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Artist finds purpose

David Leon Crispo, a landscape and nature acrylic artist from Elliot Lake, Ont., has 40 paintings on display at the Golden Prairie Arts Council as part of its 30th anniversary exhibition series. Crispo, who returned to painting after losing his hearing in 1999, says creating bold, colourful works allows him to find peace and share that feeling with others. See full story on pg. 15.

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Local woman promotes national blanket project for Tumbler Ridge

By Lana Meier

A Carman woman is encouraging local crocheters to lend their skills to a national blanket initiative supporting families and staff affected by the tragedy at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in British Columbia.

Erin Heppner learned about the project while scrolling through Facebook.

"I was scrolling through Facebook on Friday, and Facebook with its algorithms showed me crochet groups," she said. "This popped up on my newsfeed through a group called Canadian Crocheters and I thought, 'Hey, this is a great idea. People need to know about this and help the people of Tumbler Ridge.'"

The initiative is being organized by Mary Marguerite Gee of 100 Mile House, B.C. This is her second national blanket effort; she previously organized a similar project following the Humboldt Broncos tragedy.

The blankets will be distributed to students, families and teachers at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School who were affected.

Heppner said while Carman is not formally connected to the project, she hopes local residents will take part.

"I live in Carman, so I guess I am



A completed 12-by-12-inch crochet square made from #4 worsted acrylic yarn.

the Carman connection," she said. "I am hoping that the people of Carman will join in this opportunity to stand with the victims' families and teachers of Tumbler Ridge."

Heppner said contributing a square is a practical way to show care and compassion.

"It is important to me to be personally involved because it is a real and tangible way to show the love of Jesus Christ in a really dark situation," she said. "As a whole, I enjoy encouraging others through my crochet work. Also, as a mom who is a year away from sending our daughter to school,



STANDARD PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Erin Heppner crochets a 12-by-12-inch square for a national blanket initiative supporting students, families and staff affected in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. She is encouraging anyone willing to pick up a crochet hook to help show that communities across Canada stand behind them.

I cannot imagine what the families are going through right now and can only hope this never happens in Carman."

The goal is to create at least 32 blan-

kets. Each blanket will be assembled using 20 to 24 crocheted squares.

Crocheters are asked to follow spe-

Continued on page 8

Tender for Landscaping Services

The Town of Carman and the Rural Municipality of Dufferin (collectively referred to as the "Municipalities") are inviting submissions from qualified contractors for the provision of landscaping services at various jointly owned and/or managed municipal properties for the 2026 season (with an option to extend, if desired). Contact the office as listed below for a tender package or see our website.

The successful contractor will be responsible for ensuring all designated areas are maintained to a high standard, reflecting the Municipalities' commitment to clean, attractive, and well-kept public spaces.

The Municipalities reserve the right to reject any or all tenders and to waive informalities at their discretion. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Closing Date and Time: Friday, March 13th, 2026, @ 12:00 pm

Submission Location: Carman Dufferin Recreation (on behalf of the Town of Carman and the Rural Municipality of Dufferin)
Box 160 Carman, MB R0G 0J0, 12-2nd Avenue SW

Contact: Susan Stein, CAO Town of Carman

Phone: 204-745-2443 - email: cao@townofcarman.com or

Sharla Murray, CAO RM of Dufferin

Phone: 204-745-2301 - email: cao@rmofdufferin.com



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Rooted in Carman: Touchette receives MBNLA Life Membership Award

By Jessica Eblie

After more than four decades of shaping Manitoba's horticulture industry, Michel Touchette has received one of the province's highest professional honours.

On Feb. 19, Touchette was presented with a Life Membership Award from the Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association (MBNLA), recognizing his decades-long commitment, leadership and innovation within the nursery and landscape sector.

"It's recognition for the commitment and effort that I did for the association," Touchette said.

The award acknowledges individu-

als who have made lasting contributions to Manitoba's horticulture industry — and for Touchette, that impact stretches back to a summer job in Carman nearly five decades ago.

