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Bowl for Kids gets a strike for Big Bros.

Big Brothers Big sisters of the Pembina Valley's Jenelle Neufeld and Danielle Crossman at the mentoring agency's Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraiser last week. For the full story, see Pg. 2.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

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Bowl for Kids raises \$25,000 for Big Bros.

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Over 120 people came out to VB Entertainment Centre in Winkler March 27 to support Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley.

The agency's annual bowling fundraiser, Bowl for Kids' Sake, was a resounding success, raising \$25,000 in cash and in-kind donations in support of local mentoring programming.

"We ended up with 25 teams, which is in the ballpark of what we did last year," shared executive director Jenelle Neufeld, noting they also teamed up with Gateway Resources to fill out the lane time slots with additional enthusiastic bowlers. "It's a way for us to partner with other non-profits and be able to give back ourselves, because we're not always able to do that financially."

"They brought six teams and brought in \$700 worth of pledges—so that was an added bonus."

The event also had numerous lane sponsors from local businesses eager

to support the cause, and numerous companies donated goodies for the prize raffle or sponsored teams.

"It's all appreciated and all needed and just so fantastic," Neufeld said.

The funds go to help Big Bros. continue to offer its programming, which fosters positive relationships between kids and adult volunteers through one-on-one and group mentoring programs across the region.

"We are doing our very best to expand our programming," Neufeld shared, noting they've recently expanded their staff complement and hours to speed up the volunteer assessment/qualification and matching processes.

As always, the agency is in need of volunteers to make more mentoring matches possible. There are always about a dozen or so kids on the wait list.

"We have expanded our programming to do more group programming because there is such a lack of volunteers," Neufeld shared, noting last



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Some Bowl for Kids' Sake bowlers came in costume to the fundraiser at VB's Entertainment Centre in Winkler last week.

fall's Grow Youth program saw 15 young ladies come together for a one-day workshop to learn about physical wellness, balanced eating, self-esteem, and leadership. "The feedback we got really brings it all back home why we do this."

They're planning a second workshop for girls in June and another targeted at middle school boys hopefully in fall, if they can find the volunteer facilitators for it.

So far this year, the agency has had 52 children involved in its programs. Their goal is to reach 200.

It's a lofty goal, but one Neufeld is confident they'll reach.

"When you get these group programs going and you're doing 10 or 15 kids participating at a time, it really adds up," she said. "And we're hopefully going to be expanding our Grow program umbrella. We've reworked the Go Girls after school program to be more digestible—it used to be seven weeks long and we've cut it down to four, still including all the important topics and conversations but requiring less of a time commitment."

If you'd like to get involved, connect with Big Brother Big Sisters online at pembinavalley.bigbrothersbigisters.ca.

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Local youth receive Yes I Can awards, scholarships

By Lorne Stelmach

Three area students were among those honoured recently by the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children.

The provincial branch of the national Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) presented its 35th annual Yes I Can awards in connection to its mission to improve the quality of education for exceptional children and youth with a range of abilities and disabilities.

Morden Collegiate student Benny Wiebe was honoured in the transition category, which celebrates achievement in activities that lead to successful experiences in such areas as work, vocational training, or independent living.

Jessica Derksen of Rosenort School and Gracie Beckett of Nellie McClung Collegiate in Manitou were both recipients of transition scholarships, which are available to students with exceptional needs who are transitioning from high school to after-school life such as post-secondary education, job training, or employment.

Wiebe was cited for his incredible perseverance and dedication in his journey toward independence and success in the workforce. While he has faced significant challenges in communication, social interaction and executive functioning, he has never wavered in his determination to succeed.

With the support of an individualized education plan, specialized programs, and therapies tailored to his needs, Wiebe has developed essential life and work skills, allowing him to thrive in vocational training and independent living.

His hard work has led him to employment at the local thrift store, Giant Tiger, and the Pembina Valley Humane Society. Beyond his personal achievements, Benny has become an inspiration to his peers, demonstrat-

ing that with the right support, resilience, and dedication, anything is possible.

Wiebe said through resource teacher Kari Friesen that the award made him feel good and proud. He said he likes to keep busy and enjoys being with his friends at school and work.

"And Benny, if you met him in person, he would just put a smile on your face," shared Friesen, who also works in the life skills area at Morden Collegiate.

She noted Wiebe likes being involved in recycling at school as well as putting up the flag out front. In the future, he will go to work at Gateway Resources in Winkler.

"He is a huge part of our school community here. Everybody knows who he is. Everybody sees him in the hall and meets and greets him. You can't help but smile after having any interaction with him for sure."

Derksen was cited for having had a variety of experiences working with younger children including as a babysitter, a counsellor at the Roseau River Bible Camp, and as a volunteer in a Grade 1-2 class at Rosenort School. In the classroom, she led small group activities, helped students individually, and assisted with outdoor supervision.

Her citation noted that Derksen is able to anticipate the needs of students and then jump into action without being told, so this made her a valuable classroom volunteer.

One of her standout qualities is her drive to overcome adversity. Even when faced with significant challenges, she is determined to tackle each situation with a positive mindset while remaining upbeat and not allowing setbacks to hinder her progress. This attitude not only contributes to her success but also has a positive influence on those around her.

Her goal is to obtain early childhood education credentials so she can have a successful career in a day care.

"HE'S A HUGE PART OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY HERE."



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Above: Morden Collegiate vice principals Mike Ward and Chris Chiappetta with Benny Wiebe and his Yes I Can Award. Right: Rosenort School's Jessica Derksen receives her scholarship. Below: Gracie Beckett from Nellie McClung Collegiate in Manitou also received a scholarship from the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children.



Derksen offered a brief comment via email that the support will be vital to her future plans.

"Getting this scholarship helps me pursue my dreams in getting into college so I can do my early childhood education," she said. "Working with kids is something I enjoy doing."

Beckett was cited for having volunteered at such events as a local day care's Halloween party and at the Honey, Garlic and Maple Syrup Festival and also being part of two plays at the Manitou Opera House.

When she was younger, she enjoyed giving gifts and support to children diagnosed with cancer.

Beckett began her journey at Best Western Plus in Morden as a volunteer at the age of 15 and in three years has grown into a hardworking, dedicated, and dependable employee. Beckett plans to continue to build her skills at the hotel.



Continued on page 6



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Headway made on Plum Coulee pedestrian bridge

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Plum Coulee is getting closer to having its long-awaited pedestrian bridge in place.

After years of planning, appealing to the government for approval, and fundraising, headway has finally been made at the site alongside the Hespler Drain that cuts the north side of the community from the south.

A pair of concrete piers have been installed on either side of the dike—a sign of things to come, shares committee member Allen Funk.

“The pilings went down and then the structure on top of the pilings was just done,” he said last week. “A couple of days ago they took the boarding off and we’re good to start building the actual bridge.”

The 37-foot long, six-foot wide bridge will make it easier and safer for residents to get from either end of the community; currently, the official route requires pedestrians to go the long way around and walk down a busy highway.

Given the rate of development in Plum Coulee’s south side, that’s just



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Allen Funk and June Letkeman, pedestrian bridge committee members, in front of the pillars that have been installed. The hope is to start construction on the bridge itself this summer.

not safe nor feasible anymore, says bridge committee chair June Letkeman.

“Just look at that new development,” she said, gesturing to the houses being built a stone’s throw from the bridge site. “This is so important. We

really need this bridge.”

“We’ll have instant use on it,” added Funk.

The committee hopes to begin building the bridge this summer and to have it completed and in use sometime in fall.

But they need to do one more big fundraising push to get the project across the finish line.

The entire build comes with a price tag of about \$450,000. They’ve raised more than \$250,000 so far and have high hopes that a few sizeable government grants will bring the remaining total down significantly.

“We’re thinking if we go to our supporters and we’re able to find about \$100,000 more in donations, that’ll do it,” Funk says.

The community has really thrown its support behind this project, and Letkeman is confident this last bit will be achieved, especially now that progress can be seen at the site itself.

For \$250 you can sponsor a board on the bridge, with your name recognized at the site in thanks.

“We’ve sold quite a few of those already,” Letkeman shared, thanking every donor so far and urging those who have been considering making a donation to do so now.

Donations can be made by reaching out to Letkeman at 204-362-0501 or Kyle Wiebe at 204-362-4730.

Winkler council approves \$28.2M budget for 2025

By Ashleigh Viveiros

At its March 25 meeting, Winkler city council unveiled a \$28.2 million financial plan for the year ahead that will see the average ratepayer’s tax bill increase by 4.2 per cent.

“We’ve been working over the last number of years to try to make sure that we do the things that we have to do in order to set Winkler up to be a financially sustainable community for the long-term and for us to finish our projects as we need to,” Mayor Henry Siemens said of the rise in taxes. “We’ve been careful to try to minimize those increases as much as possible, looking at a slow and steady pace to doing that. And mostly, we’re well on track.”

The request from the Pembina Valley Water Co-op last year for a sizeable injection of capital funding from its members, coupled with several major capital projects on the go in Winkler itself, required a slightly higher increase than usual this year, the mayor noted.

