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Happy New Year!

EXPRESS PHOTO BY RAYME THOMSON

The Gimli Barvinok Ukrainian Dancer's Inc. celebrated Ukrainian New Year's on Jan. 25 at the Fraserwood Hall. Alumni Performance Ensemble dancers, including Maggie Michaluk, centre, and Thea Goodman, right, performed the Hopak.

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Here's How.



Want to learn to ice fish? Now's your chance to learn on Lake Winnipeg

Beaches of 59 giving residents a chance to learn to fish

By Katelyn Boulanger

Residents in our region are invited to learn to ice fish this winter with Beaches of 59. This is the group's second annual Learn to Fish event which allows those who sign up to come out to Lake Winnipeg and have a day of fun while learning about one of our region's winter traditions.

"It's basically an event to introduce people who have never had the opportunity or experience of ice fishing, or somebody, perhaps who has gone but they don't have equipment and would like some instruction. It's a great opportunity for people to come out. All the equipment is provided. You can either rent it for the day, or you can purchase it if you feel that you love it and you're going to want to go ice fishing every weekend," said Anna Pegoretti-Saurette, committee member with the Beaches of 59.

The Beaches of 59 is a tourist organization that works to promote the beauty of our local area encouraging residents to come to the area and locals to get out and enjoy it.

This event helps residents learn to ice fish by promoting a great environment for their first ice fishing adven-

ture on the Lake.

"Ice fishing is a sport that could be quite daunting if you've never done it. Number one, going out onto a frozen lake. 'Where do I go? Is it safe to go?' But here's an environment where we've got a group of volunteers that go out and check to make sure that the ice is a proper thickness and that the area is safe to go out. So that's number one, they don't have to worry about that. Secondly, drilling the holes to get set up for ice fishing, you've got to have equipment and, just to kind of start and do it for the day, it can cost a lot of money. So, (this event is) just a really practical way to get introduced into the sport of ice fishing," explained Pegoretti-Saurette.

The group has also thought of the practicality of this event for people getting on to the ice.

"It's quite a popular spot, but, I mean, there's a lot of really popular spots on Lake Winnipeg. We chose this particular spot because it does have quite easy access onto the lake, and there is a large parking lot. It's at the end of the Yellow Brick Road, and we the Beaches of 59 committee, we put up signage from Highway 59,"



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY KATELYN BOULANGER

A fisher dropped a line on the Red River.

she said.

There will also be volunteers guiding people onto the lake, all necessary fishing equipment will be provided to all participants, experienced instructors, a wind shelter and warm-up stations, and each participant will get a hotdog, chips and a warm non-alcoholic drink.

The idea for this event came from the popularity of ice fishing.

"We wanted, for the local community, a place that that people could go and make it very affordable as well so that anybody can try it," said Pegoretti-Saurette.

She herself is relatively new to ice fishing having been introduced to the sport a few years ago.

"I had never done it before, and I just found it to be wonderfully relaxing and a lot of fun. You know, we can sit in the ice shack for hours and just, you know, visit and fish and, you know, just, just have a good time," she explained.

Another part of the event that has been planned out well for new fishers is that the Beaches of 59 Committee has planned this event for the province's Family Fishing Weekend. This means that residents do not need to get a fishing license for this event, however, all other rules and regulations apply.

If you want to sign up for the event there isn't much that you should bring but wearing weather-appropriate clothing is a must.

"Warm clothes, warm boots, hats, mitts, whatever you need. Definitely dress warm. Last year, we were so lucky. We had the most amazing win-

ter day. It was lovely but, for everyone, come dressed and prepared for winter. Check what the weather is going to be like that day. We have no idea (what it's going to be), but hopefully, the sun will be shining," said Pegoretti-Saurette.

There are two three-hour sessions that residents can sign up for. One takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the other from 2 to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each or \$45 if you'd also like to purchase your rod and reel. There is no age restriction for this event and all are welcome to sign up but children 14 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

To sign up for this Learn To Fish event visit <https://www.beachesof59.ca/icefishing-1>. To keep up with everything that the Beaches of 59 are up to check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Beachesof59/> or Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/beachesof59/>.

Pegoretti-Saurette encourages everyone who's interested in participating to check out the website and sign up.

"It is a lot of fun, you've got great instructors, and like I said, you don't have to worry about all the things that one may have to worry about if you were going to do it on your own. You don't need all that equipment. Everything — the drilling of the holes — is provided for you. There's a shelter, there's a warm lunch. You just get to experience it at its best without having to really invest in committing to ice fishing one-hundred per cent," she said.

A photograph of a family (a man, a woman, and a child) walking away from the camera in a park-like setting with trees and a dog on a leash.

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Gimli's Operation Red Nose rides down but donations ups

By David Connors

The number of safe rides home Gimli Operation Red Nose volunteers gave this holiday season was down from last year, and the local campaign co-chair couldn't be happier.

"It means we did our job!" said Dwayne Binns.

That's because getting partiers home safely is only one part of what Red Nose does. It starts with putting up posters in the Gimli area promoting the service, and it continues with personal visits to local watering holes, hotels, and party hosts, encouraging them to make sure their patrons and guests have arranged a way to get home safely.

When one volunteer driver from the Gimli Rotary Club dropped into a local pub to promote Operation Red Nose, a patron told her, "Oh, yeah, we have a safe ride planned" — and they gave her a \$50 donation "just for being there."

Minerva Tree Farms gave everyone a ride home from their staff party but still gave a donation to Red Nose.

"More and more people are planning their own safe rides home," said Dave LeBlanc, the other campaign co-chair.

Binns said he often found older partiers had already arranged to have their adult children drive them home. "We would go to places where we knew holiday parties were happening and they would tell us, "Don't worry, we already have a designated driver."

And that is the point of Operation

Red Nose, said Binns. "If we can help keep even one person off the road who might endanger themselves or others, then it's a job well done."

Even though rides were down to 90 this year from 103 last year, donations were up, with almost \$5,000 raised from riders and corporate sponsors.

Most of the money will go to the youth sports organizations in the Gimli area that sent teams of volunteers for the campaign, such as the Gimli Ski Club and Skate Interlake.

A big shout-out also goes to the volunteers from Access Credit Union, Brio Insurance/Interlake Real Estate, the RM of Gimli Volunteer Fire Department and the Gimli Rotary Club, which ran the event for their second year.

Thanks to the generous donations of vehicles and gas from Gimli's three dealerships, Red Nose volunteers are able to drive patrons home in their vehicles and then catch a ride back in the donated vehicles to Red Nose headquarters, which is in a conference room donated by Lakeview Gimli Resort. Prairie Communications donated two-way radios to help keep all the Red Nose teams co-ordinated.

"Local participation from sponsors was just great," said LeBlanc. "In fact, we had so much food donated to fuel the volunteers that we had to turn some offers away."

If you want to be part of the action next year, watch for the posters to go up next November and sign up!

Gypsumville RCMP searching for missing 11-year-old female

By Lana Meier

On Jan. 26, at 10:10 p.m., the Gypsumville RCMP received a report about an 11-year-old girl who was missing from a residence in Fairford.

Breeze Lynn Houle, 11, was last seen the night before, around 9 p.m., leaving an address on Townsite Road in Fairford.

Officers and family members have checked numerous potential locations but have not been successful in finding her.

Early this morning, officers received a tip about a female who was seen walking southbound on Highway 6 towards Mulvihill. However, patrols in that area did not locate anyone.

It is believed that Houle may have received a ride and could currently

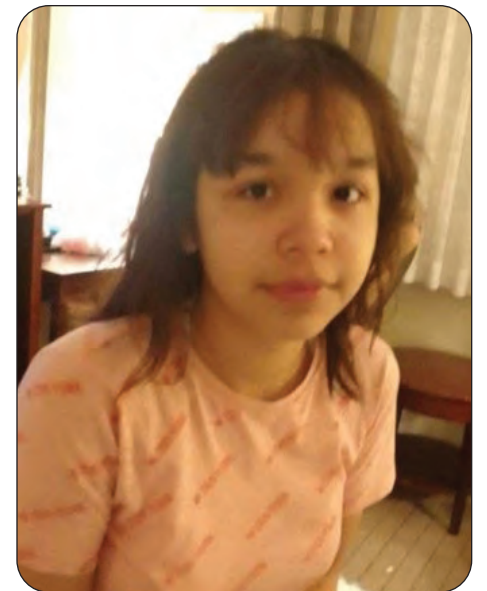


PHOTO SUBMITTED

Eleven-year-old Breeze Houle of Fairford was last seen leaving an address on Townsite Road in Fairford at 9 p.m. on Jan. 25.

be in the City of Winnipeg.

She was last seen wearing a black jacket, blue jeans and carrying a backpack along with a brown purse. Breeze has brown hair with red bangs.

The RCMP and her family are worried for her well-being. If you have seen Breeze Houle or have any information regarding her whereabouts, please call the Gypsumville RCMP at 204-659-5224.