In the summer of 1978, Touchette arrived in Carman for what was meant to be a temporary position at Aubin Nurseries. Raised between two dairy farms in the Ottawa region, he had just completed his third year of horticulture studies at the University of Guelph when he accepted the summer role.

"I must have impressed somebody," he said with a laugh.

After graduating in 1979, he re-

turned to Aubin Nurseries and spent roughly five years working in Carman. Those formative prairie years laid the foundation for a career that would influence growers across Manitoba and beyond.

Touchette first became involved with the MBNLA around 1980 and was elected president in 1982. His leadership later extended to the national stage through the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association, though he says he consistently advocated for Manitoba growers and their unique challenges.

Those challenges are significant. Manitoba sits largely in plant hardiness zones three and four, where plants must endure harsh winters and short growing seasons. At the same time, local growers compete with producers in milder climates such as British Columbia, where longer seasons allow plants to mature more quickly and profitably.

Throughout his career, Touchette worked to strengthen Manitoba's competitive edge. He was involved in introducing new plant varieties, including the Parkland Pillar birch, after spotting a narrow mutation in a grower's field in Red Deer and recognizing its potential value. After nego-



STANDARD PHOTOS SUBMITTED
Michel Touchette (right) receives the Life Membership Award from the Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association on Feb. 19, recognizing more than four decades of leadership and innovation in Manitoba's horticulture industry.



tiating with the grower, the tree was introduced into wider distribution.

He also contributed to efforts to preserve the genetics of hardy roses developed at the Morden Research Station — work that ensured prairie-

Continued on page 9

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getheard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

Manitoba adds CMV to newborn screening program

By Lana Meier

Manitoba families will now receive earlier answers about a little-known infection that can quietly affect a child's development after the province expanded its newborn screening program to include congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV).

The province launched universal screening in December 2025, and more than 1,500 newborns have already been tested.

"When you bring a baby into the world, you have to trust the health-care system is doing everything possible to protect your child from day one," Premier Wab Kinew said during the announcement. "Families are receiving answers sooner, clinicians have critical information earlier, and there are more opportunities to intervene when that intervention can mean all the difference."

Congenital CMV is a common virus passed from mother to baby during pregnancy. It affects roughly one in 200 births and is among the leading infectious causes of permanent hearing loss and developmental disability in children.

Health officials say pregnant people can lower the risk of CMV infection through simple hygiene precautions, including washing hands after contact with young children's saliva or diapers, avoiding sharing food or utensils, and not kissing toddlers on the lips. The virus commonly spreads through contact with bodily fluids from young children, who often show no symptoms.

"Without screening, families may not know something is wrong until months or even years later, when hearing loss or developmental delays appear," Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara said. "Universal screening closes a gap that has existed for far too long."

The test is performed using the same heel-prick blood sample already collected from newborns and analyzed at Cadham Provincial Laboratory.



MANITOBA GOVERNMENT YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM

Rob Tétrault speaks alongside his son Alex and Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara during the announcement of Manitoba's expanded newborn CMV screening program on Feb. 17.

"If we can identify babies early, we can treat them early, and that leads to better outcomes. That's why screening at birth matters — it can change a child's future," said Rob Tétrault, president and co-founder of the Canadian CMV Foundation.

"There is no risk to the child whatsoever — just a few drops of blood," Tétrault added.

Tétrault began advocating for screening nearly 18 years ago after his son Alex was born with CMV and diagnosed only because of an unrelated prenatal concern.

"Had that random occurrence not happened, I hate to think what would have happened," he said. "I meet families all the time whose outcomes aren't as positive. We knew we had to change this."

Early treatment must happen quickly, he added.

"You have a very small window — usually the first month of life — where antiviral treatment can dramatically reduce hearing loss and cognitive impacts," Tétrault said.

He called Manitoba's adoption of universal screening a milestone after years of advocacy.

