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The Morden Christmas Cheer Board delivered over 300 care packages to families in need last week. For the full story, see Pg. 3.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Spreading Christmas cheer

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

look inside for our

4 PAGE

BOXING WEEK FLYER

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Stanley takes over snow-clearing duties on several village roads

By Voice staff

efficient system in place, so some of those provincial roads will be cleared by the RM while others will be hired out to a contractor along with a few other miles of local roads.

With winter now having arrived in full force, Stanley residents will be seeing some changes in how the RM does snow clearing in 2023.

The RM has entered into a snow clearing agreement with the Province of Manitoba which will see the municipality take over responsibility for clearing a number of provincial paved roads through the villages.

Reinfeld, Schanzenfeld, Chortitz, Friedensruh, Hochfeld, Blumenfeld, Osterwick, and Thornhill will all have some roads that will see municipal staff handling the clearing.

"We are hopeful that this will give residents of these areas a quicker snow clearing response," said Councillor Ray Unrau, who chairs the roads committee.

The municipality has been reviewing the plow routes to keep the most

"It is an effort to make things as efficient as possible. We have a few areas where it's an RM road, then it turns into a provincial road, and then a half mile later it is back to an RM road, so this change removes that jurisdictional issue and simplifies things, as we can send one plow in to do the job," Unrau explained.

"The RM is being compensated by the province for this work," he added, noting the agreement is only for snow clearing and not other road maintenance.

"This agreement expires in spring of 2023, so we will review after that and see how things went and if we want to continue with it, make any required changes."



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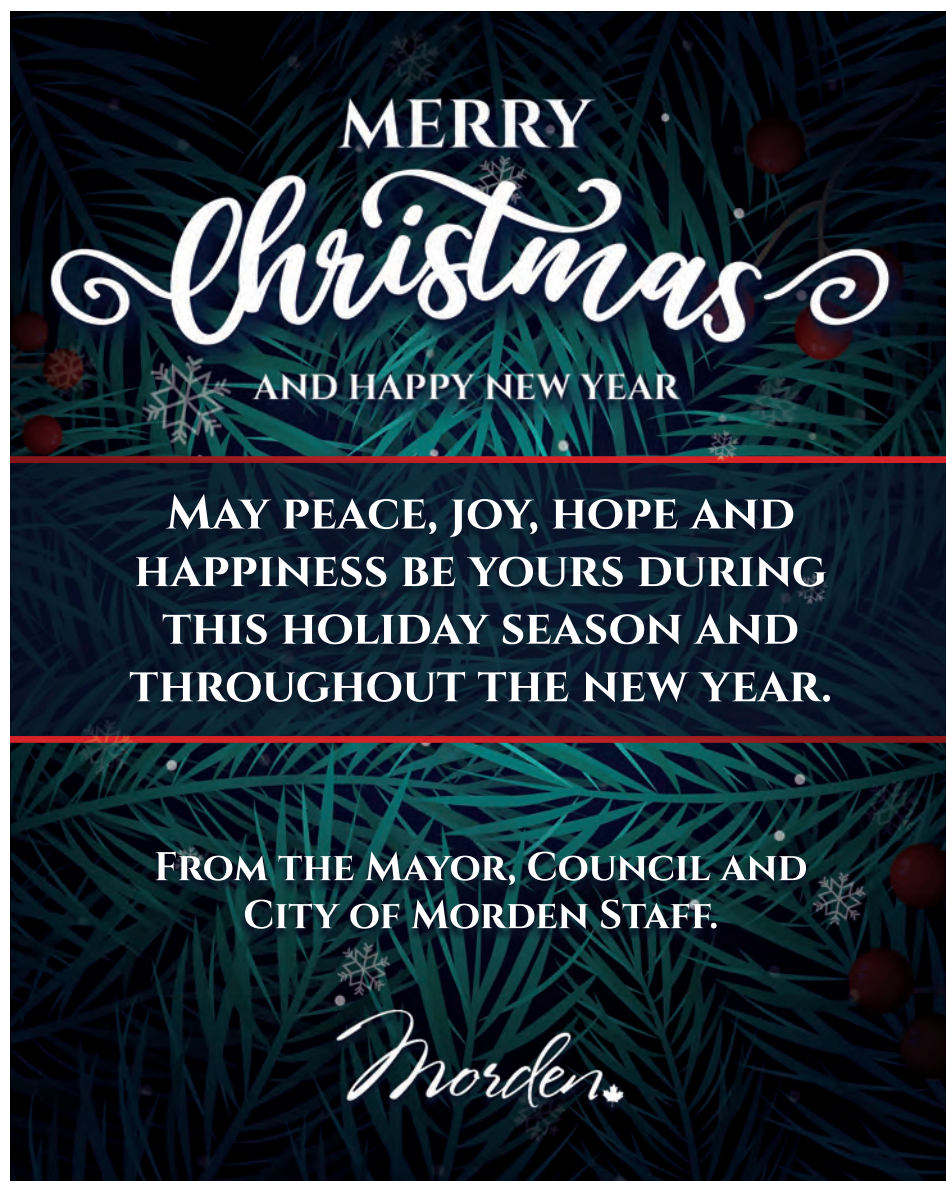
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MERRY
Christmas
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

MAY PEACE, JOY, HOPE AND
HAPPINESS BE YOURS DURING
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND
THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR.


FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL AND
CITY OF MORDEN STAFF.


Morden



MERRY
Christmas

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your family hope,
peace and love
this Christmas!



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Morden Cheer Board delivers over 300 hampers

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden Christmas Cheer Board had been bracing for a significant bump in the demand for hampers this holiday season.

But, as delivery day arrived last Wednesday, the numbers weren't as high as was initially expected.

"We were lucky," said chairperson Carolyn Schellenberg, who wondered if organizations like the 500 Stephen Community Centre and Many Hands Resource Centre were helping lessen the need. "I think there's many supports in the community that are helping people as well."

In 2020, the Cheer Board numbers jumped to over 300 recipient households. That number then dropped to 276 last Christmas. This year, it's back up to a little over 300 once again.

"The referrals came from schools and churches, and people referred themselves as well," explained Schellenberg. "It was our goal to ensure that every child received a toy."

"Our largest hamper has 11 people in the family," she noted. "We had a lot of single [person] hampers too."

Recipients received grocery gift cards and some non-perishable food



Morden Cheer Board volunteers, including members of the Morden Thunder hockey team, were hard at work rounding up hamper goodies for delivery last week. PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

items along with toys, books, and craft supplies for children.

While the numbers didn't hit the heights the volunteer-run organization had feared, donations in support of the campaign also didn't set any records.

"[Monetary] donations are down this year, and toys were down as well, so we had to go purchase some toys ... that was unfortunate," Schellenberg said. "We do take donations all year."

Continued on page 4



WISHING YOU CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS!

• DOORCRASHERS •

<p style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">BOXING DAY DEALS!!!</p> <p style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">WINTER BOOTS 25% OFF</p> <p style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">BEAR PAW BOOTS 35% OFF</p>	<p style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">SLIPPERS 25% OFF</p>	<p style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold;">BLUNDSTONE FOR EVERY OCCASION!!!!</p>
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GVC puts call out for donations, letters of support

Winkler high school hopes to transform front yard into a community green space

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Garden Valley Collegiate intends to transform its barren front yard into a beautiful community green space, but they need some help to get it done.

The Winkler high school has put a call out for both donations and letters of support for the project, which will add a large picnic shelter, a paved path through the yard from Main St. to the high school, and several shade trees and benches.

"This project is intended to create a community space where people can gather," says Marilyn Hart, grant chair for the GVC parent advisory council, which is heading up the project. "We want to make that front space welcoming and inviting for everybody and anybody who wants to connect with other people."

Students, certainly, will be able to make good use of the space, but GVC also hopes it becomes a hub for the neighbourhood.

"We have a lot of businesses and apartments and houses just down the street, so we want this to be very inviting for everyone," Hart says. "We're envisioning so many people making use of that space in so many different ways."

The picnic shelter will have seating for about 30 people, which means it could be used as an outdoor classroom during school hours and a public gathering space the rest of the time.

The pathway through the heart of the space follows a well-trod path made by students and community members from Main St. to the high school, and will be lit by solar lights.

"It's a natural walking path and so we're just making it more accessible by making sure it's cleared year-round," Hart says.

They also intend to plant several trees and install benches beneath them to create additional shaded seating areas around the yard.

All this work comes with a price tag of over \$130,000. Whether it gets done all at once or in several phases will depend on community support.

Last week, GVC sent out a letter to families and area businesses announcing they are applying for a Building Sustainable Communities Program grant for this project.

The program, funded by the Manitoba government, is a major source of funding for community undertakings like this, offering up to 50 per cent of project costs to a maximum of \$75,000.



SUPPLIED IMAGE

An artist's rendering of what the proposed front yard revitalization project will look like at Garden Valley Collegiate.

GVC's chances of receiving a sizable grant from this program go up if the school can show it has the community's support, says parent advisory council chair Barb Heide.

"The grants rely heavily on this being a community project, so we need community financial support," she says, noting donations of any size are welcome. "They all add up."

"So we're looking for that as well as then support letters that we can attach to our grant application" outlining the impact this new greenspace will have on the community, Heide says.

GVC will be submitting its Building

Sustainable Communities Program grant application early in the new year, so it needs those letters and donations by Jan. 11.

To donate or voice your support, email Hart at mhartfam@gmail.com, Heide at barbaraheide@gmail.com, or GVC principal Carrie Friesen at carrie.friesen@gvsc.ca.

Cheques can also be dropped off or mailed to the high school. Make them payable to Garden

Valley School Division. Tax receipts are available for donations of \$20 or more.

"WE'RE ENVISIONING SO MANY PEOPLE MAKING USE OF THAT SPACE IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS."



Jason, Victoria, Heather, Tommy, 🐾 Harper & Reagan

Merry Christmas
& Happy Holidays

From Premier Heather Stefanson, family and the entire Manitoba PC Caucus

Manitoba PC Caucus

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Our mistake

Our story last week on the upcoming *Maria and the Mennos* sitcom noted that local thespian Chuck Fefchak, who has been cast to play the father, has lived "in the Winkler area for 25 years."

While Fefchak has worked in Winkler for many years, he lives in Morden.

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

> MORDEN CHRISTMAS CHEER, FROM PG. 3

In addition to community donations, the Cheer Board also works with Morden Co-op, Giant Tiger, Pharmasave, Morden Dollar Store, and Kroeker Farms (The Potato Store) to fill the hampers. This year the Pembina Hills Arts Council also took part, organizing an art supply

donation drive.

"We're just hoping that everybody will have a good Christmas, and we look forward to doing it again next year," Schellenberg said. "Hopefully, our numbers will be down, but our goal is always to help everyone that needs it."

get informed

Morden youth wins provincial contest

By Lorne Stelmach

For the third time in recent years, a lucky Morden youth has won the top prize provincially in a contest connected to Fire Prevention Week.

Every year, the Manitoba Firefighters' Burn Fund, Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs, Province of Manitoba and the Office of the Fire Commissioner host a home fire escape plan contest for all Kindergarten to Grade 4 students.

Morden Fire and Rescue public education officer Jonathan Baumgart and Chief Andy Thiessen recently presented the award to Kindergarten John Dyckson, who received a \$200 gift card to Toys R Us and fire prevention materials for his classroom.

Thiessen noted the City of Morden submitted 124 contest entries, which accounted for over 25 per cent of all the entries submitted in Manitoba, so he joked it definitely gives them bragging rights over other fire departments.

"It's great that our community is taking note of it and getting so involved,

but I gave it to the rest of the guys in the province," he said.

The chief said it is all due to the interest from staff at Maple Leaf School and Minnewasta School for allowing them to visit and share their fire prevention message and encourage students to participate.

"It's definitely because of the interest we get from the schools here. If the teachers don't promote it, that's as far as it goes," Thiessen said. "They are doing that here, and we've had some great success with it."

Most important though of course is getting their message out about being prepared.

"It's nice to be able to reward a kid for doing the extra work ... but the biggest takeaway from this is that people are thinking about how to be safe at home. It's in their mind to be safe and cautious. That's our goal," said Thiessen. "We've been using this tool for a long time ... and perhaps if we bug the kids enough, maybe they will then bug their parents about it."



MORDEN FIRE DEPARTMENT PHOTO

Morden Fire Department public education officer Jonathan Baumgart (left) and Chief Andy Thiessen with John Dyckson, whose home fire escape plan won a provincial contest this fall.

BTHC Fdn. 50/50 draw is next week

By Lorne Stelmach

Time is running out if you want to have a chance to win some money and support the regional hospital at the same time.

The 50/50 fundraising raffle of the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation makes its big draw on Saturday, Dec. 31. The proceeds will be split between the BTHC and the winning ticket holder.

The raffle has proven to be an increasingly popular draw through its first two years. The first jackpot in 2020 saw the winner take home over \$19,000. Last year, two people shared a ticket and a \$29,190 prize.

"We really want to smash last year's record," said foundation executive director Shannon Samatte-Folkett, who was confident they would do just that. Last week, the pot was already

at \$53,000.

"Each year it's gotten bigger and better," she said. "It's great that money goes back to support our hospital."

The funds help the foundation in its continued support of BTHC's palliative and spiritual care programs, on top of purchasing various pieces of medical equipment.

"It is a very important fundraiser for us," Samatte-Folkett said. "This fundraising is super important, especially for things like the equipment needs of the hospital."

"And it's a fun fundraiser. It's always great to call people to let them know they've won. I get to call someone and make their day ... it's a win-win."

To get your ticket, head online to bthcf5050.ca, call 204-331-8808, or stop in at the foundation office at BTHC.



Recipe Credit: Turkey Farmers of Canada

Extra Crispy Roast Turkey

- 1 Manitoba-Raised Turkey, fresh/thawed to taste, salt and pepper
 - 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter, softened
 - 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
 - 1 ½ tsp (7.5 ml) ground sage
 - 1 ½ tsp (7.5 ml) ground thyme
 - ½ cup (80 ml) roughly chopped carrots
 - ½ cup (80 ml) roughly chopped celery
 - ½ cup (80 ml) roughly chopped onions
- Remove bag & giblets, pat turkey dry then place on a rack over a tray to air chill for 12-24 hours in the fridge. Air chilling dries the skin resulting in extra crispy skin. Rub butter on & under skin of chilled turkey. Season with oil & spices. Add veggies to cavity. Roast turkey at 350°F (175°C) until a meat thermometer reads 170°F (77°C) in the thigh away from any bones. Let turkey rest for 20 minutes then carve. Discard veggies.

ROASTING TIMES FOR WHOLE TURKEYS*

Weight	Stuffed	Unstuffed
6-8lbs (3-3.5kgs)	3-3¼ hrs	2½-2¾ hrs
8-10lbs (3.5-4.5kgs)	3¼-3½ hrs	2¾-3 hrs
10-12lbs (4.5-5.5kgs)	3½-3¾ hrs	3-3¼ hrs
12-16lbs (5.5-7kgs)	3¾-4 hrs	3¼-3½ hrs
16-20lbs (7-9kgs)	4¼-4¾ hrs	3¾-4½ hrs
20-24lbs (9-11kgs)	4¾-5½ hrs	4-5 hrs



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 *Roast a whole turkey at 350°F (175°C) & cook to an internal temperature of 170°F (77°C).
 *Stuffing/dressing inside the cavity should reach 165°F (74°C).
 *Allow the turkey to stand/rest for 20 minutes before carving.

Find more recipes and cooking tips at turkey.mb.ca

The **Voice**

get heard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

My very real Santa Claus



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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.

OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



It is Christmas Eve and I am a sound asleep five-year-old.