“We’ve been shooting towards that three per cent-ish number over the term of our three-year budget to try to go back to the community carefully and not ask for too much too quick-

ly, but to still allow us to decrease the amount of time that we put debentures out there and allow us to build out the three major projects that we’re mid-project on, whether we look at the wastewater treatment or water treatment or the arena renovations.

“Those projects are coming along well, they’re coming along on budget, on time, but it is still monies being spent, so we want to make sure that we allow ourselves room to also fund our reserves so we’re able to repair, replace, and renew projects as they need to happen.”

To that end, the city has undertaken a comprehensive asset management plan to determine exactly what infrastructure and equipment it has, how old it is, and when it might need to be replaced. The replacement value across the board is pegged at over \$391M.

That together with the new multi-year financial plan allows council to better plan for the future while also saving \$7.8 million in interest by reducing debenture terms to 10 years from the previous 20.

“That’s an absolutely huge amount of money that we’re able to leave for the future rather than paying it in interest,” Siemens noted.

The three-year plan—which calls for tax increases of 3.30 per cent for both 2026 and 2027—gives city staff a much clearer picture of the funding available when it comes to long-term strategic planning.

“That long-term planning allows us to get to a financially sustainable community that delivers the services that they need, that our community wants and desires, at exactly the right time,” Siemens said. “We’re confident that this is the route to go. It will help Winkler get to a place that we’re able to do what we need to do when we need to do it, without coming [to taxpayers] for a really big ask in any given year.”

The 2025 budget sees the mill rate decrease from 13.967 to 13.315. But because it’s an assessment year, property values have gone up, which means the city will take in about \$17.2 million (61 per cent of its revenue for the year) even with the lower mill rate.

For a residential home previously assessed at \$300,000 but now valued at \$330,600, municipal taxes will increase \$95.33 to \$1,980, a 5.06 per cent increase. Taxpayers will also pay a \$160 waste fee and \$91 for the city’s health care funding special levy for a total tax bill of \$2,231.

Meanwhile, a commercial property valued at \$1 million last year but \$1.077M this year is looking at a tax bill of \$9,321, a 2.67 per cent increase of \$242. Commercial ratepayers also pay the \$91 health care funding levy.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

From the operating budget of \$28.2 million, a full 23 per cent goes to reserves, 17 per cent to fund the police department, 14 per cent to recreation and culture, 11 per cent to both administration and transportation costs, 10 per cent for fiscal services, four per cent to waste disposal, and three per cent each to the fire, planning, and economic departments.

The \$4.5M utilities budget covers several major capital expenditures, including a much-needed new vacuum truck, well replacements, and \$1.47M for the ongoing manhole restoration project.

Other expenditures for the year ahead include \$693,000 on equipment (including a new sand truck and a truck for the fire department) and \$1.6M on transportation/drainage projects, including the renewal of

Continued on page 5

Home Routes tour looking for venues in Morden-Winkler

By Lorne Stelmach

The people behind a grassroots music movement and are going strong and hoping to expand their footprint in southern Manitoba.

Home Routes/Chemin Chez Nous was founded in 2007 with the aim of building more infrastructure for folk and roots musicians to play in more communities across Canada.

It is being achieved by partnering with local community members to create a network of hosts across the country who donate their time and homes or find appropriate venues to host music events in intimate and unique settings.

"We would love to have a host in Morden and Winkler ... maybe half of the season could be in Morden, half could be in Winkler," speculated Leonard Podolak, one of the lead organizers.

Since 2007, it is estimated Home Routes has been involved with close to 12,000 concerts in 50-plus communities across Canada involving over 1,100 touring artists.

What makes Home Routes special is it offers a rare chance to experience live music in a cozy, welcoming setting, creates opportunities for audiences to connect personally with artists, and supports musicians by providing guaranteed performance fees and well-organized tour routes.

Its success relies on dedicated community members who open their homes or small venues to host artists and create unforgettable live music experiences, said Podolak, as they seek to expand and draw music lovers to join their network.

"We're working mostly in communities that are sort of off the typical beaten path," he said. "It's a rare opportunity to discover something new and to bring the community together."

It is a good opportunity for the artists as well, Podolak noted. The tours draw on talent with varying levels of success and achievements and a wide range of styles.

"We work with artists who have been there and also artists who are going there," he said. "We work with artists from all across Canada and sometimes around the world."

There is something special about the feel-

ing and the vibe around the shows being in a smaller setting.

"It's mostly in houses, in people's private homes, which creates a completely different and way more intimate setting for a concert ... everybody is all in the room there together," Podolak said. "Our hosts are community volunteers who are doing all of this work. It is a huge contribution that you can make to your community."

"It's more than just moving the furniture—you have to spread the word in town. It's a bit of a job, but it's rewarding ... we like to say it's like you're back stage."

Deandra Braun, events and activities co-ordinator at The Gardens on Tenth in Altona, noted they have been involved with the Home Routes tours for the past two seasons and also before the pandemic.

"The Home Routes shows have been great. We have a crowd of 25 to 35 people usually, and there's a variety of different music

genres that come through, which is also great. They stay in our guest suite for the night and have supper and breakfast in our facility.

"It's a great way to have music from across Canada and the world come through and share their music," Braun added.

"Being a Home Routes host feels fantastic. We are bringing incredible artists to rural locations and this is huge. Be it living rooms or small venues, we are thrilled to be a part of this," said Pamela Cavers of United Community Arts in Pilot Mound, where they share the concert season with a couple of other local communities including Baldur, Cypress River, and Cartwright.

QUITE A LINEUP

Podolak shared that they have had a great lineup of performers this season so far.

The most recent tour in March featured Gangspil in Pilot Mound and Altona. The act took audiences on an entertaining journey through the traditions of Danish folk music, including old dance tunes and songs from every corner of their Scandinavian home country.

Up next is fiddler Olivia Barrett and harpist Ellen Gibling performing old and new folk

"OUR HOSTS ARE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS ... IT'S A HUGE CONTRIBUTION THAT YOU CAN MAKE TO YOUR COMMUNITY."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Artists Olivia Barrett and Ellen Gibling perform the Home Routes tour in April, including a stop in Altona April 10.

music. They take the stage April 10 in Altona.

"What a wonderful group of musicians across so many genres ... the season will be diverse ... it's a real smorgasbord," said Podolak.

Continued on page 9

Spring flood outlook remains low to moderate

By Voice staff

Manitoba is looking at a low-to-moderate risk of spring flooding, the provincial forecast centre announced last week.

As always, extreme weather conditions over the next few weeks could change things, but right now the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure's Hydrologic Forecast Centre advises that most Manitoba lakes are expected to be within desired operating ranges after the spring runoff, making the risk of flooding there low.

A moderate risk of flooding is in effect for the Assiniboine River main stem from Russell to Brandon, Souris River, Qu'Appelle River, and Interlake region (including the Fisher River and Icelandic River).

A low/minor flood risk is in effect for the Red River, Pembina River, Rat River, Roseau River, Winnipeg River, Saskatchewan River, Churchill River, Carrot River and Swan River, and the Whiteshell Lakes area.

The system that brought snow to much of central and southern Manitoba last weekend was factored into this outlook, the centre noted.

Depending on precipitation over the coming weeks, minimal operation of the Red River Floodway and the Portage Diversion may be necessary. The Shellmouth Dam is being operated in consultation with the Shellmouth Dam liaison committee to provide storage capacity for reservoir inflows to reduce flooding downstream as well as ensure a sufficient reservoir level for recreation and water supply.

Ice-cutting and breaking activities have been completed on the Red and Icelandic rivers and were slated taking place on Fisher River last week.

As warmer weather sets in, Manitobans are advised to stay off the ice on waterways, rivers, and retention ponds.

> BUDGET, FROM PG. 4

Main St. (the adjacent parts of it, at least, that the city are responsible for, as it's a provincially-owned roadway), Crystal Cres., and the city's bike path system.

Speaking to that last project, Siemens noted the plan is to finish extending the Winkler system to connect east of town with the Re-

infeld path.

"That's part of making sure that we have as much active trail network as we can, and to expand it where we can and renew it where it needs to be renewed," he said.

The full budget presentation is available on the City of Winkler's YouTube channel.

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



It is April, a time of newness, a time of fresh growth and life, but the world feels like it forgot about spring and is settling into a long winter.

How easy is it to look around us and become pessimistic?

We continue to see global conflict and death with no sign of end. There is fear, uncertainty, and doubt everywhere. Prices are rising in the face of massive tectonic political and economic shifts around the world, and people are quick to blame with little real information.

Ugh. One is tempted to believe we live in the worst of times.

Once this temptation falls on me I take a deep breath and work hard to find things to be thankful of.

I'm thankful I am not my grandparents, who fled the anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia in the early 1900s that saw thousands of Jews, men, women, and children murdered and their property stolen.

I'm thankful I'm not my grandfather, who sat as a tail gunner in RAF Lancaster bombers through the entirety of WW2 after joining at the tender age of 18. A role that had an average lifespan of two weeks.

I'm thankful I'm not my mum, who, at the young age of 17, homeless and placed in an asylum as was the practice then when there were no foster homes available, was subjected to

electroshock therapy because, for some reason, she was sad.

I know this falls into the "it could be worse" category but, frankly, it could be worse—substantially worse.

