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VOLUME 11 EDITION 11

THURSDAY,
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Going out with a bang

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

With a merger with the United Way of Morden and District in the works, the Winkler and District United Way distributed the funds from its final solo campaign last week to 11 local non-profit organizations. The community's generosity made it possible for the agency to gift out \$30,000—three times what it did the year before. For the full story, see Pg. 10.

news > sports > opinion > community > people > entertainment > events > classifieds > careers > everything you need to know

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“This is the time to be prepared ... a time to act”

Province urging Manitobans to maintain social distancing

By Lorne Stelmach

Officials continue to present a united message as fears rise around the spread of COVID-19.

Local leaders were echoing the words of Premier Brian Pallister and others as the coronavirus began to take hold in the province last week.

At press time on Tuesday, Manitoba had seven confirmed cases and one presumed case of the virus, all con-

nected to travel overseas.

Officials all preached continued vigilance.

“The health care system is at the highest level of readiness,” said Dr. Brent Roussin, chief provincial public health officer.

“I want to stress that this is not the time for fear or panic,” he added. “This is the time to be prepared, to gather credible information, but it is a time to act. We need to change many

things we do in our day to day activities ... if we haven’t made a change, we haven’t started to do our part to limit the spread of this virus.”

Measures continued to ramp up at all levels Monday with the federal government announcing Canada is closing its borders to all travellers who are not Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or American citizens.

Manitoba public health officials continue advising all Manitobans to cancel or postpone any non-essential international travel. Those who are returning from a trip are asked to self-isolate and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after entering to Canada.

The province also took the step last Friday to suspend all school classes effective Monday, March 23 for a period of three weeks, including a week before and a week after the originally scheduled spring break (see story on

Pg. 5).

“I am bolstered in my confidence that as a nation we are dealing with the issue in an open and in a proactive way,” Premier Pallister said in a news conference on Friday.

“I think that there was initially a much greater misunderstanding of the nature of the severity of CO-

VID-19, and I think that in part is one of the issues we need to address,” he also acknowledged.

“We’re dealing with a dynamic situation that’s evolving ... what we’re having to do is choose between reaction or proaction. We can err on the side of

caution or err on the side of delay.”

“Manitobans can rest assured that their government is taking action to make sure that the health care system is prepared,” stressed Health Minister and Morden-Winkler MLA Cameron Friesen.

“I WANT TO STRESS THAT THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR FEAR OR PANIC.”

Continued on page 7

Our mistake

The photo cutline with our story last week on the GVC Skillz Competition accidentally misidentified the two students taking part in the foods and nutrition part of the event.

Pictured (at right) were Nancy Dueck and Laureen Felski, not Madalyn Wiebe and Lauren Wolfe.

We regret the error and any confusion it may have caused.



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Fire damages MWM Environmental building

By Lorne Stelmach

It was business as usual for waste collection services in Morden despite a fire that damaged the company's local shop.

The fire that brought Morden firefighters out to MWM Environmental around 2:45 a.m. last Tuesday morning caused significant smoke damage and left one of MWM's main trucks a write-off.

"But we do have a spare there, so right now they are using the spare to do all the routes, and there really is no interruption in service because that was the only unit that was damaged," said Conrad Kelm, controller for MWM Environmental based out of Souris.

"We certainly have to commend the Morden fire department for their quick action," added Kelm. "It certainly could have been a lot worse ... if [the fire] hadn't been noticed. Everything could have gone up."

Morden fire Chief Andy Thiessen said they were alerted by a cab driver who saw smoke coming from the building.

"Inside, one of their trucks had caught fire and subsequently put their building at risk," said Thiessen.

"It sustained a fair bit of damage but a lot of smoke damage mainly. There

was some structural compromise but it was mostly smoke damage. There was quite a bit of heat on the top of the building ... the inside is pretty black."

Firefighters were on the scene for about five and a half hours.

"We were able to gain access to the one overhead door, and we removed the truck that was giving us the problem," Thiessen said. "Then once we had the fire in the attic taken care of, then we started moving some vehicles out when it was safe."

"Because someone going by had noticed it, we were able to make a relatively decent save on the building. They'll be able to do some repair ... though I imagine they'll be out of there for a bit."

Kelm said they understand that there was an electrical issue in their main front loading truck, and that there was significant damage to the interior of the shop.

"We won't be able to operate our trucks out of it for the next little while as it's being repaired," he said. "There's a lot of smoke damage on the interior of the building."

In the interim, the company has found a temporary location in Morden in addition to having use of the spare truck.

Continued on page 4



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The MWM Environmental building in Morden suffered major smoke damage last week Tuesday after one of their trucks caught fire in the early morning hours.

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Totally tubular night for Genesis

PHOTOS BY
ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Genesis House's '80s themed quiz night was a huge success for the regional women's shelter last week. The sold-out evening at the Access Event Centre saw many come dressed in period-appropriate attire (above). The night's Best Dressed prize went to the Rockin' Fonda's (centre group above holding their prizes) while the title of trivia masters went to the tongue-in-cheek team "We Have ALL the Toilet Paper" (left), which won with a perfect score.



> FIRE, FROM PG. 3

"We're leasing a space actually from one of our customers, so we will operate out of there until we get our shop fully repaired," said Kelm.

"There really shouldn't be any disruption in service," he added, noting the recycling and trash containers can continue to be used at the Jefferson St. location. "The only service where there will be a

slight interruption is we do have hazardous waste and e-waste where we collect those on site ... we're going to temporarily suspend that service ... there won't be anybody there to handle that material."

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Local officials taking steps to slow spread of virus

Public buildings close, rec. programs suspended

By Lorne Stelmach

Winkler and Morden are both taking steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the region.

Representatives of both cities say they have been in close communication with the Southern Emergency Response Committee and Southern Health-Sante Sud as well as emergency response personnel and other regional municipal partners.

Now, in addition to the widespread cancellation of events and programs, public access is being temporarily shutdown to a number of public fa-

cilities in both communities.

In Winkler, that includes the Winkler arena and P.W. Enns Centennial Concert Hall. The Winkler Police Service has also closed its offices to the public for walk-in traffic, though, of course, criminal investigations and emergency responses will continue.

Winkler Mayor Martin Harder noted on Monday that City Hall is remaining open for now, although some precautionary measures are being taken.

"We have partially closed the glass sliding doors so that people are restricted to come to one point at the counter and not in direct contact," said Harder, who noted the March 24 council meeting introducing the city's 2020 financial plan is expected to go ahead as planned.

He said that they continue encouraging the community at large to com-

ply with provincial directions and guidelines around COVID-19, including to avoid large gatherings, practice social-distancing, and avoid travel.

"I think the city is responding very well ... and I think as a community we have heeded the restrictions that have been suggested," Harder said.

In Morden, the closures affect all city-owned buildings, including walk-in services at the civic centre, police and fire departments, and the professional development office. Staff will remain reachable by phone or email. Things like paying water bills can be done online or by using the cheque drop box in the front of the civic centre.

The Morden library, art gallery, and Access Event Centre will also remain closed until at least April 13.

Morden Mayor Brandon Burley

stressed that there needed to be a calm and measured approach with precautions as part of a larger strategy to ensure the virus is not given room to expand its footprint.

"The time is right now to make sure this doesn't get more ahead of us than it already is ... and we believe it would be irresponsible not to participate [in taking precautions]," he said. "We're going to follow the federal and provincial leads and ensure that we work together to protect our city."

"If we don't act at the same time in a consistent manner, we give it the opportunity to gain a foothold, and if it gets a foothold, there's no turning around on it," Burley stressed. "At this point, there should be no tolerance and zero acceptability for people who don't take measures because they're putting everybody at risk."

Manitoba schools shutting down for three weeks starting Monday

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitoba students will get an extended spring break as the province tries to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced on Friday that all schools will suspend classes starting Monday, March 23, a week earlier than the scheduled spring break. Schools will remain closed until April 13, a week later than originally scheduled.

"Foremost, we are thinking of the health and well-being of all Manitobans," said Goertzen. "We believe we need to stay ahead of the virus instead of running behind it."