"I sent my first advocacy emails about 10 years ago," he said. "To finally see this in place means kids will have better outcomes, and parents will have less uncertainty. That brings me a lot of joy."

Alex Tétrault, now a young adult, said he's glad other children will benefit.

"I'm very happy more children are going to get treated," he said. "After all this time, it finally happened."

The province estimates the program costs about \$1.3 million and says it plans to continue tracking outcomes and ensuring families have access to follow-up care and supports.

Officials say the goal is simple — identify infections early rather than after permanent complications develop.

"This comes from listening to parents, advocates and clinicians," Asagwara said. "Earlier answers really do change outcomes."

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Flood outlook low to moderate across Manitoba: forecast centre

By Staff

The province is anticipating there will only be a low to moderate risk for spring flooding across Manitoba.

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure's Hydrologic Forecast Centre last week released its spring flood outlook, and there is no high risk for flooding right now although of course it remains largely dependent on weather conditions from now through the melt period, including additional snowfall and spring rainfall as well as the snowmelt's timing and rate.

It is currently believed there is a moderate risk of flooding for the Red, Pembina, Assiniboine, Souris and Qu'Appelle rivers as well as the Interlake region including the Icelandic and Fisher rivers and portions of the Saskatchewan River in northern Manitoba.

There is a low flood risk for the Red and Assiniboine river tributaries including the Rat and Roseau rivers. Eastern Manitoba, including the Winnipeg River basin and Whiteshell lakes area. Most Manitoba lakes are expected to remain within desired operating ranges after spring runoff and

the risk of flooding along Manitoba lakes is low.

Soil moisture at freeze-up was near normal to below normal across most of Manitoba, and winter precipitation has ranged from near normal to below normal in many regions, while soil frost depths are generally shallower than normal, allowing greater infiltration of meltwater.

Snow accumulations are also generally within the normal range except for parts of southern Manitoba where snow accumulation remains below typical values for this time of year.

Lake levels across the province are within operating ranges. Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba are well below normal for this time of year, and inflows into most major lakes are expected to be below seasonal normals, reflecting generally drier-than-normal conditions across contributing river basins.

The Red River Floodway is not expected to be operated under normal or favourable weather conditions but may be operated under unfavourable conditions to reduce water levels

within Winnipeg. The Portage Diversion may be operated under unfavourable weather conditions or to mitigate ice-jamming on the lower Assiniboine River. The Shellmouth Reservoir is being operated in consultation with the Shellmouth Liaison Committee to reduce downstream flood risk while maintaining water supply and recreation objectives.

Ice-cutting and breaking activities are already underway along the Red River to reduce the risk of ice-jam flooding. There is also risk of flooding on other rivers that are historically affected by ice jams including the Saskatchewan, Carrot, Swan, Icelandic and Fisher rivers.

Ice conditions and spring weather will play a key role in determining breakup timing and localized flood potential, the province notes.

As temperatures warm and ice strength deteriorates, Manitobans are reminded to stay off waterways, rivers and retention ponds.

An updated flood outlook is expected to be released in late March.

worship with us > FAITH

"A Prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the LORD" (inscription to Psalm 102).

Our Circumstances

We live in a difficult time in a world filled with violence. There is much confusion about right and wrong, and about who gets to judge them. We all feel like we belong to a minority. We feel like no one is listening to our group.

Discussions turn into demonstrations that often become violent, with looting, damage to property and lives, and no clear outcome, as if anything is accomplished by such actions. These actions may make us feel like we are at least doing something, without considering that, mostly, nothing is being accomplished except a lot of damage and a rise in anxiety. 'When will it happen again?' we think, 'Will I be caught in the middle of it when it does happen?'

Christians have no immunity to these circumstances. We might think our times are different from those of the past. The Bible is very clear that things have not changed much over the millennia. But the Bible also teaches us a very different way to respond to our circumstances. There is an action we can take that actually helps relieve the guilt, shame, fear, and anxiety that creep into our lives because of the swirl of conditions in our world.