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Indigenous-led conservation initiative seeks to expand protected areas in Interlake

By Patricia Barrett

With a focus on enhanced environmental protection and conservation efforts in Manitoba, Indigenous communities — with federal and provincial support — are proposing to expand protected areas in the Interlake, including in the Interlake.

In partnership with the Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) and with funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisher River Cree Nation, Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation and Peguis First Nation are leading a conservation initiative focused on six Interlake areas that stretch from Kinow Bay Provincial Park (north basin of Lake Winnipeg) down to Riverton and areas westward.

The goal of the initiative is to “protect the health of the southeastern Interlake’s thriving natural landscape so it can continue to provide sustainable economic opportunities and to support our cherished lifestyles and cultures,” states the proposal, as well as protect an “adequate quantity of natural habitats and ecosystems” in the area. It also aims to strike a balance between the interests of local communities, rights-holders and stakeholders.

The conservation partnership is holding open houses in the Interlake to get public feedback to its draft proposal based on the six areas before it’s finalized and presented to the provincial government.

CPAWS Manitoba’s executive director Ron Thiessen said feedback from the open houses will be used to refine the current proposal.

“Once the final conservation proposal is complete, we will begin discussing implementation with the Manitoba government,” said Thiessen. “During this time, we will continue engaging with groups and individuals if they have questions or concerns. Any of the proposed areas that Manitoba wishes to proceed with will be subject to its own public consultation.”

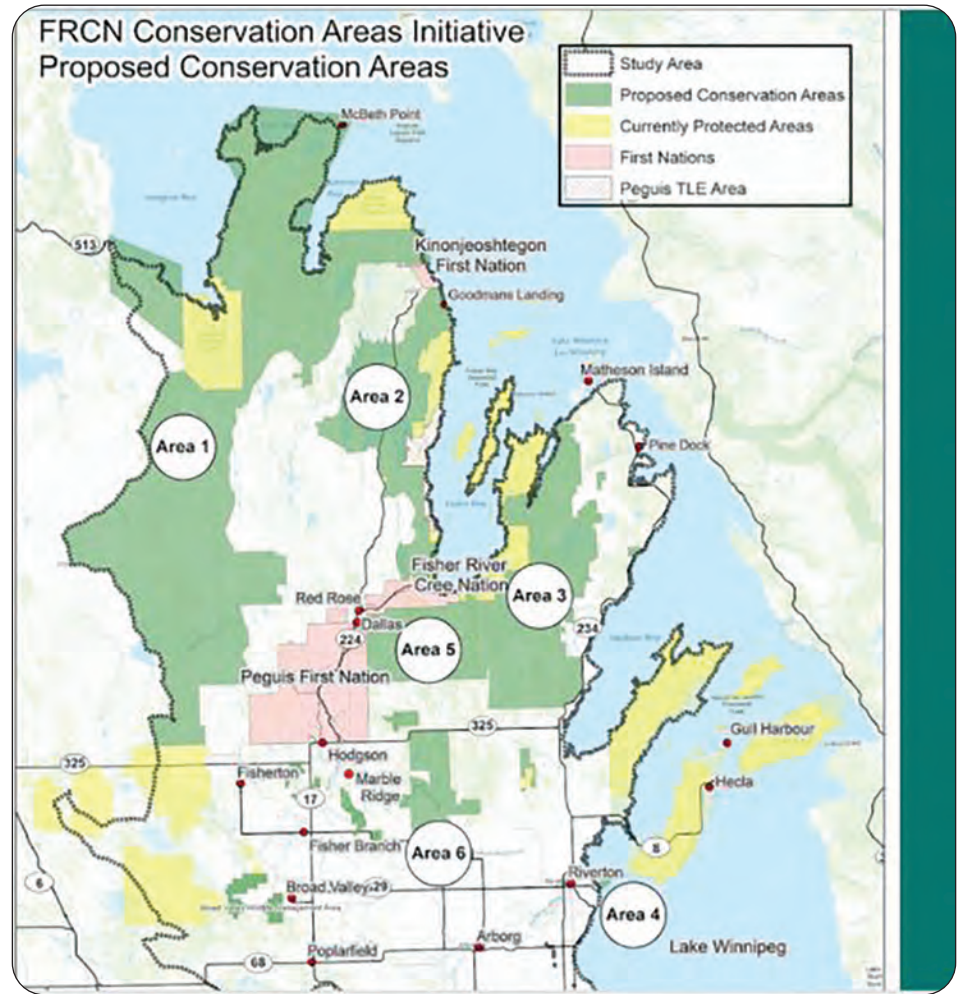
The six areas in the Interlake covered under the proposal are as follows:

Area 1 (1,988 square kilometres) extends from Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park to the Mantagao Wildlife Management Area. Included in this area are “hunting areas and traplines used by local communities.”

Area 2 (374 square kilometres) covers the west shore of Fisher Bay to Lake St. George and Lake St. Andrews. As an access point for regional fishers, Goodman’s Landing is also included.

Area 3 (560 square kilometres) covers the Washow Bay Peninsula and could involve expanding Fisher Bay Provincial Park, extending protection around Moose Lake to preserve moose and other wildlife habitat and/or establishing official protected status for the Moose Creek Wildlife Management Area. “Our hope is to limit further developments on the peninsula, allowing more of the area to return to a natural state while ensuring continuous habitat for moose and other wildlife,” states the proposal.

Area 4 (four square kilometres) covers the mouth of the Icelandic River to Sandy Bar Beach on Lake Winnipeg. It includes the sand spit. The area is a designated Important Bird Area and



CONSERVATION AREAS INITIATIVE DRAFT PROPOSAL

The map shows six areas of proposed conservation expansion in the Interlake.

popular fishing spot.

Area 5 (219 square kilometres) covers the Fish Road area, an important connection between Fisher River Cree Nation and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton and Arborg. It is a valuable medicine-picking area. “Connecting the Fish Road area to the Fisher Bay Provincial Park and Moose Creek WMA [Wildlife Management Area] would help to ensure that na-

ture here is connected and uninterrupted for wildlife movement,” states the proposal.

Area 6 (204 square kilometres) covers several WMAs that are “highly suited for permanent protection.” A revision of the legal regulations of the WMAs is proposed to ensure these

Continued on page 5

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> AREAS, FROM PG. 4

areas remain natural areas. Affected WMAs are Lee Lake WMA, Washow Bay WMA, David B. Tomasson WMA and Broad Valley WMA. The proposal also seeks protections for the “globally rare alvar regions” in the area.

Alvar is defined as limestone or dolomite bedrock covered by thin soil and containing unique plants, lichen and bryophytes (e.g., mosses, liverworts). There are four major alvar habitats in Manitoba: grasslands, shrubland, savannah and wetlands. The majority are on Crown land.

The conservation initiative in the Interlake is one of three Indigenous-led initiatives that CPAWS is involved in, said Thiessen. The Interlake study area consists of more than 934,000 hectares that stretches from Riverton in the south to Kinow Bay Provincial Park in the north, but the partnership is “not looking to have the whole study protected: we are studying the broad needs and interests of the region in order to develop an appropriate and balanced conservation plan.”

The conservation initiative is “aligned with” the provincial government’s commitment to protect 30 per cent of the province’s lands and waters by 2030, said Thiessen.

Also referred to as 30x30, the initiative is a Conference of the Parties (COP) framework that aims to conserve 30 per cent of the Earth’s land and sea areas by 2030. COP is made up of 196 national governments that meet every two years to determine what progress has been made, set priorities and commit to actions to stop environmental destruction caused by or linked to human activity.

COP governs a legal environmental agreement, the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), for the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of resources and equitable sharing. CBD came into force in 1993. Its overall objective is to take actions that will lead to a sustainable future.

Some of the global goals under 30x30 include establishing protected areas, reducing nutrients and pesticides, eliminating plastic waste, reducing the rate of introduction of invasive alien species and or their control or eradication, controlling or eliminat-

ing incentives that are harmful for biodiversity, and providing international financing to developing countries.

The Canadian government is committed to 30x30, and is working to “halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 and achieving a full recovery for nature by 2050,” according to Environment and Climate Change Canada. The government aims to protect and recover species at risk, and support Indigenous leadership in conservation and climate solutions. Nature agreements with “interested” provincial and territorial governments are being struck and entail mutually agreed upon actions and financial commitments to reach individual and collection conservation goals.

Provincial and territorial governments such as Yukon, British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia have committed to protecting more areas of nature in their respective jurisdictions, as have local governments such as the regional district of central Okanagan, Toronto, Sudbury and Chelsea, Que.

The Manitoba government said in a Oct. 24, 2023, news release that climate changes “poses a significant threat” to the province and requires “real action” from the government. It’s “committed to protecting 30 per cent of Manitoba’s lands and waters by 2030.”

As expected, there are stakeholders who are opposed to 30x30 for different reasons.

The Manitoba Wildlife Federation issued a news release on Jan. 7, stating Manitoba’s Crown lands have “always been a shared resource” supporting hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation, and that 30x30 will “erode access to vast tracts” of Crown land.