"We believe that our schools are safe, however the experience in other provinces and other parts of the world tells us that proactive measures lessen the impact of the spread of COVID-19 and lessens the negative impact on individuals," the minister continued. "Through this suspension, we are acting in an abundance of caution to lessen the effects of COVID-19 on Manitoba and Manitobans as a whole."

Teachers will be asked to remain on the job for

the weeks before and after the regularly scheduled spring break to prepare lessons for students to do at home where possible, Goertzen said. Other school staff will be asked to prepare schools for the return of students, which could include cleaning and maintenance.

"We are announcing the suspension in advance so that parents and those in the education system can plan and prepare," said Goertzen.

There are currently no plans to extend the school year to make up for the lost days of classes.

"Our hope is that we can make that up," Goertzen said. "Our officials are looking at contingency plans to ensure we can either compress the time or to see if there's other alternatives."

Whether the school closures will be extended beyond April 13 will be decided at a later date and publicized well in advance.

Dr. Brent Roussin, chief provincial public health officer, said it's hoped proactively closing schools will help limit the impact of the virus in Manitoba.

"Actions like this show us that we are not helpless against this virus," he said. "All Manitobans

have a role to play in limiting the impact of this virus in our communities."

Premier Brian Pallister told reporters on Friday that daycares, including those located within schools, will not be shut down at this point, though he wouldn't rule it out as a possibility as things unfold.

"We're making sure that we do everything we can to protect the health and well-being of people here," Pallister said in response to reporters' questions, stressing the government is doing "everything we can to be in front of this and not chasing it."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pesticide Control Program

Public Notice is hereby given that the Province of Manitoba intends to conduct the following Pesticide Control Programs during 2020 within the province right of way.

1. To control invasive plants and noxious weeds on Manitoba Provincial Right of Way.
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The public may send written submissions or objections within 15 days of the publication of the notice to the department below.

Manitoba Conservation and Climate
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Coronavirus cancellations

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread cancellations of community events.

Here are the ones we've been made aware of as of press time:

- The Morden Festival of the Arts organizing committee has decided to postpone the entire 2020 festival season. The situation will be reevaluated in the coming weeks to determine whether it will be re-scheduled.
- The Morden Lions have cancelled their 2020 Toy Show scheduled to take place at the Access Event Centre this weekend.

• Candlewick and Prairie Spirit School Division's performances of Fiddler on the Roof at the Manitou Opera House are cancelled this weekend. Alternative dates are being considered.

• Morden Figure Skating Club's carnival March 22 has been cancelled.

• Special Olympics programs and practices in the area are cancelled until the end of the month.

Continued on page 8

The *Winkler Morden*
Voice



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The Winkler Morden Voice is published Thursdays and distributed as a free publication through Canada Post to 15,350 homes by BigandColourful Printing and Publishing.

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Our editorial staff is available in Winkler at 204-332-3456, in Morden at 204-823-2655, or via e-mail at news@winklermordenvoice.ca.

Our commitment to you: we want to help build stronger communities through articles that both inform and entertain you about what's going on throughout the Pembina Valley. This is your community newspaper—let us know what you want to see in it.

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Find us online at winklermordenvoice.ca.

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get heard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

• **HEALTH CORNER**

We all need to do our part

My name is Kirstyn Humniski. I am a family physician who works in your community. Some of you may have met me in the clinic, urgent care or the emergency room.

I have had many questions about this new coronavirus by patients. Some people feel this whole thing is being blown out of proportion and it is not as bad as the media makes it out to be. I am here to tell you that doctors are worried. This virus has the potential to disrupt our economy, our health and our lives.



By Dr. Kirstyn Humniski

Similar to other places in the world, Southern Manitoba will see serious cases and deaths. I do not tell you this to incite worry, but to try to inspire action. In times like these we may feel powerless, but I am telling you that there are steps you can do to help lessen the impact of the virus on our community.

I urge everyone to take steps to slow the spread of this virus. This is known as flattening the curve. A certain percentage of people infected will require advanced care to survive. A surge of ill people can overwhelm the system and lead to deaths that may have been prevented.

Steps to take include:

- **Minimize travel.** March break will soon be here and many people travel during it. Some people will undoubtedly bring back the virus. This is now a pandemic. There are no safe countries anymore. British Columbia and Alberta have already made a state-

ment against any non-essential travel outside Canada. Please reconsider your travel plans. This includes the United States. There have been reported cases in 46 states.

- **If you have travelled,** then please follow Public Health recommendations. As of this writing, this means you need to self-isolate for 14 days if you've returned from Italy, Iran or the province of Hubei in China.

If you have traveled anywhere outside of Canada then you need to self monitor for symptoms for 14 days. If any cold or flu-like symptoms develop, you need to contact Health Links-Info Sante. Most people only have mild symptoms but are still infectious. Health Links-Info Sante will guide you on where to go for testing if it is required.

If you become ill and have been around someone who was ill and travelled, then call Health Links. Please be patient, as you may have to be on hold for a long period of time.

- **Social distancing.** Avoid large gatherings, concerts or sporting events. Consider working from home if you are able. Avoid personal greet-

ings that involve touch like handshakes. Minimize prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than 2 meters/6 feet) contact with individuals in public. This is where we need you to be creative. How do you make your workplace safer? How do we make church safer?

- **Hygiene.** Wash your hands. Wash your hands. Don't touch your face. *Wash your hands.* You do not need gallons of hand sanitizer. Soap, water, and a good scrub do the job. Disinfect frequently used surfaces. Disinfect your phone. Cough and sneeze into a tissue (then wash your hands) or your elbow.

- **If you are sick,** stay home. If your child is sick, keep them home. Employers: Do not send people to the clinic for sick notes.

- **Do not panic.** Be prepared instead. Do not stockpile toilet paper and masks. Have supplies in case you and your family are placed in self isolation—some extra food, prescription medication, diapers, and pet supplies. Have alternate arrangements for childcare in case of school or day-care closure.

"NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT. IT IS NOT TOO SOON. IF WE WAIT THEN IT WILL BE TOO LATE."

Continued on page 7

Letter policy

The *Voice* welcomes letters from readers on local and regional issues and concerns.

Please keep your letters short (excessively long letters are unlikely to be published), on-topic, and respectful.

The *Voice* reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject any submission.

Please include your full name, address, and phone number for veri-

fication purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

Send your letters to us by e-mail at news@winklermordenvoice.ca, or via mail to:

Editor
Winkler Morden Voice
Box 185, Winkler, MB.
R6W 4A5

All columns and letters published on our Get Heard pages are the personal opinions of the submitting writers. They are not objective news articles, nor are they necessarily the viewpoint of the Winkler Morden Voice.

Bowl for Kids 2020 cancelled amidst COVID-19 concerns

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley's biggest fundraiser of the year was supposed to take place last weekend, but the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic forced organizers to make the difficult decision to cancel the event.

Executive director Jenelle Neufeld said the board decided to take their lead from Public Health officials, who are urging Canadians to avoid large public gatherings in order to hinder the spread of the novel coronavirus across the country.

"This is our biggest fundraiser of the year and we've been planning for it for quite awhile, so it definitely wasn't an easy decision," she said on Friday. "But with everything going on we felt it was our responsibility to take the necessary precautions so that every-

one is safe."

Forty-eight teams had signed up for Bowl for Kids 2020, which was slated to take place at the new Winkler bowling lanes on Saturday.

While the event itself didn't happen, the money raised through registration fees and sponsorships will still go directly towards mentoring children and youth in the Winkler-Morden-Altona area.

Any bowlers who had collected pledges on Big Brothers' behalf are asked to contact Neufeld at 204-325-9707 to arrange to drop them off. A prize will still be handed out for the top fundraiser.

The loss of day-of donations and silent auction ticket sales means Big Bros. will likely fall well short of the \$32,000 it was aiming for with this year's Bowl for Kids, but final numbers were not available at press time.



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Last year's Bowl for Kids raised thousands of dollars for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley. The COVID-19 pandemic put an end to the 2020 event.

On Monday the agency further announced that it was pausing all of its in-person mentoring programming—including traditional commu-

nity matches and in-school mentoring—for four weeks to protect its Bigs and Littles.

