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Santa Claus has been making the rounds in the back of a pick-up truck spreading holiday cheer. For more on the man behind the beard, see Pg. 3.

PHOTO BY LORNE
STELMACH/VOICE



Merry Christmas to all

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



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Santa Claus a family tradition

By Lorne Stelmach

Putting on the Santa Claus suit is more than just holiday merriment for Dale Maksymic.

For the Morden resident, it is a tradition that has been carried on by generations of his family, and it's one he's proud to continue.

"I feel the need to do it because I guess I grew up with it," explained Maksymic, who has been parading around Morden, Winkler, and Schanzenfeld recently after his son Dylan had to cancel plans for a Santa Claus parade due to pandemic restrictions.

"I wanted to do something around here this year because of how things are ... everybody needs it this year."

Maksymic traces the tradition back to his mother, who was born in 1940 in Neepawa and at just four years of age was diagnosed with asthma. Her parents were told she wouldn't live to see her sixth birthday.

"So my grandfather decided to get a Santa suit and play Santa Claus at Christmastime ... she would have been five then ... because he wanted her to see Santa at least once before she passed away," said Maksymic.

"She ended up living, and he kept the Santa Claus suit and ended up playing Santa in the Santa Claus parade in Neepawa for over 35 years," he continued. "He retired, I believe it was around 1980, and my uncle took

over. He played Santa in the parade for probably another 25 years there.

"I just carried on with it," Maksymic said, "and it's actually just the last few years has been the busiest for me, so it's been working out really well."

Every time he puts on the suit Maksymic feels a connection to his family, including his mom, who lived to be 65.

This year, when plans for a Santa Claus parade through the streets of Morden got cancelled, Maksymic and his family decided they'd strike

out on their own, letting people see and wave from the safety of their own homes.

"I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING AROUND HERE THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF HOW THINGS ARE ... EVERYBODY NEEDS IT THIS YEAR."



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

A decorated truck with St. Nick himself in the back has been driving around local communities of late, bringing a smile to the faces of the young and old alike.

"It's worked out really well, and we've gotten a lot of good comments," he said. "And it's not just the kids who

are excited, it's often the adults too.

"We decided we were going to do it

Continued on page 5

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Spreading holiday cheer

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler and District Christmas Cheer Board elves were hard at work last week making the holidays a little brighter for families in need.

In lieu of the usual hampers laden with food and toiletries, this year the Cheer Board distributed 368 gift cards of various values for families to use to buy groceries for themselves. They also sent out over 500 presents for children and teens, unwrapped due to COVID-19 concerns.

The numbers were actually down a bit from both last year (388 hampers) and what organizers had been bracing for (closer to 400 applications).

What most certainly was not down was the community's support of the



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Winkler Christmas Cheer volunteers came together at the Meridian Exhibition Centre last week to prepare over 500 presents for kids to go out with the 368 grocery gift cards distributed to families in need.

campaign, which exceeded \$120,000—way over their goal of \$95,000.

"It is considerable more than we were expecting," president Kris Derksen said. "I don't think we can quite put into words how thankful we are for the support."

Over the next few months, the Cheer Board plans to distribute the excess funds to community groups who provide programs and services to local families.

"We're looking at how we can use that money to put back into the community," Derksen said.



CHANGE PROVED BENEFICIAL

The move to gift cards was necessitated by the pandemic, but Derksen said it went so well that the committee is considering whether it might be the way to go in the future.

"The few people that

our workers had contact with, they said they were so thrilled to be getting grocery cards because that just empowers them so much more," she said.

"We will definitely be considering this next year," Derksen continued. "We will look for a lot of feedback from the school liaisons and from Central Station to see what they hear back from families in the next few months, but this was certainly much, much easier."

Continued on page 5

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By Voice staff

Winkler children are sharing messages of hope with the community.

Classes from Winkler Elementary School and Pine Ridge Elementary School brightened up City Hall's front windows last week with over 100 paper hands featuring notes of encouragement on them.

"With all the mixed opinions these days through this difficult time, we thought it would be a wonderful idea to see the

world through a child's perspective," the City of Winkler said last week as it invited people to take a walk downtown and see the display for themselves. "The messages are notes of

encouragement to get us through this pandemic. They are bright, positive and heartwarming."

CITY OF WINKLER PHOTOS

Messages of hope

> WINKLER CHEER FROM PG. 4

Cheer Board volunteers normally spend days sorting supplies, wrapping gifts, and preparing the hampers (each of which is made up of

several boxes). A small army of volunteer drivers is then needed to get the hampers to families.

"We're usually handling thou-

> SANTA CLAUS, FROM PG. 3

a few more times before Christmas. It's been a little better reaction that I had expected."

It is heartening to see the community spirit being shown, and, even after many trips around the area, it is something that still feels special to Maksymic every night.

"My grandfather told me years ago that anybody can put a Santa Claus

suit on, but he said if you don't feel it and if you don't really come off as Santa Claus to people then it's not meant to be.

"Just putting the suit on isn't going to do much ... so I kind of feel what he was talking about because when I put the suit on. You really feel it, especially when it goes down so deep in the family."

sands of pounds of groceries and having to carry all the boxes out to the cars," Derksen said. "This was so different. Handing out the parcels to get delivered took just 45 minutes."

Nearly half of the families this year were able to come to the MEC to pick

up the gift cards and presents themselves, with the remaining being delivered by a small group of volunteers in a fraction of the time it usually takes.

"It took no time at all," Derksen said.



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

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The driver of this vehicle made it out with non-life threatening injuries after colliding with a train near Winkler last week.

RCMP PHOTO

Two drivers collide with westbound train

RCMP urge motorists to be cautious at railway crossings

By Voice staff

Emergency crews were called out to two vehicle versus train collisions in less than two hours on Dec. 8.

Just after 2 p.m. that day, a vehicle travelling north on Road 18W just south of Hwy. 14 east of Winkler collided with a westbound train.

The vehicle rolled several times. The driver, a 53-year-old male from Morden, was taken to hospital with non-life threatening injuries. He was released later that day.

Pembina Valley RCMP, who responded alongside the Winkler Fire Department, say the driver was not wearing his seatbelt at the time of the crash.

Two hours later, just after 4 p.m., another vehicle travelling north on Road 23W stopped at the stop sign and then proceeded across the tracks

before it was safe to do so. They were hit by the same westbound train as in the first incident.

The vehicle was pushed into the ditch. The driver, a 19-year-old female from Morden, was treated and released at the scene.

RCMP along with the Canadian Pacific Railway Police continue to investigate the incidents.

RCMP urge drivers to take care when traversing railway crossings.

"Many railroad tracks in Manitoba go through rural areas and cross roads at uncontrolled intersections," said Corporal Julie Courchaine. "Drivers must be cautious and aware of their surroundings. When a train is coming, vehicles should stop at least four and a half metres away from the rails and wait until the train is completely clear before proceeding. Please be vigilant and drive safe."

New website aims to help local vendors connect with customers during lockdown

By Lorne Stelmach

A number of factors came into play to lead a Winkler entrepreneur to get involved in starting up an online platform to help connect local vendors and customers.

The idea for Winkler Market Online came out

of a desire to keep holiday shopping dollars in the community, explains Francisco Zacharias.

"We would rather buy something local," he says, explaining he was looking for a specific kind of game for his kids and found a source for

Continued on page 7

At the close of another year, we remember our friends both far and near! We'd like to thank you for pulling for us! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

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The Winkler Morden
Voice

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Mayor sings Discovery Nature Sanctuary's praises

By Lorne Stelmach

Mayor Martin Harder often sings the praises of the Discovery Nature Sanctuary, but last week he especially noted its value as people seek to stay active in spite of pandemic restrictions.

"You realize the value that type of recreation has and especially at a time like this when facilities are closed. You need to be able to go somewhere to get some mental stability," Harder said following a recent council meeting.

"It is really a highlight. My wife and I go there for walks all the time. It's such a beautiful environment to go for a peaceful walk," he said, noting the space allows for people to be out safely while obeying the rules to keep their distance from others. "I bet there would have been 40 people there going for a walk [the past] Sunday."

A report to council last week noted

the progress made this fall on a number of aspects of the sanctuary, including the outdoor classroom.

Landscaping around the classroom has been completed, and its limestone trail has been connected to the existing trail. The grand opening for the classroom has been postponed until spring once signage is installed.

In addition, there is research underway to look into the potential for a viewing platform. The committee is investigating the cost of a multi-level platform.

Fundraising is also an ongoing effort, with the committee looking into the possibility of a grant for trees while also hoping for an additional \$5,000 to complete the pollinator garden in 2021.

Harder saluted the many partners and contributors who have been involved throughout as the sanctuary continues to develop.



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Discovery Nature Sanctuary offers a safe way to get out and be active while still following pandemic restrictions.

"That was totally a partnership between the businesses community, the city, and others, and it's allowing DNS to use their imagination to develop it."

> WINKLER ONLINE, FROM PG. 6

it locally only after a fair bit of digging. "I think people like to have an option to buy local and not have to buy it on Amazon.

"There's a lot of people who build stuff in Winkler, but there's no common place where everybody can find it and buy it easily."

Zacharias, who works in construction and also has a small storefront in his shop selling welding supplies, turned to some of his more technological-savvy staff to put the website together.

He sees it as helping fill a void for many people who might not necessarily have the resources or ability to do all this on their own.

"It's maybe not in their capacity to create a website and do marketing," said Zacharias.

The site is not fully functional yet, but the early response has been encouraging.

"We've had a lot of interest. There were 50 people or companies who had already signed up to sell stuff," said Zacharias. "If it all works out good ... we'll do a launch for the general public.

"We're not limited to Winkler," he added. "As we have the bugs worked out, we could go into different areas as well and create local markets in different communities."

If interested in becoming a vendor, you can go to winklermarket.com/my-account and register. If you require new categories for your shop or products, you can e-mail info@winklermarket.com.

Voice staff honoured at Better Newspapers awards

The *Winkler Morden Voice* earned a slew of awards at the 101st Better Newspapers Competition Awards for its work in 2019.

In lieu of an awards banquet this year, the Manitoba Community Newspapers Association posted the list of winners online last week. The MCNA represents 46 member newspapers across the province.

Voice graphic designer Tara Gionet won first place in the Best Advertisement category for an ad for Pharmasave, photographer Rick Hiebert's ice fishing photo won second in Best Feature Photo, Peter Cantelon came in third in the Best Columnist category, reporter Lorne Stelmach won third in Best Tourism Story for a piece on the Manitoba World War One Museum,

and editor Ashleigh Viveiros earned third for Best Education Story for her article on the Border Valley School Leadership Day.

The paper also clinched second place finishes in the 10,000+ circulation category for Best Front Page, Best Editorial Page, and Best In Class.

Our sister papers the *Stonewall Teulon Tribune*, *Selkirk Record*, and *Express Weekly News* also earned numerous accolades for writing, photography, design, and general excellence. We here at the *Voice* send out kudos to our colleagues for their success.

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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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getheard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

Thankful

I am thankful for many things in life. I try not to dwell on the negative. I try not to carry the burden of my mistakes (which are many) along the road with me.

This is not the same as forgetting. I do not want to forget the weight of things, merely set them down along the way like unnecessary heavy burdens and continue on with the memory of what they were and the hope that I might carry things differently moving forward.

My wife makes me happy. My children make me happy. These are good things in the grand scheme of things.

Generally, I am a simple person in a sea of complexity. I don't need a lot relationally. This can become a tendency of not giving a lot relationally if I am not careful and attentive.

I have always known I can be content simply knowing a person I love or care for exists in the world in a state of general contentment. In the past this has caused me to make assumptions about others. I assume if I am content in the knowledge that my friend or relative is simply existing that they too feel the same way about me. I don't need to reach out and they don't need to reach out and everyone is happy.



By Peter Cantelon

In this sense I am a distant person relationally and can appear cold. I internalize my relationships. I consume them and take them inside, sheltered from the wind and rain of the real world. Safe.

This is not really how things are supposed to work with relationships. It is how I work. It is important to understand these things and note the distinction.

Regardless of how you feel, in relationships, there are others. They feel and emot and exist in ways different from ourselves. Knowing this, we are asked to extend ourselves outside of our safe comfort zones that we might reach out to others (or pull back as the case may be) so that we can acknowledge and value how others seek to relate to us.

We must speak to those who need speaking to and hug those who need to be hugged—even when these are not our ways. This is not to suggest you abandon who you are and become the same as others. This is not healthy and also leads to relational breakdown. The point is for both people in a relationship to find that middle place between you and occupy it from time to time.

Sometimes, given enough effort, you

may learn to like the stretched place and even come to overlap. This is a wonderful thing in a relationship.

One of the things I value most in my marriage is that we have, through time and effort, found places we overlap. Over the years one of those areas is walking together. We walk together nearly every single day. This may seem simple but it can be remarkably hard to defend a relational habit like this with the ever present tyranny of the urgent constantly seeking to press in on that which we can take for granted—like simple relational presence.

This is the beautiful thing about our walks together. There is no agenda. We talk, sometimes. We are silent, sometimes. We hold hands, sometimes. You get the idea. Taking a walk together expresses a simple desire to be near to one-another. There is opportunity to vent and discuss. There is opportunity to simply be in each other's space. I have come to value our walks as an expression of mutual love.

A habit of intentionally seeking the other is important. When we reach out we actively acknowledge and communicate that the person in the relationship is valuable to us. In fact the act itself is part of the engine of relationship—it keeps it going.

Clarification

The *Voice* would like to clarify that the headline we ran on Pg. 6 last week with Peter Cantelon's column had nothing at all to do with COVID-19 mask use.

"Stop hiding and remove your masks" was referring only to Cantelon's thoughts about the metaphorical masks people so often

wear in life, including politicians who feel they need to hide their religious beliefs while in office.

It was most certainly not meant as a commentary on the pandemic nor the restrictions that are necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19, and we sincerely apologize if it was taken in that way.

letters

SPREADING CHRISTMAS JOY

Thank you to the very creative mobile music/Christmas display team!