MWF promotes conservation, angling, hunting and other outdoor activities, according to its website.

In its press release, MWF says it “recognizes and respects Indigenous rights” and supports reconciliation but wants “inclusive conservation efforts that balance ecological protection with the needs of all land users.”

It goes on to say that CPAWS is “aggressively promoting” the United Nations and federal government’s 30x30 initiative without consulting Manitobans, and that three [including Interlake] of the nine Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) in Manitoba are currently being “aggressively advanced.”

“In Manitoba, IPCAs are being promoted as a key tool to meet the 30x30 goal,” states the MWF’s news release. “These areas often involve agreements between Indigenous communities and government entities to designate large tracts of Crown Land as protected, barring certain activities like resource extraction (mining, forestry, and other industry sectors) or non-Indigenous hunting.”

The MWF also states that the provincial government identifies and designates Crown land for protection, and that the lands are then “transferred” to federal jurisdiction under agreements. MWF doesn’t know if the province has entered into any land-transfer agreements, and it’s trying to find out. The federal government then gives the management of those lands to Indigenous communities.

“Once in federal jurisdiction, management authority is delegated to Indigenous communities, who govern the land according to principles agreed upon in the IPCA framework between them and government,” states the

MWF’s news release. “This will almost certainly include restrictions on activities like licensed hunting, angling, and recreational use by non-Indigenous users.”

With regard to the conservation initiative underway in the Interlake, Thiessen said it’s an inclusive process, and outdoor enthusiasts, licensed hunters and anglers, Indigenous land-users and communities are part of the conversation.

“Licensed hunting, fishing and trapping, and activities such as personal berry-gathering, would not be affected by any conservation plan that is proposed by the initiative, said Thiessen. “Concerns have recently been raised about a lack of consultation. The Conservation Areas Initiative took the time to have conversations with as many of the interested parties in the region as possible over the past few years, including the MWF in November of 2021. The initiative’s engagement process has been outlined on the initiative’s website since the spring of 2021, and all stakeholders we spoke with in Round One were made aware of our process.”

He added that the province retains Crown jurisdiction over its natural resources and that any new protected area must be approved by the province and requires public consultation.

A spokesperson for the province said activities such as licensed hunting, fishing, trapping, ecotourism, outfitting, haying, grazing and winter roads are generally allowed if they’re “not harmful” to the habitats being protected.

The province is working with Indigenous communities and the federal government to determine how IPCAs can manage and expand protected areas to the benefit of all.

“An Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) is an area where the purpose, development, establishment, and ongoing management reflect and enable Indigenous culture, interests and leadership,” he said. “While there are currently no Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in Manitoba, the Manitoba government is committed to working with Indigenous communities and the federal government to explore how IPCAs can help support management of traditional territories in Manitoba and build Manitoba’s network of protected and conserved areas for the benefit of all Manitobans.”

The protection of Crown land includes Indigenous, stakeholder and public engagement so that “all voices are heard and reflected in the decision-making process,” he added.

As to the MWF’s statement about transferring Crown lands, the spokesperson said the transfer of Crown land to the federal government is “not a requirement to establish an IPCA” and, at present, there are no agreements in place for the transfer of Manitoba Crown land to the federal government to support Indigenous-led protected and conserved area projects.

The Indigenous-led conservation initiative in the Interlake has already held open houses in Kinonjeoshtegon and Peguis. Upcoming open houses will be held in Riverton on Jan. 31 from 5 to 9 p.m., Fisher River Cree Nation on Feb. 4 from 5 to 9 p.m. and Arborg on Feb. 6 from 5 to 9 p.m.

For more information, visit www.frcnconservation.ca

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



The Ecological Corridor program is stopped: lessons learned and a path forward

Mercifully, the Assiniboine West Watershed District has decided not to sign a contribution agreement with Parks Canada for a \$1 million grant to deliver programming within the federal government's Ecological Corridor program framework. This ends a months-long, divisive battle between a rapidly expanding group of local agricultural producers, known as the Manitoba Land Stewards Inc. (MLS), and the Assiniboine West Watershed District (AWWD).

The conflict has raged on since last fall, with the intensity increasing to a fever pitch leading up to an eventful town hall meeting in Erickson last week (Jan.15). Hundreds of concerned citizens and landowners packed the town's Legion Hall to hear presentations from the MLS and the Manitoba Wildlife Federation (MWF). The rural community has been divided, feelings have been hurt, and damage has been done to all involved.

Unsurprisingly, the blame game has begun, with some pointing fingers at the MLS and the MWF as the cause of all this heartache. Usually, all parties can claim some fault in situations like this.

Sorry, not this time. The Ecological Corridor program was doomed from the start. Only a federal bureaucracy, sequestered in an office in a faraway city, could have thought it was a good idea to place the Ecological Corridor program under the banner of Parks Canada. The Corridor program is functionally a private-land agricultural conservation program; it just didn't know it. The federal folks out east who designed the Corridor program didn't think of it from an agricultural producer perspective, which was their first mistake.

Nor would federal policy experts from far away realize that Parks Canada has a long and somewhat difficult



PHOTO SUBMITTED

A community town hall meeting was held in Erickson on Jan. 15. Concerned citizens and landowners attended to hear presentations from the Manitoba Land Stewards and the Manitoba Wildlife Federation on the The Ecological Corridor program.

relationship with landowners south of Riding Mountain Park, including, among other things, attempting to create a sort of "buffer zone" around the parks many years ago. Landowners have a long memory, and those feathers are still ruffled to this day.

Agriculture Canada or Environment and Climate Change Canada would have been better choices to lead the Corridor program. Moreover, an institution like Agriculture Canada knows how to talk to farmers and is in the business of producing documents for agricultural producers. Regrettably, when it comes to rural landowners, the Parks Canada documentation for the Corridor simply could not have been worse.

The program materials were hyper-focused on species at risk and spoke of what "compatible activities" would be allowed within the Corridor with no clear indication of what that actually meant, only repeated references to the need for "regulatory mechanisms." It's all scary stuff for agricultural producers, so it's no wonder there was push-back.

The most surprising part was the AWWD response to the push-back. Repeatedly and systematically, the concerns of landowners were framed as "unfounded." Minimizing your customer's feelings is never a good approach, especially when your business relies on private land access.

Watershed Districts are chronically underfunded, so nobody can blame them for chasing federal grants to work in their area. We can imagine that the allure of a \$1 million grant from the federal government must explain how the AWWD continued to push forward when it was clear landowners were not comfortable and did not trust Parks Canada as the lead agency.

On the Corridor, questions were asked, and good answers never came. Not surprising when the nearest contact from Parks Canada for the Corridor was in Quebec. The lack of timely, solid information added to the growing fears and, well, here we are.

So, what now? Trust is everything when it comes to conservation in rural agricultural communities. It is hard to establish but easy to lose. So, it's paramount now that everyone let bygones be bygones and remember that a program that essentially guaranteed a bad outcome for all involved put us all in a bad position.

We would all do well to remember that the Watershed District has always been a great organization with a solid community-based conservation model. The last thing we need to do now is throw out the baby with the bathwater. Yes, the District should do some soul-searching and understand why it took this far over a single federal grant, and we hope they will.

The Corridor program focused heavily on the need for Indigenous

Continued on page 8

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Gimli resident's petition for passing lanes on Highway 8 gets green light

By Patricia Barrett

A petition for passing lanes on Highway 8 that a Gimli resident started has resulted in a green light from the provincial government.

Teri Nicholson had set up a petition on Change.org last August and received 1,111 signatures in favour of passing lanes on Highway 8, a fast-paced highway that has no transitional speed zones like Highway 9 and sees high volumes of traffic to and from Winnipeg and other communities.

The province has promised to build passing lanes on Highway 8 between Highway 67, the east-west corridor to Selkirk and Stonewall, and PR 231, at the northern edge of the town of Gimli.

Nicholson said she received a communique from provincial Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Lisa Naylor last week with regard to the request for passing lanes.

"I am pleased to inform you that the department has identified passing lanes on PTH 8 as a capital project for future construction," states the communique from Naylor. "There are various locations on PTH 8 between PTH 67 and PR 231 that will be upgraded

with passing lanes with construction anticipated to begin in 2025."

Nicholson told the *Express* she decided to start the petition after seeing repeated complaints on social media about dangerous driving and near misses on Highway 8. Instead of being "keyboard warriors," she wanted to try a different approach to see whether a collective response could lead to government action.

Anyone who has driven Highway 8 can probably tell a story or two about having had dicey experiences, she said, including herself.

"Vehicles get backed up behind a slower vehicle, then someone from the back of the line decides to pass everyone. To avoid being hit by oncoming traffic, they have to swerve back into the other lane forcing everyone else to slam on their brakes to let them in," said Nicholson. "I have had to come to a complete stop on more than one occasion. Many of us locals avoid using Highway 8 when possible, especially during the summer."

She said she's driven on other provincial highways with passing lanes and found them to be beneficial to reducing tailbacks and improving safety.