Wash your hands, avoid large gatherings: health officials

From Pg. 2

"Our government is working around the clock with federal partners, with the public health agency of Canada and indeed in our own jurisdiction with all of our service delivery organizations to make sure we're doing all that we can to protect Manitobans."

A statement from the C. W. Wiebe Medical Centre physicians in Winkler noted they are anticipating that the COVID-19 virus will arrive in the area in the coming days to weeks and stressed those aged 60 years and over are at the greatest risk.

"If this virus spreads too rapidly, we could see a devastating over-saturation of our hospital and intensive care resources that would impact all age groups," said the statement, which also echoed the recommendations to suspend large gatherings to help slow the spread of the illness.

There are visitor restrictions being put in place at all Manitoba health care and long term care facilities. Only one visitor per patient at a time is allowed in acute care facilities. That does not apply to parents of children in hospital, the province has said, and other exceptions will be made at a manager's discretion for special circumstances, such as visitors who require an escort or those going to see a patient nearing the end of their life.

People are encouraged to take common prevention measures, including regular hand washing with soap and

warm water for at least 15 seconds followed by thoroughly drying hands. Alternatively, people can use an alcohol-based hand cleanser if their hands are not visibly dirty.

People should also cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into their sleeve.

Public health officials continue to recommend social distancing measures for all Manitobans. That includes:

- minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two metres) contact between individuals in public;
- avoiding greetings that involve touching such as handshakes;
- disinfecting frequently used surfaces;
- following public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus; and
- avoiding all non-essential travel, as well as crowded places and events.

> HEALTH CORNER, FROM PG. 6

• Think critically. At the time of this writing there is no vaccine and no approved treatment. There are no vitamins or supplements that will keep you well. There will be unscrupulous people who will try to profit off the fear with products and lies. Ignore them.

• Know where to look for information. Expect information and recommendations to change rapidly.

Employers are being asked to review their business continuity plans and take steps to ensure their employees can stay home when ill, without facing barriers such as the requirement for sick notes, and to work from home if possible.

Employers should also consider discontinuing non-essential work related travel outside of Manitoba and encouraging virtual meetings to reduce prolonged, close contact between individuals.

As of Monday, Manitoba had five screening and testing sites in place, including four in Winnipeg and one in Thompson. Additional locations across the province were being considered and finalized.

Officials stress that only individuals who have recently returned from an international trip and also have a fever, cough or other symptoms of a respiratory illness should be tested for COVID-19.

"No one without symptoms should be tested for COVID-19," Roussin stressed.

The Government of Manitoba website (gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus) has updated case numbers for the province, information, and helpful links.

The Government of Canada website (canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html) has more detail on how you can prepare.

We are a community. I know some

"We are confident that these measures and others will have effect in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and flattening the curve of positive cases in this province," said Friesen. "This is about our families, it is about our friends and our neighbours, our co-workers and our classmates. We can all contribute to reduce the spread of COVID-19."

"Actions like this show us that we are not helpless against this virus. All Manitobans have a role to play in limiting the impact of this virus in our communities," added Roussin.

"This pandemic is emerging rapidly," he reiterated. "We don't see evidence of community transmission right now, but this is rapidly evolving, and so I think getting out ahead of it is going to be a good step to reduce the impact here."

"It's going to take Manitobans to make a little bit of change in their daily lives."

Information on COVID-19 is available online at gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus.

of these suggestions are inconvenient and costly. We do this not only for ourselves but to protect our loved ones. We do this for our grandparents, our parents and those whose immune systems are not strong enough to protect themselves.

Now is the time to act. It is not too soon. If we wait then it will be too late.

Winkler Heritage Soc. looking for help

By Lorne Stelmach

The challenges both short term and long term continue for the Winkler Heritage Society.

Improving its financial sustainability as well as settling the issue of its location remain the two key things facing the organization, members heard at the society's annual meeting last week.

"I think any charitable organization goes through similar things," said chairperson Randy Rietze.

"It's always scrambling a bit from year to year, and we've kind of run into a few problems," he continued. "We're trying to restructure some things in our executive to get more people involved in fundraising. I think that's our biggest problem.

"We need to get more people involved," he stressed. "Being an older group, a lot of the older people just don't want to get involved, and we understand that, so let's get more younger people involved."

The society came out of the past year with a smaller deficit in the \$2,000 range, and the members approved a

2020 budget that aims to break even at \$63,000.

For income, it relies mostly on donations, grants, fundraisers, and memberships, which reached 111 in 2019.

The society is also working to build up an endowment fund, which was at just over \$5,200 as of last fall, but its financial stability continues to be a concern.

"Revenue always is a challenge," said Rietze, who especially cited the need for the organization to find ways to generate more through fundraising events.

"I'd like to thank all of our people who donate and our businesses that give us money every year. We just have to come up with a few more ideas," he said.

"We're thinking of a major fundraiser where, instead of making five hundred or a thousand dollars, we

can make bigger money with some kind of major event ... we've got some irons in the fire with that now."

In the meantime, questions also remain around how the change in ownership of the Southland Mall might impact the museum's location there, but Rietze said the owners seem amenable to helping make things work for

"WE NEED TO GET MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED ... MORE YOUNGER PEOPLE INVOLVED."



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Winkler Heritage Society chair Randy Rietze addressed members at the organization's annual meeting last week. Finding new sources of revenue and increasing its volunteer pool remain high on the society's to-do list.

them, including providing extra space to store some of their excess artifacts.

"I think that's our plan right now to stay there at least for this year and possibly next," he said. "We're trying to make some changes there, and if that works out, we could probably get more room ... there's nothing wrong with where we are, it's just that it's taking time to get to that point.

"We could use more room, and I think that's a common problem with any organization like this one," Rietze continued. "Not that we can maybe afford the extra room, but we would surely welcome it, so that might also involve doing more fundraising."

The society would eventually like to have both the museum and the archives—currently housed at the Winkler library—together in one location,



he noted.

In the meantime, the society will continue to try to keep getting the word out to bring in more support and get more people involved.

"I think we are out there more now with the new website that we have," Rietze said. "We're getting help from more people.

"I think it's just getting your name out there more, getting people to know who you are, that you exist."

> CANCELLATIONS AND CLOSURES, FROM PG. 5

- Winkler Senior Centre has cancelled all its programming until further notice. Meal service is available for pick up or delivery.

- Morden Activity Centre programs are suspended until further notice.

- Café 545 at Central Station cancelled last Monday's community meal but was offering to deliver meals to those in need. Decisions on upcoming weekly meals will be decided on a week-to-week basis. Call 204-325-0257 for details.

- Central Station has postponed the bulk of its group programming until further notice. The Winkler and District Food Cupboard will be operating in a modified manner.

- Winkler Family Resource Centre programs and events are all cancelled until further notice.

- Morden Parent and Child Re-

source Centre programs are on hold until further notice.

- The Winkler Festival of the Arts April sessions are postponed, likely until early May.

- Pembina Hills Arts Council has postponed its Encountering Egypt Art Talk (March 19), Santana Listening Party (March 20), and the Taste of France Wine and Cheese Tasting (March 27). The gallery itself is also closed.

- The Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association is postponing its April 8 conference in Morden. Details about a potential rescheduled date will be released later in the month.

- The ninth annual Raptor Festival in La Riviere scheduled for April 18 has been cancelled for 2020.

- The Women Speaking Out Parity Lunch & Learn scheduled for March

19 has been postponed.

- Visits, including animal surrenders, at the Pembina Valley Humane Society shelter in Morden are by appointment only until further notice.

- Morden's Access Event Centre is closed and all recreation programs are suspended.

- The Winkler arena and P.W. Enns Centennial Concert Hall are closed and all programming is suspended.

- The Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre is closed until further notice. The Spring Break Dino Day Camp is also cancelled.

- Public access to the Plum Coulee and Gretna arenas are suspended. All RM of Rhineland recreation programs are cancelled.

- Access Credit Union's March 19 special meeting of members to vote both in person and online on the

proposed merger with Crosstown Civic Credit Union has been postponed indefinitely.

- South Central Regional Library's branches in Altona, Winkler, and Miami will follow the province-wide school closures (March 23 to April 10) while the Morden and Manitou branches closed earlier this week at the direction of the City of Morden and the RM of Pembina.