In a world where we've learned the little things really do matter, this was a bright spot in the day.

Your efforts were noticed and appreciated by the Sun Vista 2 residents. Thank you!

**Ruth and Dave Thiessen,
Winkler**

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.

letters

> Got something you want to get off your chest? How about an act of kindness to share?

Send your letters to the editor or acts of kindness to news@winklermordenvoice.ca. Please include your name, address, and phone number for confirmation purposes.

MAYOR HIT THE MARK

As a resident of Winkler, I would like to thank our mayor for his letter of encouragement [Voice, Dec. 10, Pg. 6].

I sensed his attitude of humility and yet firmness. It's comforting to know not only our Mayor, Premier, and Prime Minister are wise enough to take their directives from the health experts. All we have to do is accept them and do our part.

I have family in the United States, Ontario, and Alberta and our Manitoba strategy is far superior.

I'm thankful. How come you're not?

Diane Verrier,
Winkler

SAVING LIVES AT WHAT COST?

I worry that our health policies to try to save "as many lives as possible" are being made without the balance of liberty and living life in a free country.

Our politicians and health ministers have told us what to do and how this is protecting lives. I would also like to hear how these "short-term" measures will not impact our personal freedoms in the future. Let this crisis not be a time to cede away our future freedom and life.

Obviously, COVID is real and there is cause for concern among certain age groups and those with preexisting conditions predominantly. I agree

health policy measures should be in place specifically for these people.

I argue that in no other areas of life do we enact policy based on saving "as many lives as possible." I encourage you to explore the following analogy:

In 2019 MPI reports that there were 11,646 victims of traffic collisions. Of these, 76 lost their lives and 368 sustained serious injuries.

If we wanted to save as many lives as possible in the area of driving we would enact the following, regardless of merits, age, or mental capacity:

- Mandatory driver education. For every driver. Every year.
- Reduced speed limits. Maybe 50km/h highway and 20km/h in town and city.
- Restrict amount of fuel purchased at one time to limit distance driven. Less driving, less risk.
- No driving after the age of 80

Would these save lives? Presumably, yes. Does it encroach on our freedoms and behavior to save lives? Yes. The above ideas would be aimed at saving "as many lives as possible."

I know there is a certain risk each time I get in my vehicle and travel. I accept the risk. I am not advocating for mandatory reeducation, reduced speed limits on highways, or any listed idea. If I assess the risk too great for my own travel, I stay at home.

Many people are aware of the lives lost by COVID but are underinformed about lives lost to any other cause. It

is difficult with the loud narrative of statistics about one singular cause of illness and death to put into perspective the lives lost by all other costs. As well as balancing policy and risk with the immeasurable cost of diminished freedoms and loss of contact for months many have had to endure.

Arm people with their specific risk based on age and preexisting conditions to make educated decisions on what risk they are willing to take.

Protect the most vulnerable among us.

Don't shut down in a way that there is nothing to open up to again.

If measures need to be taken, let the politicians make them. Let them be informed by health ministers. Ultimately let our elected officials own their decision and we will own our decision come election time based on the job and decisions they made.

COVID is a risk. Driving is a risk. Policy should always be balanced.

Dave Guenther,
Morden

LET THE HEALING BEGIN NOW

This year has been characterized by racial injustice, economic uncertainty, and political polarization.

Now COVID-19 has taken centre stage, which has brought about restrictions, mandates, and guidelines in dizzying fashion. While some of the measures make perfect sense, others

seem questionable and combative. As we consider our response, we need to be careful not to be enslaved by our own appetites and trapped by our selfish desires.

How do we manage to change a situation dominated by suffering, angst, destruction, and defiance to acts of love, kindness, self-sacrifice, and life giving?

For genuine change to occur we need to move past platitudes and rekindle compassion through community and conversation. Forgiveness and reconciliation are fundamental in the process of peace-building. Forgiveness is a process that has universal resonance and needs to begin with "me."

Even though we have been informed that the worst is yet to come, we need to let the healing begin now. Then, and only then, will we experience the true Spirit of Christmas.

Peter Hildebrand,
Morden

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

Send letters to us by e-mail to news@winklermordenvoice.ca.

• FAITH FOCUS

Looking for a point of reference

When I was a child we would travel as a family to visit our grandparents at their farm. It was always an adventure.

As we neared the farm we turned off a highway onto a gravel road with some hills and turns. It was an exciting moment because it meant that we were almost there. That corner became, for me, a guide to measure how close we were to our destination.

Most of us will have some



By Randy
Smart

geographical landmarks that give us a sense of direction for places we love to live in, visit or travel to. In various fields of study they refer to a "point of reference." It is a key point, visually or otherwise, which provides a foundation or anchor for their assumptions and directions in their work.

When we find ourselves driving through a whiteout the first question is not "Why is this storm here?" The question is "How will I get through this storm safely?" We bring all of the knowledge and skills we have to guide us in responding to the circumstances that have been given to us, and we work our way forward, one small distance at a time. We eagerly anticipate arriving at a safe place and finding rest.

Since we are living with a heightened awareness of the need for attention to our personal health and public safety we need to look for ways

Continued on page 11

A message from the Board of Directors at The Pembina Threshermens Museum.

We wish all who have supported us in any way a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. The Covid restrictions have hampered our regular fund raising events here at the museum. We did what we were allowed, however having said that, the Valley Harvest Maid were limited in the amount of people allowed in the building which cut into their ability to raise funds. We adapted as best we could with opening up window service for the last fish fry. Our reunion days were cut in 1/2 only having a one day threshing event. The attendance at the museum has been steady throughout the year but out of Province attendance was decreased due to Covid restrictions. We are extremely thankful for all who did come to visit

the museum when restrictions allowed. But in all honesty the museum would not have been able to function without the generous donations from the general public and the grants that we received.

With the monies received we were able to maintain and operate the museum, put up the digital sign, and add the heritage home from Winkler to our museum. We also received numerous donations to the museum that will enhance the viewing experience for our guests in the future. We are now totally run and operated by volunteers. So on behalf of the Pembina Threshermens Museums Board of Directors, I would like to thank all the volunteers and thank you to everyone who donated in any way to help us maintain and build the museum for generations to come. **Bill Fehr President**



Hoofing it for exercise? Follow the rules of the road: police chiefs

By Lorne Stelmach

With so many people taking to the great outdoors for some exercise these days, local police are offering a reminder to pedestrians and cyclists about key rules of the road.

Some of them become a challenge if icy or snow-covered sidewalks force people on to the road, but there is an onus on everybody to be mindful of

everyone's safety, say police.

"We know we stop people walking on the roads, and they say, 'Well, the sidewalks are so icy,'" said Morden Police Chief Brad Neduzak.

"Obviously, if there is a sidewalk available, that's the safest place to be," said Winkler Police Chief Ryan Hunt. "It's still always better to be on the sidewalk than on the roadway."

Both stressed there are a few key

things for pedestrians and cyclists to keep in mind.

"If they're needing to walk on the roadway, such as where there's no sidewalk, they should be walking facing the oncoming traffic," said Hunt.

"It is a safety hazard [walking with traffic] ... especially at night, because if there's another car, the drivers sometimes can't see you with the lights of the oncoming car," he explained. "And [a driver] might not see that pedestrian walking there, so you've got to be careful and prepared for anything when you're walking."

"And, of course, if you're walking at night, it's a good idea to wear some reflective clothing for sure," continued Hunt. "I notice that a lot more, which is good; it's encouraging to see. It jumps out at you pretty quick when your lights hit them. You can see somebody there right away."

"Any little bit that gets the attention of a driver can help," he said. "Too often drivers aren't watching for pedestrians enough."

Neduzak also stressed those considerations for pedestrians and went on to note how important it is to walk single file when the lack of a sidewalk

forces you on the road.

Cyclists, meanwhile, need to be moving with traffic and close to the curb.

"Bikes should not be on the sidewalk at all," Neduzak said, while noting the Highway Traffic Act has a provision for the smallest size of bikes to be on sidewalks in consideration for small children.

"Bikes have to follow the same rules of the road," he continued, citing the examples of obeying stop signs and using hand signals for turns.

"And wear something reflective so it can stand out. We see people with the reflective vests on, and those obviously are the best choice."

In the end, Neduzak encourages everyone to exercise caution and awareness when venturing out.

"Some people push that button [at a crosswalk] and just begin to walk before even looking to make sure that driver actually sees you and is actually going to stop, and the same goes for cyclists," he said. "We've had a lot of close calls."



A walk can be a great way to get some exercise, even in the winter months, but local police remind pedestrians to follow the rules of the road.

"YOU'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL AND PREPARED FOR ANYTHING WHEN YOU'RE WALKING."

Morden, Winkler United Ways put out one last call for donations

By Lorne Stelmach

A final push is on for donations in support of the United Way in both Morden and Winkler.

The clock is winding down on the campaign, with the United Way of Morden and District and the Winkler and District United Way's joint effort having thus far received over \$100,000 in donations.

"There's still time to give to the dozens of local non-profits and charities who do so much for our two communities," said Morden United Way president Alex Fedorchuk.

"We really are encouraged by the response. Our big corporate supporters have come through in the usual fashion, and our loyal individual donors have as well," he added, noting it's been a challenging year for many of the organizations United Way supports.

"Sometimes when we've expected the donations to be higher, they weren't ... but this year, we are very close to last year, so we're very,

pleased."

"A United Way donation is a great way to give a Christmas gift to our community," suggested Winkler president Kim Nelson. "Every donation, no matter how large or how small, makes a difference."

She also was happy with the level of support despite the difficult circumstances many businesses, organizations, and individuals are dealing with this year.

"We're very happy that, despite the difficult year, that we have been able to raise this much money and keep it all local."

"It's been a successful year," said Nelson, adding both United Ways were able to get an early start on grant

disbursement with the second round of the federal government's Emergency Community Support Fund.

Winkler United Way received \$19,000 to distribute to community groups serving those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including \$6,000 to the Winkler Family Resource Centre, \$4,500 for Central Station, \$3,500 to Seque Career Options and \$2,500 for both Gateway Resources and Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation.

Morden was able to distribute \$14,250, including \$5,475 to both the Morden Activity Centre and Morden Community Handi-Van and \$3,300 to the Pembina-Manitou Health Centre Foundation.

"Being able to give out the extra funds throughout the year to help during the pandemic was great," said Nelson. "It was a great opportunity, and we were able to do two rounds of funding to help out local organizations."

The Winkler and Morden United Ways will start 2021 as one entity called United Way Pembina Valley. A merged board of directors will get together early in the new year to distribute the 2020-2021 campaign funds.

Donations can be made in person at any Access Credit Union branch, while online donations can be made at unitedwaywinkler.com and cheques can be mailed to the United Way, PO Box 758, Morden, MB, R6M 1A7.

The **Winkler Morden**
Voice

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Gateway Resources working to keep participants connected

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Gateway Resources has been doing what it can to stay in touch with its participants during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Gateway provides programming and services for adults living with an intellectual disability in the Morden-Winkler area. Not being able to come to the Winkler centre for regular programming in recent months has been tough for many participants, says executive director Kim Nelson.

"As in spring, it's been challenging," she said, explaining the day programs have been shut down for most participants. "We have been providing some day service supports to individuals who meet the government's critical needs criteria."

Still, that means they're only working with about 30 clients on a daily basis—down from 120 pre-pandemic.

And so staff have worked hard to reach out to those participants not able to come in to ensure they know they haven't been forgotten.

"We want to maintain the connection with the individuals we support," Nelson stressed.

To aid in that connection, thanks to funding from the Winkler Community Foundation, Gateway was able to

purchase iPads and webcams for participants to use.

"So we've been able to reach out to individuals that way," Nelson said, adding they've also been hosting a variety of online programming like music and craft sessions as well as social media groups to keep the lines of communication open.

Staff have also been kept busy finding ways to keep Gateway's residential clients active at home.

"People are getting bored, as most of us are," Nelson said. "But we have very creative teams who keep them engaged."

Meanwhile, Gateway's recycling and woodshop programs have been operational throughout the pandemic, though with increased cleaning and distancing measures in place. The Clay Owl Studio & Boutique has also been open for curbside pick-up.

"We just have a lot less people working at any given time," Nelson said, "which does make it challenging to meet the needs of the communities we serve."

Last month, the provincial government announced it was launching new training and recruitment tools to help ease staffing strain at facilities working with vulnerable Manitobans.

The tools include an online employ-



GATEWAY RESOURCES PHOTO

Gateway Resources sent a few staff elves out last week to deliver gifts and smiles to clients who have been stuck at home during the pandemic. Gateway's day programs have been cut back from 120 clients to just 30 participants with critical needs.

ment platform to match workers with available jobs and an online training course to prepare them to work with people with disabilities.

It's still early days, but Nelson is optimistic these measures could be useful for Gateway, which has most certainly felt the staffing pinch of late.

"Everyone is experiencing staffing shortages right now, and with [COVID-19 exposure] isolation timeframes we are short staffed, so we will definitely give this a try and we hope it will help."

Gateway currently employs 220 staff in a variety of full-time, part-time and casual support positions. Nelson said they've been shuffling people around to fill the holes left whenever a staff member has to self-isolate for a few weeks after a potential COVID-19 exposure.

"We have amazing, dedicated staff and they really have stepped up for us," she said.

Details on the government's recruitment campaign can be found online at disabilityrecruitmentmb.ca.

Don't let parcel thieves ruin your Christmas

By Voice staff

You might not think our landlocked Prairies would have pirates, but they're out there and they're on the hunt for your holiday packages.

Manitoba RCMP say parcel theft is a growing concern, especially this year when so many people are shopping online due to the pandemic.

Parcels left unattended on your doorstep make easy targets for would-be thieves, but police have issued a few tips to foil the Grinches.

To help keep your packages safe this holiday season, the RCMP recommend:

- Installing security cameras or a smart doorbell on your property to monitor and record any suspicious activity.
- Choosing an alternate delivery location for your package such as a nearby post office or your place of employment.
- Considering the use of a delivery

locker on your property.

- Requesting a signature upon delivery.