I live in what I consider the greatest country on earth. I have free health-care; I own a home and two cars. I have an awesome job. I have incredible children and the most amazing, loving wife a guy could ask for.

For me, things could be far worse.

In 2011 Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker asserted in his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, that humans are currently living in the most peaceful time in our entire history. Right now. This is hopeful.

It is not so hopeful to the Palestinian living in Gaza or the mother of an Israeli hostage. It is not so hopeful for the family whose young son is fighting on the front lines in Ukraine or those currently suffering devastation in Syria and elsewhere certainly.

But for me, for many, things could be substantially worse.

The point? My anxiety. My angst and fear. These things feel real, but they could easily be relegated to the category of "first world problems" and I need to reflect on that before diving into the deep end of hopelessness.

Heck, even within Canada things are not so bad for me. I mean, I know someone paying almost \$2,500 a month rent for a one-bedroom apartment outside of Toronto. By comparison, Manitoba is far more affordable.

I'm not saying "stop being sad" because frankly that kind of statement is wildly unhelpful. I am saying take a look around you and cast your vision further afield than your living room to build some context around your sad.

Find that thin golden thread of hope we all need, whatever (or whomever) it is, and hang onto it like it's a lifeline.



By Peter Cantelon

> AWARDS, FROM PG. 3

"Gracie is an extraordinary young lady, and her journey is an inspiration to all who meet her," her mother Elizabeth shared in commenting on Beckett's behalf. "Whether it's handing out homemade cards and gifts to children at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or celebrating her remarkable 15-year milestone of being cancer-free by raising donations for the Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Support Group, Gracie's generosity knows no bounds.

"She finds joy in giving back to her community, and her actions speak volumes about her character. Despite the challenges she has faced,

Gracie has never let adversity dim her light," Elizabeth said. "Gracie's path has not always been easy, especially when it comes to learning. Yet, through perseverance, an incredible team of educators and an unwavering positive attitude, she has overcome each obstacle," she continued. "She has worked incredibly hard, not only to overcome her personal challenges but also to help others along the way.

"Receiving this scholarship is a testament to her dedication, perseverance and selflessness. Gracie is truly proud of what she's accomplished, and so is everyone who has had the privilege of witnessing her growth."

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Former Portage-Lisgar MP honoured

By Lorne Stelmach

Former Portage-Lisgar MP Candice Bergen was able to hand out many honours during her time serving in Parliament, but she instead was now the recipient of one.

Bergen was among the recipients of the King Charles III Coronation Medals presented recently by Manitoba senator Don Plett.

The award was in recognition of her service that included serving as an MP from 2008 to 2023 as well as taking on the role of interim leader of the Conservative Party and the leader of the Opposition from February to September 2022.

"It was a lovely surprise ... I was very happy and excited ... it was obviously an honour," said Bergen, who now calls Winnipeg home.

"I've given away a number of different medals. The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal I gave when I was a MP, and I gave away the Queen's Plati-

num Medal," she recalled. "But now, being retired, to be on the receiving end was really lovely.

"It's very kind and gratifying, and I felt quite honoured by it all," Bergen said, recalling that presenting the platinum medals was one of her last official events before retiring from elected office.

"So many people do so many things to contribute to our community and our province, so it's wonderful to be able to give," she said. "They say to be able to give is better than to receive, but receiving one was pretty nice as well."

Bergen added it was also special to receive it from Plett.

"He was there when I was helping the party back together and was able to shepherd us through a pretty difficult time, so him recognizing what I did in that way ... he really saw it as a service not just to our party but to the country, who needed a strong opposition at that time."

Bergen takes pride in her time in office and her service to the country.

"When I think about it, I go, wow, I can't believe a girl from Morden, Manitoba ended up being the leader of the official opposition," she said, noting that she was actually the last leader of Her Majesty's Royal Opposition and then the first leader of His Majesty's Royal Opposition.

"I look back fondly at that time," she said. "Obviously, being a Member of Parliament was a great honour, and I was happy to be able to serve Portage-Lisgar.

"A lot happened over the course of being an MP, but then being able to be the leader during that very difficult tumultuous time in the party, in the country ... the emergencies act was being invoked ... people were very upset," said Bergen.

"I was able to bring my party back together, come back to our Conservative principles, which was so important for our party to get back to what



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Candice Bergen received the coronation medal from Senator Don Plett.

we believed as Conservatives ... and then be an effective and strong opposition ... I held Justin Trudeau to account and did it with a really great team behind me."

Winkler chamber announces business award winners

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce is shining a spotlight on five local businesses and organizations with its 2025 P.W. Enns Business Awards.

"For all of the awards, the nominations come in from the community," said chamber executive director Tanya Chateauf. "So these are outstanding businesses that the community has selected.

"They're outstanding in many different areas ... how they contribute to our community and give back, their workplace culture and how they treat their employees, and then also the experience from the customer's point of view as well."

The winners include:

- Business Excellence Award: Tri Koating Inc. This family-owned and operated business provides power coating, manufacturing, and assembly services to the area. Since 2013, they've grown from 6,600 square feet to 56,000 sq. ft., operating three paint lines and one of the largest custom

powder coating ovens in Manitoba.

- Business Builder Award: Mulligans Restaurant. This restaurant serves as a complement to the Winkler Centennial Golf Course, offering everything from burgers and fries to fine dining courtesy of owner Andrea Thiessen and chef Nathan Pelsner and their dedicated staff.

- Community Builder Award: The Property Brokers Real Estate Group Inc. Realtors Wes Harder and Tim Friesen started up this real estate company from scratch, bringing together over 25 years of experience in the industry when they did so. Today have become a fixture in the Winkler area real estate market.

- Customer Service Award: EMCO Corporation. Founded in Ontario in 1906, this company is one of the oldest members of the construction market in Canada. They are one of the nation's largest integrated distributors of construction products, providing top-level customer service in each of their local branches.

- Non-Profit Service Award: Katie Cares. Through the Katie's Cottage

respite home, this charity provides a home away from home for families who need to be close to the hospital while a loved one receives care. They also provide teddy bears and care packages to child patients.

The awards will be presented at a gala taking place the evening of Wednesday, May 14 at the Buttercup Celebration Hall.

HONOURING EXCELLENCE

Taking time to celebrate the accomplishments of Winkler businesses is important to the chamber, Chateauf noted.

"Over the last few years, the business community has struggled with many different challenges, and they continue to do so," she said. "So I think it's important to sit back and say, 'Hey, what are we doing right? How can we celebrate that?'"

"It's also a way to bring our community together, so we work with our sponsors to put on this event. We definitely wouldn't be able to do it without them, so we're grateful to

our sponsors who help us celebrate these businesses awards for our community."

The chamber is trying something new with this year's gala, as there will not be a guest speaker.

"We're really putting a huge focus on celebrating the award recipients," Chateauf explained. "And we're doing a four-course dinner, which is a little unique for us, adding a course in there and creating a real food experience as well."

There will also be local entertainment, though those details were still being firmed up at press time.

Tickets are \$150 each, plus tax, and can be reserved online at winklerchamber.com/events or by emailing admin@winklerchamber.com.

All are welcome to attend, chamber member or not.

"We really want this evening to be about celebrating, about everyone having a good time, and the opportunity to network and really connect with people around the table," Chateauf said.

The **Voice**

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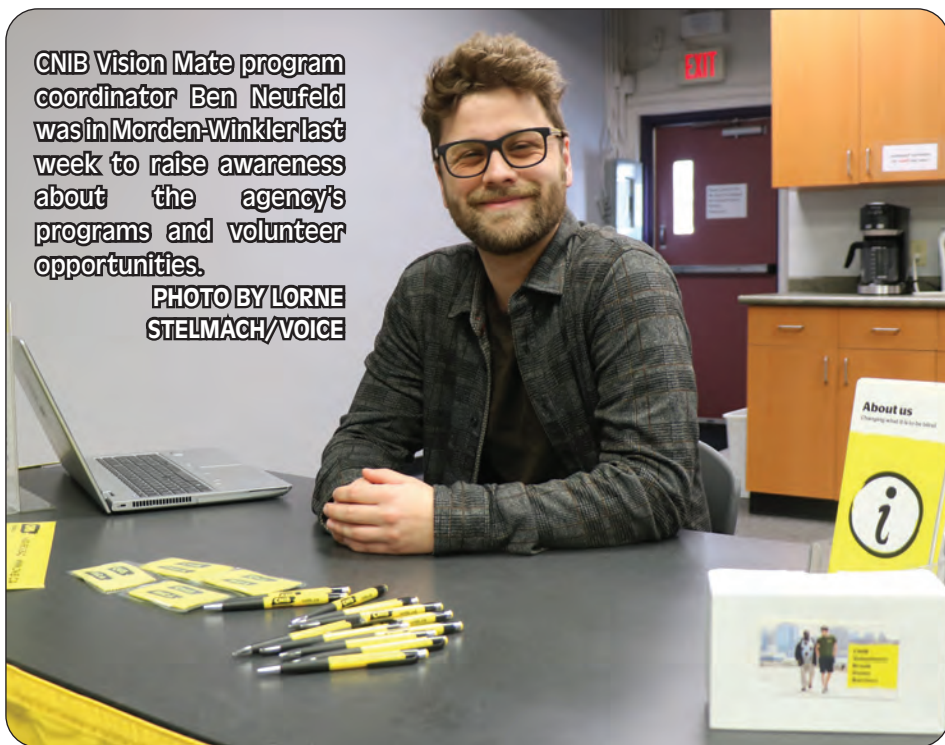
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get informed

CNIB visit raises awareness in Morden-Winkler

CNIB Vision Mate program coordinator Ben Neufeld was in Morden-Winkler last week to raise awareness about the agency's programs and volunteer opportunities.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



Multiple programs for the visually impaired are looking for local volunteers

By Lorne Stelmach

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) visited Morden and Winkler last week to not only raise awareness but also with the hope of recruiting volunteers.