- Portage-Lisgar MP Candice Bergen's offices in Morden are closed to face-to-face meetings for the time being. Her staff can be reached via email at info@candicebergen.ca and telephone at 1-866-856-2090.

- Numerous area churches are cancelling Sunday services on a week-by-week basis. Contact your church to confirm.

Ray Derksen steps into WAC director role

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Ray Derksen was a driving force behind the campaign to transform the former Park St. water treatment plant into Winkler's own arts and cultural centre.

Now he's back to help lead the organization into the next phase of its existence.

In the wake of the departure of executive director Wendy Klassen earlier this year, Derksen has stepped into the new art and community director role for Winkler Arts & Culture.

"The idea was, since this was sort of my baby, the board thought I'd have the most passion to get some stuff done," says Derksen, who has served on the WAC board in a variety of capacities over the years. "I'm

much more in the trenches now than I would be as a board member."

A focus for Derksen from the get-go is to secure funding for both ongoing operational costs and future capital plans.

The centre's opening in 2016 was the completion of just one phase of a much larger project, Derksen notes.

Future phases include renovating unused space in the rear of the building into an additional gallery and transforming the greenspace under the water tower outside

into an outdoor stage and plaza area.

"I'm excited for WAC and what the future holds," Derksen says, stressing that the goal has always been to make the facility not just an art gallery but a true community hub.

"WE WANT TO BE THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE COMMUNITY."

Continued on page 20



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Ray Derksen, who spearheaded the creation of the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre, is now back as its new art and community director.



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Winkler United Way distributes \$30K to 11 groups

By Lorne Stelmach

The revival of the Winkler and District United Way continued in the past year, and directors celebrated



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Winkler United Way president Kim Nelson is excited to see what the future holds for the agency as it merges with the Morden United Way.

last Wednesday while also looking ahead to what's to come for the organization.

The Winkler United Way is currently working towards a merger with the United Way of Morden and District, but in the meantime it handed out \$30,000 in proceeds from its 2019 campaign to 11 organizations.

President Kim Nelson was pleased with their progress after what had been a rebuild for the United Way brand in Winkler a year earlier.

"Being able to raise three times the amount we did the first year that I was president was great," Nelson said.

The campaign included donation drop-off points as well as online giving and payroll deductions, and Nelson said they made good progress in getting the United Way further re-established in the community after having started over in 2018 with a new board.

"It really showed that people still want United Way, to be able to donate to all the local organizations that we are able to help support," she said, adding she felt they made good progress overall when it came to fundraising. "We definitely aren't where we were when we were doing the can-

vassing, but I feel that we were more visible and that people knew how to reach us and that we were making headway in the community."

Recipients receiving funding for a variety of projects and operational expenses last week included Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley, Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation, Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba Foundation, Eden Mental Health Services, Gateway Resources, Pembina Counselling Centre, Pembina Valley Humane Society,

Continued on page 15

Schanzenfeld teen killed in crash

A 16-year-old from Schanzenfeld was killed in a crash near Plum Coulee over the weekend.

Just before 2 a.m. Sunday morning, Carman RCMP were called to the scene of a single-vehicle collision near the intersection of Provincial Road 306 and Municipal Road 12N, approximately three kilometres south of Plum Coulee.

Police have determined that a vehicle being driven by a 16-year-old male was heading westbound when it lost control, entered the ditch, and collided with a hydro pole.

The driver, who was not wearing a seatbelt, was pronounced deceased on scene.

Two other male occupants in the vehicle, an 18-year old and 17-year-

old who were both wearing their seatbelts, were assessed by EMS. The 18-year-old was taken to hospital with minor injuries while the 17-year-old was treated and released.

Alcohol is believed to be a factor in the collision.

Carman RCMP, along with a forensic collision reconstructionist, continue to investigate.

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KC's Shoe Repair is doing its part to save the environment—one repair job at a time.

The Winkler store, located at 325 Kimberly Rd. behind the Southland Mall, prides itself on being able to repair just about anything a customer might bring in.

Shoe and boot repairs—fixing soles and heels, adding lifts, mending tears—remain a staple for the shop, but they've long since branched out to become the go-to fix-it place for the area.

"We repair everything and anything. Boots, sporting goods, saddles, truck seats, luggage, upholstery," says owner Ken Thiessen, who estimates his leatherwork and sewing skills have kept literally tons of items out the landfill over the past three decades.

Another way to keep stuff out of the landfill? Make sure the products are built to last from the get-go.

"Our stuff lasts a long time," Thiessen says of the wide variety of work and western wear he has in stock. "If you buy quality, it lasts for years."

The store's shelves are packed full of quality footwear from such trusted brands as Keen, Blundstone, Royer, and Merrell.

"We've got everything from runners for your little kids right to size 15, 16 work boots," Thiessen says. "Western boots for the whole family, right down to tiny ones for infants."

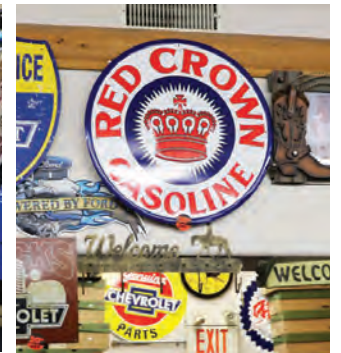
They also have an assortment of men's and women's clothing, including shirts, jeans, hats, and belts.

KC's has also been expanding its jewelry and purse offerings, alongside unique gift products such as western-themed lamps and frames and vintage signs.

The store offers competitive pricing close to home and also has a healthy clearance section with something new to check out on every visit.



Ken Thiessen of KC's Shoe Repair has the equipment and the know-how to fix just about anything. His shop also offers a huge selection of work and western wear for the entire family.



"We have deals going on all the time," says Thiessen. Drop by KC's today to see for yourself or give them a call at 204-325-5538.



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March is Pharmacist Awareness Month

The changing role of pharmacists

Did you know that depending on where you live, your pharmacist might be able to give you a flu shot? And that he or she can give you a screening test for the early detection of diabetes? As an important member of your health-care team, there are a lot of things your pharmacist can do that you might not be aware of. This March, Pharmacist Awareness Month (PAM) aims to celebrate and educate Canadians about all the contributions that pharmacists make to your good health.

In a February 2015 report prepared for the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPA), an online survey of Canadians showed that we are more likely to have a positive impression of pharmacists than of teachers, military officers and police officers. That information goes a long way in saying that we put a lot of trust in our pharmacists every time we buy an over-the-counter pro-



duct, get a prescription filled and get advice about chronic illness or medications. In the past ten years, the scope of practice of pharmacists has expanded so they can do more for their patients as health-care providers and not just as prescription-fillers. In fact, 79 per cent of the respondents of the 2015 CPA survey agreed that "if pharmacists worked more closely with doctors it would reduce overall health-care costs... and patients' overall quality of life would improve." During the month of March, ask your pharmacist which services he or she offers besides filling prescriptions. You may be surprised to learn that your pharmacy is almost a one-stop health shop.

Your medicine cabinet: do you have everything you need?

Headaches, scratches, heartburn and colds: not all your ills require a visit to the doctor. But do you have what you need to take care of them? It's time to take an inventory of your medicine cabinet so you can be ready to deal with all those minor day-to-day emergencies that can come up.

Essentials

Your medicine cabinet should include basic medicines for all the members of your family. In other words, you should be able to deal with:

- pain and fever
- coughing and nasal congestion
- allergies and itching
- mild burns, sunburns and cuts
- digestive problems, sore muscles, diarrhea and nausea

Insect repellent and sunscreen are also essential, depending on the season. If you have a baby, stock up on cream for diaper rash and a soothing teething gel.

First-aid kit

As well as the above-mentioned medications, you should also have a first-aid kit containing:

- a digital thermometer, splinter tweezers, blunt-ended scissors and safety pins
 - sterile gloves and pads, adhesive bandages of various sizes, antiseptic solution, alcohol pads, adhesive tape, gauze bandages, cotton wool and elastic fabric bandages
 - a hot water bottle, ice compresses and CPR mask
- Don't forget to keep on hand all the relevant emergency phone numbers, including the poison control line and your family physician's.