"A good way to defend against this type of crime is working together with

your neighbours," police say. "Know who they are and talk to them to make arrangements to pick up your packages if you won't be home for an extended period."

If you've been the victim of or have witnessed a porch theft, contact local police.

> POINT OF REFERENCE, FROM PG. 9

to help each other be safe. That sense of safety includes our spiritual, mental, physical and emotional health. We do need to be careful that we do not neglect our self-care because of the limitations of our time.

Inspirational and encouraging reading can take our minds beyond the latest newscast. Reading a biography of a person from a past generation can help us capture a greater sense of how to have presence of mind for our time. Taking walks regularly can help us keep active and provides fresh air and stimulation for our mind and body. We also need

to make sure that we find adequate time for rest.

For those who have a confidence in God and in the Bible, the scriptures provide a reference point for every season in our lives.

In a pandemic time Martin Luther offered counsel we should consider:

"Therefore, I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others,

and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. ... See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."

Let's continue to consider the point of reference that can help us understand and respond without fear, and with hope. Jesus taught that looking after our neighbours is just as important as looking after ourselves.

Randy Smart has been a pastor in Southern Manitoba since 1979. He is currently senior pastor at Bethel Bergthaler Mennonite Church south of Winkler.

getinformed

NEWS > VIEWS > WINKLER > MORDEN > SURROUNDING AREAS

Locals making their own ice this winter

Pandemic leads to a boom in backyard ice rinks

By Lorne Stelmach

Making the best of things in the winter months comes naturally to Manitobans, but that ethos is driving a dramatically increased demand for something that seems quintessentially Canadian.

Backyard rinks are appearing all over the place as people seek winter activity while so much is shut down because of the pandemic.

"The rinks per capita in Morden must be way up this year," wondered Jeremy Winslow, who has dubbed their Eagle Drive yard rink the "Eagle's Nest."

Driving the demand is simply the reality of having to find something to do while so much else is not possible, noted Michael Macaraeg, who has built a rink at his Morden home for the first time.

"We started in mid-November," he explained. "I had a lot of help from co-workers who have built outdoor rinks for years. They've given me some tips and tricks."

"Macaraeg Gardens" comes complete with lines and logos, though the spell of nicer weather recently made its upkeep challenging.

"It's been ironic that I was dreading the warmer weather," Macaraeg said. "We've been lucky to have the milder weather ... but in terms of the conditions for rink, it had been a bit of a hindrance."

"We're destined for colder weather, though, obviously," he said, adding that the effort of battling Mother Nature was worth it "just to see the smiling faces on day one out on the rink."

"It's nice to have it available close by. You can throw the skates on and go for a quick skate after supper, and it gets the kids active."

Likewise, Winslow noted right now seemed to be the ideal time for his family to build a rink while his kids, eight and 10, will be keen on making use of it.

"We look at it as something we'll probably do for the next four or five years at least, while they're interested," said Winslow, who ordered his rink kit online.

"It's a great way to get some activity. The accessibility is really nice, having it right in the yard is a fantastic thing," he said, adding it also fills a void from not being able to participate in minor



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dave and Jett DiFrancesco put their homemade "Zamboni" to work



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Dave DiFrancesco and son Jett on their homemade rink in Schanzenfeld. The family are making and selling handheld ice resurfacers, with proceeds to support the Winkler Food Cupboard.

hockey this year.

"Once it's done, it's not too bad to maintain ... the upkeep isn't bad," said Winslow, who noted it is just unfortunate that they can't be sharing it with others right now.

"Even the kids now reflect on it and think it would be nice to have some kids over and play on it ... they're missing that part of it," he said. "My wife and I get out there and we have a little two-on-two game ... it's nice that it gets everybody some exercise."

Heather DiFrancesco's family have been hitting the ice at their Schanzenfeld home as much as possible.

"It's just such a fun way to have some activity outside," she said. "We have a big yard, which is really helpful, and we have one son who loves to play hockey, so it was kind of a way for him to keep up his skills and skate whenever he wanted."

"It's something we can do as a family. We have three boys, so they all can get out there and skate."

DiFrancesco's husband, Dave, used salvaged materials to make the rink, including sileage tarp for the base and material from a trampoline for netting to keep pucks on the ice.

The family even has their own homemade hand-held ice resurfacer

to keep the ice skateable. Their teenage kids have been building them for others and donating proceeds to the Winkler Food Cupboard in honor of a family friend who is fighting a battle in hospital.

LOCAL BUSINESSES MEETING THE DEMAND

As more people than ever set out to make backyard rinks, local stores are doing what they can to keep the needed materials in stock.

"I think it's fantastic; good for folks for doing it," said David Dunseath, who has been trying to keep up with the demand for ice rink kits at the Canadian Tire store in Winkler.

Dunseath had anticipated there would be additional demand for a range of winter outdoor equipment, so in June he boosted his usual order for things like the ice

rink kits.

"I usually don't sell very many ... I ordered five times as many as I have usually ordered in the past. I sold out within two weeks," he said.

"I did go heavy [with the order]. It's a guessing game; you never know," he

"IT'S JUST SUCH A FUN WAY TO HAVE SOME ACTIVITY OUTSIDE."

Continued on page 13



> RINKS, FROM PG. 12

said. "If these all sell, I'll probably sell 10 times as many backyard rinks this year as I did last year."

He even sees the interest at home, where his own three daughters have decided they want a rink this winter..

"They're 22, 20 and 17, and they're putting in a backyard rink ... they've never done it, but it's something cool, and they're home."

Canadian Lumber also predicted the jump in interest and set out to create their own custom rink kit, which has proven a hot-ticket item.

"So far it's been very popular ... we've never sold this kind of thing before, so it's a new experience," said marketing rep. Cam Dueck. "It's basically everything you need other than

the water, and you're good to go.

"It's unbelievable. It's really cool that the community is that excited about it," he said, adding that the best part of it is seeing people trying to adapt to pandemic restrictions. in a creative way "If the community rinks are closed, why not build your own?"

Fehrway Feeds has also seen demand for silage tarps go through the roof. They've sold 126 for ice rink projects in the last three weeks alone.

"We have four different widths, and we can cut it to any length ... they're all various sizes," said the company's Dave Buhler. "Normally I would say we do 10 to 20 of them a year. We've already sold out probably three times in the last month."

Left: Michael Macaraeg and wife Eryn with their kids Annika, James, and Zoe on their rink, which is getting plenty of use. Right: Jeremy Winslow with his kids, Brady and Willow, on the "Eagles Nest" rink he built for them in their Eagle Drive backyard in Morden.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



Christmas Greetings



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What's *Your* Christmas Story?

We were overwhelmed with story submissions this year! It was no easy task to pick just two winners from the many creative entries, but here they are with a bunch more of our favourites:

Snowman for a night

It must have been around 11:45 p.m. when I woke up ... on the front lawn.

"That's weird," I thought. "What's going on?"

So I decided to find out in the morning. I probably wouldn't have noticed that I was a snowman until further—a LOT further—into the night if I hadn't tried to go inside my house.

When I put my TWIG hand onto the doorknob, I didn't see my arm. Instead, I saw a tree branch the same length as my arm.



My branch flew back in shock as I stared at myself. I was a snowman!

The first thing I tried to do to make myself back to a person was shake off all the snow. The only thing that did was make me a little smaller!

As I was rolling in the snow to make myself my normal size, I thought of how much fun I could have as a snowman. I rolled and rolled and rolled until I stopped. I was as tall as the Golden Boy!

Just then I remembered that it was the middle of spring and if I was still a snowman during the day I would melt. So, not wanting to figure out what that was like, I decided to come up with a Plan B to turn back to a person.

It sounded crazy, but I would look for another living snowman for help.

About half an hour later I found one somewhere in Russia that I am not going to try to pronounce

GRAND PRIZE, K-4: JAXTON NEUFELD,
GR. 4, BORDER VALLEY SCHOOL

and the way I understood it (through his thick Russian accent) was that before 3 a.m. I had to touch our Christmas tree.

I hurried across the Pacific Ocean back to Canada and made it onto our yard at around 2:55 a.m. and tried to think of a way to get inside our house without damaging it.

Two minutes later I decided to try to open the door. I saw my arm bend, but I managed to get the door open, which was good.

I found a way up the steps and checked the time. I had 15 seconds!

I touched the Christmas tree just in time and saw the coolest thing: I was never a snowman! I was just covered with snow!

I cleaned up the mess of snow I made in the hall and went to bed, preparing for having to tell my family the whole story of the time I was a snowman for a night (I never did).

Wishing you a

*Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year!*

From: Jake, Theo, Shane, Dominick and Steve

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Free GRAND PRIZE, GR. 5-8: ALIA KREISER, GR. 7, THORNHILL

Asher struggled to keep his eyes open as he sat watching his father's sheep.

Suddenly, a bright light split the night sky. Asher blinked ... there were angels, so many of them that he couldn't count. Just moments before Asher had been struggling to see in the black of night, and now, all of a sudden, it was bright as day.

His heart started to beat faster. He would have ran, but one of the angels started to speak.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you great news of joy, not fear. Today in Bethlehem a Saviour has been born. He is Christ the Lord. If you do not believe me, you can go find Him. He is a baby, laying in a manger, and wrapped in

strips of cloth."

Then they began to sing! Asher froze, stunned by their music. The beautiful song they sang was like nothing he had ever heard before. But when he compared the melody to the words, everything paled in comparison.

Suddenly, they were gone, and Asher knew what he had to do. No, what he wanted to do! He felt himself get up, and began running as fast as he could towards Bethlehem.

When he was halfway there he stopped to catch his breath, which by now was coming in ragged spurts. His side cramped and his legs felt weak and wobbly. Asher saw the water at his side that he always carried with him. Lifting the sheepskin bag to his mouth, he drank deeply. When he finished, Asher continued, being careful not to trip on the worn dirt road or stumble in the dark as he ran.

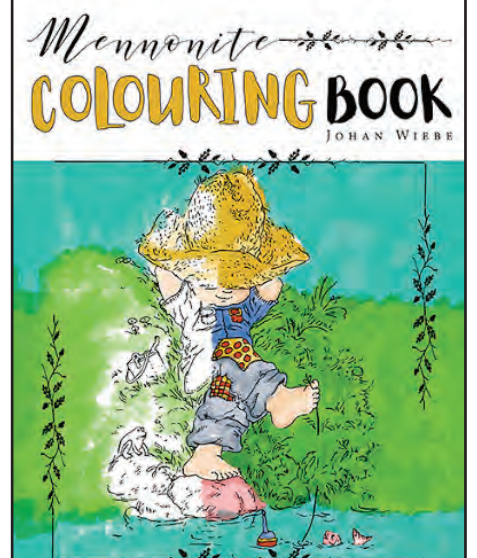
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What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

TELL THE NEWS

Asher struggled to keep his eyes open as he sat watching his father's sheep. Suddenly a bright light split the night sky. The light blinded him

for a few seconds before his eyes adjusted. He squinted up into the blinding light and saw the outline of the angel above him. For a moment, he thought he was in heaven, but the loud baahs of the sheep brought him

back to reality. Asher jumped up and started to run after his father's sheep, but a deep voice stopped him.

"Do not be afraid."

The sheep suddenly stopped, and all stood dumbstruck in their frozen

position, looking up to the light. The angel was now in clear view.

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

Asher was now silent, looking up into the sky with his jaw dropped.

"This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

What Asher saw next was the company of the heavenly host. They all joined the angel and spoke:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

The angels vanished. Asher closed his mouth and the sheep continued to graze and acted as if nothing had ever happened. Asher heard hurried footsteps; he saw his father's shepherds run up the hill to meet him.

"Come Asher," one of them said.

"We're gonna go to Bethlehem to see this thing that the angel spoke about!"

The shepherds started running down the hill towards Bethlehem.

"But what about the sheep?" he asked as he ran after him.

> FREE, FROM PG. 15

He was just getting back into rhythm—breathing in, taking running steps, breathing out—when suddenly he stopped.

One thought overtook his mind. He wasn't ready to see the Saviour. The Saviour wouldn't want him. How many times had Asher snuck away from his duty to go for a swim in the cool river on a hot day? Or gotten mad at his brother when Simon hadn't done what he wanted? Or what about that time when he had yelled at his father? Surely he was not clean enough to meet the Saviour.

Dejectedly, Asher turned around and started back to the long night of watching the flock. Before he knew what was happening, a few tears escaped his eyes and started running down his tanned cheeks. Embarrassed, though no one could see him, Asher swiped them off.

Why did he need a Saviour anyways? Didn't everyone else do without one all these years? Sure, they had to offer sacrifices, but everyone sinned and they seemed fine. He didn't need a Saviour.

At that thought Asher began to cry again. Deep in his

heart he knew that he did! The Saviour would be the only one able to remove that ever-present guilt that weighed on him. And maybe, just maybe, He would accept Asher.

Once the tears had stopped, Asher once again wiped his face. Straightening up and squaring his shoulders, he began to run. Even faster this time, driven with the urge to be made free.

When finally he made it to Bethlehem, Asher headed towards a stable. Panting, he opened the door. Inside a warm light glowed. There were animals and Asher wondered if he had come to the wrong place. But at the end of the stable he saw two figures.

Moving closer, Asher saw that there was a man and a woman, both looking at the little bundle in the manger. Asher moved even closer to get a better look. What he saw took his breath away. He had seen babies before, but this one ... this one was different.

Asher felt a sense of peace that he had never felt before. He knew that now, because of Him, he was finally free.

Continued on page 17



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And pray that every one of you
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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 16

"The Lord will watch over them," the slowest one yelled back.

As they were running in the streets of Bethlehem, Asher noticed a bright star outshining all the others, right above Bethlehem. The city streets were empty, but the inns were full. Many people had come for the census and needed room. Asher wondered if everyone had a place to stay.

"Surly not," he thought. "Pity those who didn't."

They soon reached their destination. Asher breathed heavily. The star hovered above the stable.

"A stable?" Asher thought. Why would God even LET his son to be born in a stable with the animals?