Ultimately, the organization would love to see a support group in place in the area for those who are either blind or with low vision.

"We had done a Mobile Hub out in Steinbach ... and the feedback we received from that is about trying to set up a group or reestablish a group so that people have more of a regular peer support," said Ben Neufeld, who is Vision Mate co-ordinator and Mobile Hub co-ordinator for CNIB in Manitoba. "The same thing is true in the Morden and Winkler context ... you want folks to have common spaces where they can gather together and share their challenges.

"With any group, it really hinges a lot on who the facilitators are ... if they really make people feel welcome."

Neufeld touched on the Mobile Hub, which is an initiative to bring awareness of the CNIB resources and services available to people and families living with vision loss.

Visits to communities like Morden and Winkler also serve to help CNIB and Neufeld make connections in the community while also promoting the Vision Mate program.

"I'm just going around Morden and chatting with folks and getting a better understanding of the community," he said.

There are volunteer virtual and in-person opportunities available for those who want to get involved.

"The virtual is having routine phone calls with someone who's blind or low vision," Neufeld explained, "and the classic would be helping someone in their home or out in the community doing different things like assisting them in getting groceries or stopping by for a social visit ... going for a walk, kind of whatever they want to get up to," he said.

"I like people to match for about two hours in a given week," he added, noting it doesn't need to take that much time to make a real difference in a person's life.

The key to the whole process is building a relationship with the clients.

"I think the important thing is to let people know they're not alone in their challenges and that there's a broader network that they can connect to," Neufeld said. "And as an organization, we have some different supports to try to reach people and then expanding that to reach more Manitobans."

To learn more about volunteering or CNIB programming, head to cnib.ca.

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Stanley Soil reports on a busy year

By Lorne Stelmach

The past year was another busy one for the Stanley Soil Management Association.

From selling and planting trees to dealing with a notorious noxious weed, the association continues to be busy and see continued growth and interest.

"There's important work being done, and it's a lot of interesting work," said technician Richard Warkentin following the association's annual meeting last Friday.

One of their most significant ventures each year is tree planting as well as their maintenance and care.

"We planted 19 miles of trees, and we planted eight miles of trees in gaps," Warkentin said, estimating over 18,000 trees were planted across the region.

"One of the biggest projects that we did was we also participated in a project at Swan Lake First Nation. We were involved in the planting of over 22,000 trees on a 60 acres piece of property," he said, noting they were mostly planted by machine but some had to be done by hand.

"It was a time consuming project. It

was a major plantation that we were involved with there," Warkentin said, noting it also involved both the Pembina Valley and Redboine watershed districts.

In addition, there were various other planting projects across a large area of southern Manitoba with over a dozen sites involved.

"The biggest one was about five miles of trees that we planted at a site near Letellier."

In addition, tree sales involved almost 40,000 trees being sold to over 60 customers. About 45 per cent of these trees were planted at Pembina Valley Watershed District sites.

"One of their big programs is the shelterbelt planting," shared Warkentin. "We have become more of a tree supplier, and last year we actually sold approximately 40,000 trees, and almost 18,000 of those trees were supplied to Pembina Valley Watershed District projects."

Meanwhile, another significant ongoing project revolves around diffuse knapweed, which is rated as a tier one noxious weed and is located in a particular area of the RM of Stanley.

"And it's the only place in all of Manitoba where this noxious weed is



STANLEY SOIL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION PHOTO

Stanley Soil Management Association staffers were kept busy this past year across the region.

found, and tier one means if you see it, you have to destroy it," Warkentin said. "It's got the potential of becoming a real problem ... we try to contain it."

"We spent basically one day doing some cursory scouting, and we found so many plants," he added. "It's concerning that this diffuse knapweed seems to be increasing, and we'll have to raise more awareness. The landowner is the biggest part and needs to be aware of it."

"This year was worse. I've never really seen as much in all the years that I've been monitoring it. We have to be more diligent in getting it."

Finally, Warkentin said some of his time is also devoted to raising aware-

ness, particularly with youth.

"We got some funding through the Two Billion Tree Program to make school presentations," he said, noting they also have a presence at various festivals and events such as Arbor Day in Morden. "I did quite a few school presentations on the value of trees. That was kind of fun to do ... and we handed out some trees."

At the AGM, guest speaker David Scott of Swan Lake First Nations touched on a youth environmental training program. The goal is to bring aboriginal and non-aboriginal youth together in land-based environmental training through both Ojibwe teachings and western science.

Morden Festival of the Arts April sessions coming up

By Voice staff

The Morden Festival of the Arts continues this month for the final sessions of its 50th year.

The vocal and choral takes place April 14-15 at Morden Mennonite Church with vocal Monday at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. then choral Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

There will be solos and duets as well as choirs from J.R. Walkof School, Morden Collegiate, École Morden Middle School, École Discovery

Trails, and Minnewasta School through the day Tuesday.

Next then will be French and English speech arts April 22-23 at 9:30 a.m., 1:15 p.m., and 7 p.m. Tuesday and 9 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Wednesday at the Morden Alliance Church.

There will be solos, duets, trios and quartets as well as 10 speech choirs participating from ÉMMS and Discovery Trails in both French and English.

On that Wednesday, April 23, there will also be

a band session starting at 9 a.m. in the Morden Collegiate band room.

The finale of the festival will be the highlights concert Sunday, May 4 at 2 p.m. at Westside Community Church with performances recommended by the adjudicators of each discipline throughout the festival season. Admission is by donation.

Awards will be presented to many festival participants, with some recommended to represent the local festival at the provincial level. The 2025 Loreena McKennitt Award will also be presented to a festival participant judged to have reached a level of excellence in his or her musical studies and who plans to continue studies and pursue a career in the performing arts.

> HOME ROUTES, FROM PG. 5

Performers have also sung the praises of Home Routes.

"Whenever I tour this way, I learn so much about people and how to put on a strong solo show," shared musician Shari Ulrich. "It's single-handedly responsible for me being a much better performer. I think Home Routes is the greatest friend to artists, audiences and Canada."

"The beauty of Home Routes is the audience is so appreciative and supportive," said sing-

er-songwriter William Prince. "Playing two full sets for a house of people is incredible. You can feel the response without amplification, and you're not fighting anyone in the room for your place."

"Time spent with music lovers who cook real meals and open their homes as a haven of rest—it's a beautiful journey. Home Routes is a treasure and tremendous support in keeping live music thriving and artists driving."

To learn more about hosting a Home Routes show, head to their website: www.homeroutes.ca.



Winkler, Morden galleries part of Flash Photographic Festival

By Lorne Stelmach

The art galleries in Winkler and Morden are both part of a province-wide program to celebrate photography and lens-based art.

The Flash Photographic Festival involves over 50 venues across Manitoba this year, including 12 rural and northern venues for the first time.

Winkler Arts and Culture will feature the *For The Love Of Birds* photography exhibit by Walter Dueck in its upper gallery, while the Pembina Hills Gallery in Morden will have a group exhibit of work from various

local photographers.

Morden gallery director Jennifer Smirl said it is cool to be part of something that is happening across Manitoba.

"There's lots of different stuff going on," she said. "And I think it's just going to be getting bigger and bigger, and in the future, we hope to have more co-events happening here as well."

She suggested there is great potential here with a lot of talented photographers in the area, such as those who are involved with the Through the Lens group on Facebook.

"We're not hugely connected to them ... we have been in the past, and we would like to be again," said Smirl, who sees this exhibit as perhaps being a step towards more photography shows and programming.

"We haven't been getting a lot of photography work in the gallery recently, so this is a great opportunity for us to connect with a whole different part of the arts world," she said. "We hope to have more photography programming too."

The Winkler exhibit will mark the third time Dueck has had his work exhibited at the gallery, including one that was a solo show and another that was a group exhibit.

"It's quite exciting," he said. "I had asked them about doing a show at the gallery, and then they asked me if I wanted to be part of the flash photography festival."

Dueck does nature, wildlife and landscape photography. His pieces for this exhibition are all of birds.

"Birds are definitely a big part of the whole scheme and the hobby that I have," he said. "It's a passion that I've had since about 1985 when I bought my first 35 mm camera ... from there on in, I've pursued photography, and I'm obviously doing digital."

He has always found capturing images of birds to be an exciting challenge.

"Photographing birds is about timing and taking your time, and it's about being quick but at the same time also about being patient," said Dueck. "It's about seizing the moment and kind of anticipating what the bird might do. You need to sort of have a

bit of knowledge about the habits and the locations ... to see where they may be possibly nesting and feeding and then be patient and wait.