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Looking south towards Winnipeg, Highway 8 is shown here in May 2022 at the Highway 67 turnoff to either Selkirk or Stonewall.

"I have regularly travelled Highway 16 for many years. Traffic used to get backed up on it much like on Highway 8 with campers travelling below the speed limit on the way to Riding Mountain National Park. A number of years ago passing lanes were constructed on Highway 16 from Highway 1 to Highway 10, and it is now a totally different trip," said Nicholson. "I have also seen the improvements on Highway 3 since passing lanes have been constructed when I travel to visit family."

Nicholson said the minister did not mention the number of passing lanes

that the department promised to build.

Gimli Chamber of Commerce president Samantha Hampton said passing lanes on Highway 8 would enhance commutes and make them safer, and also help boost economic growth in the Interlake region.

"The addition of passing lanes will not only enhance safety for daily commuters and curious travellers alike but will also support tourism by providing safer, more accessible routes to explore our region," said Hampton. "This improvement will

Continued on page 8

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Worsening morale, staffing and workload cited by MAHCP allied health members in 2024

By Patricia Barrett

The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals (MAHCP) says a majority of over 1,400 of its frontline allied health-care members feel staffing, workload and morale had worsened over 2024.

MAHCP conducted an online survey last December to understand its members' feelings with regard to Manitoba's health-care system, which is struggling with fewer doctors, recruitment and retention issues and long average wait times for diagnostic procedures and care at emergency departments.

"Allied health-care professionals are dedicated to their patients and they understand the system isn't going to get fixed overnight, but they were hoping for some improvement by now," said MAHCP president Jason Linklater in a Jan. 23 news release. "The most troubling result in this sur-

vey is the high proportion of members — half or more — who say that staffing, workload and morale are actually getting worse."

The NDP's April 2024 budget promised to rebuild health care in Manitoba. For rural areas in particular, the government set a course to recruit doctors, invest in the expansion of medical transportation services, create positions for advanced care paramedics, build a new ER in Eriksdale and build personal care homes starting with Lac du Bonnet (in progress) then Winnipeg and Arborg, among other investments. The government also promised to invest \$6.9 million to expand allied health staffing to facilitate weekend patient discharges and encourage colleges and post-secondary institutions to remove barriers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who want to become allied health professionals, physicians and nurses.

About 48 per cent of respondents to MAHCP's survey said they had lost people from their department or area while 11 per cent said staffing had improved. Only eight per cent said they saw improvement in morale. And with regard to workload, 62 per



MAHCP

cent of respondents said they're doing more now than at the start of 2024 while only two per cent said they've seen their workload decrease.

"We know these issues are linked to staffing, and we also know demand for everything from mental health services to diagnostic tests is only growing," said Linklater in the release. "Our recent survey results should be a wake-up call: much more needs to be done, and much more quickly, or Manitobans will continue to see negative impacts in high wait times for services like testing, emergency care,

mental health and addictions support, and more."

MAHCP represents over 7,000 allied health professionals working in more than 50 specialized disciplines in labs, clinics, hospitals and long-term and community care. Its members include paramedics, lab and imaging technologists, respiratory therapists and mental health clinicians. The union's collective agreement expired in March 2024.

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of Pioneer Manor)
Contact Jackiem.lwrc@gmail.com

AA Arborg

Thursdays - 7:30 pm
Arborg Support Centre
327 Main Street
Contact 204-376-5861

AA Eriksdale

Eriksdale United Church building
#7 Main Street, Eriksdale (side door)
Meetings are Mondays
at 6:30 p.m.

AA Winnipeg Beach

Lady of the Lake RC Church
Corner of Hwy. 9 and Lake Ave.,
Winnipeg Beach
Meetings are Saturdays
between 7 and 8 p.m.
Contact Ann J 204-389-3417

Gimli Group AA

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AA Riverton Group

12 Main St. at the
Riverton Senior Centre
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> GREEN LIGHT, FROM PG. 7

have a positive impact on the business community, as safer and more efficient travel encourages increased visitation, supports local commerce and bolsters economic growth across the Interlake. Tourism thrives on the ability to travel with ease and confidence, and these improvements will undoubtedly contribute to our goal of making the Interlake a destination of

choice."

The chamber will continue to advocate for infrastructure improvements that benefit safety and enhance the economic vitality of communities in the region, she added, and it looks forward to further details from the province on the passing-lanes project.

The *Express* asked the provincial department of transportation and infrastructure how many passing lanes will be built, whether it has to appropriate land to build them and when

construction will begin but did not get detailed answers.

"Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure has determined that passing lanes on Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) 8 between PTH 67 and Provincial Road 231 are warranted and are already identified in the approved capital program for future construction," said a department spokesperson. "The project is currently in the design phase."

> WATERSHED, FROM PG. 6

leadership and laws, even though the land is vastly privately owned. But let's please all remember that it wasn't our Indigenous friends who designed this federal program, which excluded meaningful engagement for farmers. Lord knows Indigenous communities know better than anybody what it's like to be excluded from planning.

We look forward to reaching out to Indigenous communities to start a new dialogue without government interference.

The Corridor is stopped, and the sun rises on a new day. Federal winds of change are blowing. Regardless of who runs the country next, we all have an opportunity for a new national conservation strategy that brings us all together instead of dividing us. A

conservation restart is needed, with a focus on good engagement for all involved. Let's hope conservation groups and new government leaders learn from what went wrong in western Manitoba because we all need conservation.

- Rob Olson, M.N.R.M.
Senior science advisor
Manitoba Wildlife Federation

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Creative Cocoon offering more programs, bigger class sizes in new home

By Patricia Barrett

Arborg's Creative Cocoon moved into a new home and is offering bigger class sizes and additional programming.

The arts and wellness hub took up residence in the basement of the Arborg Training Centre at the beginning of the month and is off to a creative and calming start in its vibrant new studio.

With a bigger space, the cocoon is planning to make a dedicated music room called the Vibrations Music Room where students can take classes and where local musicians can get together for jam sessions.

"One exciting aspect of the new location is that we will have enough space for a music room. The Creative Cocoon has received funding through the Government of Manitoba for the Creative Cocoon Vibrations Music Room approved under the 2024/2025 From the Ground Up – Safe Healthy Communities for ALL (FGP) program," said the cocoon's co-chair Lisa Klym. "We are hoping that room will be open to the public by March 2025."

The cocoon is working towards offering a Garage Band Night where local musicians can get together and jam, Klym added. And they're also working on providing music classes that are not currently offered in the community in order to further enrich Arborg's cultural landscape.

The cocoon had met with the Town of Arborg council last year to inquire about leasing the basement of the Training Centre as it needed more

space for its operation. Council passed a resolution at its Nov. 13 meeting to approve the request to lease the basement. The town gave the cocoon a discounted rate of \$1,200 and also approved a grant of \$5,400 a year to help the organization offset the rental fee.

In addition to music offerings, the cocoon is collaborating with local businesses and organizations, offering inclusive art programs that celebrate diversity and creating opportunities to showcase Arborg's "incredible talent."

The Creative Cocoon is a non-profit organization that was formed in 2016 after a number of local visionaries saw the need for an arts and wellness centre in the area. It offers arts and wellness workshops for people in Arborg and surrounding areas. The organization is advised by the Arborg Arts Committee and teams up with artists, organizations and schools to offer workshops such as theatre for children and adults, music, dance, writing and health and wellness. It also provides exhibit space for Arborg and other artists.

Some of the cocoon's upcoming programs include the following:

- Healing Harmony Music and Games Workshop for Seniors, starting Feb. 4 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. (6 weeks);
- Kid's Felt Wreath Workshop on Feb. 5 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. (all supplies provided)
- Adult Acting Classes, starting Feb. 6 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. (6 weeks)



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Creative Cocoon board members, back row: Lisa Klym (co-chair), Ron Rogowsky (treasurer), Jenna Stansell (chair), Rachel Plett (secretary), Jesica Plett; front row, Emilie Cardinal and Ingen Gulay. Missing from the photo is Kim Dubek.

•Theatre and Music Workshop for Youth and People with Disabilities with special education teacher, actress and singer Dani Caldeira, starting Feb. 11 from 1 to 2 p.m. (6 weeks).

For more information about workshops and registering, email the Creative Cocoon at info@thecreativecocoon.net or call 204-494-0065. Visit the cocoon online: thecreativecocoon.ca

The Arborg Training Centre is located

at 444 Recreation Centre. The training centre has an elevator to facilitate access to the basement.

Community shows charitable holiday spirit

By Jennifer McFee

The holiday spirit was alive and well in local communities where residents shared a healthy dose of donations with the Interlake Eastern Health Foundation.

The Interlake Eastern Health Foundation aims to improve quality of life throughout the region by supporting facilities and programs close to home.

Averill Stephenson, executive di-

rector of Interlake Eastern Health Foundation, shared her thanks with everyone who made donations to the organization — including many people who chose to donate in lieu of giving holiday gifts to friends, family and co-workers.