The shepherds moved aside to make room for Asher. The sight took Asher's breath away. He just looked like an ordinary baby, but something about just LOOKING at the baby made Asher feel warm inside. He felt something that no one could EVER describe. It was just as the angel said: Wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. The Messiah, our Lord. Sent from God to this evil world to save sinners just like me. Asher got down on his knees and bowed before the prince of peace.

When Asher got up, he noticed a man and a woman he hadn't noticed before. Mary and Joseph, Asher later learned. He noticed the animals in the stalls. The baby laid on hay in an animal's trough. Asher turned to see someone else behind him. A boy, about as old as Asher, 17 years of age. In his hands he held a drum.

"Come," Mary said to the boy.

He walked up to the manger and dropped to his knees.

"I am a poor boy," he said, "I have no gift fit for a king."

He was silent for a little bit.

"Shall I play my drum?" he asked. Mary nodded.

Asher and the shepherds left the stable with much excitement. The excitement couldn't wait till morning, so they ran all around Bethlehem to tell everyone. Mary pondered this in her heart.

10 years later

Asher was retelling the Christmas story to his cute little grandson Luke.

"I turned around and I saw ..."

"The boy with the drum, right?" Luke asked.

"Right," Asher chuckled. He loved telling this story to his little grandson. He knew God would have big plans for little Luke. This story was so special, everyone should get a chance to hear the amazing story of Jesus Christ, forever and ever.

—Destiny Funk,
Gr. 7, Schoenwiese



Christmas Greetings!

In a time of uncertainty, the message of Christmas becomes more relevant with every passing day!

Christmas, over 2000 years ago was a time of uncertainty and Government control with everyone being required to go to their ancestral birthplace to register. It didn't matter if it was convenient, it was simply required! Yet in the lowly stable in Bethlehem the Christ-child, and Saviour of the world was born! Yes, Jesus changed the future forever, God had this all planned, He used imperfect people and an imperfect Government to accomplish His purpose.

So with this in mind, may your revised, or interrupted Christmas experience bring joy in the knowledge that you are not alone, your friends and family are still with you, and may you experience Christmas in a new way, caring for others in a special way!

Merry Christmas!

Mayor and Council - City of Winkler

yes winkler!

What's *Your* Christmas Story?

THE SNOWGIRL

One crisp cold morning, I got out of bed and discovered that I was a snowman ... or should I say, snowgirl?

I said, "Mom! Look at me!"

Mom replied, "Yeah, but look at me! I am one too! You should go wash your sticks for breakfast!"

"Okay, okay, I will," I agreed.

Going to the sink, I saw ice cubes coming

out of the tap instead of water.

"What? Ice!? Wash my sticks with ice?!" I exclaimed.

"I have always wanted to do this," I said to myself. "I guess being a snowman, or I mean, snowgirl, isn't bad after all. I kind of like it so far."

After I washed my hands—um, I mean sticks—I asked my mom what was for breakfast.

"Frozen pancakes, you silly," she answered.

"But, Mom," I complained.

"But, but, no buts," she said. "Now let's eat!"

My mom offered me some hot chocolate to go with my frozen pancakes. I drank it and began to shrink. I was melting because of the hot drink!

"Oh no! We are all going to melt if we drink this hot chocolate," I exclaimed.

"No, my mom replied. "We are not going to melt because we live in an igloo in Antarctica. We will be safe. If you melt a little, you'll just refreeze!"

"If you say so, Mom," I replied.

"Now wash up so you can play outside with your friends," my

mom said.

"Okay fine, I will," I responded. "Since it is almost Christmas, can we decorate the tree when I come back?"

"For sure," my mom agreed. "That would be so much fun! I will get the decorations for it. This year, we will use ... ice cubes!"

"Okay, great! Call me when you are ready for me," I asked.

"I sure will," my mom answered. I went outside to play and saw a snowgirl I didn't know.

"Hi," I said. "My name is Lily!"

"My name is Christine," the girl answered. "Do you want to play?"

"Yeah sure," I agreed.

Ten minutes later, I heard my mom calling from our igloo.

"Lily! We are decorating the tree now!"

"I have to go," I said to my new friend. "Bye!"

"First, before we decorate the tree," my mother began, "let's sing a Christmas song."

"Okay, let's do it," I said.

We decided to sing the song "Jingle Bells." After we were done singing it was time to decorate the tree

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

with ice cubes and lights. When we were almost done I said, "Let's light it up now!"

"Okay," Mom started a countdown, "Three, two, one....."

BANG! Ahhhhhhhhh!

"Lily, wake up," I heard my mom say.

"Am I a snowgirl?" I asked.

"No, why?" my mom asked back.

I guess my snowgirl adventure was all a dream!

—Lily Haacke,
Gr. 3, Winkler

THE BEST CHRISTMAS BREAK

It was the most awesome Christmas break EVER! Here is what happened:

I got a trampoline, an iPad, and much more! My most favorite gift was my new cat! I love cats!

I also went to my Grandma's house for supper. I gave my family their presents. My Grandma made my cousin Brenna two blankets: one for her mom's dog Rory and one for her dog Eevee. Eevee's blanket colour is pink and Rory's is purple.

I could not wait for Christmas; I was so excited to go to bed on Christmas Eve. The next morning, I jumped out of bed and woke up my mom and dad. They woke up and we all went to the living room.

We waited to open our presents 'till after breakfast. My mom made us hot chocolate and mini mouse pancakes with rainbow sprinkles! While we ate, we watched *Home Alone*.

After we were done eating, we opened presents. This was the best Christmas ever!

Have a great Christmas everyone!

—Breelyn Laverty,
Gr. 3, Morden



Happy Holidays

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and happy holiday season.



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MITTENS THE SNOWMAN

I'm Mittens the snowman. It is freezing cold here outside. I live in a big igloo in the backyard. I'm only alive in long winters so I sing and dance and play.

I love to take nice, long walks in the cool breeze. I like to go sledding on big hills. I also watch out for if I get hit or if I bump into something so I don't fall apart.

I throw snowballs at kids when they

Continued on page 19

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 18

walk by my front yard and then we have a fun snowball fight!

I drink hot cocoa out here with my friends. My friends' names are Slushie, Slippy, and Skatelyn.

Sometimes I go to watch you while you're inside. I wish I could come inside with you in the warmth but I have a hat and a scarf to keep me warm.

When I get hungry, I eat my carrot nose!

—Alyssa Zacharias,
Gr. 2, Winkler

SNOWMAN CATASTROPHE

Suddenly, I open my eyes and realize ... I'm a snowman!

I look down at myself and see a scarf, a toque, a carrot nose and mittens. Then I take a look around me at a square type house, a dog, a Chevy car, and a sign beneath me. It says, "Ashley." Guess I'm a girl.

I notice that it's dark, so I gain all my strength and take a step. It worked. YES! I take another step, and another, and 20 more. Soon enough, I reach the driveway.

I look around and see several other snowman gaining a lot of strength and walking, like me. Someone says "Hey!" I wave and start walking along the road. It's a chilly night, but I don't mind. After all, I am a snowman. I'm pure snow.

Anyway, as I walk down the road, one snowman walked over to me and started talking with me. I talked and talked. Soon enough, the light starts to rise over the horizon. I hurry home and ... oh no! The dog began to bark and ran towards me! I hear a clanking

noise. Whew. The dog is on a chain.

I get into position and I instantly hear two kids' voices.

"Mom, can we play outside after breakfast?"

"Yes, but eat your oatmeal first."

The boys ate breakfast and went outside.

"Ashley's still here! Maybe we can introduce us to her," one of the kids said.

"I'm Erick and this girl is Joy. I'm glad you didn't melt," Erick said.

"Well, Erick, it's not like a snowman can walk," Joy said quietly. "Plus, we should make a family for Ashley. Or maybe friends."

I knew deep down inside that Joy was wrong. Snowman CAN walk.

Sooner or later, there was five snowman surrounding me.

"DINNER TIME!!" said the mom.

Continued on page 20



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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 19

I stood very still, making sure they were inside before I moved a tiny teeny baby snowman muscle.

Soon enough, I couldn't see the sun. The kids came outside to say good-night to Rubin, the dog.

I waited until Joy closed the door be-

fore moving. When I heard the slam of the door, I moved. Really quickly. But two snow arms stopped me.

"Wait for us," five voices said.

I stopped and looked at the five snowman. I waited until they caught up. We ran together and I felt like I was free. I smiled so very brightly.

They all told me their names: Austin, Tyler, Shea, Coco and Santa.

Rubin starts barking immediately, but this time I don't care.

Suddenly I see a man on the roof of the square type house. He's climbing into the chimney, but he stops. He has a sack of ... toys, it looks like. We all look at each other, me and the five snowman, and we run. Fast. We start telling every snowman we see about the strange man we saw. One snowman said he has saw that man many times.

The light began to rise once again and I hurried home once again. And when I looked at the thermometer it said ... +10!!! I totally forgot that it was the beginning of SUMMER!!!

I quickly got into position as Erick and Joy burst out the door.

"Good thing we made special clouds for the snowman," Joy half shouted. Erick and Joy placed weird clouds on top of each snowman.

"Well, I guess we should take the prop down," said Erick, looking at the roof."

"Yeah," said Joy quietly.

WOW!!! It was just a prop!

And then I basically lived forever. And had a wonderful, merry, fun life!!

changed our clothes, my mommy made us hot chocolate. We drank it so fast! As we drank, we forgot it was hot! We burned our tongues.

It was the best Christmas week in the whole world.

— Brandi, Gr. 3, Border Valley School

THE SNOWMAN SWITCH

"What do you mean, you won't be here for Christmas?"

"I'm sorry, Jack," my older sister, Melissa, told me through the phone. "But the weather's really bad. You don't want me to get hurt, do you?"

"No," I replied softly. I just want you home, I thought.

On Christmas Eve, I had trouble sleeping. The reality of the words that Melissa had spoken hit me. My sister wouldn't be here for Christmas. She would be missing from all our traditions. Gone, like somebody had edited her out of the scene.


I gave up on sleep and shuffled to my window. Below, I could see the snowman that Melissa and I had made a few weeks before. He dutifully stood there, staring at the street as though waiting for the return of a long-lost friend. Well, she's not coming back, I thought.

I returned to bed, hoping for sleep to pull me out of my misery. The last thing I remember before drifting off is thinking, If Melissa won't be home for Christmas, I may as well celebrate it as a snowman.

I woke up the next morning as cold as if someone had left me in a freezer overnight. I tried to move my arm, but

Continued on page 21

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THE BEST CHRISTMAS EVER

On Christmas break, my daddy made a big snow hill. My daddy and my sisters and me slid down the big snow hill so many times. It was a fast hill. We fell off the sleds. And me and my sister made snowmen and snow angels and it was so fun!

After, we were so wet. After we

—Mylee Guenter, Gr. 4, Chortitz

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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 20

it wouldn't budge. Around me, all I could see was pure white. The golden morning sun shone above me, hitting the ... snow beneath me. But what was I doing outside? I looked down, and a horrible realization dawned on me. My thoughts from last night were now a reality. I was a snowman.

I felt a chill race along my spine, and not just because I was made of snow. I was stuck like this. And when spring came...

Suddenly I saw a huge dog run out of the house across the street. And he was coming straight for me. He jumped on me and tried to grab my nose in his strong teeth.

"No!" I yelled. "I...am...not...edible!"

And then I remembered what my nose was made of. The dog must have seen the carrot and raced across the street to get a taste. The dog was just about to get what he wanted when I heard a car door slam.

"Hey!" a familiar voice shouted. A woman with curly hair ran over to us and pulled him off me.

"Melissa!" I shouted.

She did a double take, then looked closely at me. "Jack?" she whispered.

"Yes!" I cried.

"But ... how? What happened?"

I told her everything. "Now I'm stuck like this and ..."

A shiny piece of paper nestled in the snow had just caught my attention. Melissa saw it too and grabbed it, then unfolded it.

"It's a letter," she said, holding it up for me to see.

It read, "I'm so sorry that this has happened. Christmas magic is supposed to be used for good, but sometimes there's nothing I can do. I regret to inform you that the only way out of

this is to find someone willing to take your place. Sincerely, Santa Claus." At the bottom were his initials written in fancy script, a red S and a green C.

"I'll do it," Melissa said immediately after reading it.

"Oh, Melissa, you can't," I tried to say, but my words were drowned out by Melissa announcing, "I'll take Jack's place!"

A sparkling mist surrounded us, and next thing I knew I was alone with Melissa the snowman. I looked down and, sure enough, I was me again.

"No," I whispered. But I knew it was too late for me to do anything.

Melissa's gone. The words resonated in my head, getting louder and louder until I wanted to scream. I felt selfish. Selfish for complaining about being a snowman. Selfish for letting her take my place. Selfish for being upset at Melissa, the person I love most in all the world. I just wanted her back ...

Tears streaming down my face, I walked inside. And sitting on the

Continued on page 22

Celebrating the Reason for the Season

As we revel in the joy and festivities of the Christmas season, we are moved to remember the greatest gift of all: the birth of our Savior. His eternal love for us brings peace and contentment to our hearts at this holy time and all year.

Merry Christmas & Blessings to You and Yours!

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MAY THE PEACE, JOY, AND HOPE THAT SURROUNDS THE SEASON BE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

We wish you a wonderful Christmas and a Blessed New Year. Thank you for your continued support and look forward to serving you in 2021.

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Dec. 24 - 8:30am-noon	Dec. 24 - 9am-11am
Dec. 25 - CLOSED • Dec. 26 - CLOSED	Dec. 25 - CLOSED • Dec. 26 - CLOSED
Dec. 27 - CLOSED	Dec. 27 - CLOSED
Dec. 28 - CLOSED (in lieu of Boxing Day)	Dec. 28 - CLOSED (in lieu of Boxing Day)
Dec. 29 - 8:30am-6pm	Dec. 29 - 10:30am-6:30pm
Dec. 30 - 8:30am-6pm	Dec. 30 - 10:30am-6:30pm
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JAN. 1 - CLOSED	

Merry Christmas From all of Us!

What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 21

couch ... was Melissa. I rushed over to my sister and threw my arms around her. That's when I noticed a golden chain around her neck. And dangling from the end of it were two elegantly



Drawing by Levi Nissley

shaped letters: SC.