You had to get to bed early in case Santa Claus came before you were ready. Everybody knew if he caught you awake there go all the gifts you were going to get.

Suddenly a sound on the roof as if ... well, you know. Whatever it was immediately woke me up. I didn't move a muscle but my eyes were as wide as frying pans. I listened so carefully I could almost imagine muscles in my ears flexing with the effort.

Quiet. A silent night. Then as I was about to relax another sound again ... this time out in the living room somewhere as if things were being jostled and moved around.

Clearly Santa had arrived and I was fortunate enough to have heard it. I resisted the temptation to sneak to the bedroom door and try and catch a glimpse. The last thing I wanted to be responsible for was ruining Christmas for everyone. Santa was notoriously sensitive to the sound of children creeping about and could flee in the blink of an eye.

No—I simply laid in bed and focused as hard as I could, trying to imagine the big guy wandering around the tiny living room placing gifts. I wondered how he'd gotten in—we never had a chimney and I didn't hear the front door. Magic obviously.

With these thoughts floating about in my head I never noticed when I fell asleep again and awoke to the shoving of my sister telling me to get up.



By Peter Cantelon

It had to be almost 7 a.m.—so late already.

I leapt from bed and in my pajamas followed my sister to the living room. Wondrous! There were so many wrapped presents under the tree. We carefully inspected each them, lifting, gauging the weight (the heaviest were clearly the best) and ensuring neither of us had been cursed with socks or underwear. Honestly, any kind of clothing was a rip off.

Everything felt appropriately amazing. Santa had most certainly received the letters Mum had us write and had mailed.

After a few minutes we went and dragged Mum from bed. She managed to groggily follow us to the tree and declare in mock surprise that Santa had obviously thought we were both good. Mum, in her pajamas and fuzzy slippers with crazy hair, would then make a coffee, light a cigarette and proceed to hand out gifts. Most were from Santa, but here and there were a few from Mum.

Over the years the number of gifts from Santa reduced while the number of gifts from Mum increased. No questions were ever asked. It was a natural progression that came with age and maturity. But even on those

last Christmases together during university there was always still a gift or two "From Santa" in cursive suspiciously like Mum's.

We believed in Santa Claus with all of our hearts. When we went downstairs Christmas mornings there was the proof: the empty glass and plate that had once held milk and cookies (and the occasional beer, as our Santa was a down to earth, blue collar kind of guy). Even the carrots we left out for the reindeer and been dutifully nibbled.

C.S. Lewis once wrote that allowing children to be immersed in fantasy and fairy tale prepares their minds to accept mystery and the unknown or unknowable as they grew. He felt it was healthy and necessary and beneficial to those who continued in a life of faith as adults.

Christmas holds many precious memories for me both from my childhood and as a father who worked hard to preserve the mystery of Santa in his my own children's lives. I am thankful that there were no dour old adults arrogant or misguided enough to attempt to dispel the belief I held as a child and naturally grew out of.

Continued on page 7

Letter policy

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

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

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

Please include your full name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

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

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 Voice.

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View the *Voice* online at www.winklermordenvoice.ca or altonavoiced.ca

• DON'T MIND THE MESS

Here we come a'gathering

Mom, do I really have to go to the Christmas gathering?"

"No, but if you don't, you'll have to sit here for hours while I tell you about the ones I used to go to when I was a kid."

"I'll get my jacket."

Loaded with casserole dishes and Tupperware, I follow him to the car. My mind wanders back to my own days of yore. I see my mother, young and—with seven children—understandably stressed-out, hauling bags and containers of her best baked goods and casseroles to the trunk. She was about to face the harshest food critics in the world: relatives.

I see myself, sad to leave my new toys behind, but excited to play with my cousins again. I couldn't wait to brag about my new doll. I couldn't wait to whisper about my latest crush. I couldn't wait to sample all that rich food.

And boy of boy, was there food!



By Lori Penner

What do you get when you throw a dozen or so competitive Mennonite women into a kitchen? You get 15 different kinds of squares and cookies, salads with ingredients not even found in nature, pastries that would put all of France to shame, and so much Jell-O the room jiggles.

My cousins and I steered clear of the kitchen during those festive days. The women were preparing a meal, and there was no space in there for kids. There was an invisible line in the doorway. If perchance one of us hapless fools did wander in for a glass of water or to tattle on somebody, the rest of us would pause in silent prayer.

The unsuspecting victim would enter the kitchen to find it packed with aproned ladies of all shapes and sizes, engaged in a strange kind of ballet, swirling around each other with platters and bowls heaped with food. He would clear his throat, and the vacuum created by the abrupt halt to the gossip and chatter would literally ruffle his hair. Like Moses descending Mount Ararat, he would return to our group ... changed. We didn't ask. He didn't tell.

Those were the days when children were seen, but not heard. If you don't believe in ghosts, you've never attended an old-fashioned family gathering. We'd play as quietly as we

could, but inevitably, the giggling and scampering in the attic of my grandparent's tiny farmhouse would get out of control and we'd all be banished outdoors. The only noises my grandfather tolerated were church hymns and tractor engines.

Clothing manufacturers in the 1970s had clearly never heard of Canada. In our painfully inadequate winter wear, we'd spend hours in minus 30 temperatures, sliding down enormous hills of snow, romping through the pasture hunting for rabbit tracks, and daring each other to skate across the frozen pond. We were a tougher breed back then. We didn't even notice the cold until the frostbite made it hard to walk.

When it was time to go, our parents would collect our stuff, and we'd stand in the entrance for about an hour, sweating profusely in our

parkas, while they said their endless goodbyes. Tired and bloated, I've never slept as soundly as I did in the backseat of the car on the way home from those gatherings.

Most of the older faces from those days are planning gatherings in Heaven now, which makes these recollections even more precious.

I'd give anything to go back to those long ago days, when all the aunties and uncles were still so young, and Christmas preparations weren't my responsibility or expense. When all we had to do was show up, unwrap gifts, and eat.

Never diminish the importance of these get-togethers. They tie generations together like Crazy Glue. They perpetuate memories, beliefs, and traditions. And they've kept the Jell-O company in business since 1893.

> CANTELON, FROM PG. 6

I would not trade those memories for anything. Santa was as real as Mum and my sister. As real as me. There was nothing but pure joy, excitement and anticipation in the certain knowledge he would visit.

Let me end with a secret.

Even now, all these years later,

this sometimes crotchety columnist, should he hear a noise in the night on Christmas Eve, would most definitely and quietly rise out of bed pretending to go to the bathroom in order to sneak a peek and listen attentively.

Just in case.

Two woman arrested in Winkler stabbing

By Voice staff

Two woman are facing a litany of charges in connection with a violent assault that took place in Winkler last week.

On Dec. 12th, at approximately 11:30 p.m., Winkler officers were dispatched to a report of a stabbing at a residence in the 100 block of 3rd Street South.

The victim, a 66-year-old man, told police that two female acquaintances (known to him only by the fictitious

names they had provided previously) had broken into his home and demanded money and a ride to another location.

When he told the suspects to leave, one of them began pouring gasoline on the floors and walls of the residence while asking the second suspect for a lighter.

The suspects then physically attacked the victim, threatening to kill him while assaulting him with a weapon.

The man was forced to give the sus-

pects a ride, during which they continued to physically assault him, stabbing him several times in the upper body.

After dropping the suspects off at their requested destination, the victim returned home and phoned police.

He was taken to Boundary Trails Health Centre and treated for his injuries.

Police were able to identify and track down the two suspects. Both were placed under arrest the next day, Dec. 13.

A 38-year-old Winkler woman and a 17-year-old woman from the Roseau River First Nation have been charged with break and enter to commit robbery, assault, aggravated assault, forcible confinement, and possessing a weapon for a dangerous purpose.

The 38-year-old was also charged with failing to comply with the conditions of an undertaking.

Both were remanded in custody to appear in Winnipeg Provincial Court on Dec. 15.

Police arrest Winnipeg man found with stolen vehicle

By Voice staff

A Winnipeg man is facing charges after the stolen vehicle he was driving hit the ditch in the RM of Stanley last week.

Morden RCMP were called to the scene on Road 36W just north of High-

way 3 on Tuesday, Dec. 13 around 7 a.m.

Two passersby had stopped to help the driver of a vehicle that had gone off the road. They called police after noticing the vehicle appeared to be stolen, as it didn't have licence plates

and the dashboard was damaged.

Upon arriving on the scene, police found the driver had two outstanding warrants, one from Saskatchewan and one from Ontario. The man was arrested.

Further investigation found the ve-

hicle had been stolen from Winnipeg overnight.

The 45-year-old Winnipegger has been charged with possession of property obtained by crime and two counts of failing to comply.

getinformed

Pine Ridge kids raise funds for Winkler Cheer

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A class of Gr. 2/3 students at Pine Ridge School put together a gift for the Winkler and District Christmas Cheer Board this week.

On Monday and Tuesday, teacher Darlene Derksen's class hosted a garage sale in their classroom, inviting the school's K-4 classes to stop by and do some last-minute holiday shopping.

"We are raising money for the Cheer Board," said student Carter Friesen, who explained everyone brought unwanted items from home to fill the tables with everything from toys to books to home decor. There was also a raffle prize table with high-value goodies donated by local businesses and individuals.

The sale was doing brisk business Monday morning.

"We have over \$40 already," exclaimed student Fenton Nickel. Friesen chimed in that they hoped to raise \$1,000.

Final numbers were not available at press time, but Derksen noted a similar sale she helped organize with her class at Winkler Elementary School a few years back brought in over \$600.

It's a real exercise in teamwork, she reflected.

"They all brought in toys they don't play with anymore and they asked their grandparents for help and their siblings and parents, too," she said.

"It's been a great learning experience



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Teacher Darlene Derksen's Gr. 2/3 class at Pine Ridge School organized a Christmas garage sale in support of the Winkler and District Christmas Cheer Board this week. Cheer Board rep Becky Loewen (back row, second from left) says it's great to see young kids learn about the importance of giving back to their community.

all around," Derksen added. "They've learned to price, to sort. We've talked about how to be a greeter at the door, how to give change. And they were so excited about setting this all up and inviting people here."

The sale certainly got a big thumbs up from the kids.

"It's awesome, because we get to help people," said Friesen.

"And we get to count all the money," added classmate Marsel Kuchkachov.

"[I like] that we can raise money

for the Winkler Cheer Board and we can help our community and help the poor families in Winkler that don't have as much stuff," noted Sawyer Friesen.

Leftover garage sale items were going to be donated to the Adult & Teen Challenge Super Thrift store in Winkler as another way of giving back.

Winkler Cheer Board rep Becky Loewen popped by Monday to thank the students for their hard work.

"This is amazing. You can't teach

kids young enough what it is to be helpful in the community," she said. "This is really cool to see."

The Cheer Board met its \$100,000 fundraising goal for this year, though they ended up packing more hampers than expected (423 in all), creating a bit of a shortfall between the donations that came in and the actual campaign costs for 2022.

You can still donate online at winklercheerboard.com

Winkler Family Resource Centre hosting New Year's Eve bash

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Family Resource Centre is hosting a New Year's Eve bash for our community's youngest members.

WFRC's Family New Year's Eve Party takes place at the centre (located in the Emmanuel Mennonite Church at 750 15th St.) on Saturday, Dec. 31 from 6-7:30 p.m.

The evening will include snacks, door prizes, special New Year's Eve crafts, carnival games, and other fun activities.

"We'll get them running around and using up all their energy," says

executive director Sarah Peters with a chuckle, noting it's a great way to ring in 2023 a few hours early with the kids so Mom and Dad can enjoy the rest of the night while their tuckered-out tots are in bed.

The activities are aimed at pre-schoolers, though older siblings are certainly welcome to attend as well.

The night will wrap up with a balloon drop at 7:30 p.m.

Admission is \$25 per family. Tickets must be booked in advance via email to winklerfrfc@gmail.com or by call-

ing 204-332-9418.

PROGRAMS STARTING UP IN NEW YEAR

The centre kicks off 2023 with a host of free early childhood programming in January and February.

The schedule includes sessions of Wiggle, Giggle, and Munch; Mindful Munchkins; Shake, Rattle, and Roll; Mother Goose Kit and Kaboodle; 123 Bake With Me; and Winter Number Train.

These programs focus on literacy

and learning, physical health, and interactive playtime and are aimed at pre-schoolers. Sessions take place in Winkler, Morden, and Plum Coulee.

Registration for these sessions opened Dec. 12. There are still spaces available in some of them. For full details, head to www.winklerfamilyresourcecentre.com.

There are also weekly Stay and Play drop-in sessions in both Winkler (Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon at the Emmanuel Mennonite Church) and Morden (Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon in the Morden Alliance Church).

Check out the Voice online at www.winklermordenvoice.ca or altonavoice.ca

Delegation appeals to SCRL member municipalities for action

Request funding be withheld unless "sexually explicit" books removed from shelves

By Lorne Stelmach

Residents aiming to have books they deem as pornographic removed from local libraries are taking their fight to the seven municipalities that fund the South Central Regional Library.

A presentation to Winkler city council at its meeting last Tuesday was one of a series of delegations appearing before municipal councils to voice their concerns.

"This is not about a book complaint. This is not about censorship. This is about accountability," said David Wall on behalf of the delegation in an emailed statement to the *Voice* after the meeting.

"Our councils have the right to make robust by-laws that protect our children. If our libraries are going to double down on keeping materials that are in conflict with the Criminal Code of Canada, then this delegation is asking that our City of Winkler tax dollars be removed from the South Central Regional Library."

The issue first arose earlier this fall when a delegation appeared before the library board asking that three books be removed from the SCRL collection.

In a subsequent review of the books in question, the board determined they were in line with the library's collection development policy, and so they would be kept on the shelves.

One of the books—*It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, Gender and Sexual Health* by Robie Harris—was moved from the juvenile to the young adult section. *Sex is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings and You* as well as *What Makes A Baby*, which are both by Cory Silverberg, remains in the juvenile non-fiction section.

The delegation had raised concerns the books were readily available in the children's non-fiction section despite containing what they say is sexually explicit

content, including some in-depth detail and illustrations which they suggested qualified as being pornographic.

In his presentation to Winkler city council, Wall addressed issues around not only pornography and child abuse but also accountability and governance in the context of what is covered in the criminal code.

He noted while a book may be catalogued by the publishers as sex instruction, he sees there being a key distinction here.

"Sex education focuses on basic anatomy and the biology of sex. These books however are instructing our children on how to commit various sexual acts," he suggested.

He took council through a number of specific examples and images from the books and cited the portrayal of various sexual acts, such as boys and girls shown masturbating.

"This normalizes children masturbating while another person is present in the room," said Wall, who went on to note that the criminal code specifically addresses things like invitation to sexual touching.

"Is there enough information, enough instruction, on these pages to counsel children to perform these acts of sexual touching? There is indeed," said Wall, who called some of the explicit examples and ideas presented as "deeply, deeply concerning."

"Consider for a moment what position the library board has put themselves in by having and distributing this material," said Wall, who emphasized how the criminal code also addresses distribution of child pornography.

"The question we are asking is why would you, Winkler's city council, continue to provide funding to the South Central Regional Library, if they've been made aware of and chosen to keep materials on the shelves that contain child pornography?"

"The authority of the library board and its duties are delegated not only under the Public Libraries Act but also under municipal bylaws and agreements established between municipalities that are involved in the South Central Regional Library," Wall reiterated in his email on behalf of the delegation.

Wall reiterated in his email on behalf of the delegation.



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

David Wall made his case before Winkler city council last week. Similar delegations have already or are going to be presenting at the six other communities who support the South Central Regional Library with funding.