Your pharmacist can help you customize your home pharmacy kit. Don't hesitate to ask him or her for advice.



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New Approach to Prescription Refills - Getting things Always Right and Right on Time!

To get full benefit of many medications and health supplements, you must take them on a regular basis as prescribed or directed. Taking medication regularly can be challenging for many reasons. Taking many medications can also be challenging in a variety of ways.

To help alleviate these challenges, Pharmasave's pharmacy team is excited to provide a new service: Simpl Sync. Simpl Sync saves you time, money and hassle when it comes to your prescription drug refills. It also can go a long way toward keeping you healthy (by helping you take medications as prescribed) and reducing the country's overall medical costs - which are often linked to the improper use of medications. Another part of the Simpl Sync program is an annual one-on-one session with a pharmacist to review all of your medications to ensure they are providing you with the best possible health outcomes.

Many people take a number of different medications, and getting all those refills can require several trips to the pharmacy each month. Now, through our Simpl Sync program, our pharmacy team can work to meet patients' individual needs and with their insurance

plans so that all of their refills are available for pickup on the same date.

Pharmasave will offer a week-ahead check-in for those enrolled to make sure there haven't been any changes in their medications, and will also remind people the day before their prescriptions are ready for pickup. In this manner, medications will be filled exactly the way patients should be taking them, and exactly when they need them. Private consultations with a pharmacist will be scheduled to more thoroughly review medication issues.

This program is the first of its kind in western Canada. Pharmasave is pleased to be offering Simpl Sync to any person on three or more regularly-scheduled medications. There is no extra cost to joining our Simpl Sync program.

People's top reasons for not taking their medications include running out, being away from home, trying to save money, and experiencing side effects. Whatever your reason, Pharmasave's Simpl Sync program can help you take your medications properly and with less worry and hassle. Please stop by Pharmasave in Morden and ask any staff member about the Simpl Sync program.



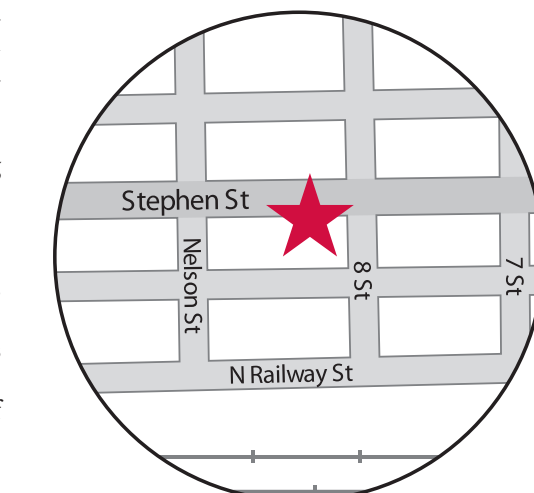
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Country Lane Kennels celebrating 10 years



By Lorne Stelmach

Country Lane Kennels is marking the milestone of 10 years in operation this month, and the Morden-area business very much continues to be a labour of love for Sheila Schultz.

Since taking the kennel over from its previous owner several years ago, Schultz finds pleasure in it each day while doing all the necessary chores and tasks.

"Our days are spent caring for animals. It's a very natural thing in our lives," Schultz said.

"For our whole married life ... we've always had dogs, cats or both," she noted. "For me, this is living the dream. We care for people's animals, and what you give to them you get back ... you love them, and they love you."

The idea came about when Schultz and her husband were celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary seven years ago when they got a text from their daughter that the kennel where they used to take their animals was up for sale.

After talking about it, they decided that they

were ready for a change in their lives.

"We have the heart for animals," Schultz said. "It was definitely something I wanted to see continue and definitely wanted to improve and grow."

They have done a number of upgrades since taking over the business. One of their main features is that the dogs have their own large runs, portions of which are covered for protection from the weather.

They have the capacity for 15 animals, and Schultz finds it enjoyable that they have had all sorts of furry and feathered friends arrive for stays.

"We have had cats, dogs, birds, guinea pigs, rabbits," she noted.

"Our goal every day is to keep them safe, happy and entertained. It's so important to us that we have the time to give each and everyone of them," said Schultz. "It's a good feeling. They lift you up. You go out there and all the stresses of the world go away."

Pooches of all sizes have found a home away from home at Country Lane Kennels over the past decade.

GVSD board passes \$52.3M deficit budget

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Garden Valley School Division will be operating with a deficit budget this fall for the first time in years.

The division's board of trustees passed a budget very similar to the proposed financial plan they laid out for the community at the public budget meeting last month.

The nearly \$52.3 million budget includes an increase of \$773,700 in expenditures, the bulk of which (\$445,800) goes to pay for salaries and benefits as division staff move up the pay scales outlined in their collective bargaining agreements.

Another big ticket expense is the property tax for the new Pine Ridge Elementary School, which totals over \$100,000.

The budget calls for a number of cuts, including a \$61,100 or 2.05 per cent decrease spent on supplies/materials/equipment over the current year.

GVSD has also cut discretionary budgets for all departments (schools, transportation, administration, maintenance, and IT) by two per cent, saving \$80,000.

Even with these cuts, though, with provincial funding going down by \$114,000 and the division limited in how much it may raise education property taxes (the special levy increases 1.28 per cent, or \$510,696, to just over \$20 million) the budget calls for a deficit of \$449,154, meaning

Garden Valley will have to draw down its \$1.5 million accumulated surplus to just over \$1 million.

The board stuck to its commitment to its strategic plan, including maintaining existing funding levels for its literacy, numeracy, and student men-

tal health initiatives.

GVSD will also continue to support the Winkler Family Resource Centre and the Imagination Library to the tune of \$17,000 and \$10,000, respectively.

The mill rate drops from 15.02 to

13.74, which will result in a slight decrease in education taxes for most home owners. Farm education property taxes will also drop, though commercial taxes will increase slightly.

Western SD passes \$22.5M budget

By Lorne Stelmach

Western School Division last week approved a \$22.5 million budget for the next school year.

The 2020-21 financial plan only received minor tweaks from what was presented at the Feb. 26 budget expo.

The division benefitted this year from a provincial funding increase of about \$542,000 or 4.8 per cent from the 2019-20 support, but trustees say Western still faced the challenge of keeping pace with the rising costs associated with continued strong growth.

The budget represents a 4.8 per cent increase over the current school year. About 65 per cent (\$14.7 million) comes from provincial funding, with another 33.3 per cent (\$7.5 million) coming from local taxes.

The division set out an 8.4 per cent

decrease in the mill rate for the 2020 school tax levy, but it is also a reassessment year, so the amount raised through the special requirement in total will increase by two per cent—a level mandated by the province.

The tax impact will vary but a home reassessed from \$275,000 to \$304,288 will see its school tax increase by \$26.64 from \$1,895.85 to \$1,922.49.

On a quarter section of farmland revalued from \$1 million to \$1,134,900, the school tax will rise by \$159.64 from \$3,983.20 to \$4,142.84.

For a business with an assessment that rose from \$500,000 to \$555,700, the school tax will jump by \$446.04 from \$8,154.25 to \$8,600.29.

The priorities for the budget revolve around meeting enrolment growth that was over seven per cent this school year and is projected to be similar again for the fall.

The budget addresses a number of priorities including the addition of six full-time teachers and increases in resource and guidance time, educational assistant time, and vice principal time at Minnewasta, Maple Leaf and École Morden Middle School.

"This is a value conscious budget," vice-chairperson Robyn Wiebe said at the budget expo.

"We wanted to focus our limited dollars in the classroom. We are seeing huge growth with our population of students and our diverse needs among those students, so we wanted to make sure that the dollars we spent were in the classroom, so you'll see a significant increase in staffing," she said. "We want to make sure that our students are supported and our teachers are supported."

Check out the Winkler Morden Voice online at www.winklermordenvoice.ca

Stanley council okays water rate increases

By Lorne Stelmach

RM of Stanley residents will be paying a little more for their water in the year ahead.

Stanley council approved a bylaw at its meeting last Thursday to increase water rates by three per cent.