—Rachel Hesom, Gr. 6, Winkler

THE NEW SKATEBOARD

Once in the morning I woke up and saw a special gift. I opened the gift and saw a skateboard.
I went to the Christmas tree and rolled around it. The ornaments fell, but I didn't notice it.
I went to the living room and cracked the lamp, but I didn't notice it.
I went to my brother's room and got the bed dirty. I didn't notice it.
I went to my sister's room and broke her toy. I didn't notice it.
I took a break outside for five minutes.
I went into the house and saw a broken toy, dirty bed, a cracked lamp, and broken ornaments!
I had to clean it all up! The end!

— Levi Nissley, Gr. 3, Winkler

THE DANCING LIGHTS

Asher struggled to keep his eyes open as he sat watching his father's sheep. Suddenly, a bright light split the night sky. It was the Northern Lights!
This woke Asher up. He loved seeing the Dancing Lights, as he called them. The colours and lines mesmerized him every night. It was why he volunteered to watch the sheep at night.
Tonight the lights were especially bright, he noticed. All of a sudden, the lights came down around him. Before he could say a word he was transported to Santa's Village.
Elves walked all around him, chattering in some unknown language that he couldn't understand. They were all walking in the same direction, so Asher followed them. The elves were headed to a red and white palace.
When Asher got there, he saw a huge door with a yeti standing guard. The yeti grumbled something to the elves, then came his way. The yeti picked Asher up and carried him through the door. Asher struggled trying to

get away, but the yeti just grunted and kept going.
The yeti carried Asher all the way to Santa's office, dropped him in a chair, and went back to his post.
Right in front of Asher was the one and only Santa Claus.
When Santa looked up his eyes widened.
"What are you doing here?" he asked.
"I don't know," Asher replied, "I was watching the Northern Lights and they came down around me. The next thing I know I'm here."
"The Northern Lights?" Santa replied. "That never happened before. Well, let's get you home then."
"NO!" Asher yelled. "I want to see more of the village."
"Well then, I guess I could show you the reindeer stables and a few workshops, too."
"I would love that!"
At the reindeer stables, Santa showed Asher how to ride the reindeer. It did

Continued on page 23

Merry Christmas

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Martin Luther

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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 22

not go well, but Asher laughed the whole time.

Next Santa brought Asher to the elves' best toy workshop. Asher made a wonderful ornament with the elves' help and destroyed a few toys in the process.

Santa introduced Asher to Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer. They had a fun little snowball fight with them.

After that, Asher was covered in snow from head to toe. Santa gave Asher a new red and white jacket to warm up with, along with some of Mrs. Claus' hot chocolate.

Asher was having the most fun he had ever had in his life. It almost hurt

to think about going home. Asher never wanted to leave, but if Santa wouldn't let him stay, Asher would go home.

"It is time to go home Asher," Santa said.

Asher looked up and saw Santa had a serious face. "Okay."

Santa snapped his fingers and Asher woke up at his father's farm in a snowbank.

"It must have been a dream," Asher said with a sad smile and went inside.

The next day Asher was helping decorate the house for Christmas when he found the coat Santa had given him along with the ornament he had made with the elves and a picture of him with Santa, Rudolph, and Frosty.

"It wasn't a dream," Asher said.

"What is that, Asher?" asked his sis-

ter.

"Oh, nothing. Let's go help decorate the tree."

As he guided his sister out of the room, he saw a glimpse of the Dancing Lights through the window.

—Emmi Tuuri, Gr. 6,
École Morden Middle School

THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT

The best gift I have ever given is a record player. And why is it so special? It's because it was for my dad. My mom bought it but I knew he really wanted it.

—Tobias Harder,
Gr. 4, Schanzenfeld



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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

THE SNOWMAN

I closed my eyes and fell asleep in my warm bed. When I opened my eyes, I was not in my bed anymore. I was not even in my house ... I was outside!

My body felt stiff and cold. Then I saw my body. It did not seem to belong to me, or what if ... I HAD TURNED INTO A SNOWMAN! I had a carrot nose and branch arms.

A bunny came hopping along. He did not listen to my cries for help. Instead, he stared suspiciously at my nose. What was he staring at? Did I have a pimple or a wart on my nose? He jumped up and with all its might grabbed my nose and went to its little rabbit hole.

Then a Snowy Owl landed in front of me. I tried asking for help, but she did not listen. Instead, she was staring

at my arms. She sat there ignoring my cries for help for a long time. Finally, she started to fly. I thought she was flying to her nest, but I was wrong. She grabbed my arms and flew away. Great, now I didn't have arms or a nose.

My stones started to slide, and I felt very wet. I looked up ... IT WAS SUNNY! Is this how it would end? Would I be a puddle on my own yard? Would I ever see my family again?

At that moment I felt something. It was warm. It was my mom's hand waking me up. Then I smelled the Christmas breakfast. I knew that this was the day that Jesus was born, and he took away all fear. I had nothing to worry about. Not even becoming a snowman.

— Emery Friesen,
Gr. 5, Winkler

CHARLOTTE'S CHRISTMAS BREAK

My name is Charlotte and I am 10 years old. I want to tell you about my favourite Christmas break ever. My family and I went down to Osoyoos, British Columbia, Canada,

which is located in the Okanagan Valley. I was very excited to see my grandma, Emma, because I had not seen her since I was a baby. My parents told me that Grandma would tell me all sorts of interesting and funny stories, and I couldn't wait to hear them!

We arrived at Grandma's on December 23. I was quickly reintroduced to her, and she instantly took a liking to me, her only granddaughter.

We were cleaning up supper, and Grandma asked about my school studies.

"What is your favourite subject so far this year, Charlotte?" asked Grandma. "I'm really enjoying history this year," I replied.

"What have you been learning about?" inquired Grandma.

"The year there was no Christmas cause by the Great Pandemic of 2020. How could there have been a year with no Christmas?!?!?" I exclaimed. "Do you remember it, Grandma?"

"I do! I can't believe I didn't tell you about that!" Grandma exclaimed. "Would you like to hear about it?"

"I would!"

Grandma and I continued to clean up as she started the story.

"I was 13 years old that year. We had already had a lockdown earlier that year in the spring," Grandma began. "Everything had started to open up slowly, but our COVID-19 case count starting going up again at the end of the summer, so the government shut down almost everything by the end of November of 2020. The government had put restrictions on gatherings, and how many people you could have over, so we knew that there wouldn't be much of a Christmas."

"Wow!" I interjected. "That must have been very hard!"

"It was!" Grandma replied. "We weren't supposed to have people over, so no Christmas gatherings or Christmas parties. My friends couldn't even come over!"

"I couldn't imagine if my friends couldn't come over for Christmas!"

"We made it through that Christmas," Grandma concluded. "It definitely wasn't a very merry Christmas, thanks to the pandemic, but it was a Christmas that no one would ever forget."

"Charlotte," Grandma said to me, "Never take the simplest things in life for granted."

Grandma taught me a lesson I hope I will never forget. We stayed for another four days at Grandma's. It was the most awesome Christmas break ever.

— Emma Rempel,
Gr. 8, Thornhill



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What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

YES, I'M A SNOWMAN

Hi, I'm Lizzy, but everyone calls me Lizz. And yes, I'm a snowman.

It all began when I was outside building a snowman with my little brother. It was quite big but was soon finished.

Next, we went sledding down the hill in our back yard. Just so you know, our snowman was at the bottom of the hill. We went sledding lots but we were called inside. We were going to go down one more time and then go in for supper but when we went down the hill something really strange happened. We crashed into our snowman and I ... I turned into one! Why did it have to be me?!

At the moment, I didn't know this so when I saw my brother's expression I said, "What's wrong? Did snow fall down your jacket or something?"

He screamed, "AHHHHHHHHH-HHH!!!!!"

He pointed at my nose. I looked at it. "AHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!" I screamed. It was orange.

My brother ran inside and locked the door. I decided to take a walk to the park, but instead of taking the short but boring route, I took the scenic route.

On the walk I met lots of other snowmen. Some with similar situations and some built by little kids.

We talked for a bit and they offered to have me stay with them in their igloos and snow shelters. I said I would rather spend the night at my house in the snow fort me and my brother made.

As I walked home I thought about my brother and my parents and how they are probably worried sick, but if I went inside they would probably freak out. I wanted to go inside anyway.

"Ok," I said to myself. "Let's do this!" I slowly walked to the door.

"Ding-dong," the door creaked open.

"Hello?" Someone asked. The door opened a bit more and I saw my brother and as he looked at me I felt something happen. MAGIC! I felt the snow melting away and I was me again!

"Look! Your nose!" My brother cried. "It's normal again!"

The rest of my evening went smoothly. But I don't ever want to be a snowman again!

— Sarah Wieler,
10, Winkler

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

I woke up in my bed feeling sticky and sweaty. I managed to get out of bed and walk to the bathroom. I turned on a bright light that nearly blinded me. I opened my eyes wide in order to see ... AAGGHHH! I, Rachel Krahn, was a snowman.

I was so confused. Like, how and why? Then I thought back to when I was done my Christmas concert. I was mad at my mom for not getting me a gift after I finished the concert. I saw a star and wished I was something loved that people would give gifts to. I didn't think it was actually going to work!

What am I going to do?!? I start to panic and begin to yank on my head with my thin stick arms, I look down and see a huge puddle.

I think to myself for a second and say, "I'm a snowman." I repeat it again, then I hear my creaky old stairs. Someone was coming, and they were getting closer.

I think fast and slide down the hall and dive into my bed. I try to grab my blanket and throw it over me, but my stubby stick fingers won't hold it. I then go with Plan B and roll off my bed. There is now only half of me.

The doorknob turns and it's my mom. She walks over to my desk and looks at my pictures. She starts to smile and tear up. She quickly turns to the door and walks out.

As the door shuts behind her I manage to pull myself up. I look down and a floor of water is below me. I think for a moment and write a note with my only hand left.

I turn to my window and open it. There is a crisp light breeze that comes in and hardens my half head. I lower myself onto the garage and look into the window. A big Christmas tree is in the corner of the room. I feel little ice cubes running down my face beating against the garage. I turn around and slip.

I'm in my neighbor's yard and the little girl that lives there comes up to me and starts rolling. Now I am a full snowman again.

I sit there as she tries to find five rocks for my mouth. She later finds them and starts shouting something, but I can't hear.

The sliding door starts to open and a young, black-haired woman walks out. She talks to the little girl and the



little girl gives her the rocks and her mom is walking toward me. She gives me a mouth and as I'm about to say something they hug.

The mom holds the little girl's hand and goes inside. I see a Christmas tree but no presents. The sun starts to rise which means it's Christmas morning but there are still no presents.

I now know the meaning of Christmas. With the blink of an eye I'm back in my room as me.

I go downstairs and hug my mom and say I'm sorry. We start to open presents and I am grateful for what I have.

— Rachel Krahn, Gr. 5,
Pine Ridge Elementary School

THE DIFFICULT LIFE OF A SNOWMAN

One night I go to bed and when I wake up, I am a snowman!

Life is so cold. I can't walk—I have no feet! I have a carrot for a nose, and rocks for both my eyes and mouth.

My hat is the only thing keeping me warm. Oh no! I have no clothes! I try to hide, but I just fall over and break!

Kids come and stomp on me. I get pushed to the ground! The only thing that you can still see of me are my rock eyes and mouth and a carrot nose. Being a snowman is difficult.

Now it is summer and I melt. In five months it is winter again. Kids come and remake me! I am a snowman again!

This time when the kids make me, they make me a little friend. I am ex-

cited about my new friend!

My new friend and I have so much fun together. My friend's name is Snowflake. Snowflake is awesome, kind, and funny! Snowflake and I have so much fun together while we play Fox and Hound as well as snowball fights! We have snowball fights a lot. Snowball fights are a lot fun!

Today Snowflake and I are having a super awesome snowball fight! Snowflake and I throw a super hard snowball at each other at the same time ... we both fall down and break! Kids rush to fix us!

In an hour the kids are done fixing us. We are repaired at last! We'll never have another snowball fight again! We don't like snow anymore, but we are made of snow. I guess we have to like snow. Oh well.

The next morning Snowflake and I start a Christmas countdown. There are only three days 'till Christmas! Snowflake and I play Fox and Hound while we wait for the day to be over. It is the next morning and there are only two days till Christmas. Tomorrow is Christmas Eve!

Today we talk about what we want for Christmas. I want a dog for Christmas, Snowflake wants a cat for Christmas.

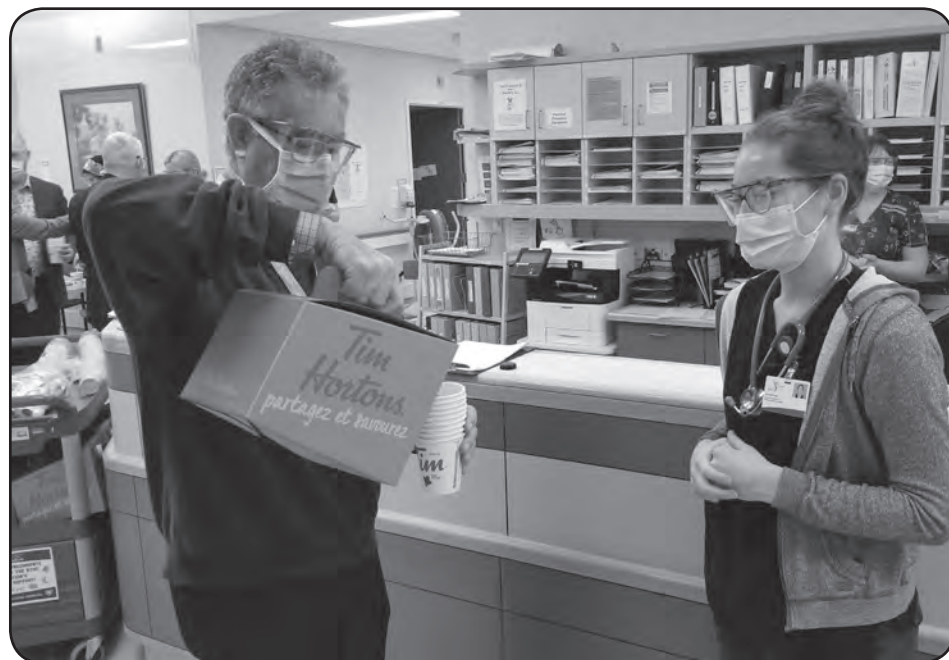
It's Christmas Eve! Today Snowflake and I wrap each other's presents.