"I remember the photo as an experience," he noted, adding he appreciates being able to be part of having photography in the spotlight.

"I think it's an amazing thing ... it's a great way for photographers to kind of get some recognition ... it's really special to get that recognition ... it's an honour to be considered to be on that level."

The lead organizer of the festival especially likes having various rural Manitoba galleries involved this year.

"I am overwhelmed with the generosity from all of the participating venues urban and rural and the sincere enthusiasm for photography and lens-based work," said Diana Thorneycroft, co-ordinator of the Flash Photographic Festival. "It's been incredibly time consuming putting this festival together, but it's going to be amazing."

"This year's Flash Festival marks a milestone for rural and Northern artists as well as the venues that champion their work," added Rose-Anne Harder, executive director of the Manitoba Arts Network. "These spaces are vital to their communities, providing artists with a platform to share their perspectives. We're thrilled to see both the artists and venues represented in such a significant way this year."

The Flash Photographic Festival runs through April. For more information, head online to www.flashfest.net.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The work of Walter Dueck will be on display at the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre as part of the Flash Photographic Festival this month. Photos from area artists will also be up at the Pembina Hills Gallery in Morden.

"Unstoppable Tracy" to speak at Gateway Resources gala

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The fifth annual Gateway Resources Gala takes place at the Buttercup Celebration Hall on Thursday, May 8, and there's still time to reserve your seat.

The evening will provide guests with a glimpse inside Gateway's programs and the impact they have on adults living with intellectual disabilities in our community.

"The revenue generated from this helps us to do so many projects for our agency, but our biggest thing with this is getting the communities to know all about Gateway," says CEO Kim Nelson. "Everyone knows a piece about Gateway, but they don't necessarily understand the vast impact that the communities have on

Gateway and that we have on our communities."

The agency currently has over 200 clients living in their residential facilities, attending life enrichment programs, or finding meaningful employment in their recycling and wood room divisions.

Gala guests will get to hear from some of those clients, and from Gateway staff as well, Nelson said.

"We will have stories from a number of individuals, and a short video to display what Gateway does."

The evening will also feature a guest speaker this year: Canadian Disability Hall of Fame member Tracy Schmitt, a.k.a. "Unstoppable Tracy."

Schmitt is a quadruple amputee who hasn't let her disabilities stop her

from climbing mountains, competing in sailing competitions, and winning a bronze medal in alpine downhill para-skiing at the Ontario Parasport Games.

"The perseverance that she shows is something that we see on a daily basis here at Gateway," Nelson said, noting Schmitt's story of strength and joy in life is an inspiring one and a great fit for the gala.

Tickets are \$100 each and are available until April 17 by calling 204-325-7304 ext. 260 or emailing corinne@gatewayresourcesinc.com.

Tracy Schmitt will share her story of perseverance as the guest speaker at the Gateway Resources Gala May 8.

SUPPLIED PHOTO



Tom Friesen wins national championship with BU Bobcats

By Lorne Stelmach

A Brandon University student born and raised in Reinfeld is now a national champion in his favourite sport.

Tom Friesen is part of the Brandon University Bobcats volleyball team that not only recently captured the national title in an upset but also pulled off the feat as the host team.

Friesen contributed 10 kills as eighth-ranked Brandon won their first-ever national title with a 3-1 (25-20, 22-25, 28-26, 25-17) victory over the defending champion and third-ranked Alberta Golden Bears.

The upset run by the Bobcats marked the first host team to capture the national title since Laval in 2013 and denied Alberta a chance to repeat as gold medalists and win their third title in four seasons.

The Bobcats ended their season as champions with an overall record of 13-12, while the Golden Bears finished at 21-6, and Friesen said it was a special feeling to be a national champion.

"It was really overwhelming right after we won. A lot of emotions, and it was a huge game. The building was sold out ... and it was a huge win against some of the top teams in the country."

It was extra special to win given how they may have been viewed as underdogs.

"Since we were hosting nationals, we automatically got into the nationals ... so during the regular season, we knew this was coming," Friesen said.

"We had times throughout the year where we were playing really well and times where we weren't quite at our potential," he said. "We really turned it up in the last few weeks of the season."

Throughout the season, he noted, the Bobcats had split their two games against all of the other teams.

"Against all the teams that we ended up playing in nationals, we knew had beaten them before ... so we definitely knew that we could do it. It was just a matter of playing our best every game."

Friesen was drawn to volleyball quite early on thanks in large part to his father.

"I've been playing volleyball since a pretty young age. My dad was the coach at WES [Winkler Elementary School]," he noted. "My dad played volleyball, and it was his main sport, and that got me into it, and I've enjoyed it a lot."

Growing up, he benefitted from having the Aztecs volleyball club, and he



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Reinfeld's Tom Friesen and the BU Bobcats won the U Sports Men's Volleyball Championship last month.

played for both the WES Wildcats and the Garden Valley Collegiate Zodiacs.

"Volleyball is a great team sport, which I think makes it more enjoyable," Friesen said. "It's really fun to play with a team that you really enjoy spending time with ... even if you're maybe not having your best day, your team's got your back."

He is now in his fifth year at Brandon University, but it is only his fourth year of eligibility due to his first year being lost as a result of the pandemic.

He plans to return to the court next school year, and is also looking forward to perhaps then playing professionally overseas in Europe.

"Volleyball's been a blast, and I want to use up all my years [of eligibility]," said Friesen. "I definitely know a few people on my team who are interested in playing pro ... if I'm good enough over the next year or so, that is definitely an option. Playing volleyball and getting paid for it would be absolutely awesome."

'Every Piece of Me' on at the Kenmor this weekend

By Lorne Stelmach

The latest play to hit the stage at the Kenmor Theatre in Morden is extra special.

Every Piece of Me was not only written by Morden resident Darien Dawley but features her as part of the cast as well.

For the 27-year-old Dawley, who moved to Morden three years ago, it's a treat to have her own play performed in her newfound theatrical home.

"Having my play make it on stage locally is such a gift," she said. "Having people I look up to and friends I've made in the theatre community believe in my story and be excited to bring it to life to our local audience — more people we love — is so encouraging."

"At the same time, it's terrifying to be this vulnerable, but having the people I love get it on stage with me makes it such a fun and memorable experience."

The play hits the Kenmor stage April

4-5 at 7 p.m. and April 6 at 3 p.m.

Along with experienced co-directors Chuck Fefchak and Richard Klassen, Dawley is directing and acting in the play she has been writing for over a year.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity for people to see my heart on stage," said Dawley. "The idea for this play came to me from experiences in my own life."

"The play is a comedy drama about a mother who is pulled into memories of her past while her children's lives fracture," she explained. "But it has a unique twist: the stage is visually split into two sets, which we don't see often. On one side, we have the past set in the '60s, and on the other, we have the present set in 1999."

Every Piece of Me features Ms. Miller, played by Darlene Reimer, as a mother who has buried secrets from her past and never revealed the identity of her children's father.

When celebrating her 66th birthday, her daughter Nancy, played by Emilie Fehr, discovers a box of journals and asks her mother to try to remember the identity of her father.

Miller's memories pull her back to the past to Joe's Diner, with its owner, the reliable and ready-to-listen Joe, played by Ezra Reimer. There also is his charming but impatient best friend Jackson, played by Andrew Doerksen, and Dawn, played by Dawley, an out-of-towner who stops by Joe's Diner only for a quick bite to eat.

As Ms. Miller immerses herself in her memories, her children's lives are falling apart: Nancy is facing a medical illness, and her brother Dawson, played by Keith Friesen, realizes his life has no direction.

When Ms. Miller reaches her last memory of their father, she faces the truth and how it changed her, learning to save the relationships that matter most to her.

"I wanted to express these themes in a way that's funny and real," shared Dawley. "My hope for audiences is that they'll be laughing their butts off throughout the play, and then taking a heartfelt message home with them."

Tickets are available by visiting candlewick.ca or by calling 204-822-7469.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Every Piece of Me is at the Kenmor Theatre in Morden this weekend.



End bullying in schools

Over the years, concerns have been growing about finding effective ways to end bullying in schools. The key is to adopt a unified and proactive approach. Here are some ways to do this:

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- Provide tools to help students develop empathy and social skills
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- Involve parents, students, school staff and management in developing prevention strategies
- Rigorously follow up on actions taken to ensure their effectiveness



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Marking Epilepsy Awareness Month

By Lorne Stelmach

Purple was the colour of the day last Wednesday for the annual epilepsy awareness campaign.

March was Epilepsy Awareness Month, and March 26 was Purple Day as a means to help make more people aware that epilepsy impacts 23,000 people in Manitoba alone.

"We're just trying to promote understanding as much as possible," said Chris Kullman, who not only lives with epilepsy but is also vice-president of the Epilepsy and Seizure Association of Manitoba.

"Epilepsy is a significant condition that people have, and it's important to understand it. There can be a big stigma around it," he suggested. "It's important that people understand what it is, how you get it ... there's still a lot of myths out there about it."

Epilepsy is a brain condition that causes recurring seizures. In some people the cause can be identified, but for others it's unknown.