"The criminal code is clear that pornography is not only photographs but also as drawings or visual representations. It also states that pornography does not need to be an image to fit the definition. It can be written material as well.

"Likewise, the criminal code makes it clear that counseling children to perform acts of sexual touching is illegal. Materials that fit these descrip-

Continued on page 10

Town of Altona will not cut SCRL funding: mayor

By Voice staff

The Town of Altona has issued a response to the delegation requesting local municipalities stop funding the South Central Regional Library until it takes what they deem objectionable material off the shelves.

The delegation has been making presentations to councils across the region in recent weeks, including to Winkler city council last week (see story above), the rural municipalities of Rhineland, Stanley, and Thompson the week before, and Altona town council a week earlier.

It's expected further presentations will be made to the Morden and RM of Thompson councils as well. These communities make up the seven

which provide funding for the SCRL, which has branches in Winkler, Morden, Altona, Miami, and Manitou.

In a statement issued Dec. 15, Altona Mayor Harv Schroeder said his community will not cease its funding to the library over this matter.

"The board, which we participate in, sets policies to direct its staff in the operations of the libraries," he said. "One example of policy is the Collection Development Policy, which provides guidelines for developing the collection and a review process that allows patrons to challenge a book's suitability in the library.

"We understand that three books were challenged recently under this policy—the same books that were

used as examples by the delegation who presented to us."

The books in question are the sexual education books *What Makes a Baby*, *Sex is a Funny Word*, and *It's Perfectly Normal*. A delegation appeared before the SCRL board in September calling for their removal from the library's shelves.

Schroeder noted library staff reviewed these books and consulted legal counsel, who "gave the opinion that the materials in question are educational in nature, are legal and not pornographic, and do not violate the Criminal Code of Canada, as the challenge claimed."

The statement goes on to stress the importance public libraries play in

the community, not only by providing access to educational and recreational resources, but also as a space for social gatherings and connections.

"The South Central Regional Library is an essential service in our community, and we support our library board and staff, their knowledge and expertise, and the decision they've made on this request," Schroeder said.

"While we recognize that the library may provide materials that do not appeal to each and every patron, it is important that all legal reading materials remain available so that each patron is free to make their own choice.

"For these reasons, we do not support the delegation's request to cease funding the library."

SERC reports on a busy year of emergency response

By Lorne Stelmach

The Southern Emergency Response Committee (SERC) certainly proved its worth in the past year.

That was a key takeaway as a report to Winkler city council recently looked back at 2022 and highlighted a couple priorities for the year ahead.

"It's one of the best investments that we make," suggested Mayor Henry Siemens, who noted the value they get from the SERC budget of \$57,800 in 2022, which includes wages of \$37,300.

"I think the budget, in and of itself, is a fairly small number in the grand scheme of our overall budget," he said. "What's important is the fact that we have, for a very reasonable cost, a committee that's able to help us when these disasters come."

The report highlighted what was a tumultuous spring in the Winkler-Morden-Stanley region, including an April winter storm that saw SERC organize convoys from Winkler and Morden for Boundary Trails Health Centre staff.

The RM of Stanley then experienced severe overland flooding causing widespread damage to municipal roads, houses, and farmland. SERC coordinated the response with municipal officials and organized volunteers to make sandbags over several days. Flooding issues of course continued to be a challenge throughout spring in various spots in the municipality.

The failure of large culverts at the south end of Winkler resulted in a large amount of water backing up and threatening to breach the dike on south end of city. SERC responded to coordinate potential evacuations and established communication with provincial officials until the situation was stabilized.

Morden also declared a local state of emergency April 30 due to significant flooding that caused major damage to roads and bridges and several dozen residences. Emergency powers were used to restrict access to portions of the city that experiencing flooding.

Flooding had not been a hazard anticipated by SERC for these communities, the report noted, but it praised all three municipalities for being able to effectively respond to each of these events.

In the report, municipal emergency co-ordinator Darin Driedger noted one lesson learned involved dealing with jurisdictional matters "between municipal-owned and provincial-owned infrastructure. While flooding occurred in municipal boundaries, much of the significant infrastructure such as roads and drains are owned and controlled by the provincial government.

"This is something that municipalities need to be aware of when responding to flooding," he stressed.

Driedger also noted that changes to the SERC municipal emergency plan included addressing the area of dealing with volunteer offers of assistance



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Southern Emergency Response Committee was activated to respond to flooding in Morden, Stanley, and Winkler this spring.

along with residents who request help.

"SERC has created email accounts to receive these requests and trained several SERC volunteers on how to effectively match those willing to help with those who need this help," he said. "This allows SERC to provide some control and deter residents from 'self-dispatching' themselves to affected areas, which can hinder first responders and municipal officials working at affected areas."

Going forward, Driedger noted SERC anticipates completing a shelter-based exercise scenario in the next few weeks.

"This will allow SERC volunteers to

regain skills that haven't been used for several years due to the pandemic restrictions ... part of the upcoming training exercise will be to validate that we have the right supplies required to set up a shelter."

Siemens expressed his gratitude for the vital services provided by SERC.

"What I was most struck with was how many volunteers that organization has that show up, and they plan scenarios and practice scenarios and are prepared when events happen," he said. "They're fully trained, they're full prepared, and they're fully ready to go. It's a tremendous resource that we have in this area that we don't always notice."

"These books are meant to educate young people about their own bodies"

From Pg. 9

tions, freely accessible to children, are in our local South Central Regional libraries, both online and on their shelves."

The delegation noted they have the support at least 1,000 area residents in their concerns, but a counter petition circulating online as of last week had also attracted more than 1,000 residents signing on in support of the library's decision to make these books available.

"I think it is plain and simple. If you don't want these books, don't look at them. If you don't want your kids to see them, keep them away from that area. If it offends you, close it and put it back. Keep moving. Go find something else to read. It's really simple, isn't it?" stated petition creator Megan Wall on its page on change.org.

"As a resident of one of these mu-

nicipalities and an avid user of this library system, I am appalled at the idea of funding being cut to these branches," Wall further stated. "I do not agree with this group that they are pornographic or sex instruction. Clearly, they are books that are meant to be read with a parent and are for sexual education. I understand that they might not be for everyone, but, I do see the benefit of having them available.

"These books are meant to educate our young people about their own bodies, covering a range of topics from puberty, gender, sexual desire, most importantly, consent.

"It has been taught through the ages, that the more you educate young people regarding these topics, the lesser the chances of them being sexually abused. This kind of education removes the shame from kids when it comes to discussing their bodies."

MUCH TO CONSIDER

Winkler Mayor Henry Siemens said the issue gives council much to consider.

"It was a highly emotionally charged conversation. It's a very passionate group of people who care deeply ... and they made a number of different points that certainly we're going to consider and look into.

"A key piece for us in this was the appeal originally had been made to the library. A decision was made ... and that initial concern hadn't been appealed once a decision was rendered. The group here was fairly clear on that ... they felt because the appeal has to go to the same group that made the original decision, their concern was the decision would be no different, and there may be some validity to that," he acknowledged.

"We're going to do some additional research and dive into some of the points that the group made here," Siemens said. "We're going to reach out to other councils in the area—the seven who help fund the regional library—to have some discussion around it. We're going to get together with the rest of the councils to have some thought.

"In all likelihood, they won't get to present to the last of the councils until into the new year," he added. "I wouldn't expect there would be any kind of answer before the end of January."

Meanwhile, Altona town council hosted a similar delegation earlier this month and last week issued a statement that they will not be cutting funding to the SCRL (see story on Pg. 9).

Morden Area Fdn. hands out \$26,000 in grants

By Lorne Stelmach

The annual meeting of the Morden Area Foundation last week also served as a Christmas party, so what better way to celebrate than by handing out some gifts.

Following the meeting, foundation representatives presented over \$26,000 in grants to a variety of community organizations.

"Handing out these grants is like a second Christmas for me ... it's my favorite time of year," said chairperson Allison Braun.

The largest grant of \$9,000 went to Genesis House to support the organization in setting up a kitchen for its transitional housing program.

It is a service that goes a long way in helping people become successful after leaving an abusive relationship, said executive director Ang Braun, who added that some of their best work happens around the kitchen.

"It will be the bridge to a new life," she said.

A grant of \$7,775 was presented to the Many Hands Resource Centre for a new commercial refrigerator to support their food bank and meal programs.

The organization has made do with second hand fridges, but the need has increased dramatically, noted representative Brenda Klassen.

"This has helped us grow our impact in the community," said Klassen, who sees the foundation's support as helping them more effectively serve

the community.

The Morden Multicultural Winterfest received \$5,495 towards construction of an enclosed shelter at Lake Minnewasta.

Representative Shelly Voth noted this is in support of their plan to change Winterfest this year to have five different pavilions downtown and a Canadian pavilion at the lake.

"We're really excited ... we really wanted to have a place that was warm."

Just over \$1,600 was presented to the Pembina Hills Arts Council for a portable printing press.

"It's a really versatile tool," explained Tye Dandridge-Evancio, who said the flexibility will help them expand their programming in the region. "It will allow us to extend our reach beyond the gallery."

The South Central Regional Library also received \$1,500 for a new storage shed, while

\$1,200 was presented to the Douglas Kuhl School of Music to provide for the use of a digital piano.

Braun said the foundation loves to be able to address a range of needs in the community through their grants.

"Being able to help these charities and these non-profits is important because we know they in turn help make our community a stronger and a better place to live, and that is what the foundation is all about," she said. "The recipients this year are all very well deserving. We try to put the money where we think it's going to be the most useful in our community."

"HANDING OUT THESE GRANTS IS LIKE A SECOND CHRISTMAS FOR ME ... IT'S MY FAVOURITE TIME OF THE YEAR."



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Morden Area Foundation board members presented grants to numerous community organizations last week, including (clockwise from above) the Many Hands Resource Centre, the Pembina Threshermen's Museum, the Pembina Hills Arts Council, Morden Multicultural Winterfest, and Genesis House.



getinformed

Morden fdn. reports on challenging year, high hopes for the future

By Lorne Stelmach

It has been a challenging time for the Morden Area Foundation, but it is emerging from the pandemic anxious for renewed growth.

Board members at the annual meeting last Wednesday noted there had been some financial impact from the pandemic taking a toll on the markets, but the foundation remains in a strong position overall.

"It was a challenging year, but we know from the past that the markets will come back, so we're not too concerned about it," said chairperson Allison Braun. "The foundation will be here forever. That principal amount will stay, and it will continue to grow, so we remain optimistic."

In 2022, the foundation had revenues of \$221,547, which was down from \$236,972 in 2021. Expenses were also down from \$207,567 in 2021 to \$180,417 this year.

The state of the investment market certainly had an impact, with net assets overall that were at \$4,332,608 in 2021 but down to \$3,937,137 for 2022. It includes the restricted assets of the main endowment funds at \$3,884,990 along with unrestricted assets of \$52,147.



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Morden Area Foundation board of directors held their AGM last week.

Despite these challenges, Braun noted that the Morden Area Foundation continues to receive strong support from the community, including \$25,300 in donations during the Giving Challenge week last month.

"As far as the Giving Challenge, we were a little short of our goal from what we reached last year, but not a lot short considering," she said. "And we understand that it has been difficult for people. It's been a rough couple of years."

The foundation announced at the AGM that it has established four new endowment funds.

One is the Isaac and Dorothy Kroeker Memorial Fund, which has \$19,469 and will award \$750 to a deserving student pursuing higher education. Another is the Midge and Lorne Kyle Memorial Fund, which has \$10,095 and will support a variety of community projects

Also now in place through the support of Colleen Lyne and in memory

of Bill Lyne are funds established for the Pembina Threshermen's Museum and the Morden Activity Centre.

With these new ones, the foundation now has 38 funds in all.

The largest of is for the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre (currently at just over \$1.5 million), followed by the general community fund (\$813,585), and the support fund (\$300,322).

Other significant funds include the recreation and sport fund (\$130,000), Power of the Purse fund (\$121,000), Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame fund (\$104,571), William and Colleen Lyne scholarship fund (\$103,145), foundation managed fund (\$89,464), City of Morden fund (\$77,171), and the CFDC heritage fund (\$75,553).

Knowing the continuing impact of the foundation in the community is what keeps them going, concluded Braun.

"We're moving ahead, and we're looking forward to a good year next year, and we don't have any concerns," she said. "The foundation is in a good position ... I think people believe in the Morden Area Foundation because they believe in their community, and we'll continue to be here for them."



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Students and staff at Maple Leaf School in Morden enjoyed doing some shopping Monday as the Gr. 2 class of teacher Jennifer Stein hosted its annual garage sale. It not only provides a good learning experience for the students in organizing it but also supports worthy charities. This year the proceeds are going to the Morden Christmas Cheer Board and the Genesis House shelter for the victims of domestic violence. A final tally was not available at press time, but the event has raised as much as \$1,300 in past years.

Kids chip in for charity



#Hike4Birds duo complete their trek

By Lorne Stelmach

They started out July 1, 2019 from Cape Spear Newfoundland on the Atlantic Coast and arrived at Point Zero in Victoria, British Columbia on the shores of the Pacific Ocean Nov. 25, 2022.

In between, there were 556 days of hiking that covered over 13,700 km on the Trans Canada Trail network across 10 provinces, but it was less about their feat than it was for Dr. Sonya Richmond and Sean Morton to perhaps inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

"Our goal was just to reach out to people from different backgrounds, age groups, physical abilities, genders, orientations and try to get them inspired to connect with nature through citizen science ... and also just to explore this amazing country for themselves," Richmond said recently.

"That was a big motivation for doing this; just to try to get people to see the amazing things that are in our backyard ... all of us, no matter where you live, you've got something incredible in your backyard."

Richmond until recently was a GIS analyst assisting in the development of provincial bird atlases for Bird Studies Canada and an ornithological researcher for the Canadian Wildlife

Service.

In 2019, she left her job, sold her house, and donated her possessions to help her and Morton fund what they planned as a 28,000 km hike across Canada along the world's longest pathway: the Trans Canada Trail.

They are two of only a few people to have ever completed the main route of the Canada's Great Trail on foot by hiking from the Atlantic to the Pacific unsupported.

While few others have made this trek in its entirety, none have done so for a cause and with the primary purpose of promoting diversity and accessibility outdoors while striving to get youth engaged with and connected to nature through citizen science.

Their daily distances varied from perhaps as little as 5 km to as much as 60 km, especially on the open prairie. Their journey brought them through Morden in the summer of 2021.

"We had an incredibly positive response from Morden and the surrounding communities ... and we had some very good birding opportunities there as well," recalled Richmond.

There are countless memories from the trip as a whole, she shared, from scaling cliffs on rope ladders to walking along coastal footpaths and spending evenings on the sides of crystal clear lakes to going days in



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Sonya Richmond and Sean Morton have completed their hike along the Trans Canada Trail, which included a stop in Morden last year.

remote wilderness without meeting anyone else.

"We have seen whales and seals in the Atlantic Ocean, watched herds of caribou, encountered moose and deer on the trail, listened to coyotes call throughout the evenings in the prairies, had black bear encounters in almost every province and of course seen over 400 species of birds."

The pair extensively documented their trek, sharing photos and stories along the way to encourage others to explore Canada themselves one day.

Richmond emphasized their cause was to encourage Canadians to engage in citizen science and campaign for bird conservation, the protection of important bird areas and the boreal forest as well as promote youth engagement.

While trekking, the Hike4Birds campaign gave more than 150 free presentations to school and nature groups, hiking clubs, conservation organizations, and at Parks Canada sites and communities across the country.