It's Christmas Day! I got Snowflake a cat! Snowflake got me a dog! I'm happy it's Christmas. Merry Christmas everyone!

— Zaharra Hildebrand, Gr. 3,
Maple Leaf Elementary School

getinformed

NEWS > VIEWS > WINKLER > MORDEN > SURROUNDING AREAS



RHA shares message of thanks with frontline workers

By Lorne Stelmach

Coffee and muffins represented a simple gesture, but there was an important message that came with it recently at care facilities across southern Manitoba.

Southern Health-Santé Sud's community engagement committee undertook a staff appreciation initiative this fall to show support to frontline workers.

Board members and officials paid visits to facilities that included Boundary Trails Health Centre locally as well as Bethesda Regional Health Centre in Steinbach and Portage District General Hospital.

The delegation to BTHC included Southern Health CEO Jane Curtis, board chair Abe Bergen, and board members Dr. Desmond Leen, and Adam Monteith armed with goodies sponsored by the board, Tim Hortons, and Access Credit Union.

"Since then, we've gone to most of the hospitals in the Southern Health region and nursing homes," said Bergen, noting that covers a lot of ground. "We're all the way from Gladstone north of Portage to Sprague ... it's a large, wide area."

Indeed, it's a region covering over 27,000 square kilometers that encompasses 20 rural municipalities, seven municipalities, four cities, four towns,



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Southern Health-Santé Sud board members Dr. Desmond Leen (left) and Adam Monteith (above) stopped by care facilities across the region recently to deliver coffee and treats to staff in appreciation for all the work they've been putting in during the pandemic.

a village, an unorganized territory, and seven First Nation communities and serves upwards of 208,000 residents.

It's also home to over 6,000 employees, including 4,800 Southern Health-Santé Sud staff and 1,200 workers at affiliate and community-owned not-for-profit sites.

It is the dedication of all those people that they wanted to honour, said Bergen.

"It came up at the board as an initiative to say thanks to the frontline folks for the extra effort and the stress that's involved in health care these days. It's a way of just expressing appreciation

and support to the health care workers."

It is impossible to fully appreciate what workers are facing day in and day out, he added.

"They're working extra shifts, they're covering for colleagues who have to self isolate or take off 14 days," Bergen cited as an example. "My impression walking into the hospital first of all is it's a pretty high stress environment ... and I can't imagine being a caregiver in that environment."

"This is a small tangible thing we can do," he said. "It's a way for us to get out and meet our staff and say thanks."

WFRC Family Fun Feb. calendars on sale now

By Ashleigh Viveiros

February may seem a long ways off, but the Winkler Family Resource Centre hopes people will keep it in mind while doing their holiday shopping this month.

WFRC has launched pre-sales for its Family Fun February prize draw calendar in support of its free early childhood education programming.

The centre is selling February calen-

dars that will have a prize sponsored by a local business listed for each day of the month. Participants have a chance to win all 28 days.

It would make a great stocking stuffer or gift, says WFRC executive director Cathy Savage.

"Any businesses out there who aren't able to have Christmas parties could maybe consider supporting a local charity and local businesses by

purchasing these calendars as a present for their staff," she says. "Or families looking for a gift that gives back."

Prizes include a movie night package, a family board game package, and a puzzle package, to name a few. There are also a number of gift cards up for grabs.

Savage says they already have several businesses on board as sponsors, but there's still room for more.

The finalized calendars will be available in the new year, but Savage has pre-sale placeholders for people who want something to hand out for Christmas.

Calendars are \$10 each or three for \$25. Bulk purchase deals are also available. Contact Savage at 204-332-9418 or winklerfrfc@gmail.com for more details.

Tune in online to Women Helping Women 2020

By Lorne Stelmach

An annual event to benefit safe spaces for women and children in Winnipeg is expanding its reach this year to also support the local shelter for the victims of domestic violence.

Partial proceeds from the online Women Helping Women concert will be going to Genesis House.

"I'm thinking perhaps having some rural people involved performing has helped broaden their scope as well," suggested Ang Braun, executive director of the Winkler-based shelter.

"They've had this event for a number of years. This year because of COVID and the way that things have gone more virtual, they decided to reach outside the city as well," she said.

"I think one of the things that maybe is a silver lining is it has sort of connected the world and made it smaller, and connecting with virtual events means more people can be included."

Women Helping Women is set for

Sunday, Dec. 20 beginning at 7 p.m., and it will be hosted by the Stacey James Band, which is also part of the lineup of performers.

The concert will also be featuring local performer Jayme Giesbrecht as well as Jess Rae, Christa Lucas, Kristen McKay, Kwiat, Shandra Levreault, Eternal Now, Tiffany Ponce, Daisy Chain, Ingrid Aubrey, Mal Magorel, Holly Rose, The Keen and The Kind, Elle Es, and Katrina Van Humbeck.

Tickets are available by donation through Eventbrite. People can find more information and connect through the Facebook and Instagram pages of Genesis House as well as the Women Helping Women 2020 Facebook page.

Braun said they are pleased to be part of it not only for raising funds but awareness as well.

"Some of these kinds of events have been very successful for other nonprofits," she noted. "I think it helps bring attention to domestic violence

Winkler's own Jayme Giesbrecht is among the list of performers for the Dec. 20 Women Helping Women concert in support of Manitoba shelters for the victims of domestic violence.



and also exposure for our agency.

"I think it is a great idea. The thought of women supporting women is very cool, but I think, even more than that, for us has been trying to figure out,

without doing all of the events that we normally do, how do we make sure that people are aware of us and remember us?"

Morden Area Foundation distributes its fall grants

By Lorne Stelmach

At a time when so much has been impacted by the pandemic, the Morden Area Foundation still had a banner year.

Despite the restrictions due to COVID, the foundation did well with its fundraising and granting back into the community.

There was over \$106,810 that went back into Morden and the surrounding area in 2020 through not only its usual ongoing funds but also with its role in distributing Emergency Community Support Funding from the federal government.

"It is very satisfying knowing the foundation can make a huge difference, particularly during this time of uncertainty," said foundation board chair Allison Braun last week.

This fall, another \$20,100 was granted out from the Morden community fund along with \$5,170 from the sport and recreation fund.

Direct grants from the Morden Area Foundation this year in two rounds of grants included:

- South Central Cancer Resource: \$5,600 for a computer, software, and office chairs.
 - Pembina Valley Humane Society: \$4,500 for new dog doors for the kennels.
 - Morden Chamber of Commerce: \$5,000 for office equipment.
 - Katie Cares: \$3,000 for blankets for guest beds.
 - City of Morden: \$5,170 for recreational hockey program support.
 - Genesis House: \$2,000 for a men's program.
- MAF was also able to grant out \$70,000 of ECSF dollars throughout the year, including:
- Many Hands Resource Centre: \$14,000 for the Morden Farmers' Market food vouchers.
 - Genesis House: \$13,000 for kitchen staff.
 - Morden Adult Education Centre: \$13,000 for an outdoor classroom.

- South Central Regional Library: \$5,000 for tablets for students working at home.
- Morden Parent and Child Resource Centre: \$10,000 for sanitization equipment.
- Pembina Valley Pregnancy Care Centre: \$10,000 for technology.
- Society for Manitobans with Disabilities/Manitoba Possible: \$5,000 for grocery gift cards.

The foundation also distributed \$10,540 as a result of its Power of the Purse brunch and another \$1,000 through the Citizen of Distinction award program.

With overall endowment funds worth approximately \$3.6 million, the foundation this year received community fund grant requests for about \$378,000, so it is a challenging but rewarding process to select recipients,

Braun noted.

"I always look forward to meeting with the applicant organizations as this helps to build relationships and puts a face to a name," she said. "I thoroughly enjoy talking to these organizations and learning of all the good projects that are out there targeting the needs of the community. Granting is truly my most favorite time of year."

"The foundation is here to support the good work in the community," added Lynda Lambert, Endow Manitoba community foundations coordinator for the south central region, including Morden.

"By investing with the foundation, no matter if your donation is small or large, you are touching the lives of the current residents, residents that are yet to come, and those that haven't even been born yet," she added. "Your donation today is invested, and with interest earned, will grant out every year, year after year after year, forever."

"It is hard to fathom but that is the foundation's plan for longevity and sustainability of the community."

"THE FOUNDATION IS HERE TO SUPPORT THE GOOD WORK IN THE COMMUNITY."

The Winkler Morden Voice

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Elks lottery a success

The Morden Elks Lodge recently wrapped up their annual 50/50 lottery fundraiser, and it did well again in its ninth year with close to \$30,000 in proceeds. The event has now put over \$100,000 back into the community. Proceeds this year will see about \$20,000 go to the Morden beach committee for a play structure project and close to \$10,000 to the BTHC Foundation.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Boil water advisory issued for Reinfeld, Plum Coulee

Started Monday and could last a week

By Voice staff

The Pembina Valley Water Co-operative has issued a boil water advisory for users of the Red River Regional Water System.

Starting on Monday, Dec. 14 and expected to last anywhere from four to seven days, the advisory is a precautionary measure in response to scheduled maintenance at the water treatment plant in Letellier.

Communities affected include:

- Reinfeld in the RM of Stanley.
- RM of Rhineland including Gretna, Rosenfeld, and Plum Coulee.
- RM of Montcalm: St. Joseph and

south of PTH 201W to Hwy. 75 and east to the Red River. Does not include St. Jean Baptiste.

- Town of Altona.
- RM of Emerson-Franklin: Town of Emerson and all water users served by the town.

- Halbstadt-Marais Water Cooperative.

- Altona Rural Water Cooperative.
- Roseau River First Nation.
- Blumengart Colony.

Households and businesses in these communities are advised to use bottled water or bring tap water to a rolling boil for at least one minute before it is used for drinking or ice-making, preparing beverages or food, and brushing teeth.

Updates on the advisory can be found on the PVWC and municipal websites.

Hope on the horizon, but we're not out of this yet: Roussin

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Public health officials announced 241 new cases of COVID-19 in Manitoba on Monday, along with nine additional deaths.

That brings the province's total number of case to 21,264 and the death toll to 499 at press time (up 92 from the week before).

Manitoba had 5,791 active cases of the virus at the start of the week and 14,974 recoveries. There were 303 people hospitalized with COVID-19 on Monday, 39 in intensive care. The five-day test positivity rate was at 13.6 per cent.

In our region, Winkler at press time was at 27 cases and three deaths, Morden had 12 cases, Stanley was reporting two active cases and one death, Carman had no active cases and one death, Altona had 34 active cases, Morris was at 10 active cases and one death, Roland/Thompson had one active cases and one death, and Lorne/Louise/Pembina had four active cases.

At Monday's press briefing, Dr. Brent Roussin, Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, once again urged people to stick to their own households in the weeks ahead to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

"We know that this is the time for family gatherings ... but this year has to be different," he said. "We must socialize only with members of our household.

"If we gather over these coming weeks, we're going to see an escalation in cases," Roussin stressed. "It's very difficult this year, but we have to find a way to celebrate virtually. Reduce your contacts to household members only, practise the fundamentals at all times ... going out only for essential reasons."

The next few weeks won't be easy, but there is reason to be hopeful about the future, Roussin said.

"We have a vaccine on the horizon. We have every reason to believe that next year is not going to look like this. But we have to get through this year."

ROLLING OUT THE VACCINE

Administration of the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in Manitoba

was slated to begin this week.

They have been earmarked for eligible health-care providers of a certain age whose work involves direct contact with patients in critical care, acute care, and long-term care facilities, as well as those assigned to COVID-19 immunization clinics.

The province is reminding Manitobans to only call for an appointment if you are an eligible front-line health-care provider.

"With only a very limited supply of new vaccines available before the spring, we will follow the advice of national and provincial public health experts," Premier Brian Pallister said last week. "We will focus our initial immunization efforts on those most at risk of COVID-19 including seniors,

those working in the health-care system and in long-term care facilities, and Indigenous peoples."

Further vaccine shipments are expected to arrive over the next few weeks.

In total, Manitoba has been told it will receive 228,000 doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines between now and March 31, 2021, enough to vaccinate more than 100,000 Manitobans or approximately seven per cent of the total population.

"Many Manitobans want to be immunized and our plan is to have that available to any Manitoban, but right now we're going to have limited supply and we need to make choices on how to best approach this," said Roussin on Monday.

Code red restrictions extended to Jan. 8

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitobans will be dealing with tight COVID-19 restrictions for at least a few more weeks.

Premier Brian Pallister announced last Tuesday that the government has extended the public health orders designed to limit the spread of the virus until Jan. 8.

"Our number one priority in the face of this pandemic is protecting our most vulnerable Manitobans and

ensuring that our health care system is there for all Manitobans when they need it," he said in addressing the province.

That's why, Pallister said, the government brought in critical (red) level restrictions a few weeks ago, and it's why those restrictions are being extended beyond the original Dec. 11 end date.

"The existing critical level restrictions will be extended, and here's why: because they're working," he

said. "They're beginning to make a difference. You're beginning to make a difference and that is critical as we move forward."

Manitoba has seen its numbers begin to drop as a result of these measures, though the current daily level of new cases is still not sustainable.

"This is not a victory lap ... we need to do more," Pallister stressed. "But Manitobans need to know that what

Continued on page 29

Rona supports BTHC Fdn.

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler's Rona store was able to give an early Christmas gift to the BTHC Foundation last week.

The store's Canada Heroes Campaign in September asked people to donate at the till in support of the BTHC palliative care program.