Seizure symptoms can also vary widely. Some people may lose awareness during a seizure, while others don't. Some people stare blankly for a few seconds during a seizure, while others may repeatedly twitch their arms or legs as convulsions.

Having a single seizure doesn't mean you have epilepsy, which is diagnosed if you've had at least two unprovoked seizures at least 24 hours apart.

Treatment with medicines or sometimes surgery can control seizures for most people with epilepsy. Some require lifelong treatment, while for others, seizures go away. Some children with epilepsy may outgrow the condition.

The prevalence rate is about 1 in 100 Canadians—roughly 300,000 peo-

ple. Of those, 42,000 are children and youth. An estimated 54 new cases are diagnosed every day—about 20,000 Canadians.

"Awareness is the most important thing," said Kullman, who noted how it is estimated three or four per cent of people have epilepsy, while about one in ten will have a seizure sometime in their life.

"So multiply that by population and you've got a lot of people ... but it's not talked about very much, so that is what Purple Day can do, just increase the awareness.

"It's a worldwide recognition of epilepsy and promoting epilepsy awareness," he continued. "It's quite interesting because it was initiated by a young girl in 2008, and she just tried starting to do this on her own, and it actually just grew and grew and now it's worldwide, which is pretty great."

There is also an International Epilepsy Day on Feb. 10, but Purple Day has started to get good uptake in Manitoba, with many places lighting up purple such as the Dauphin city hall and Selkirk water tower.

"We have quite a few places in the province engage with us," Kullman noted. "The Legislative building will light up purple on the central tower after dark. The Winnipeg sign at The Forks was going to light up purple."

And Kullman feels there is much progress being made with Manitobans living with epilepsy now being able to access better treatment through a new epilepsy monitoring unit and an adjacent neurological recovery unit at the Health Sciences Centre.

"I have had epilepsy myself ... when I was a kid, there was just nothing out there ... and there was a stigma about it," he said. "Of course, with social media now, it makes it so much easier to get the word out there."



Manitoba landmarks lit up for Purple Day last week in honour of Epilepsy Awareness Month.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

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BTHC expansion progressing on schedule

By Lorne Stelmach

The expansion of Boundary Trails Health Centre continues to move along, and officials are pleased with where the project is at now.

"Everything is on track, everything's timing out well ... progress is going well, and everybody's really excited," said Kyle MacNair, who is the implementation lead for clinical programming with Southern Health-Santé Sud.

"I think people are excited to see things coming together," he added. "And we're also going heavy duty into recruitment now as well."

What had been estimated to be a \$100 million project is being completed in phases and will include 24 additional acute care inpatient beds, an expanded emergency department, new state-of-the-art operating room, expansion of the cancer care unit, dedicated space for palliative care services, and a level two nursery designed to provide services to premature newborns with complex feeding needs.

The new community services building will enable existing community services to be relocated from the current hospital building. Those services in the new building will include public health, midwifery, home care services, children and youth rehabilitation services, and a centre for hope healing garden and healing courtyard.

Then, once all of that has been ac-

complished, work will begin on the renovation of the existing hospital space.

"The first part of the project that doesn't get a lot of attention but is very critical is the energy centre," noted MacNair. "That's the backup generators and the building systems, and it's a separate building ... and it's coming online in April."

As part of what he called the commissioning stage, MacNair said they are basically going to make sure all the lights turn on and the water runs.

"It is pretty integral. "It's the backup power system for the hospital. It's a safety system for the hospital," he said.

The next building to be completed will be the in-patient unit with the 24 medicine and palliative beds

"We've basically got what's called the mock-up room finished in there," MacNair shared. "We had one of the clinical teams in, and we've had other clinical teams in over the last couple weeks just checking out the areas, making sure that everything is exactly the way that we want ... find any problems.

"One problem we found when we did the mock up was one of the shower hose connections is too close to one of the hand rails, so we've just got to adjust that," he said. "These are the important small details that you might not catch in the design phase until you see it."

They will then basically replicate



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Work on the Boundary Trails Health Centre expansion is on track.

that room 22 times, but there will be two specialized rooms for bariatric and isolation cases.

"We'll be taking the teams through those rooms then as well as they are completed," said MacNair.

"The target is still early fall to have the building construction completed and then working on getting everything set up to take patients either very late this calendar year or early next calendar year."

Their attention will then turn to the community services building, which is still very much in the early stages.

"That building isn't really set to be completed until the first quarter of 2026," said MacNair.

The final step will be renovation of the area that currently houses offices



for services like public health, home care, and administrative staff. It will be renovated into new cancer care and ambulatory care space, followed by an expansion of the emergency department along with a new operating room on the second floor and some administrative spaces as well.

"We're just in the process of sorting out the renovation schedule," said MacNair. "We've gone through a first phase of design, and we got a costing for it, and it's not insignificant ... and then we'll get the timelines set out."

PVLIP launches voter information campaign

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Pembina Valley Immigration Partnership (PVLIP) is launching an information campaign to ensure everyone who has the right to vote in the upcoming federal election knows how to do so.

Got Citizenship? Go Vote! will ensure new voters or those who haven't voted in awhile don't feel the need to avoid the ballot box on Election Day (Monday, April 28) due to uncertainty surrounding the process, says PVLIP coordinator Elaine Burton Saindon.

"The intention is to help promote civic engagement with newcomers,"

she says. "Helping new Canadians who have just become citizens recognize that that brings them the opportunity to have their voice heard through the voting process. We hope new Canadians would exercise that freedom."

While some immigrants come to Canada already familiar with the democratic process from voting in their native countries, for others this is the first time they've had the opportunity to cast a vote in a free and fair election.

But even if you've voted before in another country, it can still be a bit overwhelming to navigate things in a

new place, Burton Saindon notes, so PVLIP is hoping to allay any uncertainty or fears people may have.

"We're not getting into the politics of it—we're not explaining who to vote for," she stresses. "It's more about understanding the process, understanding your rights and the benefits of voting and what it can mean for you and your community."

A page on their website (pvlip.ca/govote) outlines who's eligible to vote, how to register to do so, what a voter's card is and what information is on it, how to find information about the candidates running in your district, where to go on voting day or

how to vote by mail, and what you need to bring with you if voting in person.

"We want to do this for each election—federal, provincial, and municipal—going forward," Burton Saindon shares.

PVLIP is also teaming up with Elections Canada to host information sessions at community centres in Altona, Morden, and Winkler in the weeks ahead.

Details on those events were still being firmed up at press time, but head to the PVLIP website for dates and times as they become available.

The **Voice**

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What's *Your* story?

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Flyers knock out Nighthawks



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Winkler's Trevor Dalton uses his speed to get around Niverville's Evan Panzer in game five Saturday, which Winkler won 4-3 in double overtime.

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers got a game six win Monday night to take their MJHL playoff series against the Niverville Nighthawks four games to two.

Monday's game was a hard-fought one. Niverville drew first blood five minutes in and then made it 2-0 at the top of the second period before Winkler's offensive lines came to life with a goal from Brody Beauchemin 14 minutes in followed by the tying goal from Liam Carlone five minutes later.

Andrew Morton then scored what proved to be the winning goal in the third period's fifth minute.

Leif Ekblad was between the posts in the 3-2 win, making 20 saves off the 22 he faced. His teammates sent 39 the other way.

The series proved to be a roller-coaster throughout the past week. It was tied at one game each when the two teams took the ice in Winkler for game three March 25.

That proved to be another nail-biter, with Winkler narrowly taking it 4-3.

Max Lavoie got Winkler on the board late in the first, but Niverville returned the favour a minute later.

Beauchemin and Carlone pulled the Flyers back into the lead with a pair of goals in the second period's sixth and seventh minutes, but Niverville got started on closing the gap with their second of the night a few minutes later and their third at the start of the final frame. Brady Craik got the game-winner for Winkler in the third period's 14th minute.

Ernst had a 22-save night in net as the Flyers outshot the Nighthawks 35-25.

Playing in Niverville two nights later, the Nighthawks managed to tie the series again, this time with a 3-2 win.

The scored was tied at 2-2 after 20 minutes thanks to goals from Craik and Nicolas Mckee.

After a scoreless second period, Niverville got their third past Ernst to win it.

Winkler once again won the shots battle 27-23, with Ernst posting 20 saves.

The pendulum swung back the other way Saturday night with a 4-3 overtime win for Winkler in game five.

The Flyers dominated in shots this game, 54 to Niverville's 21, but after scoring three goals in the opening

frame (two from Morton and one from Charles-M Bernier), Winkler's offensive lines failed to find a chink in the armour of Niverville netminder Austin Dubinsky, while the Nighthawks tied it up in the second period.

Across the rink, Ernst and Leif Ekblad split time in net, with Ernst making six saves out of the nine he faced and Ekblad denying all 12 that came his way.

It sent things into not one but two overtime periods for a decision. Mckee

put an end to it with a goal working off assists from Beauchemin and Isaiah Peters seven minutes into the second extra period.

Meanwhile, in the league's other playoff series, the Dauphin Kings knocked out the Waywayseecappo Wolverines in five games and the Northern Manitoba Blizzard beat the Neepawa Titans, also in five.