"I think it's quite likely the scope of our undertaking that attracted people," said Richmond. "This is a 28,000 km long trail. Fewer people have done it than have gone to the moon. It's just a ridiculous undertaking in a lot of ways, and I think that really helps to capture people's imaginations."

"We had also chosen to connect with

people through birds, which is something that is accessible to everyone. No matter where you live, who you are, if you leave your house, chances are you're going to see or hear at least one bird," she continued. "They're free and fun to watch, and anyone can do it ... it's a way of connecting with

nature that resonates with a lot of people."

It was all of those people met along the way who inspired them to carry on.

"The people have certainly been a huge highlight for us," Richmond said. "There were so many random acts of kindness and generosity from strangers and just words of encouragement from people we have met along the way. It's been a huge part of what

motivated us to keep going."

Up next, sometime in 2023, the duo plan to venture on to the last major spur of the Trans Canada Trail, hiking more than 4,000 km north to the Arctic from Fort Saskatchewan, AB. to Tuktoyaktuk, NT.

"This country is so vast and so diverse," said Richmond. "It's amazing, and hopefully our hike has showcased some of the wildlife and nature and incredible landscapes we have in Canada."

You can learn more about their trek online at www.comewalkwithus.online

"THE PEOPLE HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN A HUGE HIGHLIGHT FOR US. THERE WERE SO MANY RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY FROM STRANGERS ..."



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Jingling and mingling

There was festive fun Sunday evening at the Access Event Centre with the Jingle & Mingle event. The evening included the announcement of the tree decorating contest, with Tye Dandridge-Evancio (below), programs and outreach co-ordinator of the Pembina Hills Arts Council, presenting the prize to the group that included Sheila Barnuevo along with Rowena Orpiano, Jo April Umandal, and Charito Soriano. There was also music by The Seven Pines band, a photobooth, board games, a craft corner, snacks from Winkler-Morden Co-op, hot chocolate from Giant Tiger as well as a cash bar. Donations were also accepted for Morden Christmas Cheer. The main sponsor for the event was Valley Fiber.

SUBMITTED
PHOTOS
BY LILI KRUSHEL

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Light Up the Season winners

The City of Winkler announced the winners from its Light Up the Season holiday decorating contest last week. There were 19 entries throughout the city this year. Taking home prize packages filled with goodies and gift cards to local businesses were (clockwise from right) 40 Bonneville Bay in first place, 87 Stingray Bay in second, and 362 8th St. in third place. A full map of entries is available at lightuptheseason.ca

PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE



Bivalent booster for kids age 5-11 now available

By Voice staff

A bivalent booster vaccine has been approved for kids age 5-11.

Manitoba Health announced doses of the vaccine were arriving last week and were expected to be available across the province this week.

Children in this age group had previously only been eligible for a booster dose with the monovalent (original) Pfizer pediatric vaccine.

The bivalent vaccine has been developed to provide protection against two strains of COVID-19: the original strain of the virus and the omicron variant.

Public health recommends people who are due for a booster should get the bivalent vaccine. Children aged five to 11 who previously received a booster dose with the monovalent (original) vaccine do not need to receive a second booster with the biva-

lent vaccine.

Parents and caregivers of children in this age group who would like to make an appointment for a bivalent booster dose can do so by using the online booking tool (protectmb.ca) or by contacting the vaccine call centre at (toll-free) 1-844-626-8222

(1-844-MAN-VACC). Medical clinics and pharmacies can also be contacted directly for appointments.

As of Dec. 6, more than 208,400 doses of bivalent vaccine have been administered in Manitoba and entered in the provincial immunization registry.

Cash is King winners crowned

Three lucky winners had their names selected this month in the annual Elks Lodge Cash is King 50/50 raffle. Below: Club rep Gary Grabowski congratulates first-place winner Ray Kirk, who received \$10,000. Howard Pauls and Dave Wieler



won the second and third-place prizes of \$3,000 and \$2,000, respectively. This was the 10th year of having the lottery, which is a major fundraiser for the service organization. The proceeds of \$15,000 will go towards upgrades to Morden Elks Park.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



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Light Up Altona contest winners announced

By Lori Penner

Several Altona homeowners got into the spirit of the season this year by not only decking their halls but lighting up their properties as well.

Five residences and one business will benefit from all this yuletide creativity by winning prizes in the Light Up Altona contest, sponsored by the Town of Altona Recreation Department.

Altona & District Chamber Bucks will be awarded to Gord and Val Sawatzky, Wes and Quinn Hildebrand, Chris Sumner and Candace Derksen, Brad and Erica Blair-Dueck, Leonard and Katie Hildebrand, and Friesens's Corporation.

"We had advertised the promotion and we reached out to all the people who registered in the past two holiday seasons, and we just weren't getting a lot of responses," says Brittany Winkler of the Rec. Dept. "So unfortunately, we will not be producing a Christmas Light tour map this year."

Winkler says while they had hoped for more responses, they knew there were still a lot more residents who took the time and effort to spread joy by decorating their properties.

"And that's fantastic. Kudos to everyone who decorated their properties. It's always a treat to drive around and enjoy everyone's decorations and we hope that people in town take the time to enjoy the various Christmas



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Gord and Val Sawatzky went all-out when it came to decorating their Lynnwood Bay property for the Light Up Altona contest.

light displays."

Dressing up their Altona property for the Christmas season was an absolute must for Gord and Val Sawatzky. The couple recently moved from their country home near Rosenfeld to the new development on Lynnwood Bay, in the northeast corner of town. Their country yard was well-known for its "Clark Griswold" style of decorating, and they weren't about to give that up when they moved to town.

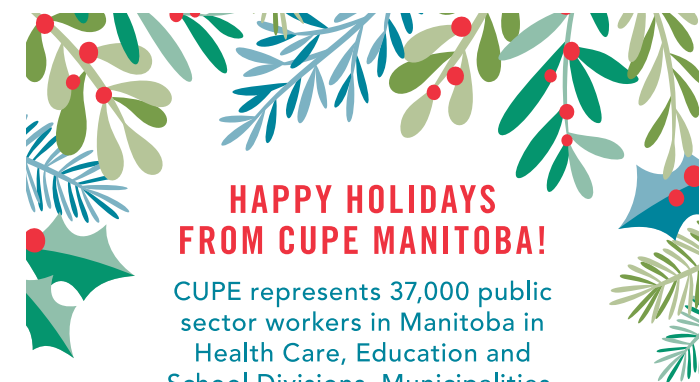
"We just wanted to keep up the tradition of what we were doing out there," Gord says. "We had a much larger yard to work with out in the country, so we basically created the



condensed version here in town. We've got lights up in the trees and on the house, and I put a sound system in the shed in the back, so I'm playing Christmas music all day long. When passing through, you can hear

the music from either side of the yard. "Hopefully it brings some of that Christmas spirit to whoever walks by in the neighborhood ... so far, I think people are enjoying it."

GVE gives Neuberghthal Heritage Fdn. an early Christmas gift



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM CUPE MANITOBA!

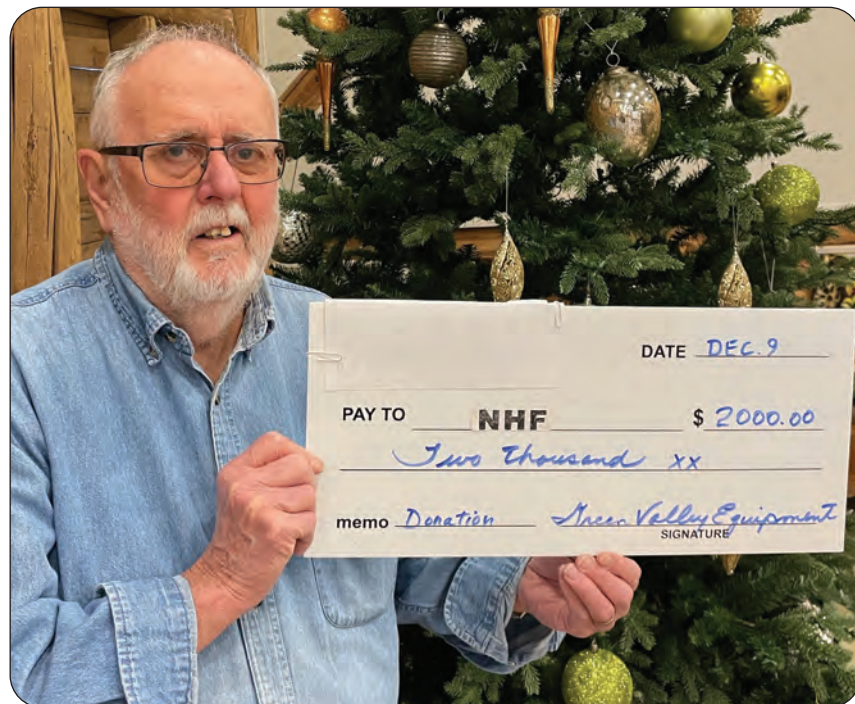
CUPE represents 37,000 public sector workers in Manitoba in Health Care, Education and School Divisions, Municipalities, Social Services and Child Care, Energy and Crowns, and Long Term Care.

This holiday season we thank public sector workers for providing around the clock services that we all rely on.

CUPE Works for Manitoba.

CUPE MANITOBA

Joe Braun, co-chair of Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation (NHF), found a present to NHF from Green Valley Equipment (GVE) under their Christmas tree recently. The company gifted them with \$2,000, which NHF reps say will be used to support their Klippenstein House Project. The heritage site is currently working to renovate the interior of The Commons Barn (Eddie Schmidt Barn), which includes the installation of a commercial kitchen. "We have really enjoyed hosting GVE events at the Commons Barn," noted GVE Altona branch manager Mark Krahn. "It offers a nice rustic yet modern venue plus lots of space outside for machinery displays. GVE continues to support them as a part of our year-end giving."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

BOXING WEEK Sale



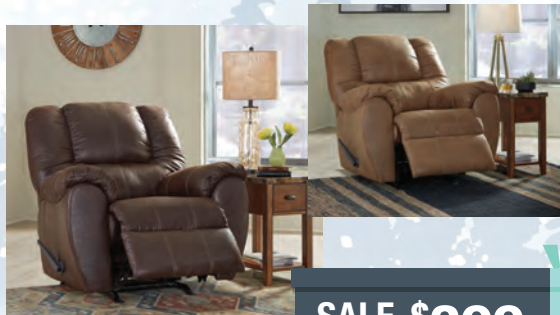
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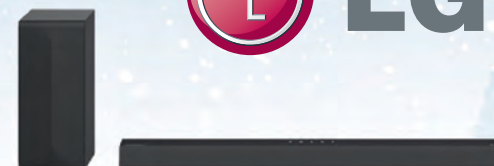


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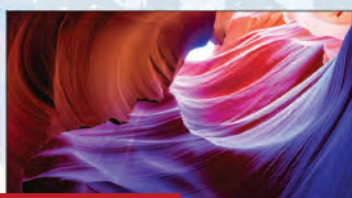


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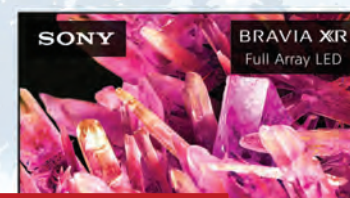


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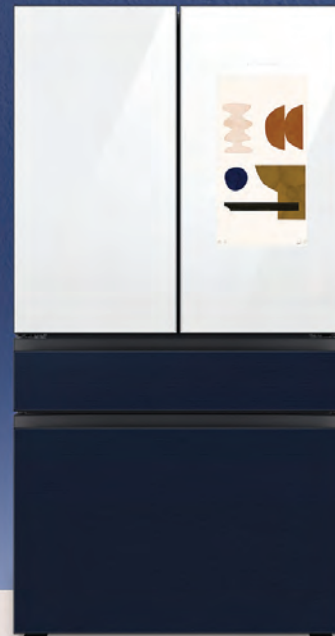
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What's *Your* Christmas Story?

We received so many creative entries for our writing contest this year! Here are our winners, along with a few other favourites.

GRAND PRIZE, KINDERGARTEN TO GR. 4: ANJULIA ST-JEAN, GR. 4, MAPLE LEAF SCHOOL

THE HOT CHOCOLATE CATASTROPHE

First of all I woke up to a clattering sound. So I sprinted to my kitchen to see what was going on.

When I got to the kitchen, I saw a snowman making hot chocolate!

At first I couldn't believe my eyes! It was the snowman that me and my brother made the other day! I remember giving him that bright red and green scarf and that dark blue hat!

But something was not right. I had this really weird feeling in my gut. It was not that the snowman was alive, it was that the snowman was boiling the hot chocolate powder and scooping cold water slowly into the mug. The powder was flying everywhere!

I screamed, "What is going on?"

The snowman shouted, "I wanted to make hot

chocolate for your family."

I know he was trying to be nice, but he was not helping. I stopped the kettle so no more powder would fling in the air.

I said, "Why are you making hot chocolate for my family?"

"I wanted to thank you and your brother for making me," replied the snowman.

No snowman had ever thanked me for making them. I could tell he was really nice.

Luckily, it was not super messy. I helped him clean the mess with a broom and showed him how to actually make hot chocolate. I'm surprised we did not wake up my parents!

Together we drank the hot chocolate and talked. We became best friends. He told me I had to name him, so I picked the name Greg.

Soon it was time for Greg to leave. I was heartbro-

ken. I did not want him to leave!

I wanted to give Greg something before he left. I asked him if he could have anything, what would it be?

"Well, it would be to have a friend," said the snowman.

That made me so sad! I knew that we were friends but I couldn't come with him.

"I can't come with you, but I can give you another snowman," I said. So I ran outside and made a medium-sized snowball, a small snowball, and a tiny snowball. I stuck them all together and I grabbed two buttons for eyes, five rocks for a mouth, a carrot for a nose, and a hat and scarf.

I gave it to Greg. He smiled, then disappeared

To this day I still remember him.

GRAND PRIZE, GRADE 5-8: EMERY FRIESEN, GR. 7, WINKLER

ARCTIC HOT CHOCOLATE

My day began just like any other day. Later it turned into something extraordinary and unbelievable, with just the right amount of magic.

It was a cold December morning. I woke up to my alarm clock beeping in its familiar rhythm. The smell of chocolate hung in the air like fog. I reluctantly drew back the blankets and shivered in the early morning air. On the other side of my frozen

window, the snow fell very quickly and heavily.

After pulling on my clothes as fast as I could, I raced downstairs, probably waking up everyone on the block with my clumsy stomping on the hard wooden floor.

As I stifled a yawn, I rounded the corner of the dark hallway and yelped in surprise. Standing in the kitchen was a ... Nope, I'm hallucinating. It couldn't be a ... No! I mean, why would a snowman be in my kitchen?

Rubbing my eyes, I peer around the corner again. Yep, it's a snowman. He (at least I assumed it was a he; I couldn't be sure ... then again, it was a snowman) stood there with a mug in his hand. So that was where the smell was coming from: hot chocolate.

Deciding to talk to him instead of covering out of his sight, I stood up straight and walked into my kitchen.

"Hello. Umm, I'm Emery and well, why are you in my kitchen and why do you have my mom's mug?"

After a lot of talking, I learned that Arctic (the snowman) was making the hot chocolate for my family. Turns out Santa asked the snowmen all over the world to make every family hot chocolate.

"Well, sorry but I have to go now," the snowman said. "I need get to this town in Mexico in the next ten minutes."

"How are you supposed to get there that soon?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Well, if you come with me you will see," he smiled. "I can get you back here after I make their hot chocolate." He said this in his deep melodic voice.

I agreed to go under one condition: that I could write this down in my journal so I could remember this forever. Arctic agreed and clutched my arm with his freezing stick hands.

"Ready? This might feel a bit chilly."