"Despite our holiday campaign looking a little different this year with no direct mail, the support of the community did not waiver," she said.

"With a social media campaign and articles in local newspapers, we raised just over \$32,000."

In addition to monetary contributions, the foundation also received many messages from patients and families to share their gratitude and support for health-care staff.

Learn more about Interlake Eastern Health Foundation at www.iehf.ca.

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Barvinok hosts Ukrainian New Year



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY RAYME THOMSON

The Gimli Barvinok Ukrainian Dancers Inc. celebrated Ukrainian New Year's with 295 guests on Jan. 25 at the Fraserwood Hall. Master of ceremonies Jay Nickerson introduced the dancers for each performance following the singing of the Canadian and Ukrainian anthems by Roman McColl. Barvinok dance school has 29 dancers registered in six different groups who performed along with the Alumni Performance Ensemble during evening. Dee's Deli Catering provided the meal and the High Profile band the music.





Falcons preparing for first round of CRJHL playoffs

By Kieran Reimer

If the Capital Region Junior Hockey League playoffs started today, it would be the third-place Lundar Falcons taking on the sixth-place Arborg Ice Dawgs in a best three-of-five quarterfinal.

With the Falcons sitting comfortably in that third slot, that matchup is becoming increasingly likely with just five games left in the regular season.

"We'll be prepared with whoever our matchup is," said head coach Tyler Medeiros. "We've played them (Arborg) enough times to know their style of play and that's not anything that would be a surprise for us."

And that style of play is hard-nosed hockey, which Arborg is one of the best at in the CRJHL.

The Ice Dawgs sit five points behind the La Broquerie Habs and 14 points ahead of the North Winnipeg Satelites, making the Lundar-Arborg matchup almost inevitable.

The Falcons have won four of their five games this season, each in fairly close fashion, with powerplays often being the deciding factor.

Medeiros said he'd be expecting a competitive series regardless of whether it's against the Ice Dawgs or the Habs or Satelites.

"The league's been really competi-

tive, and you've got to be ready to compete every night regardless of who you're playing. We're going to make sure we're hitting our stride come playoff time."

And the Falcons took a step toward that on Saturday with a 7-3 win over the North Winnipeg Satelites.

After going down 3-2 in the first, the Falcons responded with five unanswered goals to take it in dominant fashion.

They also took a whopping 59 shots in the game, while their goaltender Seth Hasker stopped 43 of the 46 he faced.

Joe MacMillan and Zachary Hall-dorson were both two-goal scorers, while Gavin Miller, Dylan Vitelli and Liam Russell had the others. The Falcons now hold a 14-9-0-2-0 record after their latest win.

"It was by committee, it was nice to see everyone working together and making it happen," said Medeiros.

The Falcons are preparing for a rematch with the Satelites on Tuesday night in North Winnipeg to close out January's schedule.

They'll play four more in February to round out the regular season starting Sunday, Feb. 2 against the Fishermen in Selkirk.

LUNDAR FALCONS Congratulations! **CRJHL**

Troy Johannesson **Braeden Lukas**

2024/25 CRJHL ALLSTARS

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Lundar Falcons defenceman Troy Johannesson, left, and forward Braeden Lukas were selected as CRJHL all-stars on Friday. Johannesson has three goals and eight assists in 23 games on the Falcons blueline this season, while Lukas is fourth in rookie scoring with 11 goals and 11 assists in 25 games.

UPCOMING GAMES:

Tuesday, Jan. 28 at North Winnipeg Satelites, 8 p.m. at Billy Mosienko

Arena

Sunday, Feb. 2 at Selkirk Fishermen, 3 p.m. at Selkirk Recreation Complex

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Lightning Report: U17s getting hot at the right time

By Kieran Reimer

Watch out because the U17 AAA Interlake Lightning are getting hot at the right time.

After winning just three games from October to December, the Lightning are starting to turn their season around with just a month before the playoffs begin.

In January they went 3-2-2 in league play and 2-1-1 in tournament play at the Robin's Minor Hockey Tournament in Thunder Bay last weekend.

At the tournament, they took on U18 AA teams, and even with by far the youngest team, they still found ways to win and wound up making the semi-finals, where they were eventually eliminated in a shootout.

Head coach Niels Kaczorowski believes the team's struggles in the first half of the season were due to being one of the younger teams in the league and needing time to get their feet wet.

Now, with just seven regular season games left, anything is possible for this confident Lightning squad.

"Our goal is to jump Pembina Valley for sixth place and get a better playoff position and work toward winning some playoff games," said Kaczorowski. "It's not surprising it took us so long to get going with such a young team. They needed a little confidence to be able to battle some adversity and over the first three weeks of January we're a whole different hockey team."

As of right now, the Lightning are tied with the Pembina Valley Hawks for sixth place, with a 6-17-5 record and a game in hand.

Kaczorowski is confident that they can take sole possession of that spot based on the effort and never-give-up attitude he's seen from his team over the past few weeks.

That attitude was especially on display in their 6-6 comeback tie against the West End Bruins U18 AA in Thunder Bay last Saturday.

"We were down 6-4 with two minutes to go and we took a penalty and scored two shorthanded goals to tie the game. Then we needed a win in our last game to make the semi-final and we went down early but had not quit and came back and won it 4-2. Even in the semi-final we gave up two shorthanded goals early and still managed to battle back but just



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The U17 AAA Male Interlake Lightning visited the Terry Fox Memorial in Thunder Bay last weekend during their off time at the Robin's Minor Hockey Tournament. The Lightning went 2-1-1 at the tournament, making it to the semi-finals.

couldn't do it in the shootout. A great effort from the kids, and they are a close-knit group; it's honestly a pleasure to coach them. They are a great group."

The Lightning are now set for a busy February, which will see the playoffs start at the end of the month.

They hope to channel their inner 2018-19 St. Louis Blues and go from being one of the league's last-place teams in December to being the team that wins it all by the end of the season.

Next up on the weekend is the Eastman Selects and Winnipeg Wild. Puck drop in those goes at 7 p.m. on Saturday in Garson and 3:45 p.m. on Sunday in Warren.

The **U13 AA Female Interlake Lightning** won 4-3 over the Twins in St. Norbert on Sunday night. They currently sit seventh with a 6-13-0-1 record.

Upcoming Games: Sunday, Feb. 2 vs Twins, 3:30 p.m. at Stony Mountain Community Centre

The **U13 AA Male Interlake Lightning** won 3-2 over the Winnipeg Wild White on Wednesday and 8-4 over the Winnipeg Thrashers Red on Saturday. They currently sit 12th with an 11-11-0-1 record.

Upcoming Games: Sunday, Feb. 2 at Kenora Thistles, 3 p.m. at Bowman Electric Keewatin Memorial Arena

The **U15 AA Male Interlake Lightning** lost 5-3 to the Winnipeg Wild Green on Wednesday and tied 2-2 with the Winnipeg Wild White on Sunday. They currently sit eighth with an 8-9-5-2 record.

Upcoming Games: Thursday, Jan. 30 at Winnipeg Bruins Black, 6:30 p.m. at East End Arena

The **U15 AAA Female Interlake Lightning** lost 3-1 to the Pembina Valley Hawks on Saturday night in Carman. They currently sit seventh with a 3-16 record.

Upcoming Games: Friday, Jan. 31 vs Eastman Selects, 7:30 p.m. at Access Credit Union Arena; Saturday, Feb. 1 vs Pembina Valley Hawks, 4:15 p.m. at Access Credit Union Arena; Sunday, Feb. 2 at Westman Wildcats, 1:15 p.m. at Deloraine Doc Bonar Arena

The **U15 AAA Male Interlake Lightning** lost 7-4 to the Pembina Valley Hawks on Sunday. They currently sit fifth in the Central Division with a

4-23 record.

Upcoming Games: Tuesday, Jan. 28 vs Winnipeg Wild Red, 7:30 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Sports Complex

The **U18 AAA Male Interlake Lightning** won 6-2 over the Central Plains Capitals on Friday and 4-3 over the Winnipeg Bruins on Sunday. They currently sit eighth with a 17-14-2-1-3-2 record.

Upcoming Games: Wednesday, Jan. 29 vs Winnipeg Wild, 7 p.m. at Teulon-Rockwood Arena; Saturday, Feb. 1 at Winnipeg Thrashers, 7 p.m. at Seven Oaks Community Centre; Sunday, Feb. 2 vs Kenora Thistles, 2 p.m. at Teulon-Rockwood Arena

The **U18 AAA Female Interlake Lightning** lost 4-0 Wednesday to the Winnipeg Ice, 8-2 Friday to the Pembina Valley Hawks and 7-0 Saturday to the Eastman Selects. They currently sit eighth with a 5-26-0-1-3 record.