It means for those residents on the Massey system that what they pay for water will increase from \$5.97 to \$6.15 per thousand gallons.

For those who receive water through the Pembina Valley Water Co-op, there is a three per cent increase on only the RM's portion of the cost of the water. For those customers, their rate will increase from \$12.51 to \$12.61 per thousand gallons.

Meanwhile, council also gave its approval for further road paving this year in the village of Chortitz.

A public hearing was held for a local improvement plan to pave the remaining gravel roads in Chortitz, and it involves 42 properties.

Each benefiting property owner will be contributing \$5,000, which they can either pay outright or add to their taxes over a 10 year period. The remaining portion of the project's costs will come through federal gas tax funding.

The total cost of the project includ-

ing base work, driveway connections, landscaping, and paving is around

\$460,000. This is a continuation of the village paving program started

in 2015 in Reinfeld and continued in 2018 to Schanzenfeld.

> UNITED WAY, FROM PG. 10

Pembina Valley Pregnancy Care Centre, Salem Home, Winkler Day Care Centre, and the Winkler Family Resource Centre.

The financial support from organizations like the United Way makes a big difference to organizations like the Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba Foundation.

The money they received will go to the Chance2Grow program, which helps kids from all over the region participate in a variety of recreational programs.

"We couldn't do it without organizations like the United Way and the support of the community of Winkler," said executive director Tracey Bercier. "The United Ways are amazing in terms of bringing people together and raising money ... we couldn't do what we do and provide what we provide without funds."

Now the Winkler and District United Way turns its attention to

merging with its Morden counterpart. Nelson noted the two organizations have been discussing this step for quite some time.

"We just feel with the overlap of the agencies we do support ... and with the growing communities in both Winkler and Morden and the need for the local funds to stay local ... in order for us to be able to grow and to expand, it made sense for us to take the strengths of both boards, merge them together and become one," she said. "Being able to have board members and volunteers from both communities in one group will be easier than trying to fill two full board complements and volunteers in very close communities."

"We host a number of similar events, and we look forward to expanding those events and bringing them to both communities," Nelson added. "We see a need. We see a need to have the events that Morden hosts

or the events that Winkler hosted to have them in both."

Nelson anticipates the new entity will be called the Pembina Valley United Way, though that hasn't been finalized yet.

Despite becoming a regional organization, the local needs in each community will continue to be a priority.

"Our goal is that when we are receiving the applications, that we are being mindful and being aware and looking at all of the very valuable people who apply and then taking all of those things into consideration," Nelson stressed.

"We're hoping this enables us to just continue to grow the pot of money so we're actually able to give out more," she concluded. "A number of smaller United Ways have ended up disbanding ... we just find that by amalgamating and merging we're hoping to continue to keep it in the Pembina Valley region."

The Most Interesting Sounds You've Never Heard

from Creation Moments Radio Program

Psalm 77:17

"The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad."



Infrasound waves are below 20 hertz, the lowest frequency we can hear. Because the sound waves are long, they can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles. Volcanic eruptions regularly generate infrasound and so does the wind. But, perhaps most interestingly, those beautiful Northern Lights that often color the night sky also generate infrasound. The sound is produced when the incoming solar particles push the air outward. While we are not able to hear infrasound, it does influence us. Researchers in England placed an infrasound generator in a concert hall and, during the performance, infrasound was added at selected points. After the concert, the

audience was asked about their emotions during certain passages of music, or if they had experienced any strange feelings during the concert. Researchers concluded that infrasound intensified whatever emotional state the music had produced in people. So, if you have ever watched the Northern Lights and thought you were almost hearing something, it was likely the infrasound you were sensing.

The more we learn about the creation God has given us, the more we find to marvel at how excellent is His workmanship.

Prayer: Father, You have been so generous to us, not only in the creation You have given us, but also in Your love in Christ.

For further info. contact Creation Science of Saskatchewan Inc., Box 26, Kenaston, SK. S0G 2N0 or call 204-325-5244.



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Top 5 tax tips you need to know

Tax filing can be complicated, and this year provincial and federal governments have introduced many changes that can only add to the confusion. To help, here are five ways to confidently manage the filing process.

Take note of key dates. Whether you owe money or not, it's important to file your taxes on time to avoid the interruption of benefits, interest and any penalties. The CRA can charge you penalties of 5 per cent on what you owe, plus an additional 1 per cent for each month you fail to file, for a

maximum of 12 months. "To avoid the stress of filing last-minute, use your phone to set up reminders to flag important tax-related dates," suggests Lisa Gittens, tax expert at H&R Block.

Stay organized. Ensure you gather all forms, slips and necessary receipts throughout the year. Organize everything you need to file your return, such as tuition receipts, medical bills by category and date and file them away. You can also take photos of hard-copy receipts and add these to your online folder as well, making it much easier if you must look back months, or even years, later.

Get some credit for being kind. If you, your spouse or your common-law partner made a charitable donation, you might be able to claim a non-refundable tax credit for your generosity. When completing your return, not only can you claim the donations you made during the year, you can also claim any unclaimed donation amounts from the past five years.

Crunch numbers with a tax calculator. It's never a bad idea to get an idea of what your tax situation might look like ahead of time. "Take advantage of free tax calculators to help you get a sense of what you'll be walking into come tax season," says Gittens. All you need to do is enter your income, taxes paid and RRSPs – and remember the March 2 deadline for RRSPs.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. If figuring out where to start or which receipts to keep organized is too much, ask for a hand. Gather your receipts and documents and speak to a tax expert who can answer any questions you may have.

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Pandemic puts an end to MJHL playoffs

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers battled hard to claw their way back up from the depths of the 2018-2019 season to earn a seat at the playoff table this year, but the global pandemic has

now put an end to their hopes of going the distance.

Just a day after putting a temporary hold on all playoff games in light of the COVID-19 situation, the Canadian Junior Hockey League announced Friday that it was cancelling the 2019-

2020 season entirely.

As a result, all hockey-related activities, including the 10 junior hockey league playoffs going on across the country, the CJHL's four regional championship events, and the Centennial Cup Canadian National Ju-

nior A Championship will not be held.

In further consultation with Hockey Canada, it was determined that the cancellation of the CJHL playoffs was unavoidable, said CJHL president Brent Ladds.

"We continue to align our direction, consistent with that of Hockey Canada, and support their overall direction completely," he said.

"We extend our extreme gratitude, understanding, and commend the due diligence put forth by the CJHL's executive board, each of our 10 league commissioners/presidents, their staffs and respective clubs, and Hockey Canada in their commitment to safeguard all those involved in our wonderful game."

VIRDEN WAS UP 2-1

The Flyers were in the midst of taking on the Virden Oil Capitals in a best-of-seven quarter-final series when the news of the cancellation hit.

Game four was scheduled for last Friday night and it was going to be a pivotal one for the Flyers, who found themselves down 2-1 in the series after dropping game three on March 10.

After evening up the series with a 6-3 win in game two a couple nights earlier, the Flyers had hoped to continue the momentum with another



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Flyers goaltender Dylan Meilun keeps a close eye as Oil Caps Dylan Halliday attempts a wrap around in last Tuesday's 7-1 loss for Winkler. It proved to be the Flyers' final game after Hockey Canada pulled the plug on the 2019-2020 hockey season.

Continued on page 19

Hawks 2-0 series lead moot after season cancelled

By Lorne Stelmach

The male Pembina Valley Hawks had the momentum on their side in the Manitoba AAA playoffs until the novel coronavirus brought it to a sudden end last week.

Hockey Manitoba followed suit last week after Hockey Canada moved to cancel the 2019-2020 hockey season. The decision interrupted the Hawks' best-of-five semi-final series,

in which Pembina Valley had taken a 2-0 series lead with a 3-1 win over the Southwest Cougars in game two last Wednesday.

"We were happy with the way that we were playing through the first two games," said co-coach Jeff Andrews, who saw his team finding ways to win.

Reid Dyck had another solid night in net in game two with 39 saves, while the Hawks broke open a 1-1 game with two unanswered goals early in

the third period.

Michael Hlady opened scoring for Pembina Valley in the second period and then Justin Keck got the winner two minutes into the third and Andrew Boucher got the insurance goal at the 5:27 mark.