Chilly was an understatement. As soon as a low melody left his lips the world spun in a wintery white blur that froze me to the bone.

As my dizziness slowed, I got a good look around.

We were in a large kitchen. The walls were painted a brilliant blue. There were dishes in the sink and the counter was piled with them, but when we checked in the cupboard there were enough clean mugs for the family of five.

As we made the hot chocolate, trying to keep as quiet as possible, he told me about Santa. Arctic described him as upbeat and smiley, but tired. This year he decided to give more than just presents, but also hot chocolate, and it was a lot of work to organize the snowmen.

When we finished placing the cups on the table, he took me home, which almost froze me to death.

"Well, good bye, Arctic. Maybe I'll see you again next year."

"Hopefully," he grinned, the pebbles on his face moved slowly, like they were moving through honey.

He disappeared in a whirl of snow and song, and I raced up the stairs to my journal. I sat down at my desk and smiled.

"Oh, what a story I have," I whispered into the early morning light.



What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

One cool December morning the breeze outside my window woke me up.

Suddenly I smelled the smell of fresh pine needles. I follow the smell into the living room to find ... the most glorious Christmas tree ever!

On it I see dazzling ornaments. The most sparkly tinsel ever. Shiny red and green ribbons. Twinkling lights and candy canes dangling from the tree.

And gigantic presents lay under the plump, busy tree.

I looked up and saw the most wonderful star on top!

"Wow" I said. I felt joyful and merry.

"That is a beautiful Christmas tree!" I said. But how did it get there?

I take a candy cane from the tree and lick it. It tastes minty and delicious.

All of a sudden, the tree falls down in a crash.

"Oh no!" I cry. "How will I get it back together?"

Just then I spot a piece of paper. I pick it up and there are instructions of how to put everything on the tree!

"Hmmm," I say. "Maybe if I follow the instructions I can put the tree back together."

I try to put it back together. It is hard but I get it back together! And I kept it for my Christmas tree.

—*Kerri Elias, Gr. 3, Winkler*

MY PERFECT SNOW DAY

One morning I woke up and I got out of bed. When I looked at the time it was already 8:32! The bus was gone!

I went into the living room and my mom was still here, my sister was still there and so was my dad. They hadn't woken me up? Next thing I knew it was a snow day!

I got out of my pajamas and got into my snow gear. I got outside and started sledding down the ramp on our deck. My dad came out and asked if I wanted to go on the sled behind our snowmobile. Then we were off!

We went through the valley and around lakes and then came home to watch Christmas movies. We went inside and made hot chocolate and started the movie.

When the movie was over I went outside with my mom, dad, and sister to the golf course hill to slide down on. We were flying! After a few hours of sliding we went home.



When we arrived back home I asked if I could go to the store to get Christmas presents. My dad loves Icy Squares. Icy Squares are squares of rich, dark chocolate. When my mom and I got to the store we went wild running around and up and down the aisles. Even though we bought a whole bunch of stuff that was extra—like ornaments, Christmas lights, and garland for our Christmas tree—we still got everything we actually went to the store for.

After we finished paying for everything we went home and started wrapping all the presents.

My mom wrapped my sister's presents and I wrapped my dad's presents.

My sister got a doll camper and my dad got Icy squares, a new ornament for the tree, a go-pro lens, and a stick of deodorant (he doesn't smell too bad).

We took a break and ate candy canes and cookies while we watched another Christmas movie. Then we went back to work wrapping the Christmas presents.

When I went to bed I got to read a Christmas story because it was Christmas Eve.

As I drifted off to sleep I heard sleigh bells in the distance and a slight "Ho, ho, ho."

Merry Christmas and to all a good night!

—*River Robson, Gr. 5, Morden*

HOW ARE YOU NOT MELTING?

It started out as a normal day. December 21, to be exact. The last day of school before Christmas break.

I was walking home from school, when I heard a shout coming the direction of my house. I started running to my house. When I got there, the scream had faded. I walked into the house. Slowly, I walked into the kitchen.

"Hello?" I said.

"Hello, hello!" A jolly voice replied.

And that's when I saw him. A big, white, puff-ball. Stone buttons crawling up from his stomach to his neck. A carrot nose. A snowman!

He was at the counter, mixing something in a pot.

"Hey..." I said, recognizing that bright yellow scarf. "You're the snowman we made the other day! You're Jack!" I exclaimed.

"I believe so! I'm making some hot chocolate for you and you're family," he said, pouring chocolately hot chocolate into several mugs.

"How are you not melting!?" I suddenly exclaimed, looking at his snowy hands.

"I am!" he said, laughing and showing me his melting hands. I laughed too. It felt good to laugh with a snowman, something I have never done before.

I took a cup of hot chocolate and sipped the liquid. Hot chocolate filled my mouth with a taste I had never tasted before. Sweet and a little spicy at the same time. Hot, but not too hot. A little kick at the end where I tasted hot chili pepper seasoning.

"What did you put in here?!" I asked, still feel-

ing the chili peppers in the back of my mouth.

"Oh, well, there was some leftover meat in the fridge, so I put that in. Oh, and some stuff that was near a coffee maker, so probably coffee grinds. And some stuff from a thing you humans call a garbage can. And the hot chili pepper seasoning," he said.

I choked on my sip of now disgusting hot chocolate. I swallowed it, but it took a long time.

"So do you like it?" Jack asked, a look of excitement on his face.

"It's delicious!" I say, placing a big, fat, phony baloney smile on my face. On the inside, my stomach feels like a roller coaster. "Anyways, how did you even get in the house?"

"Oh, I used the back door," he says. "It was unlocked."

I look at the trail of melted snow from the back door to the kitchen.

"Yeah, I see that."

"I should actually get going back to the front yard. Later this night, my family is coming over to my yard, so I need to get it ready. Bye!" Jack said, slipping and sliding out the back door back to his spot on the front yard.

I looked at the door, to the hot chocolate, then to the sink. I poured all the "hot chocolate" from every cup and the leftovers from the pot down the sink. Then I made myself a real cup of hot chocolate.

Sitting down on the couch, I realized that I had met a snowman. An extraordinary snowman! And that I could never tell a single soul in the world. Because this was my snowman. A one in a million, my very special snowman.

—*Mylee Guenter, Gr. 6, Chortitz*

THE MAGIC SNOW DAY

I woke up Friday morning to get ready for school and realized it was a snow day.

When I went downstairs, I saw a snowman in the kitchen. I was like "How is there a snowman in my kitchen without making puddles? Is this a dream? Someone pinch me!" OW!

Wait ... the snowman is making hot chocolate?

As I sat down drinking my hot chocolate, I asked the snowman, "How are you not melting into a puddle?"

The snowman said, "Because I am a magic snowman, and I am here to find the most beautiful Christmas tree ever. Hurry up, finish your hot chocolate, and get dressed."

So I finished my hot chocolate and got my jacket, mitts, boots, and hat on. We then went for a walk in the forest. We slid down a snow hill into a ice tunnel. The ice tunnel led into a magical forest.

As we walked though the magical forest, I asked the snowman "How come you can talk to me?"

The snowman replied, "Because I am I am a magical snowman. Don't you remember when you wished upon a star? You wished for a spe-

Continued on page 23

What's Your Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 22

cial friend. I can't stay long, I can only stay until I help you find the most beautiful Christmas tree ever."

After a couple minutes we found the perfect Christmas tree. It was very beautiful that we dug it up and put it in a pot and put into my living room. Then the snowman disappeared. Then my family and I decorated the Christmas tree.

—Hayleigh Sherington-Voth, Gr. 4, Morden

I'M THANKFUL FOR ...

This holiday season I am thankful for the kind people.

I am thankful for shelter and a warm fire.

I am thankful for family gatherings and for food.

I am also thankful for the police and doctors and the people who keep us safe.

Christmas is my favourite holiday because there's snow and snow fights, igloos, skating, and laughter all around.

Christmas is such a thoughtful time. It makes me happy when everyone's together.

I am thankful for schools and teachers that help us learn.

I'm thankful for sledding and outside fun.

I am mostly thankful for friends, family, and Christmas.

—Karlyn Roberts, Gr. 6, Emerald Centennial School

THE SNOWMAN SURPRISE

One snowy day I was playing in the snow. I was having so much fun! My parents were outside too. We were having a snowball fight.

I hit my dad with five round snowballs. WA-BAM! He hit me with soft snowballs just two times. SPLAT! Mom was on my team! Then we went inside because my cheeks were cold.

We were going to have hot chocolate but when I walked into the kitchen I saw a snowman already making hot chocolate!

I yelled, "There's a snowman in our kitchen making hot chocolate!"

My parents laughed.

"No really come see," I said.

They slowly walked into the kitchen.

"Oh!" said my dad.

"Oh!" said my mom.

"There is really a snowman making hot chocolate," they whispered.

We asked what his name was and he

said, "Bob."

He also said he loves making chocolate for people because he loves to be kind and jolly.

So we sat down to have hot chocolate and iced Christmas tree cookies. But Bob didn't have any hot chocolate because he was made out of snow and he didn't want to melt.

—Gabriella Jerema, Gr. 2, Morden

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

It was a brisk but sunny afternoon when the school bell rang for the end of the day. I raced out the door and tore down the slippery, icy and slushy road on my jet pack. Well, I guess I wasn't on the street—more like in the air.

When I opened our pearl white with gold trim door, I stood in awe. I stared at the beautiful dark moss green tree.

Then I saw all of the ruby red, sapphire blue and magenta purple balls and glowing red stain glass cookies hanging all over the long branches. The shimmering white lights looked like snow in the sky.

While I was admiring the tree I caught the whiff of spicy chai tea drifting into the living room with soft pillowy and warm couches and arm chairs. The pine smell mixed with the tea and made the smell more wonderful. It still had a little bit of the fresh forest smell in the bark.

Just looking at the tree made me feel calm and cheerful. I was grateful to be able to have such a beautiful tree.

When I brushed against the tree I could feel the prickly needles but it was still smooth and oily.

I'd left the door open and the brisk winter air chilled my arms.

The calm Christmas music made me relax. The first song was Jingle Bells. Ah!

Hello Christmas, goodbye Christmas. It was a wonderful day. I love Christmas.

—Berkeley Zacharias, Gr. 3, Winkler

HOCKEY NEVER ENDS

If I had a snow day off from school I would ask my parents if I could invite some of my friends over to my house to skate on my rink.

If my friends could come over, I would ask them if they wanted to do a one-on-one hockey tournament and if they said yes we would have a hockey tournament

After the hockey tournament I would ask my mom if I could have a snack. For my snack I would proba-

bly have a cut up apple, cheese, and crackers.

After my snack I would probably go on the rink again with my friends because I adore being on the rink and I love playing hockey with my friends.

Once me and my friends are cold, I would ask my dad if we could have a fire and s'mores. Then me and my friends would roast s'mores and then we would eat the s'mores.

—Oakley Jerema, Gr. 4, Maple Leaf School

GIANT CHRISTMAS TREE

Blink. I open my eyes, then scream! It's Christmas!

I leap out of my bed and I smack my head on the closet door. That hurt.

I swing my clothes off the hook and I race to the bathroom. BOOM! I hit my head on the door. That hurt again.

In the bathroom, I pull the drawer and put my PJs in.

I slam the door behind me. My mom is studying the Bible and there it is: the gigantic tree. The shiny rope blends in with the green needles. On the rope are blazing lights that light the living room

The best of all is the presents under the tree. White, blue, red, all colours wrap the presents.

"Calem!" Mom called.

"What?" I ask.

"Shovel the driveway!" Mom replies.

"Rats," I mumble.

—Caleb Harder, Gr. 4, Blumenfeld School

THANKFUL

What I am most thankful for this

holiday season is my dog. His name is Monty and he is a bulldog. He is brown and he looks like a marshmallow.

He likes me. He is thankful for me too. When I feel sad he licks me and makes me feel better.

His ears flop and he is wrinkly. He walks around the house, he barks, and he likes to play tug-of-war with me.

He really likes to listen to me. He makes me laugh when he sits like a human and when he scratches his face on the floor.

I love him and he is wonderful.

—Maci Bartley, Kindergarten, Morden

WHAT A TREAT

Aurora was playing in the fresh snow outside in the front yard. Her parents were in the back yard helping her younger brother, Dean, make a snowman. Aurora was making her own snowman, whom she had decided to name Nickels the Snowman.

It was cold and she had already been outside for two hours. She felt soaked and chilly and wanted something warm to drink. The most delicious thing that came to mind was hot chocolate.

She was finally finished building her snowman. She was so excited to show her mom and dad Nickels. She grabbed a carrot and poked it into Nickels' face. She grabbed six buttons for the smile, two buttons for the eyes, and, for the last touch, she took

Continued on page 24



What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 23

off her scarf and wrapped it around Nickels' neck.

Then she walked inside getting ready for hot cocoa. She took off her jacket and mittens and then pulled out the milk and cocoa powder in the kitchen.

Suddenly Aurora heard a strange noise. She turned around and standing at the door was a small snowman who looked just like Nickels!

Aurora gasped, "What in the world, Nickels?" Aurora sounded shocked, yet not scared.

"Can I make hot chocolate? I'm so thirsty!" Nickels spoke as he slowly started to melt in the warm house.

"I guess ..." Aurora said, now just confused.

Nickels waddled over to the kitchen where the milk was sitting on the counter next to the cocoa powder.

"Mmmm, I love hot chocolate," Nickels said as he sniffed the cocoa.

"Yeah ... me too," Aurora also sniffed the air. She couldn't help but notice the marshmallowy smell of the powder.

"Do you like hot chocolate? I LOVE chocolate! I'll make some for you too, Aurora!" Nickels beamed at Aurora, but she was busy thinking, "What if my parents walk in? What if Nickels melts before he gets outside?"

Aurora had made up her mind and said, "Nickels, I'll make the hot cocoa, but for now go back outside and wait for it. We can't let my family see you."

But it was too late, because Nickels was done making five steaming mugs of hot chocolate! Nickels giggled seeing that Aurora was shocked at how fast he created the drinks. He handed over one of the mugs to Aurora and started to walk to the back door where Mom, Dad, and Dean were outside.

"WAIT!" Aurora ran up to Nickels and led him away from the back door. "You can't let them see you! You go out to the front, and I'll give them their drinks."

Nickels nodded and walked out of the house. A trail of water and ice were left where he was walking. Aurora, being careful not to spill, smiled at her mom and dad's surprised faces when she gave them each a mug of hot chocolate.

"Wow, Aurora! This is really good!" they said as Aurora laughed and closed the door. She put on her jacket and her mittens and sat down in the snow where Nickels was drinking his hot chocolate and saying, "Don't you just LOVE hot chocolate, because I LOVE hot chocolate! Mmmm," Aurora laughed as she took her first sip and realized this was the best cup of warm marshmallowy hot chocolate she had ever had.

"Aw, man!!" Nickels looked down at his cup.

"What is it?" Aurora asked.

"This is my last sip!" complained the snowman.

Aurora giggled, "Aw!"

"No, you don't understand," Nickels said, looking like he was about to cry.

"Not understand what?" asked Aurora.

"It's my last sip! So, once I drink all of it I turn back to a normal snowman." Nickels sniffled.

"What happens if you don't finish it?" Aurora asked, feeling bad for the snowman even though they just met a few hours ago. She felt like Nickels was her best friend already.

"Merry Christmas, Aurora," said Nickels without answering her question and instead took the last sip

of his hot cocoa and turned back to normal.

"Merry Christmas Nickels," sighed Aurora with a smile. "What a treat."

—Capri Rayne Nault, Gr. 6, Winkler

SNOW DAY!