Upcoming Games: Saturday, Feb. 8 vs Pembina Valley Hawks, 8 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Sports Complex

To see more photos of your favourite Interlake Athletes

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Ice Dawgs win thrilling game on Laura Fridfinnson night

By Kieran Reimer

The Arborg Ice Dawgs hosted Laura Fridfinnson at the Arborg & District Arena on Friday for a ceremonial puck drop before their game against the La Broquerie Habs. Fridfinnson, a native of Arborg, began her hockey career playing on boys' teams with the Arborg Minor Hockey Club in the late 1990s.

She later captained Team Manitoba's U18 women's team at the 2025 U18 National Championships, where she was named Tournament MVP. Fridfinnson also represented Team Canada at both the U22 and Senior Women's National Team levels. Additionally, she had an impressive college hockey career with the University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs, scoring 75 goals and 81 assists over four seasons and helping lead the Bulldogs to two national championships.

"Arborg is grateful that Laura has moved back and is now a teacher in the region. She serves as inspiration to many girls playing hockey in our community and is someone they can look up to," said Ice Dawgs general manager Lloyd Barylski during his speech at the arena on Friday night. "It's because of women like Laura that Arborg Minor Hockey is seeing

record numbers of girls participating in the sport."

With Fridfinnson in attendance, the Ice Dawgs delivered an exciting performance, pulling off a 3-2 victory. The Ice Dawgs didn't score until the second period, when Ben Danielson and Brody Barylski found the back of the net. With the game tied 2-2 midway through the third period, Dainen Jacobson scored on the power play, putting the Ice Dawgs ahead.

Goaltender Nathan Meisner made several key saves down the stretch, finishing the night with 43 saves, as the Ice Dawgs secured three points with the win.

However, on Sunday, the Ice Dawgs faced a setback, falling 5-2 to the Comets in Beausejour.

Michael Crave and Skylar Farrington scored for Arborg, and Paxton Moore made 54 saves in a losing effort.

As a result, the Ice Dawgs' record stands at 7-19-0-1-0, keeping them in sixth place in the Capital Region Junior Hockey League.

UPCOMING GAMES:

- Wednesday, Jan. 29 vs. La Broquerie Habs, 8 p.m. at Arborg & District



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Arborg Ice Dawgs welcomed Laura Fridfinnson to Arborg & District Arena on Friday for the ceremonial puck drop between the Ice Dawgs and La Broquerie Habs. Fridfinnson grew up playing hockey in Arborg before going on to represent Team Canada at various levels and helping the University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs to two national championships.

Arena

Habs, 7:30 p.m. at HyLife Centre

- Saturday, Feb. 1 at La Broquerie

Lott chasing Olympic dream with Team Dunstone

By Kieran Reimer

Colton Lott hopes to fulfill his Olympic dreams with Team Matt Dunstone over the next 13 months. Team Dunstone, which consists of skip Matt Dunstone, second E.J. Harnden, lead Ryan Harnden, and Lott as third, is currently ranked No. 1 in Canada and No. 4 in the world.

At 29 years old, Lott, a Gimli native, has never competed in the Olympics, but with Team Dunstone's excellent performance this season, his dreams have a genuine chance of becoming reality. To qualify for the Olympics, Team Dunstone must take several manageable steps based on their current performance.

The first step is to continue accumulating points in the Canadian Team Ranking System throughout the 2025 season. Currently, they have 288.875 points, which is over 21 points ahead of Team Brad Jacobs, who is in second place. They aim to remain among Canada's top nine teams to qualify for the 2025 Canadian Curling Trials in November.

Once they qualify Team Dunstone will need to win the trials, which consist of a preliminary round, a playoff round, and a best-of-three championship round. If they succeed in all these stages, they will represent Canada at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy.

"It would mean everything. It's everybody's dream. All the hard work we put in, both on and off the ice, makes this experience very significant," said Lott. "Every year, there are chances at the Brier and representing Team Canada, but the Olympics

only come around once every four years. We want to do everything we can to avoid any regrets."

The team's next major event before the Olympics is the 2025 Montana's Brier, the Canadian National Men's Curling Championship, which will take place in Kelowna from Feb. 28 to March 9. In preparation for the Brier, Team Dunstone will participate in various training camps to ensure they are ready to win. Victors at the Brier will earn a spot at the 2025 World Men's Curling Championship in Moose Jaw from March 29 to April 6.

Lott has a busy few months ahead, but he is adapting to the demands of high-stakes events, particularly over the last year. In March 2024, he and his wife, mixed doubles teammate Kadriana, qualified for and won their first-ever Mixed Doubles Canadian Championship. After previously securing silver and bronze medals in earlier years, the couple finally celebrated their first Canadian gold together.

Although they were unable to win the 2025 mixed doubles event after being eliminated two weeks ago, it has still been a successful year in the development of their individual games. Lott is eager to build on this momentum as he prepares for what he hopes will be the most significant 13 months of his curling career.

"I'm right where I need to be; it's about pulling all the pieces together now," said Lott. "The past year has been about growth, and I've come a long way as an individual player. My experiences in mixed doubles and men's team events are enhancing my overall curling skills. These are exciting times, and



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Gimli's Colton Lott will be participating at the 2025 Montana's Brier with Team Dunstone in Kelowna on Feb. 28 to March 9.

there's a lot to look forward to in the future."

Perfect tournament for Team Drews ended in the semis in Bemidji

By Kieran Reimer

It wasn't the finish they had hoped for, but Team Drews are taking the positives from their semi-final finish at last weekend's Minnesota Region USA Curling Club Playdowns in Bemidji.

Team Drews, skipped by former Ericksdale and Lundar native and now Saint Paul, Minn., local Nick Drews, dominated the tournament early on with a perfect 5-0 record in pool play.

Their winning aspirations suddenly stopped as they were bowed out in the semi-finals by Team Polo, 7-1.

Drews took ownership of the loss, saying he made a "bad shot" when he missed a steal of four in the second end.

Team Polo, which includes former United States Olympic gold medalist Joe Polo, then capitalized on the missed shot and went on to victory to bow out Team Drews.

"I made a bad shot, and we went down early fast," said Drews following the tournament on Monday. "I quite honestly thought we were the better team there, and we just had a bad game in the semi-finals, and you can't have a bad game against a team having a good game."

Despite the loss, Drews said they are staying positive after what was still a dominant tournament, despite the semi-final blunder.

With a couple of bigger tournaments



Team Drews — Mike Richards, Max Smith, Nick Drews and Tyler Drews — lost 7-1 in the semi-finals to Team Polo at the 2025 Minnesota Region USA Curling Club Playdowns in Bemidji last weekend after going 5-0 in pool play.

still left on their regular season schedule, they will need that positive mindset because the competition only gets more meaningful now.

They have the Saint Paul Club Championship coming up in a few weeks, the Twin Cities Club Championship in a couple of months, and the



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Team Drews, left to right, Tyler Drews, Nick Drews, Max Smith and Mike Richards, (missing DJ Johnson), won The Big Spiel 2025 at Saint Paul Curling Club in Saint Paul, Minn., on Jan. 14.

Last Chance Bonspiel at the end of the season, which will offer a chance to win big prize money if they can capture a first-place finish.

"We're still a good team, and we were able to put together some dominant wins and some that were just good enough, but we still like playing together," said Drews.

"We've had pretty good success in that (Last Chance Bonspiel), so I expect that to be our last bonspiel of the year."

Team Shuster, skipped by former

United States Olympic gold medalist John Shuster, will stand in their way at the Last Chance Bonspiel.

Team Drews and Team Shuster have battled in the past, and the Last Chance Bonspiel will likely be another chapter in their exciting tournament rivalry.

Drews said he is also excited to watch his brother Tyler Drews playing third for Team Grassie at the 2025 Viterra Championship later this week.

That tournament runs from Feb. 4 to 9 at Stride Place in Portage la Prairie.

Gimli's Lott wins Scotties Berth with Saskatchewan

By Kieran Reimer

Kadriana Lott, a native of Gimli, will be representing Saskatchewan at the 2025 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

As the second player on Team Nancy Martin, based in Saskatoon, Lott and her team clinched their spot at the Scotties by winning the Viterra Prairie Pinnacle in Kindersley on Sunday.

Team Martin finished the round robin with a record of 6-2, earning them the No. 2 seed entering the playoff rounds. They defeated Team Ashley Thevenot with a score of 15-8 in the semi-finals before securing a 9-7 victory over Team Jolene Campbell in the finals.

Now, the team will prepare for the Scotties, which will take place from Feb. 14 to 23 in Thunder Bay.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Kadriana Lott, right, will represent Saskatchewan with Team Martin at the 2025 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

U18 A-event champions



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Gimli's Team Graham won the U18 A-Event at the Stonewall Curling Club's Junior Open Bonspiel this past weekend. Team Graham defeated Winnipeg's Team Burton in the finals. Pictured in no order, Tyler Graham, Bryce Buchel, Jake Kowalchuk and Johannas Magnusson.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF: The Estate of Roland Edward Fortin, late of the Town of Lundar, in Manitoba, deceased. All claims against the above estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their offices, P.O. Box 1400, Stonewall, Manitoba, R0C 2Z0 on or before the 5th day of March, 2025. DATED at Stonewall, Manitoba, this 23rd day of January, 2025. GRANTHAM LAW OFFICES Solicitors for the Administratrix

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take a break > GAMES

SUDOKU

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

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

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!

MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING ACT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

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

THE MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON BY-LAW NO. **05-2024**
Being an amendment to the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Zoning By-law No. 04-2024.

HEARING LOCATION: Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Council Chambers
329 River Road, Arborg, MB

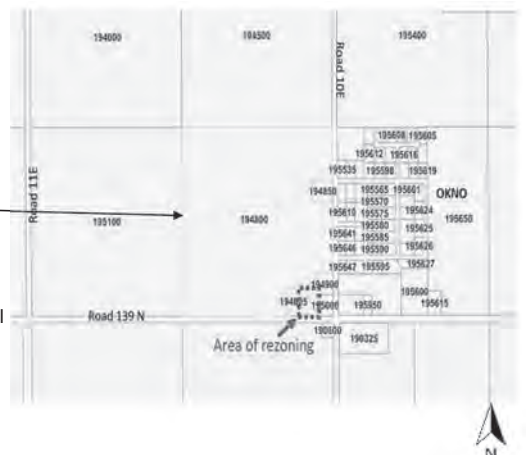
DATE & TIME: February 13, 2025
9:00 am

APPLICATION: MBR-24-05R

AFFECTED AREA: Pt. SE ¼ 10-24-02 EPM
Being Proposed Lot 1 & Proposed Lot 2
Pt. Roll No. 194800

GENERAL INTENT: To rezone an area in the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton "AL" Agricultural Limited Zone to "GD" General Development Zone as per condition of subdivision approval.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy Thom, CMMA
Chief Administration Officer / Development Officer
Eastern Interlake Planning District
62-2nd Ave, Box 1758 Gimli, MB R0C 1B0 Ph: 204-642-5478 Fax: 204-642-4061
Email: eipd@mymts.net Web: www.interlakeplanning.com



A copy of the by-law may be provided/inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, a copy of the information may be emailed upon request.

Please Note: E.I.P.D. recommends that property owner's notify lessee/renter if applicable.

Sudoku Answer

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

GARDA SECURITY Requires a casual part-time year round **Security Officer** at Diageo Canada Inc., Gimli Plan

- min. 5 shifts per 4 week schedule
- shift work (nights, weekends)
- valid driver's license required - bondable
- Criminal record check and child abuse registry check required
- Province of Manitoba Security License required (within six months)

Closing date: April 30, 2025

Please forward resume to:

gimli.part.time.application@gmail.com or mail to Diageo Canada Inc, P.O. Box 2000, Gimli, Manitoba, R0C 1B0

ATTENTION: Part-time Security Officer position

We thank all applicants in advance for their interest in the position. Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

NOTICE OF BRANCH CLOSURE TO: All members of Access Credit Union Limited (the "Credit Union")

Notice is hereby given, in compliance with the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Regulation, that the Credit Union will be closing the Lundar branch located at:

Unit B - 85 Main Street, Lundar, MB. R0C 1Y0

The branch will close effective September 17, 2025.

The Lundar branch members will be consolidated with 4 Railway Avenue, Eriksdale Branch. Members may also select any other branch location in Manitoba that may be more convenient with no changes of membership number or account numbers.

DATED this 30th day of January, 2025
ACCESS CREDIT UNION LIMITED
By order of the Board of Directors



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Rural Municipality of
FISHER

Box 280, Fisher Branch, MB, R0C 0Z0
Tel: 204-372-6393, Fax: 204-372-8470

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING ACT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a PUBLIC HEARING will be held to receive representation from any persons who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

**APPLICATION FOR CONDITIONAL USE under the
RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF FISHER ZONING
BY-LAW 1055/00 AS AMENDED.**

HEARING: RM of Fisher Council Chambers
30 Tache Street Fisher Branch, MB

DATE & TIME: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

APPLICATION: CU2025-01

OWNERS/APPLICANT: Tyrone Abas
Box 421
Hodgson, MB
R0C 1N0

PROPOSAL: To allow the establishment of a Newly Constructed Micro Cultivation Facility in a *Business Commercial Zone*.

AREA AFFECTED: LOTS 4 to 11, both inclusive, Block 4 Plan 570 WLTO (P Div) Subject to the reservations and provisos contained in the grant from the crown, out of the said LOTS 8 and 9 in the NW ¼ 32-25-1 WPM

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: RM of Fisher:
Kelly Marykuca,
Chief Administrative Officer
Rural Municipality of Fisher
Phone: (204) 372-6393
or fishercao@mymts.net



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



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Rural Municipality of
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www.Grahamdale.ca

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Finance Officer Full Time Term Position

Applications are being accepted for the position of Finance Officer for the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale for an approximate 2 year Term Position beginning in February, 2025 and ending in December, 2026.

Responsibilities:

As Finance Officer, the focus of your role is managing and overseeing financial activities with the R.M. of Grahamdale. Primary responsibilities will include budget preparation, financial reporting, compliance and full cycle bookkeeping. Key responsibilities of the position include:

- Preparation of the annual financial plan
- Ensuring sound financial controls are in place and followed
- Advising on financial matters
- Preparation of financial reports
- Accounts receivable, accounts payable, and payroll
- Weekly deposits and bank reconciliation.

Requirements:

Ideally, you will have experience in financial work in the municipal field. Strong communication, accounting and analytical skills are just some of the requirements of the position. Candidates who have completed designated accounting courses, the Certified Manitoba Municipal Administrator course, or other relevant discipline bring an educational advantage to the position.

If you would like more information about this position, please call Chief Administrative Officer Shelly Schwitek at 204-768-2858 or submit your resume in confidence to rm606@grahamdale.ca.

Application Deadline: 12 Noon on Friday, February 7, 2025.

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RECYCLING NOTICE FOR FEBRUARY / 2024

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at Arborg curbside pickup
- February 6
at Riverton curbside pickup
- February 18
at Arborg curbside pickup
- February 20
at Riverton curbside pickup

*The workshop will be closed on
February 17, 2025
Louis Riel Day*

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Announcements

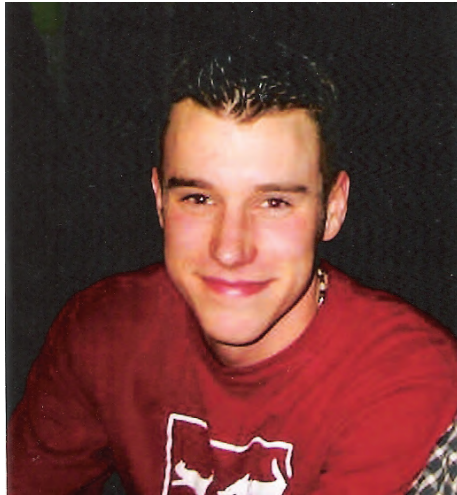
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SHOWER/SOCIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



Please join us for the
Bridal Shower of
Morgan Sumka
Bride-elect of Dylan Stobert
on Saturday, February 8th at 1 p.m.
at Arborg Community Hall
The couple is registered at
Arborg Home Hardware and myregistry.com
They would also graciously accept gift cards
from
Costco, Walmart and Home Hardware
Donations may be made at
Home Hardware, Arborg Co-op or Riverton
Co-op
Social event to follow at 8 p.m.

IN MEMORIAM



Robbie Johnson
May 1, 1983 – January 28, 2005
Taken from us so suddenly
And tragically, 20 years ago
Your life was a blessing,
Your memory a treasure,
You are loved beyond words,
And missed beyond measure.
It's the heartache of losing you,
That will never go away.
-Forever loved and deeply missed,
Mom, Dad and brother Darrell

IN MEMORIAM



**In Loving Memory of
Nadine Eyjolfson (McNabb)**
Taken from us February 5, 2015

Memories are life's special moments
Borrowed from the passing of time.
Ghosts and shadows from bygone days
Etched and stored inside our minds.

Some we would like to forget
Some in time become a treasure.
Some memories become special gifts
That live on in our hearts forever.

Our minds are memory albums
Where the past and present meet.
Memories we lovingly cling to
That make our hearts skip a beat.

Yes, memories are precious moments
And we have quite a few,
But the memories that we treasure most
Are the ones we made with you.

-Miss you forever,
Love your family

IN MEMORIAM



Jason Thorsteinson
January 30th comes with heartache.
That's the day you left us.
Son, could you come back and stay awhile.
We want to hear your voice,
And see your smile.
We want to hold you tight,
And never let go.
And tell you how much we miss and love you.
-Love Mom and Dad
and family

OBITUARY



Kathy Louise Timchishen (aka Carla)
January 13, 1955 - January 24, 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Kathy at the age of 70, at Arborg Hospital.