Rona customers responded in a big way, donating \$3,047. Lowe's Canada, Rona's parent company, added \$4,177 to that for a total donation of \$7,224.

The store's Michele Hamm presented BTHC Foundation executive director Shannon Samatte-Folkett with the giant cheque (literally) last week.

Hamm said they've done collection drives like this in the past, but this year's cause really resonated with people.

"It's way up there from previous

years ... it just seemed that we had a lot of people interested in supporting BTHC," she said, noting they received donations of all sizes—from a couple of bucks right up to \$50.

The palliative care program, which is fully funded by community donations, provides end-of-life care to local patients.

"It's very dear to the hearts of a lot of us that work here," Hamm said, noting many staff have lost loved ones to cancer.

Samatte-Folkett sends a great big thank-you out to Rona staff and all the donors for their support.

"We're so thankful and so appreciative," she said. "We don't often get the bigger stores, the nationwide stores, contributing to our smaller foundation, so it's really an honour for us that you chose us.



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

From left: BTHC Foundation's Shannon Samatte-Folkett received a giant donation from Rona's Kim Rempel, Dean Zeller, and Michele Hamm last week for the palliative care program.

"We appreciate that our local citizens understand that the palliative care program is really important at

Boundary Trails. What we do is not offered at all hospitals, so it's pretty unique and pretty special."

City, chamber, and local industry team up to help struggling businesses

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The City of Winkler, Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce, and local industries are teaming up to support small business in our community.

Winkler city council announced last week that it is contributing matching funds of up to \$50,000 to a campaign that will purchase gift cards from struggling independent companies to help them get through the pandemic shutdown.

The Winkler Chamber is chipping in \$25,000 thanks in part to a \$15,000 grant from the provincial government and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce through the Local Support Small Business program.

"It is not a handout. It is a hand up so that businesses can in fact be in business," said Mayor

Martin Harder, calling this a "made-in-Winkler solution" and noting that the hope is they can raise upwards of \$100,000.

The initiative got its start with several Winkler manufacturers, explained Chamber executive director Tanya Chateauneuf.

"Local industries stepped up and said, 'Considering the circumstances, we've had a decent year. Now how can we help small businesses who are suffering?'" she said. "It kind of snowballed from there.

Gift card purchases provide businesses trying to keep their head above wa-

ter with a much-needed cash infusion now, followed by added traffic once the cards are redeemed in the future when restrictions are eased.

In addition to helping businesses, the cam-

paign will also benefit the local community groups who will be given the gift certificates to use and distribute.

The campaign last week was quickly picking up steam as word got out.

"It's actually amazing how many businesses have reached out saying, 'We love this idea. We'll stop by and drop a cheque off.' They're just so eager to help each other," Chateauneuf said. "There's something so spectacular about the Winkler business community, the Winkler community as a whole. It just blows my mind how much people step up to help each other here."

The Chamber invites businesses wanting to be part of the program to contact them at director@winklerchamber.com for further details. It is open to Chamber members and non-members alike.

Chateauneuf said she's already heard from many companies thankful to be able to access a program like this during a challenging time.

"So many expressions of gratitude have come our way."

—with files from
Lorne Stelmach

"IT'S NOT A HANDOUT. IT IS A HAND UP SO THAT BUSINESSES CAN IN FACT BE IN BUSINESS."

> RESTRICTIONS, FROM PG. 28

they've done has helped ... it has saved lives, it has kept people from getting COVID. It has helped our hospital system not to be overcrowded and overrun, our ICUs to be able to function effectively to serve people's needs."

The public health order extension came with a few tweaks to it, including allowing thrift stores to reopen with capacity limits, adding school supplies to the essential items list, allowing for the sale of holiday decorations, and allowing drive-in events as long as vehicles contain members of one household and no one leaves their vehicle at an event.

Still in place are restrictions on public and private gatherings. Gatherings at private resi-

dences are not allowed and any gatherings in public spaces, both inside or outside, are limited to five people.

"It's crucial that Manitobans continue to limit their close contacts and only gather with members of their household this holiday season," Pallister said. "That's going to be difficult. It's going to be lonely for many. But the best thing we can do now for our loved ones is to stay apart so that we may be together in person next year."

A detailed overview of the updated public health orders can be found at manitoba.ca/covid19/restartmb/prs/orders/index.html#current.

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We want to hear from you.

The Winkler Morden Voice connects people through stories to build stronger communities.

Do you know someone who has a unique hobby? Will be recognized by a local organization for volunteer service?

A teacher that goes above and beyond? A hometown hero? A sports star? A business celebrating a milestone or expansion? A senior celebrating their 100th birthday?

A young entrepreneur starting out?

Please share your story ideas at news@winklermordenvoice.ca Phone 204-332-3456

The Winkler Morden
Voice

German study finds more humidity lessens COVID spread

By Becca Myskiw

A local man found a German and Indian study that found places with higher humidity may lessen the spread of COVID-19.

Grant Rigby of Killarney woke around 2 a.m. one day in the summer and turned on CBC Radio. Their story that night was about this study and it was the first and last time Rigby heard anything about it.

The study was done by Ajit Ahlawat, Alfred Wiedensohler, and Sumit Kumar Mishra, titled "An Overview on the Role of Relative Humidity in Airborne Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Indoor Environments."

The study points out that "recent evidence strongly suggests that COVID-19 could be transmitted via air in poorly ventilated places ... it is also possible that small viral particles may enter into indoor environments from the various emission sources aided by environmental factors such as relative



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Grant Rigby is telling people about the study he found that found more humidity might lessen the transmission of COVID-19.

humidity, wind speed, temperature, thus representing a type of an aerosol transmission."

The report then goes on to explore the role of humidity in airborne transmission of the virus. It finds that in dry places with less than 40 per cent

humidity, the chances of COVID-19 being spread through the air are higher than in areas with more than 90 per cent humidity.

The study also says a relative humidity of 40 to 60 per cent is optimal for human health, so setting a minimum

standard for indoor environments is "extremely important" to minimize the airborne transmission of the virus.

Rigby said he's concerned that this "simple idea hasn't gotten through to medical experts."

He's written letters to public health officials but hasn't got through, so now he's hoping more people can learn about this study on their own.

"I could see there were solutions here that weren't being picked up," he said. "Being silent for me isn't useful at all."

That's why Rigby is spreading the word of this study—he hopes more people will read it and test out its findings by boiling a pot of water in their home.

He does point out that he can't confirm the findings of the study, but he hasn't found anything that contradicts it.

"It might help and it might not," he said. "But it won't do any harm."

Province relaxes Sunday shopping restrictions

By Lorne Stelmach

The City of Winkler has no plans to stand in

the way of retailers choosing to be open on Sundays.

The province has passed legislation to allow

businesses to stay open later on Sundays and holidays, doing away with long-standing restrictions that forced retailers to close by 6 p.m. on those days. The change came into effect Dec. 12.

The new legislation gave municipalities the authority to pass bylaws should they prefer to keep some restrictions in place, but the City of Winkler announced last week it will not be doing so.

The choice as to whether or not a business will open on Sundays is solely the responsibility of the business, stressed Mayor Martin Harder.

"Winkler has become a destination for shopping," said Harder, who suggested council felt that forcing businesses to be closed on Sundays would be unfair given the lure and availability of shopping elsewhere. "We felt that it really wasn't fair for businesses to chase the business away. We would rather allow them to make that decision."

"We are thankful for the regulations that are there though that people are not forced to work," Harder added. "It's according to your own conscience; likewise, businesses that choose not to be open are not forced to open."

"We just thought we would not stand in the way of allowing businesses to be open."

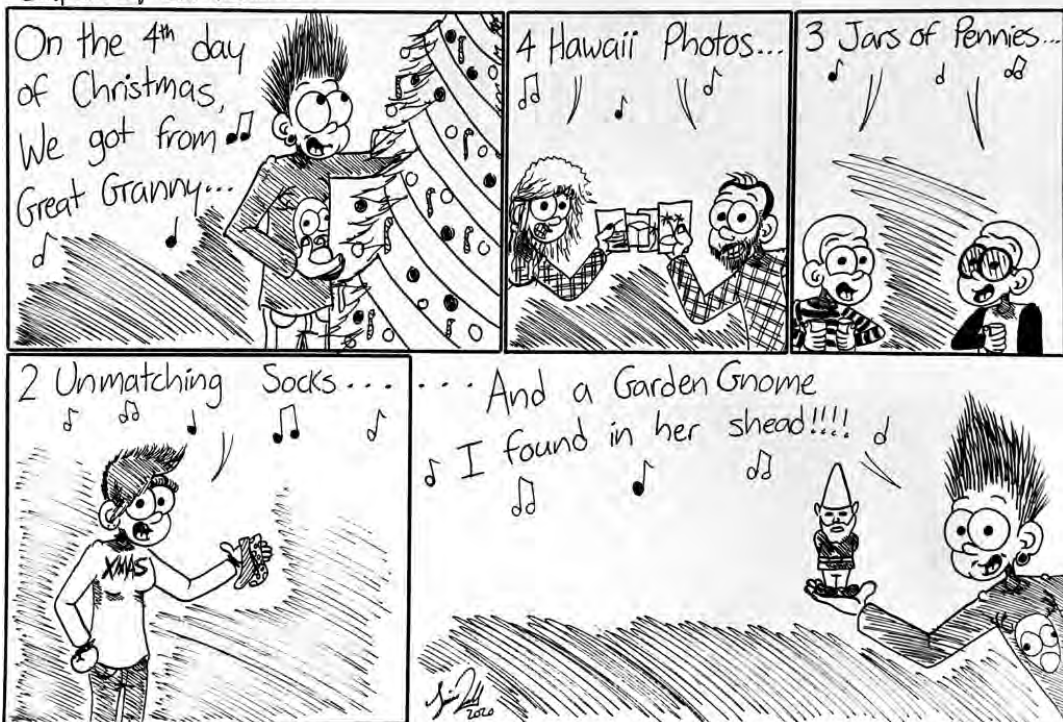
Sunday shopping has been a hot button issue in Winkler in the past, but even under the old legislation there were local stores who opted to open their doors on Sundays.

"It really was just a matter of time," said Tanya Chateauf, executive director of the Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce, in supporting the city's stance and the regulatory changes. "The idea that people have the choice to shop in our community now is a benefit. People will always find a way to

"IT REALLY WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME."

The Funnies

PLANET GARRY Merry Christmas!
By: Harrison Drell
Inspired By: Bill Watterson



Continued on page 32

Morden kids do their part to spread some kindness

By Lorne Stelmach

Four classes of Maple Leaf School students have been doing acts of kindness to help spread joy around Morden.

What may be most rewarding for their teachers is not only that it is a student-led project, but they see the students becoming passionate about what they are doing.

"We're really hoping that the students understand just because they're in Grade 1 and 2 that their little voices can have a big impact," said Zoe Fraser, a Gr. 1 French Immersion teacher. "Also we hope that these small acts of kindness will inspire others in the community to do whatever they can to help people through these tough times."

Fraser's class joined the students of fellow Gr. 1 French Immersion teacher Leanne DeJaegher and Gr. 2 English teachers Breahn Lemon and Karen Crockett-Nicholls on the 12 Days of Community Kindness project this month.

Students created a variety of crafts and stories and then decided where they wanted to send them to as a show of support and love.

For example, there were decorative snowflakes made for Tabor Home.

"Lots of the kids had grandparents that they couldn't see, so that got us talking about how there's people stuck in these care homes that won't be able to see their family on the holidays," said Fraser.

Another student thought of handing out paper candy canes to the people who work at the Co-op store, noted Lemon.

"They've actually put a lot on the line to make sure that we get our essentials of food."

"We also did lots of things for the essential workers like nurses and the firehall and the police because we realize they are the front line workers putting their lives at risk," said Fraser.

"We also decided to do small businesses because the kids realize that lots of the people who own the businesses are losing money," she added. "We also wanted to touch on the humane society because we realize that kindness spreads further than people and we need to show kindness to ev-

erything."

"They came up with a bunch of these places ... they decided who needed it," said Lemon.

"It was also really nice to see in the French Immersion program our two Gr. 1 French classes were extremely excited to share their language with the community and teach them how to say some words," added Fraser.

She said they really hoped that this initiative would recognize the efforts of those who have provided important services and made our lives better during these difficult times.

"Spreading joy to others would hopefully give them a different holiday season," said Fraser.

"The inspiration also sort of came from students talking about how things in the school look a little bit different ... how things in the community look a little bit different," added Lemon, who recalled one student noting how their mother isn't working right now, so other students wondered how they could help. They decided on the idea of making things for people to help them feel better.

She noted it was heartening to see the students come to appreciate "how so many more people are experiencing hardships right now, and we can use this opportunity to teach our students about how small acts of kindness can spread."

The plan was for their project to wrap up this Wednesday with a candy cane fundraiser in support of the Morden Christmas Cheer Board. Co-op donated candy canes for this event, which is the best part of it all for student Kole Shoonbaert.

"My favourite thing was getting ready for the candy cane fundraiser because we're getting money for the people that don't have enough money for Christmas," she said.

A few other students weighed in as well on what they have enjoyed and learned.

"I loved making the ornaments for the nurses because my mom stays up all night working hard," said Brooklyn Hoepfner.

"We made crafts for people who might not see their families, so we



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Gr. 1-2 students at Maple Leaf School in Morden made a variety of crafts and cards to distribute throughout the community in the hopes of spreading kindness.



Holiday Early Booking Deadlines

December 24 (Boxing Week)

Booking Deadline - Regular and Classified
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Fri, December 18 4:00 pm

December 31

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Continued on page 32

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Winkler Storm moving up to Premier next summer

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Storm will be playing in the Manitoba Major Soccer League's top division next summer.

Coach Reinaldo Oliveira recently got the news that his team's second place finish in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season has earned them a

seat at the Premier Division table.

"We are so excited. We were so anxious for the league's decision," he said, noting it took the MMSL a few months to figure out how to fairly advance or demote teams after they were forced to pull the plug on the season early this fall with a handful of games still to go.