I woke up feeling rested. Wait, this wasn't normal. I always felt tired when waking up for school. I looked outside and the sun seemed brighter than it should be. I raced upstairs to find my whole family eating breakfast. I glanced at a clock. 9:45! I turned to look at my mom.

"Mom, why aren't we getting ready for school! Were so late already and I ...

"There's no school today," Mom said gently "It's a snow day."

My face lit up. No. School. TODAY!? I jumped with joy. Yes, no school! I sat down with no rush to eat breakfast. I wanted to enjoy the crispness of the bacon. Food tasted much better when you have time to eat it.

"So, what do you guys wanna do today?" my mom asked.

"Sledding, skating, playing outside!" my siblings shouted.

I had no interest in going outside. I wanted to cuddle up with a blanket and a good book instead and just enjoy the freedom we have today. But I knew that wasn't going to happen.

"Maybe sledding?" I suggested.

In the end we decided we would go skating with some of our family friends because good sledding hills are far from where we live. I'm not the best skater and I always get blisters, but since I would get to see my friends, I decided it would be okay.

After a quick clean up of the house we started getting on our winter gear and Mom told me to go get the skates. I wandered into the garage, wondering where to start. I looked everywhere until finally I found them in some old dusty backpack. It smelled like a rat died in there. When I went back inside everyone was ready. And I wasn't. I quickly put on some winter gear and grabbed one of the backpacks. My family was waiting outside for me, but I couldn't find my gloves anywhere. I decided to just put my hands in my pockets because my little brothers were becoming restless. I closed the door and we started walking.

The skating rink was really close, so we didn't need to drive. There was a lot of snow, but it looked like someone had gone through the roads with a snowblower. I was thankful people were willing to come out in the cold to clear the roads for us.

I soon as my brothers saw the rink they started running. Well, more like trudging. Like I said, there was a LOT of snow.

When we made it to the rink, I started helping my brothers with their skates. When we got out of the little shed, I crossed my fingers that no one was there. I didn't like it when so many people were there, it got really crowded in that small ice rink, especially when a hockey game was going on. I was happy to see it was just a small family there.

My little brother wanted me to help him skate, so I held his hands while he skated.

"My goal is to be able to skate without any help be-



fore we leave," he said confidently.

"Well, we'll see how far we get," I replied.

My friends still hadn't come yet. I began to worry. I hope they're safe, I thought. But then I noticed their car! Hooray!

For the rest of the day, we skated around and talked. Right before we left my brother said he was going to let go. I nodded and held him steady.

"3,2,1, GO!" I shouted

I gave him a little push and he was off! He wasn't terribly fast, but he was doing it! I was so proud! We all cheered and clapped as he slowly skated around. His face lit up and he looked so happy.

Later on, when we took our skates off, he was still hopping up and down. He turned and beamed at me.

"Thank you for helping me," he said, smiling.

"You're welcome," I said happily.

He reached for my hand, and I gently took his.

This is what snow days are for, I thought, as we walked home hand in hand.

—Bella Guenter, Gr. 8, Chortitz

THANKFUL FOR A GREAT PARTY

It was December 5, 2021 and it was my 9th birthday.

I thought it was going to be great. But then my mom said, "The forecast shows that there's going to be a blizzard this afternoon. It says it's going to start at 8 p.m."

Once I heard the bad news, I started sobbing! I was so disappointed because I thought no one would be able to come!

But my mom said, "Well, maybe everyone can come during the day so no one gets stuck in the snow."

So at 2 p.m. everybody came. We all had cake, hot chocolate, vegetables, and chips.

The party was great and we all had fun. But at 6:30 p.m. everybody went home safe and sound.

Even though there was a blizzard it all turned out great!

—Vivienne Suderman, Gr. 5, Greenfarm

Continued on page 25

What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 24

THE SNOWMAN

It was two days before Christmas and Katey just couldn't wait until Santa Claus came to her home.

Wait ... what was that noise? It sounded like humming. Katey decided to go investigate.

She shoved her covers off, slipped her slippers on, and tiptoed downstairs to the main floor.

Katey's jaw dropped at the sight: a snowman was in the kitchen making hot chocolate. Only now she could tell what he was humming: "We Wish You A Merry Christmas."

The snowman then stopped humming and turned around, smiling. "Hello!" said the snowman.

"It can talk?" thought Katey, confused as ever.

"Hi," she said.

The snowman spoke again. "Here have some hot chocolate."

And, right before her eyes, the snowman walked right to her and handed her a mug filled with hot chocolate with little marshmallows in it.

"I've got to go now, Katey. Give these to your parents," he said, handing her two more mugs before disappearing.

"Wait! How do you know my name?" But it was too late. The snowman was gone.

Katey's parents then came downstairs.

"Who were you talking to, sweetie?" asked her mother.

"A magical snowman that can talk!" replied Katey.

"Who taught you to make hot chocolate? Oh wait, let me guess: the snowman," her father chuckled.

"What an amazing imagination our Katey has," he said to his wife, grinning.

They all drank their delicious steaming cups of hot chocolate.

Katey glanced out their front window to find the snowman waving at her with his huge, friendly grin. She smiled back at him and then he faded into thin air once more.

Katey and her family spent the rest of their day having family time outside in the snow. She even made a replica of the mystical snowman that she'd witnessed!

—Scarlette Paracholski, Gr. 4, Morden

A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS TREE

Once upon a time there was a very beautiful Christmas tree.

It had a very pretty star made of solid gold. It had ten ornaments of the most beautiful kind you can imagine, with the prettiest pink glitter. Also, the most beautiful candy cane ornaments with silver sparkles.

There were blue and red, green and yellow icicle ornaments. The tree skirt looked like it was made out of real silver, though it wasn't.

But that was not all! There was also every colour imaginable on a string of lights wrapped around and around the tree. There were garlands made of real flowers—pink, yellow, and white roses.



It was a real tree, and it smelled like it was just picked, fresh and beautiful! And each of its branches was fluffed in the perfect tip.

It was so pretty, and all the other Christmas trees that saw it were its friends.

—Evie Waldal, age 6, Crystal City

THE JOLLY SNOWMAN

I was curled up on the couch by the hearth, Bible in hand, enjoying the beautiful scenery outside, not expecting the crazy things that were about to happen.

It was Christmas Eve and big, gentle snowflakes drifted down to the ground making great hills for sledding.

My mom was sick, and Dad was off to do the last-minute shopping.

I went to the kitchen to grab some snack and that's when I saw the dream of my life! I gasped in shock, then screamed in delight. I quickly silenced myself, considering Mom was sleeping, but it was too late.

"Kate," she yelled. "What's going on?"

"Nothing" I reply. "Just a very suspenseful book" I fibbed, trying not to bother Mom.

"Hey," I said to the jolly snowman. "What are you doing here?"

Sadly, the snowman could not speak. He pointed towards the mouth-watering bin of hot chocolate mix.

"M-Making hot chocolate!" I stuttered, amazed. There he had four mugs on the counter waiting to be filled by the deluxe hot drink.

The snowman, which I now named Joy, was standing by the kettle looking rather puzzled.

"Need some help?" I questioned. Following his nod, I poured some water in the kettle then turned it on. Once the water started boiling, Joy escorted me back to the living room and seated me on a couch.

I read a little more, but it was hard to concentrate. My thoughts wandered me to the unique snowman. The sweet aroma of chocolate drove me back to the kitchen. He had set three mugs filled to the brim with steaming hot chocolate ready on the table. Just then, Mom clomped down the stairs. At the sight of Joy, she screeched louder than an owl at night. She clumsily ran back upstairs, mumbling something about being out of her mind and needing more sleep.

I heard the door open, and Dad stomped in, making snow fly everywhere. I was dreading the time when Mom would find out. Icicles were stuck on his beard and his cheeks were red from the cold winter's day. He crouched near the fireplace warming up his hands.

"Come join us" I called. "Joy made you a nice cup of hot cocoa".

"Who's Joy?" he asked.

I explained and his answer was simply, "I'm sure."

We went to the kitchen, but Joy was gone. I searched frantically all over the house, but no trace was found of the jolly snowman, other than a few puddles here and there.

Dad laughed and mussed my hair. I took a mug to Mom, then me and Dad sat down by the fire.

Years later, I still think of the kind snowman.

Let us all be like this kind snowman helping others in need or cheering up those in the dumps. Even if it's as simple as making hot chocolate for a family.

—Ruth Fehr, Gr. 8, Hochfeld School

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS TREE EVER

One day I woke up. Then I went to the living room. I saw the most beautiful Christmas tree ever!

It had shining ornaments, twinkling lights, and poofy pine.

The best part was the star. It twinkled and shined on the glassy window.

Then one ornament had a picture of my family. I was joyfully happy for it to be up there.

Another ornament had an angel on it to show love to my family.

Then I saw an ornament that had my dog's cute face on it.

The Christmas tree was so beautiful that it shined bright as a star.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

—Ainsley Janzen, Gr. 3, Winkler

SNOW DAY

If there was a snow day off of school I would go sledding at Klassen's hill with my brother Dylan and my cousins.

Then I would go home and play in the snow with Dylan. We would probably have a snowball fight.

Then we would go inside and have some hot chocolate with soft, fluffy marshmallows with Mom and Dad.

Then we would play a board game. Then I would turn on all the colourful lights all around the house. After that we would all watch a Christmas movie and eat Dominos pizza. Then, right before bed, me and Dylan would have some Christmas cookies and then we would go to bed.

—Riley Dyck, Gr. 5, Blumenfeld School

Continued on page 26

What's *Your* Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 25

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

One winter morning, I walk into my cozy living room and I saw the most beautifully decorated tree I have ever seen.

It's bright golden light gives a beautiful gleam to every single ornament on the tree.

I turn my gaze to the ornaments. I saw angels, a little stable, candy canes, stars and glittering ball ornaments.

I looked under the tree. There was presents wrapped in red and green wrapping paper. A stable scene is in the centre.

When I looked at the top of the tree I saw a shining gold star with hints of silver all over the star. I saw engravings in the trunk. I saw snowmen skating, elves packing carefully wrapped presents into a bright red sleigh.

—Ruth Clark, Gr. 4,
Minnewasta School

FROSTLAND

"Ahhhh! There are puddles on the floor all the way to the kitchen! My socks are all wet!" I yell.

"EKKK! I stepped in them too! Why are there puddles in here?" Nat questions.

"Let's find out!" I tell her excitedly.

We follow the trail to the kitchen and find ... a snowman! Making three cups of hot chocolate! We are completely speechless.

"Oh, hello! I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Blanche. I'm from Frostland. Hot chocolate is my fav. Would you like some?"

Nat and I communicate with our eyes. *Are we dreaming?*

"Um... ok?" Nat and I respond in shock. *A talking snowman! Good thing my parents are not home!*

After an awkward silence I say, "My name is Crystal and this is my BFF, Natasha."

"WRRRRRRRRR."

"What was that??" Nat asks worriedly.

"I don't know. I think it came from the entrance," I say. Blanche gets up from her chair and moves towards the entrance. Nat and I exchange glances and follow, while, of course, trying to avoid stepping in the puddles that are left behind.

When we reach the entrance, we see an ice blue portal with icicles hanging from the top.

"Oh! My home portal is here!"

Blanche tells us excitedly.

"What is that?" Nat asks in a curious voice.

"It's my home portal. We can teleport to the human world and meet humans whenever we want. If humans go through, the time stops in the human world, so no one knows they are missing," Blanche tells us with a smile.

"So, we can go through?" I ask mischievously.

"Yes, but ..."

Before Blanche can finish her sentence, Nat and I are jumping through the portal. Pooff!

I land in something soft, poofy, and freezing. Snow! I get up and see a village with snowmen of every size. Big, small, and tiny. I turn and see Nat beside me. She is also looking around in awe.

"Whoa!" Nat says in wonder. "This is super cool! Let's go explore!"

"Hold your reindeers, little ones!" Blanche says behind us. "Wait for me! There are rules!"

It was too late. We had already started running. After several minutes of exploring the village, we stop at a large field. All around us, snowmen are having a snowball fight! We gladly join in! Blanche does too.

"This is so fun!" I say. "The snow is perfect for making snowballs!"

After a while, we are tuckered out and Blanche says, "Follow me!"

She brings us to a big, gray tower at the edge of the village. We climb to the top.

"Wow! The view is beautiful!" exclaims Nat.

"This is totes awsome!" I say in agreement. We can see the whole village. There are Christmas decorations, and the houses looked like giant snow forts. The sun is setting and makes everything sparkle.

"Now that you've seen my village and have had some fun, I must take you back home," says Blanche.

"Ok," we say together sadly.

Blanche touches her carrot nose, and then, suddenly, the ice blue portal is right in front of us. We all jump through and ...

Thud!

"Ow! My bottom!" Nat cries.

We appear in our seats at the table with our hot cocoa. Blanche is smiling at us.

"We're home from shopping! Crystal? Natasha?" my mom yells from the entrance.

"We're here in the kitchen, mom!" I

yell back.

"I must leave now, but I will see you next week. I'll take you to see the ice palace," says Blanche very merrily. Then Blanche jumps through the portal, and it disappears.

My mom comes into the kitchen and asks, "How are you girls? Everything still standing?"

"Yes, Mom, all good. Uneventful," I say with a smirk.

Nat and I go to my room. We can hardly wait to talk about what happened.

After we debrief, Nat asks me, "We tell no one about our day?"

"Nope," I say. "Blanche said she'd see us again really soon."

"Deal," says Nat happily. "I wonder what will happen next time. I can hardly wait!"

We could never have imagined that we would have such a frosty adventure. What a day! I wonder what the ice palace looks like...

—Jaid Berard, Gr. 6,
École Morden Middle School

MY SNOWMAN

It was 12 a.m. when Stephine went downstairs for a glass of milk. She was halfway down the stairs when she heard a Clatter Bang Boom!!! Stephine ran up the stairs and right into her bed! Stephine was quite scared, so she stayed up there for a solid 30 minutes!

Finally, she got up the courage to go see what was going on. So, Stephine grabbed her teddy and slowly but surely she went to the living room. Then the bathroom. Then the den. Then she checked out all the rooms but the kitchen!

Stephine heard someone sip something. Stephine wasn't scared because she heard a funny sound! It sounded like a reindeer! She ran to the kitchen! It was Frosty and Rudolph! It was wonderful! Frosty made her hot chocolate and she rode Rudolph and opened the presents Frosty brought her! It was great!

But then Stephine almost forgot about the crash, so she asked Frosty. It was Frosty! He was making hot chocolate for her! Stephine understood. Stephine was shocked that she didn't ask Frosty how he came alive! Frosty told her the whole story. He came from Santa's workshop and his favorite elf Jingles put magic dust on him and he just rode on Rudolph to her house.

Stephine asked, "Why my house?"

Frosty said because she is a very special little girl, and she has been a very nice girl, and this was what Santa wanted you to see.

"Can you and Rudolph stay?" Stephine asked.

Frosty said he will have to check with Santa first. Frosty sent her to bed and told her he will see her tomorrow night at the same time!

Stephine couldn't eat, work, or even play! Finally, it was bedtime. She set her alarm to 12 a.m. and fell asleep.

Beep Beep Beep!!!

Stephine shot up and ran down the stairs and into the kitchen and they were there! She asked them if they could stay and they ... could! Stephine was so happy!

So, they all went to sleep (Frosty went outside for bed) and in the morning her family met Frosty and Rudolph and they all lived happily ever after!

—Olivia S., Gr. 5, Border Valley School

THE HOLY SEASON

In this beautiful season the things I am thankful for are more than just presents and hot cocoa, and I want to tell you some of the other things I am thankful for.

First is a family to enjoy and celebrate the holiday season with.