On Monday, the Portage Terriers won their game six to bounce the Steinbach Pistons out of the playoffs.



Nicholas Mckee celebrates his game-winning goal.

Morris Curling Club hosting send-off for deaf curling teams

By Siobhan Maas

The Morris Curling Club is set to host a Team Send-Off and Fundraiser on April 12 for two elite deaf curling teams that will represent the Club and Canada on the world stage.

The men's and mixed doubles teams, which both curl out of the Morris rink, will compete at the 2025 World Deaf Curling Championships in Minneapolis, Minnesota from April 22 to May 4. At least ten countries will be represented at the event.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Ross Lavallee and Susanne Beriault will compete in the mixed doubles event.

The men's team consisting of Joe Comte, Bill Kluchnik, Frank Chung, and Cam Hurst, is coached by Morris-area residents Chris and Lorne Hamblin, both Level 4 NCCP Olympic coaches who have worked with deaf curlers from across Canada since 2014.

Barb Zbeetnoff of British Columbia is coaching the mixed doubles team of Ross Lavallee and Susanne Beriault. All curlers are Winnipeggers except Chung, who is from British Columbia.

To honour the memory of teammate Brian Weselowski, who passed in 2023, the men's team will play with his name on the shoulder of their team jackets.

As part of their final preparations for the Worlds, both teams will be in Morris for a training weekend April 11-13.

The weekend will be spent mostly on-ice, to build consistency for the teams in both sweeping and throwing using the robotic rock thrower unique to the Cargill Curling Training Centre.

"Deaf curling events are always unique for spectators because the athletes don't have the same ability to communicate as other curlers," noted Chris Hamblin. "There is no possibility of discussion in the middle of the game."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

From left: Chris Hamblin, Joe Comte, Bill Kluchnik, Frank Chung, Cam Hurst and Lorne Hamblin are off to the 2025 World Deaf Curling Championships later this month.

"The athletes have tools they already use, like one communicator and one sweeper, but we will hone communication while sweeping during the weekend."

To show support and help offset the costs associated with the championship, a fundraiser send-off social is being organized for Saturday, April 12 from 7-11 p.m. at the curling club.

"We wish the team well at the World's and hope to raise funds to help offset their costs," shared Lorne Hamblin. "Unlike most World events, there is very little funding support for the teams and most of the costs are covered by the athletes."

A silent auction and 50/50 draw will help support the teams. A light lunch will be served.

"This social is a huge opportunity for the community to recognize some of the amazing athletes that train at the Cargill Curling Training Centre," said Lorne "I extend an invitation to all, especially curling club members, Mayor Scott Crick, and MPs Branden Leslie and Lauren Stone, to attend this special send-off for a community not often recognized at this level."

Those interested in donating prizes for the silent auction or attending the event can contact Chris at 204-746-3330 or Lorne at 204-712-5842.

35th Annual Carman Gun and Hobby Show Set for April 5

By Ty Dilello



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Carman Gun and Hobby Show will return for its 35th edition on April 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Carman Hall. Over 80 vendors will have tables set up with guns, ammunition, knives, and a variety of supplies.

The Carman Gun and Hobby Show is set to return for its 35th year on Saturday, April 5 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Carman Hall (60 1st St NW). Admission is \$7 for the day, and children 12 and under are free.

The event is organized by Bruce Reid, who can be contacted at carman-gunshow@gmail.com.

"This year, we have 80 tables with guns, ammo, knives and hunting-related items for sale," said Bruce Reid. "Back for another show, there will be food served by Crazy Lady's Cafeteria, which is always a big hit. It's all amazing as when I first started the spring show in Carman, I wasn't too sure how it would work out. Well it worked out as it's now the biggest one-day show in the province. This is possible due to the great attendance every show and I have a great crew which makes this easier to put togeth-

er."

The Gun Show features a special charity component, where an item is raffled off and 100% of the proceeds are donated to a different charity each year. This year, the proceeds will benefit the palliative care unit at the Carman Hospital.

Reid is excited to see how many people will come out on Oct. 26 to the Carman Hall. The canteen will also be open all day for people to come and get a bite to eat.

"Every show, I try and change it up to make it more interesting," Reid said. "It sounds like my regular crew of volunteers will be returning for another which I couldn't do the show without them. There are some new vendors which adds to the show, with several door prizes and the usual raffle. The interest from guys and gals in the sport seems to have really grown over the years."

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CAREERS

The RM of Roland is currently hiring for the following positions:
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For complete job description or for more information please email cao@rmofroland.ca or visit www.rmofroland.ca.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING UNDER THE PLANNING ACT

The City of Winkler, under the authority of The Planning Act, will hold a hearing at which time and place the council of the City of Winkler will receive representation from the applicants and any other persons who wish to make representations in respect of the Rezoning Application No. RZ2025-003 and By-law No. 2340-25, being an amendment to Winkler Zoning By-law 2271-21 of the City of Winkler.

The general intent of the above By-Law No. 2340-25, is to zone the land described below, Namely:
264 Main Street South, legally described as Lot 8, Plan 422 MLTO.
as shown outlined in a heavy solid line on the map attached hereto as Schedule "A", and forming part of this by-law, be rezoned


FROM: "R1" RESIDENTIAL LOWER DENSITY
TO: "R2" RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM DENSITY

A copy of the above By-Law No. 2340-25 and supporting material may be inspected by any persons between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday to Thursday and 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Friday, in the City Office.

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2025
Time of Hearing: 6:30 p.m.
Location: Winkler Council Chambers, 185 Main Street, Winkler, Manitoba

DATED at Winkler, in Manitoba, this 28th day of February 2025.
Designated Officer, City of Winkler

Schedule "A"



185 Main Street, Winkler MB R6W1B4
204-325-9524 | permits@cityofwinkler.ca
WWW.WINKLER.CA

COMING EVENTS

CARMAN GUN SHOW

Date: April 5, 2025
Time: 9AM to 3PM
Place: Carman Hall
\$7 ADMISSION



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CAREERS



**UNDER THE AUTHORITY
OF THE PLANNING ACT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a **PUBLIC HEARING** will be held to receive representations from any person(s) who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

By-law No. 13-2025, being an amendment to Zoning By-law No.08-2017

Hearing Location:

City of Morden Civic Center
195 Stephen St, Morden MB

Date: April 28th, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM

Area: By-law 13-2025 will apply to the entire limits of the City of Morden

General Intent: 1. To amend Part I Section 11.0: Enforcement and Penalties. This section to be deleted and replaced.

2. To amend Part VII Section 34.0; Use Definitions, to include "Country Resort" under the Cultural & Entertainment Use Category.

3. To amend Part III Section 28.2; Zoning Districts, Agricultural, Parks & Public Works Districts Use Table to add "Country Resort" as a Conditional Use in the Community Reserve Zoning District.

4. To amend Part IV; Use Specific Standards, to add Section 30.18, "Country Resorts".

For More Information Contact:

Santokh Randhawa, M. Eng., P. Eng.
133 7th Street, Morden MB R6M 1v3
204-822-2567

A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Copies may be made, and extracts taken there from, upon request.

CAREERS



**UNDER THE AUTHORITY
OF THE PLANNING ACT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a **PUBLIC HEARING** will be held to receive representations from any person(s) who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

By-law No. 17BL03, being replaced by Building By-law 03-2025

Hearing Location:

City of Morden Civic Center
195 Stephen St, Morden MB

Date: April 28th, 2025

Time: 7:15 PM

Area: By-law 03-2025 will apply to the entire limits of the City of Morden

General Intent:

1. Replace the existing Morden Building By-law 17BL03 with new building by law 03-2025.

For More Information Contact:

Santokh Randhawa, M. Eng., P. Eng.
133 7th Street, Morden MB R6M 1v3
204-822-2567

A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Copies may be made, and extracts taken there from, upon request.

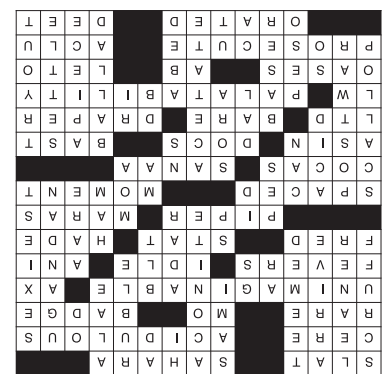
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER of the Estate of Aganetha Ruth Kroeker, late of the Town of Altona, Manitoba, Deceased.

ALL CLAIMS against the above Estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be sent to the undersigned at 504 Stanley Avenue, Winkler, Manitoba, R6W 0M3, within four (4) weeks of the date of this publication.