Kathy was survived by her husband Ted of 50 years; sons Carey, Chad and Michael; grandsons Tayson and Landon; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Kathy was predeceased by her parents Robert and Kay Scott. Mom enjoyed summers at the cottage in Grindstone. Boating and figure skating were a passion of hers. She was a figure skating instructor and skating with Toller Cranson was a highlight of her career. Planting flowers was another hobby of hers. Endless hours were spent working at the Arborg Hospital and Arborg Bar, in which she got her nickname "Carla" from Cheers.

Thank you to all the staff at HSC for all of your kind words. Paramedics Mark and Jon for all your hard work. Also, to the doctors and nursing staff at the Arborg Hospital.

A family service will be held at a later date.

kl
KEN LOEHMER
FUNERAL SERVICES
204-886-0404

OBITUARY



Evelyn (Lyn) Isaac
(Foster-Thornton)
March 10th, 1929 -
December 31st, 2024

Our loving Mum, our grand matriarch, kind, caring, at times feisty and compassionate of others to the end. She died peacefully, surrounded by family.

Tributes:
www.gilbartfuneralhome.com



Gilbart Funeral Home,
Gimli in care of arrangements.

Your memory will live forever Engraved within our hearts



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OBITUARY



Walter Wayne Mychasiw
November 18, 1942 - January 8, 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce, with his family by his side, Walter Mychasiw passed away at the Selkirk Hospital on January 8, 2025.

Our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather is survived by his wife of 60 years June; sons Jeff (Inga) and Dale (Susan); grandchildren Hillary (Tyson), Erin (Grant), Sean, and Quinn; great-grandchildren Walker and Bode; brother-in-law Mel, sister-in-law Laverne (Al), brother Albert (Eileen), sister Alex; many nieces and nephews, extended family and friends.

Walter was predeceased by his parents, Tom and Anne, and by his sister Julie.

Walter was born in Grandview, Manitoba and lived on a farm outside of Grandview until he moved to Winnipeg to attend a Surveying and Drafting program at Red River College. It was during this time that he met June on a blind date. After a short courtship, Walter and June (who he lovingly called Juna) married and lived in Seven Sisters Falls, several places in Winnipeg and then built a home in Transcona. Walter worked for two engineering companies and then as a Surveyor with the Parks Branch of the Manitoba Government. He also opened a skate sharpening business at Oxford Heights Community Club.

Always entrepreneurial and embracing change, Walter gave up his surveying career and moved his family to Arborg to open a MacLeod's store with Juna. After running the store successfully for 10 years, Walter switched gears again and opened a septic business which he operated until he retired in 2011.

Walter loved animals (especially horses) and when they built their hobby farm in Silver, near Arborg, he boarded race horses, raised dogs and cattle, fed the deer on his property and cared for his own horses which he greatly enjoyed riding. He acquired miniature horses for his grandchildren and took part in many trail rides throughout the province. Walter's love of horses and his commitment to the community led him to play a key role in initiating the Arborg Fair and Rodeo which has now been hosted for many years at Silver Hall. He was also a member of the Arborg Lion's Club and the Silver Hall Board of Directors.

Walter enjoyed the outdoors and as such, snowmobiling and quadding were frequent pastimes. After camping in many locations, often with their grandchildren, Walter and Juna bought lake-view property near the Narrows, enjoying summers of boating and campfires. His many interests also included baseball. Walter excelled at the game and was the pitcher on a team that he also managed for many years. Walter built strong friendships with his baseball teammates and enjoyed spending time with them and with other friends and family. He was always willing to lend a hand to others and was known as an excellent host who knew how to have fun.

Walter worked very hard to create the life he wanted with his beloved Juna. His family was everything to him. He was very proud of his sons and he adored his grandchildren, always building a welcoming fire in the fireplace and making family events special. Walter enriched the lives of everyone he knew and he will be greatly missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Stonewall Legion Hall, 459 Main Street, Stonewall, Manitoba, on Sunday, February 9 at 1:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

MACKENZIE FUNERAL HOME STONEWALL
(204) 467-2525 • info@mackenziefh.com



OBITUARY



Margaret Sigvaldason

With a heavy heart, we share the passing of our beloved Mother and Amma, Margaret Sigvaldason, on January 9, 2025 at the age of 90 years.

Margaret leaves behind to cherish her memory, daughters Beverly Havens, Connie (Perry) Clark and Ardis (Michael) Owen; grandchildren, Ashley and Jessica; sister Rosemarie (Roger) Maksymchuk, and brother-in-law Bob Gudmundson; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and family friends.

Margaret is joining in heaven her husband, Adalsteinn (Steini) Sigvaldason; her parents Halldor and Herdis Eastman; brother Alfred and sister-in-law Sandra Eastman, brother Dori and sister-in-law Pat Eastman, and sisters Irene Julius and Gladys Gudmundson.

Born on March 3, 1934 in Riverton, Manitoba, Margaret was the first of six children in the Eastman family. Her radiant smile could light up any room, a beacon of warmth and love. Though naturally shy, Margaret's deep love for her family always drew her out of her shell.

Margaret's journey was one of love, from the family farm to an acreage near Winnipeg, and finally to Alberta. Her home was a haven of hospitality, always ready with coffee, treats, and her famous baking. We'll forever savor the memory of her apple crisp, nanaimo bars, and banana cream pie. As an Amma, she found pure joy in her grandchildren, her gentle spirit a comfort to all.

Margaret found beauty in life's simple pleasures - the Polka Party on Friday nights, the view from her favorite window, a game of cards and the shade of a summer day. Her youthful complexion and straight black hair, often adorned with a kerchief, were as timeless as her grace.

The family wishes to send a special thank you to the wonderful caregivers at the Citadel Long Term Care Home. Your care and support for Margaret will always be remembered.

Private graveside service for immediate family.

Celebration of life service date to be determined.

Though we'll miss her dearly, Margaret's love and warmth will forever echo in our hearts. Her life was a testament to the power of family and the quiet strength of a mother's love.

GODA NOTT ELSKAN

OBITUARY



Floyd Anthony Jones
June 6, 1960 - January 25, 2025

Peacefully on January 25, 2025, Floyd passed away at the age of 64 years at the E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital, Eriksdale, MB.

Floyd is survived by his mother Alice Jones (nee Armstrong), sister Irene (Mervin) Saunders, brother Gerald (Tracy) Jones along with his nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by his father Lloyd Jones, step-father William Saunders, nephew Bill Saunders along with other family members.

Cremation has taken place and a private family gathering will be held at a later date.

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OBITUARY



Suzanne Barrow

It is with heartfelt sadness that we announce the passing of Suzanne Louise Barrow on January 20, 2025 at the Gimli Community Health Centre, with her husband George by her side.

She will also be dearly missed by her brother Ken; along with many nieces, nephews, step-children, step-grandchildren, relatives and friends.

She was predeceased by her parents Roy and Louise; sister Donna and brothers Tom and Don.

Suzanne's first love was George but her art was a close second. She was born and raised in Winnipeg and she soon found her calling for painting and she was especially known for painting beautiful sky scenes.

Special thanks to the staff at the Gimli Community Health Centre for all the excellent care and compassion, especially Julie; also

thank you to Jeff for going above and beyond helping with everything.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made in her name to the Gimli Art Club kids programs.

A celebration of her life will be held in the spring of 2025.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

"A limb has fallen from the family tree,
That says grieve not for me,
Remember the best times,
The laughter, the song,
The good life I lived while
I was strong."

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



OBITUARY



Lawrence Tymoszczuk

December 10, 1948 – January 24, 2025

It is with deep sorrow we announce the passing of Lawrence Tymoszczuk, at the age of 76 years.

Lawrence will be dearly missed by Joan, his wife of 55 years; their children Sandy, Shelley, and David; grandchildren, Andrew and Maddie; his sister Helen (Laurence), and her children Becky, Tara, Wesley, and Loren.

Dad grew up on his parents' farm in Progress, Manitoba, where his love of animals and all things relating to nature and the outdoors began. Dad had many interests and hidden abilities in art, sciences, and history. His talent in drawing were known only to a lucky few, and he was always happy to have discussions with friends about historical events or the mechanics of how things worked.

Our Dad loved being a dad and grandpa. He was adamant about teaching his children and grandchildren a wide range of practical skills and how to be self-reliant. But he also believed in spending time with his family by playing catch in the yard, fishing, or tinkering in the garage, and he never lost an opportunity to take his children outside at night when fire flies were abundant or when there was a celestial event in the night sky.

Dad worked many years at Hecla with the Department of Natural Resources, but Dad's true passion was farming and helping his neighbours. Eventually the cows were sold, and in his retirement Dad enjoyed haying, fishing, and travelling. He loved to take many photos of his adventures, especially during his trips including New Zealand, Hawaii, Alaska, and countless trips to Florida with his grandchildren.

We will miss Dad more than words can say. His funny antics will be lovingly remembered at family gatherings for years to come. Vichnaya Pamyat.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our close friends and family for their support, and the staff at Arborg Hospital for their devoted care.

A private celebration of life will take place at a later date.

If people so choose, donations may be made in Dad's memory to CancerCare Manitoba.

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