Second is the happiness, joy, love, laughter and peace that spreads across the globe and brings all people from different nations together to enjoy the holiday.

Third is the holiness that is felt. It is the strongest and most wonderful feeling whenever it floods your heart and makes you feel better than you ever have before.

Fourth is all the happy faces that I see. It is absolutely heartwarming and wondrous to see so many people bond and grow strong together and find peace in one another. As long as I see others happy, I am happy as well.

Fifth and finally is Christ the savior and God the Father's holiness that spreads world-wide, and His word that is heard every day of the season. And with that time off I want to grow my faith whenever I can, and I hope you all do that same holy act and grow close to God and follow his words for all of eternity and forevermore.

Hope you enjoy the season!

—Braydee Delyea, Gr. 6,
Hochfeld School

sports & recreation

Despite the defensive efforts of Northlands Parkway Collegiate's Memphis Klassen, Morden Collegiate's Owen Vanrobaeys tries to get a shot on goalie Hayden Janzen. The Morden Thunder ran roughshod over the visiting Nighthawks Saturday in Zone 4 High School Hockey League action, winning 13-2. Partway through the season, Morden is in third place with a 9-2 record, trailing the WC Miller Aces in first (9-5) and the PCI Trojans in second (9-1). The GVC Zodiacs are in sixth at 4-8 while the NPC Nighthawks are in ninth place at 0-11.

PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE



Winkler Royals add 4-3 SO win to their record

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Royals were the lone local team to take to the ice in the South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League last week.

They hosted the Red River Wild Saturday night and battled their way to a 4-3 shootout victory.

Winkler had a 2-0 lead after 20 minutes thanks to goals from Remi Lauricelle and Austin Wiebe.

The Wild evened things out with an unanswered goal in the second period. Jamie Thiessen then pulled the Royals back into the lead 3-2 at 17:35 in the third, only to have the Wild manage a powerplay goal with 28 seconds left on the clock to force overtime.

The extra minutes solved nothing, and it took a shootout for a decision in Winkler's favour.

Jayme Janzen made 43 saves in net for the Royals, as Red River outshot Winkler 46-34.

With that, Winkler is in fifth place in the standings with a 5-3-1 record and 11 points, the Morden Bombers are in eighth place at 4-3-0-1 and nine

points, and the Altona Maroons are in 10th and last place at 1-8-1 and three points.

Topping the standings heading into the holidays is Portage in first (16 points), Ste Anne in second (16 points), Ile des Chenes in third (14

points), and Red River in fourth (12 points).

This week's only local game sees the Bombers host the Royals Thursday night to close out 2022.

Flyers best Niverville Nighthawks 5-2

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Wintry weather meant the Winkler Flyers only played one game this past week, and they made it a good one.

Their scheduled home game against the Steinbach Pistons got postponed Friday night, but Niverville made it to town two nights later, though they may have wished they didn't.

Winkler was the only one to do any

scoring through the first two periods, with Lucas Ens lighting up the scoreboard with 14 seconds to go in the first and then Jayce Legaarden, Dalton Andrew, and Zach Nichols making it a 4-0 rout in the second.

Carter Dittmer then contributed a goal early in the final period to make it 5-0 for the home team.

The Nighthawks finally managed to get one and then two past Winkler

netminder Aiden Comeau in the last 10 minutes of the game, but it wasn't nearly enough to close the gap, giving Winkler the win 5-2.

Comeau made 36 saves overall as Niverville outshot Winkler 38-37.

The Flyers wrap up 2022 with two more games, hosting Portage this Wednesday and then playing in Steinbach on New Year's Eve.

Lyndon Friesen celebrating five decades of reffing local hockey

By Lori Penner

Hockey Manitoba and the Altona Minor Hockey Association are congratulating Level 3 official Lyndon Friesen, who has been officiating Altona Minor Hockey for 51 consecutive years, including 41 years in the Zone IV High School Hockey League.

Minor Hockey president Wes Hildebrand says it's quite a feat to have officiated for that long, ensuring that the game is safe, fair, and played within the rules.

"It takes a great amount of patience and perseverance to ref for that many years. Refing is something that often goes unrecognized in the community, and it takes a lot of strength to do that for five decades. He's been part of Altona's hockey scene for as long as many residents can remember. It's quite an achievement."

Plans for an official congratulatory ceremony were in place last week but were cancelled due to a snowstorm. Hildebrand says there will be a formal acknowledgment of Friesen's tenacity to the role in the near future.

Friesen remembers how it all started.

"Conley Kehler and I just came off a practice with a local team, and Eugene Letkeman said, 'Hey guys, here's some jerseys, you're reffing the game now.'"

From there, the two friends continued to ref together for many years, often mentoring other referees.

"In the Pembina Valley, you need a mentor out there, to train new officials. I still do a lot of mentoring



Lyndon Friesen has been a local hockey ref for 51 years.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

now," says Friesen. Kehler eventually stopped reffing. "But I just kept going, and I haven't missed a single year."

People have been congratulating him for sticking with it for so long, but Friesen says it all starts with a love for hockey.

"It's really about that and keeping the game safe for the kids. That's at the heart of all those hours on the ice."

Reffing has taught him patience, he says.

"It can test you sometimes. You have to make an unbelievable number of decisions in a game. It keeps me sharp, and but it's also taught me what to do

in tough situations. And watching kids excel—I love it. Watching them do well and grow. I used to ref so much I'd watch kids who could barely skate at the beginning of the year, and by the end of the year they were great skaters. To watch them progress from the fall to spring was incredible. You also build a lot of good relationships with coaches."

As a referee, he says you remember three sets of kids out there.

"You remember those that end up in the penalty box every game, and you remember those that score multiple goals every game. You remember the

ones that make the games interesting and the ones that make the games a success."

Looking back on some of the highlights of his years as an official, Friesen says the most memorable games were the ones that took him outside the so-called box.

"Doing the outdoor Zone 4 Classic in 2017 at the Rosenfeld rink was definitely a highlight," he says. "That was a lot of fun. I also did some reffing at a college exhibition game in Altona. And reffing at my daughter and son's games is also something that really stands out."

Another highlight was a stormy day in Altona when the refs didn't show up for senior hockey.

"It was the Altona Maroons against Morden I think, so Conley and I did what was called a Texas two-man, and that was really memorable, too."

A typical year used to see Friesen covering hundreds of games and logging countless hours and miles. "I'm not doing as many as I used to, but I'll still be reffing as long as I can. We have to certify every year, and even during COVID, I did register and even reffed a couple of games the weekend we got shut down."

He says he's grateful for all the support he's received through the years.

"I thank the community for putting up with me this long. I'm no different than anybody else. I ref good games, and I ref bad games, but at the end of the day, I can certainly say I tried my best and I enjoyed it."

Hawks wrap up 2022 with loss to Interlake

By Lorne Stelmach

The female U18 Pembina Valley Hawks were not able to close out 2022 on a winning note.

The Interlake Lightning took period leads of 1-0 and 2-0 Sunday in Morden as they edged the Hawks 3-1. A game scheduled for Friday in Morden against the Central Plains Capitals was postponed due to the weather.

Haylee Grenier scored the lone goal for the Hawks in the third period, while Kaylee Franz took the loss in goal with 18 saves.

With the victory, Interlake pulled even with the Hawks at 11 points, but Pembina Valley ranks sixth with two games in hand as well as one more victory.

Central Plains brings up the rear at

six points, and Pembina Valley's record of 5-11-1 has them trailing Eastman by four. Leading the way in the upper half of the standings are the

Winnipeg Ice at 31, Westman at 26 and the Winnipeg Avros and Yellowhead at 23 points.

The Hawks return to action in the

new year on the road as they face Westman in Hartney Jan. 6 and Yellowhead in Shoal Lake Jan. 7.

Male Hawks down Lightning 4-1

By Lorne Stelmach

The male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks were working to hold on to third place as the year-end break neared this week.

Their lone game of this past week saw them defeat the Interlake Lightning 4-1. Their scheduled Friday game against the Winnipeg Bruins was postponed due to poor weather.

With one game remaining in 2022

this Wednesday against the Winnipeg Wild, the Hawks were 17-5-4 for 38 points. They trail the Bruins at 43 and Brandon at 47 points while sitting just one point up on the Wild and Winnipeg Thrashers at 37 points.

Against Interlake, the Hawks led 2-1 after one period and then put it away with two more goals in the middle frame.

Marek Miller scored twice with singles from Sebastian Hicks and Cedrik

Robidoux. The shots on goal were 37-32 in favor of the Hawks, with Bryson Yaschyshyn making 31 saves between the posts.

The Hawks will return to action in the new year with the challenge of having three games over three days against the Thrashers. That kicks off Friday, Jan. 6 in Winnipeg and then continues Saturday, Jan. 7 in Morden before concluding Sunday, Jan. 8 in Morris.

Morden youth, adult synchronized skating teams take to the ice

Local teams hosting Crocus Open next month

By Lorne Stelmach

Synchronized skating not only continues to be a strong draw in Morden but has grown this year to include a new adult team.

And with the long-awaited return to competition in the works post-pandemic—including the first one of the season right here in Morden—there is plenty of cause for excitement.

“It’s really exciting especially because the pandemic put a pause on all synchronized skating. Last year, we were allowed to skate, but there were no competitions, so this will be the first competition since February 2019,” said Asten McGill, who is not only team manager of the Pembina Pizazz but a member of the adult team as well as competition chair for the Jan. 21 Crocus Open in Morden.

“It’s going to be really exciting to compete. We’re coming into it as a new adult team ... we don’t really have expectations ... but it’s exciting,” said Kyla Itterman, who like McGill is a fellow adult team skater whose daughter is also involved in the program.

“I think it’s really exciting to have everyone back in person,” said Sarah Kagan, who is a member of one of the youth teams. “I know last year we did a lit bit of competing virtually where we sent in a video, but it wasn’t the same, and we never really got that aspect of cheering everyone on ... I think that’s even a really fun part of it.”

The Pembina Pizazz synchronized skating program is now well established in the Morden area.

The skaters meet to train and practice every Sunday from October to March. There are two youth teams: one for ages six to 12 and the other for 12-17-year-olds.



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Morden synchronized skating youth and adult teams are gearing up to host their first competition of the season next month: the Crocus Open Jan. 21, featuring teams from across the province.

New this year is the adult team that has eight female skaters and one male skater, ranging in age from early 20s to 40-something.

McGill believes the popularity of adult synchronized skating teams is growing everywhere, although she noted it does come as a surprise to many people.

“Lots of people don’t realize ... we’re met with disbelief,” she said. “Kyla convinced me to come back. Skating can be life-long. Coming back 22 years later and still being able to do it and to watch my kid and compete at the same time as her kind of makes it special.”

“A few years ago, I started skating on an adult team in Notre Dame, and I would drive once a week to Notre Dame,” noted Itterman.

“I love to skate and wanted to stay in it, but I wanted something that was closer to home and more convenient, so I bugged Asten several times ... and it was well, okay, we can start one here. So I’m very excited about it.

“We’ve got a really good group,” she continued. “Lots of them haven’t skated in a long time, so we had a couple weeks of just kind of getting those skills back ... it’s been fun to put the program together, and I think it’s going well.”

“Everybody on the team has a background in skating,” noted McGill.

There is a particular appeal to synchronized skating in that they are using their skating skills in a different way.

“I think just bringing the team aspect of it for the girls makes it successful,” said McGill. “Skating by yourself is always fun and challenging and rewarding in itself, but when you do synchro, you get the skating and the teamwork aspect of it.”

“It’s definitely the team aspect that is appealing to me. In figure skating, so much of what we do is individual, so it’s nice to have the option to skate as a team,” agreed Itterman.

“And Pam Parker has been with the program from the beginning, and

she’s just a phenomenal coach, and the kids all just love her, so that is a draw as well.”

“I think it’s really important for us to have that option to skate as a team,” said Kagan.

“The synchro team has been around a long time, and every single year, even though it’s kind of a new slate because some people graduate and new ones come in, it’s always amazing to see how the team comes together in the end.”

The excitement is building now as the first competition in Morden draws near. That will be followed by the prairie regional in Yorkton in February and a third competition in Portage la Prairie mid-March.

It is expected there could be over a dozen teams from all over Manitoba coming to Morden Jan. 21, as well as up to three teams from Thunder Bay.

“We’re all really looking forward to it,” said McGill.

Twisters break for the holidays on a high note

By Lorne Stelmach

The Pembina Valley Twisters go into the MMJHL Christmas break riding a three-game win streak.

They extended their run Sunday in Morris by outscoring the St. Boniface Riels 7-5. A game scheduled Friday with the Charleswood Hawks

was postponed due to the inclement weather.

The Twisters scored three in the first period and another three unanswered goals early in the third then withstood a late push by the Riels.

Joel Vigier and Riley Goertzen each scored a pair for Pembina Valley, with

Nico Vigier, Keston Worley, and Derek Wiebe also contributing goals.

The Riels outshot the Twisters 46-26. Logan Enns earned the win in goal with 41 saves.

Pembina Valley goes into the break having inched up to seventh place with their record having reached .500

at 9-9-3-1 for 22 points. They are three ahead of St. Boniface and just one and two points behind Charleswood and Transcona.

The Twisters now don’t return to action until Sunday, Jan. 8 when they head to Winnipeg to face the Raiders.

Corinne Schroeder is the pride of Elm Creek

By Ty Dilello

Elm Creek's Corinne Schroeder has put her whole hometown on her back as she is soaring to new heights in the hockey world.

The 23-year-old netminder is playing professional hockey at the highest level of women's hockey in the world with the PHF's Boston Pride and has her sights set on Team Canada.

Schroeder started playing hockey when she was just four years old, after first learning to skate at the age of three.

"I started playing Timbits hockey in Elm Creek with a lot of my friends and classmates," said Schroeder. "I learned to play all positions, as you typically do at such a young age. We all rotated playing in goal, and some liked it more than others. I was one who enjoyed the challenge of goaltending and wasn't afraid of the puck, so I continued to rotate between goaltending and forward as I grew older. I didn't commit to playing in goal full time until the age of 12 or so when I joined my first spring hockey team. From then on, I still occasionally played forward, but mostly focused on goaltending."

Growing up in Elm Creek helped Schroeder get to where she is today by giving her an early start into hockey and helping her develop a love for the game at a young age.

"I have my dad and Ken Froese to thank for that. They were my first coaches and made hockey practice the most exciting part of the week for me! Carman also was very important to my development because it was where I first played on a girls' hockey team."

Initially tending goal for the Pembina Valley Hawks, Schroeder moved into Winnipeg in 2015 to attend Balmoral Hall for her final two years of high school, which was essential to

her development as a goaltender and as a student.

"The consistent goalie coaching that I received at Balmoral Hall helped me become more consistent and well-rounded as a goaltender. As a result, I received my first invitation to a Hockey Canada camp and was selected to Team Manitoba the following year. As a student, Balmoral Hall helped prepare me for university and the challenges of balancing school-work and hockey."

When it was time to settle on a college after high school, Schroeder had her choice from virtually any college she wanted. In the end, she chose Boston University, where she spent four years, before transferring to Quinnipiac for her final year of school.

Schroeder enjoyed her time in college at both Boston University and Quinnipiac (Vermont) as she had great experiences at both schools, consistently putting up top numbers all five seasons for goaltenders across women's college hockey.

"I am very grateful for the opportunities I had to play for both teams and for the education I received as well. Playing in Boston and getting to experience the city was very different from rural Manitoba, but I grew to love it very quickly. Although I only had one year at Quinnipiac, we had a great season, and I'm thankful to have gotten to experience a different program and face different opponents."