The Hawks were opportunistic as they got doubled up on in shots on goal by a 40-20 count.

In the league's other semi-final battle, the number one ranked Winnipeg

Wild were also on the verge of sweeping the sixth place Eastman Selects following 6-2 and 5-1 wins.

The cancellation of the season is disappointing but understandable in light of the global health crisis unfolding, Andrews said last week.

"When something happens that's totally out of your control, there's nothing you can do about it," he said.

News or sports tip? E-mail news@winklermordenvoice.ca or call 204-325-6888

> FLYERS, FROM PG. 18

win, this time on home ice.

It wasn't to be, though, as the Oil Capitals continued their streak of beating the Flyers in every game played in Winkler, both in the regular season and the post-season.

The Oil Capitals drew first blood six minutes in and then tripled their lead with two goals in the opening frames final 10 minutes.

Jayden McCarthy got Winkler on the board in the second period's seventh minute, but that was it for the Flyers, while Virden managed three more in the period's final handful of minutes and then one more early in the third for a 7-1 victory.

Dorrian Luding manned Winkler's net for 20 minutes, making 10 saves off 13 shots, before Dylan Meilun came in for the last 40, making 14 saves off 18 shots as the Oil Capitals outshot the Flyers 31-29 overall.

Winkler went 0-for-5 on the power-play and 4-for-5 on the penalty-kill.

Not getting the chance to see just how far his team could go is frustrating for head coach Kelvin Cech, though obviously unavoidable.

"It's incredibly disappointing, sad," Cech said on Friday, noting the team was actually on the road to Virden when the news broke. "We were excited to play and ready to go, and then we get the call from our league.

"It's upsetting. You want a little bit of finality. I think we had a good team that was rallying and overcame some adversity and now you don't get to do it. It's like your heart gets torn out.

"But we were bracing for the fact that this is what's best for the world," Cech added. "It's an international health crisis."

Cech and his coaching staff conducted exit meetings with the players Friday afternoon ahead of them leaving for the off-season.

The team bids farewell to several 20-year-old players aging out of junior hockey, and Cech ap-



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Virden netminder Ethan Peterson's mask flies off his head during action in front the net in game three, necessitating a game delay for him to make repairs to it.

plauds them for the legacy they leave behind.

"They're leaving this program in such a better place," he said. "That to me is the definition of success is leaving things better than when you found it, and they really did that because now we've got guys that want to be back and are excited to get back and get to work because of the culture that we've created here. We're really excited for next season already."

Cech said the entire team is grateful for the support they've received from local hockey fans throughout both the regular season and the shortened post-sea-

son.

"For me, a lasting memory is we were driving out to go to Virden and there was two schools of kids lined up with Flyers flags and blankets and stuff cheering us on," he said. "That means everything to us.

"Our guys love playing in Winkler. They take really good care of us here ... everything we've got is just first class," Cech said. "We're really fortunate to play in such a cool little town and we're excited to get back and do it all again next year."

Twisters-Hawks series stopped before it could start

The coronavirus halted their title defence before the Pembina Valley Twisters could even get it started.

The Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League playoffs were set to start this past weekend, but play was suspended by Hockey Canada and subsequently Hockey Manitoba as a result of the increasing concerns around the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The Twisters were set to try to repeat as league champs starting with a best of seven quarter-final against the Charleswood Hawks after having captured a second consecutive regular season banner this year with a near identical record as last season.

The Twisters took first place with a 35-7-3 record for 73 points—a comfortable nine ahead of the second place St. Vital Victorias.

They were slated to pursue what would have been their third league title after having captured the championship last season.

The decision by Hockey Canada to end play was made in consultation with the agency's membership as well as its chief medical officer and public health officials, according to a statement by Tom Renney, chief executive

officer, and Scott Smith, president and chief operating officer.

"We recognize the tremendous effort that has been put forth all year by individuals across the country as they participate in Canada's game.

"Although it is difficult to process the hockey season ending abruptly, we feel this is the best course of action in order to do our part in keeping our country safe."

MHSAA cancels all school sports

The Manitoba High School Athletic Association has pulled the plug on all high school sports in light of ongoing concerns surrounding the spread of COVID-19.

"In support of suggested recommendations from Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living and Manitoba Education and Training, effec-

tively immediately the MHSAA is cancelling all hockey and basketball provincial championships," the association said in a statement last Thursday. "In addition, all badminton and other school sport activities will be on hiatus until further notice.

"The MHSAA is committed to protecting the health and safety of our

student-athletes, staff, coaches, member-schools and the health of all of our fellow Manitobans."

A number of local teams were slated to compete in provincial competitions last weekend. There's no word on when or if those events will be re-scheduled.

The Winkler Morden
Voice

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Agriculture

Farmers respond to COVID-19 outbreak

By Harry Siemens

With governments, municipal officials, businesses, and agricultural groups making swift decisions and responses to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the farming Twitter world became more active.

With many responses and a daylong discussion on Sunday, it became apparent farmers and farm suppliers would continue to do what they always do: work through it one way or the other.

Farmer Jim Pallister said it best: "We farmed past wars and Trudeaus and the Canadian Wheat Board blockade. We will out farm this too."

One non-farmer replied, "So grateful to farmers ... especially during these scary times. Thank you for making sure that we have food on our tables."

Another person, Louise Carduner, pointed out some of what the Manitoba farming industry has going for it, including the fact that farming is a

social distancing career to begin with, many farmers (though not all) have almost everything they need on their farm to complete the 2020 planting season, and many farmers work with family, thus increasing the chance of labour availability during this difficult time.

"Most farmers have access to resources they need to stay healthy," she noted.

Somerset area farmer Gerry Demare posted how he's talked about this lately at home.

"Will this result in demand destruction disrupting supply chains?" he asked. "Most disrupters farmers have ever experienced result in lower prices. For now, the lower Canadian dollar is helping. Will the economy falter, probably, if not crash. The domino effect will be huge."

Ron Krahn of Rivers said when asked to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and how it would affect his farm that he had few concerns. Most revolve around people being unavail-

able for work due to quarantines or border issues, or crop inputs being unavailable when needed due to local logistics and active ingredients from international sources, including seed and fertilizer supplies from the U.S.

"Canola contracted to CHS in Hallock MN while wheat going to an elevator that ships a lot south," said Krahn. "Border closure could shut that down while employees having to stay home during busy seeding season are all concerns."

Eldon Klippenstein, who farms near Altona, tweeted it is hard to say at this point the impact, though he's anticipating hassle, headaches, shipping disruptions, and shortages of products.

Jim Wickett, who farms at Rosetown, SK and is chair of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers (which cancelled their 50th AGM slated for Regina March 17-18) stressed it is very

early in the process. Hopefully, this is all an abundance of caution, he said.

Günter Jochem is the president of the WCWG and operates Blue Diamond Farms just west of Winnipeg with his wife Crystal and their four daughters.

"It's tough to say how this will affect farmers," he said. "I'm glad we have a solid six weeks until seeding starts. If this happened just as seeding started it would be really tough. 2020 will be a challenging year right out of the gate."

Rolf Penner, a special crops and grain farmer east of Morris, is remaining optimistic.

"We're in a low population density business, so I'd say we shouldn't have too many issues. But it could disrupt our supply lines, inputs, repairs, etc. People who might tough it out to get the job done might now stay home just in case."

"WE WILL OUT FARM THIS TOO."

KAP seeking input on rural connectivity survey

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) has launched a rural connectivity survey aimed at better understanding the issues facing both cellular coverage and broadband access across the province.

"Our members are some of the most poorly served by telecommunications in Canada because they live and run

> WAC, FROM PG. 9

"I've always said the art is just a by-product of what this building's supposed to be," he says. "It's supposed to be an art and cultural centre."

To that end, Derksen is working with fellow WAC staffer Jennifer Penner on expanding the kinds of classes and events offered in the building and reaching out to other community groups to find new ways to welcome people into the centre.

"We want to be the cultural centre of the community," Derksen says. "I want it to be a living building. The door should be swinging constantly."

their businesses in rural areas with limited population density," KAP director Sam Connery-Nichol said. "Manitobans in rural areas are missing out on key information, including emergency alerts, and are often unable to call for help on their farms due to a lack of cell coverage."