At the time, Winkler was tied with the Hanover Kickers with a 6-1-4 record and 22 points. The Kickers took first place on the strength of their 25 goals for and 13 goals against, versus Winkler's 15 goals for and 11 against.

Oliveira was confident his team would have reclaimed the top spot and held on to it if the season had been allowed to continue.

Not being able to do so has left the players eager to prove their mettle. It's been several years since the Storm have played at the Premier level.

"They want to show off next year what they can do," Oliveira said. "We're going to cause some damage next season."

"The guys are really pumped to get some practise in and prepare," he said, noting they hope to be able to do so in the new year, pandemic restrictions allowing.

Moving up to Premier alongside the Storm are the Kickers. Other teams in the division include Ital-Inter, FC Winnipeg Lions, Bonivital, Hellas, Sweatshack, WSA, Lucania, and NKMB.

It's a tough slate of teams, but Oliveira is confident the Storm will be able to hold their own.

"Premier is the very top—it's a different pace, a bit faster," he said, stressing that the team has slowly but surely gained the experience they need to compete. "I think we can be competitive."

Winkler's other senior soccer team, the South Central Riot, are also slated to play in a higher division next summer.

The Riot didn't field a team this year, but if one is formed in 2021 they'll be playing in Division 4. They finished sixth in Division 5 in 2019.



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Winkler Storm's second place finish in the MMSL's 1st Division punched their ticket to the Premier Division next summer.

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 WEEKLY NEWS

> SUNDAY SHOPPING, FROM PG. 30

shop on a Sunday if that's what they choose to do."

Bill 4, the Retail Business Hours of Operation Act, gives all businesses the choice to remain open later on Sundays and during statutory holidays, although retail hour restrictions for Remembrance Day remain in place.

Manitoba was the only Western Canadian province to restrict retail business hours on Sundays and holidays, noted Finance Minister Scott Fielding in announcing the changes.

"Our government has been committed to modernizing our outdated and complicated shopping laws," he said.

Speeding up the passage of this legislation came at the request of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Retail Council of Canada, and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

"Given the current critical level (red) restrictions facing all retailers across the province, it is important that we pass Bill 4 in time for the for the holiday season," said the organizations in an open letter to government last month. "It is our belief that this will help many retailers with additional revenues during this important time of year."

> SPREADING KINDNESS, FROM PG. 31

can help them to not feel lonely at Christmas," said Adria Nickel.

"I learned about community kindness, and it is all about sharing kindness so it spreads and spreads and gets so big that it goes to everyone

and they spread kindness too," said Blake Penner.

"I feel good because we are respecting people. They help us, so we are helping them," said Macey Darby.

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Yield: 20 brownies
Nonstick cooking spray
1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, melted
1 tablespoon pecan or canola oil
1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons, granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon espresso powder (optional)
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
20 raw pecan halves, cut in half
40 candy eyeballs
20 red chocolate candies
1/4 cup chocolate chips
Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray mini muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray.

Reindeer Pecan Brownies

In large bowl, whisk melted butter, oil and sugar until well combined. Add eggs and vanilla extract; beat until mixture is thick and pale in color, about 1 minute.

Sift in flour and cocoa powder. Add espresso powder, if desired, and salt. Using rubber spatula, fold dry ingredients into butter mixture until just combined. Batter should be thick.

Using 1-tablespoon cookie scoop, transfer batter to prepared mini muffin tin. Bake 13-15 minutes until toothpick inserted in center comes out mostly clean, with some lingering crumbs.

Add chocolate chips to heat-proof bowl; microwave until smooth and melted. Pour melted chocolate into sandwich bag and cut off small portion of one corner to use as tip. Use melted chocolate to "glue" on pecan antlers, candy eyeballs and red candy noses to brownies.

Allow chocolate to set before transferring brownies to airtight container.

Note: Brownies will stay fresh for up to three days.



Overnight Walnut French Toast with Cranberry Walnut Ginger Compote

walnuts on baking sheet and toast 8 minutes. Remove from heat and chop coarsely.

In medium pot over medium heat, combine toasted walnuts, cranberries, orange juice, syrup, ginger and orange zest. Bring to boil and stir frequently 12-15 minutes until cranberries pop and liquid starts to reduce.

Transfer to container and refrigerate once cooled.

To make Overnight Walnut French Toast: Preheat oven to 350 F.

Place bread on baking sheet and bake 5 minutes, or until lightly toasted on outside but still soft on inside. Butter 13-by-9-inch baking dish.

In large bowl, whisk milk, sugar, 1/4 cup butter, vanilla extract, cinnamon and eggs. Dip each bread slice in mixture and let soak about 15 seconds on each side. Place in prepared baking dish, overlapping slices slightly, if necessary.

Cover and refrigerate a few hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Bake 50-60 minutes, or until golden brown and somewhat firm to touch. Serve immediately topped with Cranberry Walnut Ginger Compote.

Total time: 1 hour
Servings: 12
Cranberry Walnut Ginger Compote:
1/2 cup California Walnuts
2 cups cranberries
1/2 cup orange juice
1/2 cup maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1 orange, zest only

Overnight Walnut French Toast:
8 slices Texas Toast or 1-inch thick slices French bread
1/4 cup butter, melted, plus additional for baking dish, divided
2 1/2 cups milk or walnut milk
1/2 cup sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cinnamon
6 eggs
To make Cranberry Walnut Ginger Compote: Preheat oven to 350 F. Place

Expert patient here to help!

By Susie Schwartz

First off, Merry Christmas!

Some of my tips will touch on some funny stuff but today I'll stick to a serious strategy that has saved me much confusion:

Ask about timelines and repeat back the action plan before leaving.

Ever depart from an appointment head spinning and realise you have no idea what happens next? Been. There.

While seeing the doctor, I always ask questions like, when do you expect the results to come through? How long do you expect for me to get the MRI? Will the specialist call me or do I call them to make an appointment? What should I do if the symptom doesn't go away or comes back? Should I book a follow-up?

Maybe the antibiotics for your nasty skin infection won't kick in for 3 days. Great! No need to panic just yet.

Knowing when test results are due back, or how long before you can see a surgeon can do wonders for managing expectations and alleviating worry. It also gives an idea of when it's appropriate to check in if you haven't heard back. (The system is far from perfect and you don't want to fall through the cracks!)

Also at the end of every appointment, I then repeat the whole plan as I understand it. "So to be sure I understand, you will contact the specialist and I will receive a phone call with the appointment for the MRI? And you'll send my prescription through today?" This not only solidifies the plan for me, but sometimes the doctor will realise they hadn't made a note of one of the actions, and respond with, "Oh right. Yes, I will put that prescription through now," and then sends it



Susie Schwartz

via computer while I'm still there. (As a complicated medical case, I often need more than one action taken, and particulars can get lost in the conversation, which is pretty human, I'd say.)

Whether it is a complex plan with many parts, or one simple action that needs taking, confirming even a single step shows that you've been listening, are taking your health seriously, and will be responsible to do your part. Not only will there be less chance of the plan going awry, but the doctor will gain respect for you. They'll also learn fast that you hold high expectations for care.

So try to get clear on the details. Self-advocacy is imperative for better health.

What to give yourself for Christmas this strange year?

Less health stress, yes?

A published author and motivational speaker, Susie currently lives in the UK. She welcomes feedback and questions. Find her on FB @medicalmisstress, Instagram @medicalmisstress and her website lesshealthstress.com



Gingerbread Pecans

spice and salt. Stir to coat evenly. Spread pecans in even layer on prepared baking sheet.

Bake pecans 40 minutes, stirring halfway through. Allow pecans to cool completely.

Note: Pecans can be stored in airtight container for up to four days.

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 40 minutes
Yield: 2 cups (6 servings)
1 large egg white, beaten
2 cups raw pecan halves
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
2 teaspoons gingerbread spice blend
1 pinch salt

Preheat oven to 300 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside.

In large bowl, use fork to whisk beaten egg until frothy. Add pecans and stir until coated. Sprinkle pecans with granulated sugar, brown sugar, gingerbread

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Rural Municipality of Stanley PUBLIC NOTICE

The Rural Municipality of Stanley purchases water from the Pembina Valley Water Cooperative (PVWC) to supply water to portions of the Municipality. The Public Utilities Board approved a rate increase for PVWC for \$0.18/1000 gallons, effective January 1, 2021. This rate increase reflects a "pass through" rate increase of \$0.18/1000 gallons for RM of Stanley consumers.

Public notice is hereby given that the water rate increase will be \$0.18/1000 gallons for the March 31, 2021 quarterly billing in the Rural Municipality of Stanley. That being from the present rate of \$12.51/1000 gallons to \$12.69/1000 gallons.

Chad Harder
Finance & Administration Supervisor

CAREERS



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 and their families and friends

IN MEMORIAM



Raymond Wiebe
 1958 – 2018

Never to Walk Alone

Take my hand and walk beside me.
 To give you strength and guide you.
 You are my child and I will hold you.
 Put your trust in me and hold your faith.
 And you shall never walk alone.

-Jonathan Wiebe

OBITUARY

Frank P. Letkeman 1931 – 2020



On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, Frank P. Letkeman, aged 89 years of Morden, MB went to his heavenly home.

Dad was born on September 28, 1931 in the district of Wakeham to Peter J. and Aganetha Letkeman. He was the youngest of 12 siblings. He was baptized on the confession of his faith into the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church on May 15, 1951. Dad married the love of his life, Agatha Klassen on April 19, 1953 and settled on the family farm in the Wakeham School District, south of Morden. They were blessed with one daughter and three sons.

He enjoyed farming and in the later years, driving school bus for Western School Division for 27 years. Dad was active in the community, serving on the local school board, various church committees and being part of a local singing group. Dad also enjoyed many hobbies including hunting, golfing, bowling, making hunting knives and spending time with his many friends and especially with his kids and grandkids. Mom and Dad painted homes for many years and spent many summers painting classrooms and gymnasiums for Western School Division. In 1995, they retired and moved to Morden. Dad was a great storyteller and loved telling stories about his growing up years. He would recite verses and poems that he learned in school as a child and was always quick with a joke to brighten your day.

He was predeceased by one daughter, Diane in 2007, one grandson, Danny in 1977 and one great-granddaughter Pearl in 2015. He leaves to mourn, his wife of 67 years, Agatha; son Frank (Kathy) of Carman, son Wayne (Pureza) of Ashern, son Art (Carol) of Morden; 12 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

A private funeral service was held with interment at the Glencross Mennonite Church Cemetery.

We as a family would like to thank the staff of Boundary Trails Health Center and the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg for their wonderful care over the last few months. We would also like to thank Wiebe Funeral Home for their help in making the final arrangements.

If friends so desire, donations may be made in Frank's memory to the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation designated to Cancer Care.

Wiebe Funeral Chapel, Morden
 In care of arrangements
 wiebefuneralhomes.com



OBITUARY

Joseph Alfred Hogue

His family sadly announces his passing on November 10, 2020, at Boundary Trails Hospital following a struggle with cancer.

He was born on June 10, 1950 to Aurise (Guimond) Hogue and L. A. Hogue in Fort Frances, Ontario. He attended St. Mary's School, graduated from Fort High and later attended University of Minnesota, Duluth. His early career was with Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise. He was later recruited by the Schweitzer Division of Kimberly-Clark. He spent the next 32 years purchasing and processing flax straw, ending his career as Manager of New Business Development. After retirement, Joe was able to pursue his interest by consulting.

In June 1977, Joe married Sarah Milette of International Falls, MN. They began their life together in the wonderful town of Morden, MB. The family enjoyed many summers at their cabin on

Rainy Lake. It was the place he enjoyed the most, whether it was diving in the lake to clean up in the morning or walking down to the dock at night to gaze up at the stars.

Joe was preceded by his parents and his only brother, Leo, and his father-in-law Howard Milette.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah and their two boys, Anthony and Daniel, mother-in-law Virginia Milette of Int'l. Falls, MN, brother-in-law Stuart (Cynde) Milette of Dove Island, MN and sister-in-law Suzanne (Anne) of Iliamna, AK, a nephew Sean (Jean) Hogue of Houston, TX and niece Tarah (Ryan) Hogue of Saskatoon, SK.

Cremation has taken place and the family will have a private Celebration of Life at a later date.

The family would like to thank all the caregivers involved with Cancer Care MB for such fabulous treatment.

Loving Sarah meant learning to love dogs which he was forever grateful. If friends so desire, a donation can be made to the Pembina Valley Humane Society.

"When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive, to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love." -Marcus Aurelius

Doyle's Funeral Home
 in care of arrangements
 www.doylesfuneralhome.ca

OBITUARY

Dianne Joan Scoles

February 18, 1941 – December 9, 2020

With family at her side, Dianne passed lovingly from our life to everlasting life.

A wonderful wife to Ted and a magnificent mother to our six children. She asked that those who knew her as a friend or relative to remember her in their prayers, as she did for so many.

Dianne wove life experiences into positive threads in the fabric of her life. Award-winning student, masterful teacher/professor, and world traveler, she loved meeting new people and finding old relatives through her extensive genealogy research. Ireland became her favourite destination, second to Spain, both of which she explored many times.

A special thanks to the staff at CancerCare Manitoba, and for the last two weeks, the caring group at Riverview Hospice.



Due to COVID-19, a celebration of Dianne's life will take place later.

Donations, in lieu of flowers, can be made to your chosen charity.

A longer obituary can also be viewed at www.thomsonfuneralchapel.com where you can leave condolences if you wish.

OBITUARY

Cornelius Froese 1945 – 2020



On Thursday, December 3, 2020 at Boundary Trails Health Centre, Cornie Froese, 74 of Winkler, MB went to his eternal rest.

He leaves to mourn his passing his wife, Kathy; two daughters, Anne and Dwight Krashel, Eva and John Dyck; three sons, Cornie and Rose, Herman and Susan, Jake and Tina; as well as 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He is survived by one sister, six brothers and their families.

A private funeral service was held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at Wiebe Funeral Home, Winkler with interment at the Reinland Mennonite Church Cemetery in Schanzenfeld.

Wiebe Funeral Home, Winkler
 In care of arrangements
 wiebefuneralhomes.com



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