Schroeder completed dual bachelor's degrees with honours at Boston University, earning both a BSc in health science (magna cum laude) from the College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (Sargent College) and a BA in psychology (cum laude). She holds an MBA from Quinnipiac and would like to start a physical-therapy practice after she's finished playing hockey someday in the future.

Schroeder had first started consider-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Elm Creek's Corinne Schroeder has put her whole hometown on her back as she is soaring to new heights in the hockey world. The 23-year-old netminder is playing professional hockey at the highest level of women's hockey in the world with the PHF's Boston Pride and has her sights set on Team Canada.

ing her professional hockey options following her final college season at Quinnipiac. After some discussion with a few teams, she negotiated a contract with the Boston Pride of the Premier Hockey Foundation (PHF) and signed for the 2022-23 season.

Schroeder is having a dream start to her first professional season. Going into Christmas, she is undefeated in net as she boasts a 7-0-0 record with a 1.91 goals against average and a .944 save percentage with four shutouts.

"So far, I am really enjoying my first season in pro hockey. It has been a bit of an adjustment from college hockey, but I am enjoying the challenge. We've had a great start to our season, and I'm excited to see how we progress in the second half."

Looking to the future, Schroeder dreams of one day playing for Team

Canada at a World Championships or Olympics. It's a dream that is looking more like a real possibility with the way she has been playing so far at the professional level.

Schroeder was previously invited to the Hockey Canada National Women's Development Team Summer Camps in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and has also participated in a number of other national women's development team events, first in 2018.

"Team Canada has been one of my life goals since I was a young child. I remember doing a writing exercise in class about our futures, and the first thing on my list was to play for Team Canada at the Olympics one day. It's a goal that I am still striving for and working hard to achieve."



Bonspiel winners

Team Holliston were the big winners at the Morden Curling Club's Men's Curling Bonspiel earlier this month. Left: Terry Holliston, Vaughn Mayert, Jeff Hildebrand, and Mike Oberg won the Rocky Mountain Equipment Main Event. Winners of the Crocus Realty "Hot Shots" and the Syngenta Canada B event were the Titchkosky Rink: Marcus Titchkosky, Thomas Titchkosky, Gord Titchkosky, and Owen Storey.

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LAND FOR SALE BY TENDER

Land for Sale by Tender

Completed Tenders and a \$20,000.00 deposit will be received up to 12:00 PM (noon) on January 25, 2023 (the "Deadline") at:

MLT Aikins LLP
30th Floor - 360 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4G1
Attn: Jilian P. Stefanson
Ph: 204-957-4713 Fax: 204-957-0840
Email: jstefanson@mltaikins.com

Property for Sale Between Kaleida and Darlingford

Hwy # 3 Road Access:

4 titles comprising:
NW 11-3-8 WPM
SW 11-3-8 WPM

(approximately 317.41 acres) all as more particularly described in the Real Estate Tender Form. To obtain a Tender Form or more information, contact Jilian P. Stefanson of MLT Aikins LLP at the address above.

Conditions of Tender

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property.
- Tenders must be in the form prepared by MLT Aikins LLP and must be delivered by the Deadline.
- Each Tender must be accompanied by a certified cheque, payable to MLT Aikins LLP (in trust), in the amount of \$20,000.00.
- Deposits for Tenders not accepted will be returned to the bidders.
- The possession date and the due date of the balance of tender price shall be February 15, 2023 (the "Due Date").
- If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid on the Due Date, the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages.
- Successful bidders shall be responsible for payment of the GST or shall self-assess GST.
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- Highest Tender or any Tender will not necessarily be accepted. The Vendors are not obligated to sell any of the land, or to accept any Tender.

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4. A deposit cheque in the amount of \$25,000.00, payable to McCulloch Mooney Johnston Selby Trust, must accompany each Tender. Deposit cheques accompanying unacceptable bids will be returned.
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3. Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender. Once arrangements acceptable to the vendor have been made, the successful bidder may have access to the property for seeding and other farming purposes.
4. Successful bidder will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1, 2023.
5. The purchaser shall be responsible for payment of GST or shall self-assess for GST.
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For further information, contact Chris H. Bowler
Phone: 204-242-2801
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Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2	3	1	6	7	8	9	5	4
7	9	4	6	2	5	3	8	
8	6	5	4	1	3	9	2	7
1	4		7	1	7	2	8	3
6	2	3	5	4	6	9	8	7
9	5	8	7	3	1	2	4	6
5	1	2	3	9	4	7	8	6
5	4	6	8	9	7	3	2	1
3		7	9	1	6	5	4	8

Sudoku Answer

N	E	L	S	D	N	S	S	D	R	I	G		
O	E	T	E	N	V	N	I	S	E	E	P	E	
O	G	E	N	I	L	E	P	F	Z	D	E	T	
P	V	N	D	I	K	I	T	O	I	V			
S	R	V	F	E	D	L	T	A	L	E	R	N	U
S	B	B	E	M	E	S	G	E	N	P			
S	E	R	D	S	E	S	O	H	S	D	A	V	
V	U	S	E	N	I	D	V	A	S	S	V	O	
D	V	A	L	A	V	E	R	C	E	P	E	T	C
V	A	L	L	C	V	N	O	S					
D	E	T	N	I	M	A	R	E	S	U	O	S	
S	T	C	A	N	E	S	R	E	T	E	D	D	V
S	N	A	L	L	A	T	R	A	V	C	T	A	V
S	I	H	P	V	E	D	O	W	V	I	C		
O	A	C	A	M	S	E	S	I	A	V	C	S	

Crossword Answer

X CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- Product or ___ (abbr.)
- Zodiac sign
- S. China seaport
- Former OSS
- Early English printer
- Aphid genus
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Aussies
- Dissuades
- Make law
- Drench
- Soak in a liquid
- Male child
- It cools your home
- Small constellation
- To call (archaic)
- Explores beneath the Earth
- Commercial
- W. hemisphere organization
- You can find it in a can
- "Land of the free"
- 36 inches
- Footwear
- Challenges
- They hold things together
- Of I
- Partner to flow
- Not connected by kinship
- Worries
- Garlic mayonnaise
- A way to take by force
- Legendary English rockers
- Your consciousness of your own identity
- Fencing swords
- Silly
- Actor DiCaprio
- Encircles with a belt
- Mails a message
- Longing

CLUES DOWN

- Horse mackerels
- It can be viral
- Prickly plants

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14				15						16					
17				18						19					
20				21					22						
23							24	25					26	27	
		28					29				30				
31	32						33		34	35	36			37	
38					39	40							41		
42					43						44	45			
46		47	48					49			50				
51					52	53	54				55			56	57
		58								59					
60	61								62	63				64	
65								66						67	
68								69						70	

- Consciousness
- Type of sarcoma
- Tax collector
- Sun up in New York
- One who scorches
- Influential psychotherapist
- Situated at an apex
- Communicative
- Forearm nerve
- Former CIA
- Folk singer DiFranco
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Large-scale
- School environment
- Remove
- Male parents
- Large rodent
- Weighed down
- Held tightly
- ___ route: going there
- Explains again
- Exclamation of surprise
- Courteously
- Lying down
- Judge
- Forcefully took
- Loosely compacted sediment
- High mountain
- Portable conical tents
- Cereal grass
- Dining utensil
- Thoughtful
- Helps you walk
- Indicates near
- Midway between northeast and east
- Local area network

IN MEMORIAM



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and families

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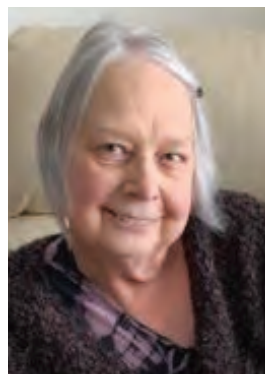
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OBITUARY

**Elizabeth Ann Hiebert
(nee Loewen)
1962 - 2022**



Elizabeth (Liz) Hiebert, aged 60 of Winkler, MB passed away surrounded by family on Sunday, December 11, 2022 after a battle with cancer.

Elizabeth was born on March 7, 1962 to Benno and Mary Loewen of Silberfeld. Elizabeth was baptized upon confession of her faith at the Morrow Gospel Church in Winnipeg. After Elizabeth graduated from the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna in 1980, she went on to study nursing a few years later. She graduated with an RN diploma in 1986 from the Grace School of Nursing at the Grace Hospital in Winnipeg.

With her nursing diploma in hand, she began her career in nursing. She quickly learned that senior care was her passion and her gift to care for the elderly. Elizabeth's nursing career extended for many years, and she brought her care and compassion to each and every shift that she put in in her nursing career.

Elizabeth and the love of her life, John, were married on March 19, 1988. Elizabeth and John have enjoyed traveling together over the years whether it was by air, vehicle, motorcycle or by camper. They enjoyed driving and the destination, wherever the destination was.

Elizabeth enjoyed horseback riding, baking and cake decorating, knitting, crocheting, sewing, porcelain doll making, caring for her house plants and her biggest passion was quilting. The beautiful quilts she created!! Quilting was her happy place.

Elizabeth is survived by her beloved husband, John; her parents, Benno and Mary Loewen, Dorothy (Don Friesen) of Altona - Renae (Jack Klassen) - Adaline; Derek Friesen, Geoff Loewen (Hayley) of Altona - Tyler Loewen; Cody Loewen (Jozanna) - Kemper; Dylan Loewen (Brittany), Greg Loewen (Crystal) of Altona - Michael Loewen Kelley; Colin Loewen Kelley (Karlle) - Marshall, Cassidy, Kristine (Kevin Hildebrand) of Carcross, Yukon - Bowden Hildebrand (Allison), Elma (David Wolfe) of Winkler - Shelley (Jean Minaudier); Sherry (Stephen Moffit); Vicki (Stephen Yanyk) - Tessa; Tim Wolfe, Martha (George Olfert) of Winkler - Joshua Olfert (Chelsea); Eric Olfert (Abby) - Millie; Adam Olfert. Elizabeth was predeceased by three unborn children.

Liz, you have touched so many, probably more than you know and you will be missed by all. We will hold your memory in our hearts forever.

Funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, December 16, 2022 at the Altona EMMC with interment at Westridge Memorial Gardens in Winkler.

If friends so desire, donations may be made in Liz's memory to Eden Mental Health Centre Foundation or to the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation designated to palliative care.

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



OBITUARY

Gertrude Dueck



On Monday, December 12, 2022 at 7:00 a.m., Gertrude passed away peacefully at Eastview Place at the age of 90 years.

She was born on August 8, 1932 to Cornelius and Katherine Dueck in the Amsterdam district, Northeast of Altona. She was a sister to five siblings and attended the Amsterdam school.

Gertrude was baptized upon the confession of her faith, and joined the Sommerfeld Church.

Most of her working years were spent working at the hospital. She started in the laundry department, then became a nurse's aide, and her final working years were spent in CSR. She was very jolly, and willing to help others. She enjoyed singing in the church choir. Even after a long day of work, she was often willing to cut people's hair and give perms.

She was predeceased by her parents Cornelius and Katherine, and her two brothers Henry and Martin and their wives.

She is survived by three sisters Tina, Margaret, and Mary (George), and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral service was held on December 15, 2022 at the Altona Sommerfeld Mennonite Church with burial at the Altona Cemetery.

Donations in memory of Gertrude may be made to a charity of one's choice.

Wiebe Funeral Home Altona
in care of arrangements
www.wiebefhaltona.com

OBITUARY

**Carol Irene Klassen (nee Epp)
1954 - 2022**



On Sunday, December 11, 2022, Carol Klassen was called home to meet her Saviour, passing peacefully with her family by her side. Born on the same day, December 11, 1954, she celebrated her 68th birthday both on earth and in heaven.

Carol is survived by two brothers, Al (Sharie) and Doug (Betty); her husband, Henry (Hank) Klassen and their two sons along with their families, Jarryd (Cally), Carter and baby soon to be born and Jesse (Destiny), Charlotte, Eliana, and Paris.

She was predeceased by her parents, Alex and Mary Epp, brother, Victor and his wife, Valerie.

Carol (known by some as Bucky) had a cheerful heart, a playful disposition, steadfast faith and a mothering spirit. This served her

well as she filled many roles throughout her life: wife, mom, youth sponsor, dental assistant, sports fan, sister, friend, Auntie C and grandma. What a gift it was to be known and loved by Carol Klassen.

Carol's Celebration of Life took place on Friday, December 16, 2022 at the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church with a private interment at the Westridge Memorial Gardens.

Donations may be made in Carol's memory to the BTHC Foundation, designated to Cancer Care.

The family would like to express their deep appreciation to the many people on Carol's medical team: her oncologist, Dr. Anderson; Dr Dhala at BTHC, the staff at CancerCare and the exceptional nurses who cared for Carol during her time in Palliative: Sarah, Heidi, and Tatjana.

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



OBITUARY

**James Taylor Young
1953 – 2022**



James Young, age 69 of Gretna and briefly of Morden, MB passed away peacefully at Boundary Trails Health Centre on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 with his three daughters by his side.

Jamie is survived by three daughters, three sons-in-law, two foster sons and their families.

As per Jamie's wishes a private scattering of his ashes will take place at his favourite fishing locations at a later date.

Wiebe Funeral Chapel, Morden
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DECEMBER - REACH OUT TO THE SENIORS IN YOUR LIFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



Visiting elderly relatives and friends during the holiday season is a great way to make them feel loved and is especially welcome if they happen to live alone. But if you don't see them often, you may want to take note of their health and overall condition. Here are five things to look out for when you visit seniors for the holidays.

1. WEIGHT LOSS

A number of conditions can cause seniors to lose their appetite, and some of them find cooking for one difficult. When visiting, take the time to look around the kitchen to find out whether the refrigerator and cupboards are stocked with fresh food. If not, ask if they need help getting groceries or cooking. Keep in mind that weight loss can also signal a serious health issue.

2. MEMORY LOSS

Forgetfulness itself isn't a concern. However, signs of serious memory loss such as placing items in unusual places, repeating the same thing over and over, mixing up words, and getting lost in familiar areas may warrant a trip to the doctor.

3. MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Depression among seniors is on the rise and those who are socially isolated are at an increased risk. Worrisome signs include withdrawal from social activities, insomnia (or oversleeping), loss of interest in hobbies, loss of appetite and changes in personality and mood.

4. MOBILITY ISSUES

A senior's level of mobility can change drastically in a short period of time. Such a change can sometimes present a danger. It's therefore a good idea to ensure that

the seniors you visit during the holidays have homes that match their current level of mobility. Uncompleted household chores may indicate an issue.

5. SOCIAL ISOLATION

Helping seniors combat social isolation is important, as doing so has been shown to reduce the likelihood of them experiencing depression and other mental health issues. What's more, by remaining socially active seniors can prevent or mitigate cognitive impairments. If the senior you're visiting is isolated, help them come up with a plan to make new friends in the new year.

While holiday visits are welcome, it's just as important to visit the seniors you care about throughout the year. Regular visits will keep you abreast of their health and overall condition and help stave off social isolation to boot.

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To our valued customers and our community,

As some of you may already know, our business experienced a devastating accidental fire in the early morning hours of Thursday December 8. We are in the process of trying to secure another location where we can temporarily "set up shop" so that we can continue to provide service to our customers. Our sales, service and parts department remain open, and our hard-working team would be happy to assist and provide direction in any way they can, as it relates to your vehicle maintenance needs and questions.

In advance, we want to say thank you so very much for your patience and understanding as we navigate this most challenging situation, especially as we head into winter. We are committed to providing updates to you all as we move forward. And again, we cannot say it enough, thanks for your patience. We will get through this!

From all of us here at Janzen's we wish you and yours a blessed Christmas and a wonderful holiday season!



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