GBH LAW OFFICE
Solicitor for the Estate



Crossword Answer

X CROSSWORD

take a break > GAME

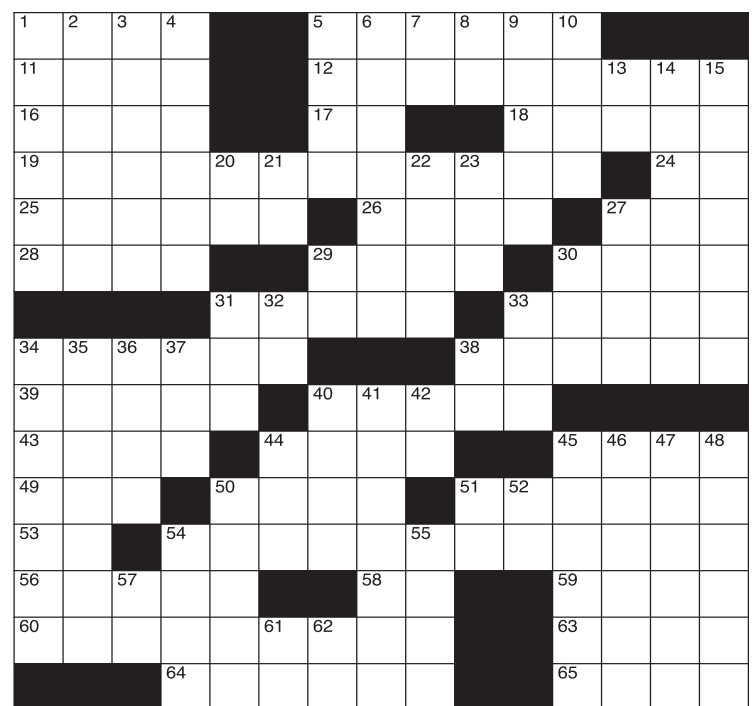
CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Narrow piece of wood
- 5. African desert
- 11. Waxy covering on birds' beaks
- 12. Sour
- 16. Infrequent
- 17. Former AL MVP Vaughn
- 18. Policemen wear one
- 19. Out of the question
- 24. Used to chop
- 25. Symptoms
- 26. Not moving
- 27. Folk singer DiFranco
- 28. Comedian Armisen
- 29. Quantitative fact
- 30. Incline from vertical
- 31. Scottish musician
- 33. Rooney and Kate are two
- 34. Positioned
- 38. A very short time
- 39. Tropical American shrubs

CLUES DOWN

- 40. Yemen capital
- 43. Spanish municipality
- 44. Medical professionals
- 45. Fibrous material
- 49. Confined condition (abbr.)
- 50. Without covering
- 51. "Mad Men" honcho Don
- 53. Hockey position
- 54. Taste property
- 56. Fertile spots in a desert
- 58. They precede C
- 59. "Requiem for a Dream" actor Jared
- 60. Try a criminal case
- 63. Liberal rights organization
- 64. Spoke
- 65. Insect repellent
- 1. Unshaven facial hair
- 2. More thin
- 3. Show up

- 4. Seethed
- 5. Ancient Greek city
- 6. Poisonous plant
- 7. Hello
- 8. College sports official
- 9. Monetary unit of Russia
- 10. Wings
- 13. Take too much of a substance
- 14. A citizen of Uganda
- 15. Most appealing
- 20. Atomic #18
- 21. Global investment bank (abbr.)
- 22. Jewish calendar month
- 23. Popular sandwich
- 27. Swiss river
- 29. Incorrect letters
- 30. Popular entree
- 31. Foot (Latin)
- 32. A driver's license is one form
- 33. Extinct flightless bird
- 34. Appetizer
- 35. After battles
- 36. It neutralizes alkalis
- 37. Beverage container
- 38. Partner to "Pa"
- 40. Gray American rail
- 41. Salt of acetic acid
- 42. Canadian province
- 44. Dish made with lentils



- 45. Narrative poem of popular origin
- 46. For each one
- 47. Come to terms
- 48. Test
- 50. More dishonorable
- 51. Unit of loudness

- 52. The Ocean State
- 54. Monetary unit in Mexico
- 55. Lying down
- 57. Thus
- 61. Where LA is located
- 62. Western State

Classifieds Announcements

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COMING EVENTS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A *Celebration of Life*
In loving memory of **Kathy Ritchie**
1951-2025

1:00 p.m. Saturday, April 12, 2025
The Access Event Centre, 111-D Gilmour St. Morden, M.B.
(Doors open at 12:15 p.m.)
Please join us to honour and celebrate a very special woman who touched so many lives and is greatly missed.
Lunch and refreshments to follow.

CAREERS

MAINTENANCE MECHANIC/MILLWRIGHT

Bunge Altona has an opening for a Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright. Work involves process equipment installation, maintenance and repair, lubrication, steel fabrication and welding. Preference will be given to those candidates holding a valid provincial Millwright or Industrial Mechanic ticket. Candidates who do not hold a valid ticket will be expected to enrol in the apprenticeship program to obtain their ticket as soon as possible. Overtime and on-call duties are required. The successful applicant will possess excellent written and verbal communication skills, trouble shooting skills, and be a team player.

The following would be considered an asset for this position:

- Experience in grain handling, processing, or manufacturing facility
- Experience in industrial equipment maintenance and repair
- Ability to read blueprints and technical documents
- Pressure or structural welding tickets and related experience

This is a regular full time position providing an excellent wage and benefits package. Bunge is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and rewarding workplace for all employees.

Starting Wages:

- Mechanic \$32.70/hour
- Red Seal Millwright: \$38.08/hour

A job description for this position can be found online on the Bunge website: <https://obs.bunge.com/>. enter "Altona" in the field "Search by Location". Click on "Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright" to read the description. Applications should be made online with an attached resume.

Bunge Canada is an equal opportunity employer.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING UNDER THE PLANNING ACT

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a public hearing will be held to receive representations from any person(s) who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

General Intent: Subject to Section 290 (1 & 2) of The Municipal Act, a municipality may close a municipal road by passing a by-law closing the road and must give public notice and hold a public hearing in respect of the proposed closure. And Section 147 (1) of the Municipal Act, the Council of a Municipality has the power to amend or repeal a bylaw. The proposed closure is illustrated by heavy solid lines on Schedule A.

Area: All that portions of Russet Road, Plan No. 67427 MLTO contained within the limits of Parcels A and B, Plan No (Dep 1192/2024) MLTO in the NW ¼ of Section 2-3-4WPM as shown in heavy solid lines on the map attached hereto as Schedule A. (By-law 2336-25)

Contact: Jody Penner, City Manager
City of Winkler
Phone: (204) 325-9524

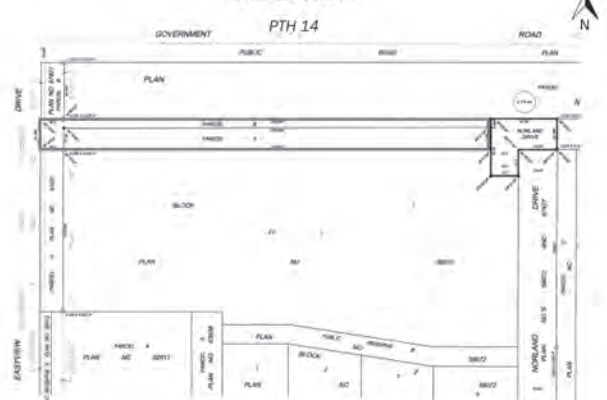
Date of Hearing: April 22, 2025

Time of Hearing: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Winkler Council Chambers,
185 Main Street, Winkler, Manitoba

A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday and 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 pm Friday. Copies may be made, and extracts taken therefrom upon request.

SCHEDULE A



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April is Parkinson's Awareness Month

Parkinson Society Canada (PSC) was founded in 1965 to enhance the lives of Canadians living with the disease. It is a national, non-profit, volunteer-based organization with regional partners and chapters and support groups across the country. Parkinson Society Canada has given itself the mission of easing the burden and finding a cure for Parkinson's disease through research, education, advocacy, and support services. PSC is committed to finding the cause of and a cure for Parkinson's.

Although Canadian investigators are among the world's best

in the field of Parkinson's science and while researchers continue to develop improved treatment and therapies, key questions still remain unanswered and most specifically, questions about cause and cure. Scientists and clinicians alike believe that Parkinson's is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. PSC is intensifying its efforts, increasing its commitment and working harder than ever to create a brighter future for Canadians with Parkinson's today, and a world without Parkinson's tomorrow.



EVERYTHING'S HARDER WHEN YOUR BODY TURNS AGAINST YOU.



Ease the symptoms of Parkinson's disease with exercise

Exercise is a common recommendation for patients diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Here's why staying active can help you manage the condition.

WHAT IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

Parkinson's disease is a long-term degenerative condition that affects the central nervous system in general and motor functions in particular.

Common symptoms include tremors, slow movement, rigidity and postural instability. As the disease progresses and more areas of the brain become involved, symptoms such as sleep problems, mood disorders and digestive issues can also develop.

HOW DOES PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HELP?

Performing a variety of physical exercises early in the course of the disease contributes to the formation

of new neural connections, which could slow the progression of symptoms.

Studies show that two and a half hours of exercise per week is enough to delay disease progression, especially with regards to symptoms that impact quality of life such as mood issues and loss of energy.

WHAT'S THE BEST KIND OF EXERCISE?

The best type of exercise to do if

you have Parkinson's disease is the one you're most willing to partake in regularly. Pick something you enjoy doing so you'll stay motivated.

While even a simple walk will benefit you, keep in mind that many sports organizations, municipalities and kinesiologists offer activities specifically designed for seniors and people with motor issues.

This feature brought to you by these community-minded businesses. Please show them your support.

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