KAP has been advocating for years for improved broadband service in rural areas. KAP members from across the province have put forward

a number of policy resolutions, urging both the provincial government and the federal government to invest in quality coverage for all areas of the province.

Agriculture is a primary economic driver provincially and nationally, the agency stresses, but a lack of access to reliable, affordable broadband internet prevents farmers from being able to take advantage of educational opportunities and technological ad-

vances that would make their operations more efficient and ultimately more successful.

KAP is encouraging both farmers and non-farmers alike from across the province to share their experiences by filling out the survey by March 31.

It can be found online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KAPConnect>.

The **Winkler Morden** *Voice*

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Winklerite wins Healthy Lake Ice Fishing Derby

Event raised \$10K for Mound Wildlife Association

The seventh annual Healthy Lake Ice Fishing Derby took place at Pelican Lake March 7.

The event saw 663 adult anglers and 137 juniors compete. During the four hours of derby fishing, a total of 114 fish were measured: 64 Northern Pike, 46 Perch, and four Walleye.

Winkler fisherman Cornie Letkeman caught the day's longest fish overall, a Northern Pike measuring 96.5 cm. He won a 2020 Can Am Outlander 450 Quad valued at \$8,532 and sponsored by Enns Brothers.

Winning the junior category with an 85 cm Northern Pike was Adlee Gudz of Brandon. The prize was a Perception Sport Swiftwater kayak sponsored by Jo-Brook Outdoors.

The derby donated a portion of its proceeds to the Mound Wildlife Association in Pilot Mound. The \$10,000 donation will go toward upgrades to the Mound Wildlife Rearing Pond.

The Mound Wildlife Rearing Pond was first established by the Mound Wildlife group in 2018 and has been

successfully used to rear approximately 2,500 Walleye fingerlings in each of the last two seasons.

These fingerlings have been distributed to the Goudney Reservoir, Rock Lake, Lake Minnewasta, Mary Jane Reservoir, Stephenfield Lake, and Pelican Lake.



SUPPLIED PHOTOS
Winkler's Cornie Letkeman (top) won the Healthy Lake Ice Fishing Derby with the 96.5 cm Northern Pike he caught. Above: In addition to 663 adult anglers, there were 137 youth out on the ice that day. Left: Partial proceeds from the derby were donated to the Mound Wildlife Association for its rearing pond.

WSD, GVSD cancel school trips abroad

By Lorne Stelmach

Two local spring break trips to Europe are among the growing list of cancellations due to the global spread of COVID-19.

Morden students will not be taking their journey to Greece and Italy while Winkler students are losing their opportunity to go to Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. Both trips had been planned for March 26 to April 4.

"It was a difficult call for sure, a disappointing call, but it definitely felt like the right call to make in all circumstances," said Marianne Fenn, principal of Morden Collegiate.

"It wasn't an easy decision ... our students and staff were looking forward to this trip with great excitement and anticipation," said Todd Monster, superintendent of Garden Valley School Division. "I think most people understand, and they see this whole situation evolving worldwide ... I think the

general public understands the kind of risks associated with international travel at this point of time."

Fenn noted planning for the trip had been going on for perhaps 18 months.

"We try as hard as we can to give parents and families huge lead time on a big trip like that because they are expensive, and we want students who want to be able to participate to have as much time as possible."

The trip would have involved close to 50 kids along with a number of parents and staff as chaperones. It would have included students from a number of grades but priority was given to Grade 11-12 students, noted Fenn.

"We do try to prioritize those kids who we know won't have another chance if we follow our normal pattern, which has been about every two years to travel over spring break."

Fenn said they had been in close contact with the tour organizer and Public Health as well as monitoring

Canadian government travel advisories prior to the cancellation. Conditions only changed and worsened enough recently to lead to the decision to call it off.

"We had obviously been monitoring the situation with the coronavirus as we started to hear about it," she said. "Our group specifically was planning a trip that involved southern Italy and not the northern communities in Italy. So, for a long time, the travel advisories, when they did start to come in for Italy, referenced regional advisories saying it might be good to avoid non-essential travel to northern Italy but didn't reference southern Italy."

"When Italy made a decision to basically lockdown any non-essential travel even within their own country for their citizens, it became clear Italy was not going to be possible," Fenn said. "And when we looked at it ... we just felt there isn't a country here we feel at this point we can substitute,

given the rapidly changing situation."

Monster cited similar considerations in reaching the decision to cancel the Winkler trip, which would have included 45 students and chaperones from both Garden Valley Collegiate and Northlands Parkway Collegiate.

"With the continuing and evolving global concerns and issues surrounding the coronavirus outbreak ... it was in the best interests of students and staff safety to cancel the trip," he said.

"We just felt the potential risk far outweighed the benefits of travel at this time," Monster added. "Outside of the obvious health concerns associated with contracting the virus, there's other concerns related to unpredictable travel changes that can occur suddenly without warning ... concerns around the possibility of quarantine and of course just the ever changing nature of this issue every day."

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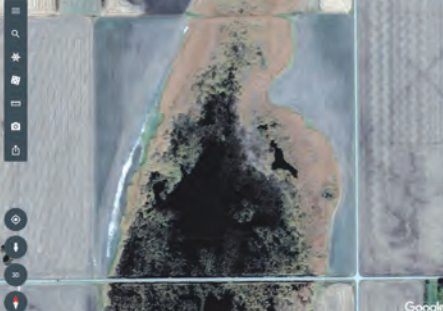
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OBITUARY



Velma Leota Angers (nee Martindale)
 1925 - 2020

Velma L Angers, 95 years of Morden, MB passed away quietly on Friday, March 13, 2020 at Boundary Trails Health Centre. She is survived by her only son, Richard. There will be no service. A private family interment will take place at the Miami Cemetery at a later date. Flowers and cards are gratefully declined. Thank you to the people at Legion House II for their friendship and support over the last twenty plus years. Thanks as well to the competent staff at the hospital for their excellent care.

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OBITUARY



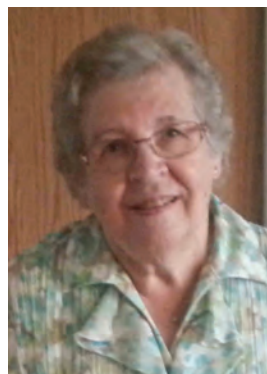
Irene Alsop (nee Lechner)
 1920 - 2020

Irene Alsop, age 99, passed away peacefully with her beloved and caring daughter-in-law, Teresa by her side on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at Oakview Extencicare in Winnipeg, MB. She was born Irene Lechner in 1920 in Morden, MB to Adolf and Mary Lechner. She married Doug Alsop and had three sons: Wayne, James, and Greg. Irene loved to visit her grandchildren, Philip, Karla, Becky, Jessica, Cristin, Tracy and Allie. Irene was predeceased by her husband, Doug; son, Greg; brothers, Albert, Jack, Leo, and Clarence and sister, Edna. Irene had a great love for travelling and enjoyed many adventures. She was known for her crafting abilities, especially her work with miniatures. When she resided at the Legion House in Morden, she was a regular "shuffler" at the Morden Activity Centre. During her time at Oakview she was noted for her participation in all activities and her cheerful smile. A Celebration of Life will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 3, 2020 at Wiebe Funeral Chapel in Morden. There will be an interment at the Hillside Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Irene's memory to the Morden Activity Centre or the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation.

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OBITUARY



Helen Hamm (nee Enns)
 1933 - 2020

On Saturday, March 14, 2020, Helen Hamm, 86, passed away peacefully at Boundary Trails Health Centre. She leaves to mourn one daughter, Linda, one son, Don (Annie) and grandchildren, Scott, Jessica (Ben), and Mark and three sisters. She was predeceased by her husband, Cornie in 2015; daughter, Erna and brother, Cornie. Memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2020 at Wiebe Funeral Home, Winkler with private interment prior at Westridge Memorial Gardens. On behalf of the family, we would like to thank the staff and doctors at Boundary Trails Health Centre for the amazing palliative care they provided for our mom.

Donations may be made in Helen's memory to Katie Cares.

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