Our Response

What are we to do? Pray. Pray in the form of a lament, which means bringing our complaints to God. To be sure, it is a reverent prayer that acknowledges God as sovereign over all our circumstances, but it is also an honest prayer. We don't have to pretend before God that we are totally comfortable with our circumstances and the state of the world. The point is to bring our concerns to Him, rather than to fret about them constantly or to become embroiled in embittered conflict with our neighbours. Such prayer will not change our circumstances, but it will change the state of our own hearts and bring glory to God.

Len Lodder, Canadian Reformed Church, Carman East

The way it was this week in March 5:

By Dennis Young

100 Years Ago, 1926 — Carmania sells White Owl cigars, 4 for 25 cents; Grade 5 honour roll lists Clint North, 87, and Jim Bryson, 80; Homewood Young People produce a play at Memorial Hall; P & B Cash Store sells head lettuce for 15 cents; Carman Corn Growers Association formed with James Grey as president; Robert McGregor has hatching eggs ready; Tom Laycock of Rosebank returns from Toronto with a prize heifer; E.M. Sanders Drugs sells kidney medicine.

75 Years Ago, 1951 — Gerry Kuik advertises for Dutch to come to Canada as farm hands, carpenters or gardeners; Roseisle's C. Walsh earns Master Elevator Merit Certificate; Mrs. F. Ostrander wins a prize on CBW's Now I Ask You; Gordon Garwood opens an office to secure possible oil rights on farmland; Kinsmen conduct Easter Seal campaign; Joanne Peterson crowned Ice Cavalcade Queen by predecessor Jocelyn Loree; Safeway sells one quart Lucerne milk for 19 cents.

50 Years Ago, 1976 — Miami Community Centre opens with the Altamont Orchestra entertaining; Glenn Steeves finishes laying water and sewer in Grundy; Art Poppe wins Corn Grower Award with 138.7 bushels per acre; Cece Dracass wins trophy at Game and Fish

Continued on page 7



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New BTHC inpatient unit, Community Services building opening this week

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Work on phase one of the Boundary Trails Health Centre major expansion project is wrapping up.

Project supporters got the chance to tour the new inpatient unit and the Community Services Building (CSB) at a special reception hosted by the BTHC Foundation Feb. 26.

The hospital planned to begin moving patients into the 24-bed expansion this week, with the CSB expected to open as soon as the numerous programs and their staff finish moving into building.

Joel Nelson, director of health services for BTHC, noted this project has been in the works for years, so to see phase one through to completion is heartening.

"I've been in this role for about three and a half years and I don't think a week goes by where there's not at least two, three, four hours of meetings that have gone into planning this space. So to be at this point now is very relieving and very exciting."

The inpatient unit features 24 new acute care and palliative care beds, a multi-disciplinary team room, lounges and private gathering spaces for family members and the public, and a staff break room.

The CSB is home to a larger hospital pharmacy, child and youth rehab services, CancerCare, public health/healthy living programming, home care, midwifery, and mental health and addictions services.

"It creates a hub which will have quick access to the acute services of the hospital," explained Dana Human, Southern Health-Santé Sud interim CEO. "It's going to be easier access, you're going to know where services are ... we want it to be a place where people feel welcome."

With the work on phase one done, BTHC's focus now turns to phase two: massive renovations in the existing hospital building, which has served the region since 2001.

"We get to enjoy this for a couple of weeks and then we start on renovations at the main campus," Nelson

noted. "We'll be moving into those projects over the next 18 to 20 months."

The renovations will expand several departments, including surgery, cancer care, emergency, ambulatory care, medical device reprocessing, and diagnostic services.

"We're doing everything quite cautiously and in phases," shared Human, noting the RHA has similar large-scale building projects going on right now in Steinbach and Portage as well. "We've learned through all these builds that good direction is always better than speed. These people know what they're doing, the staff know what they need, our patients tell us what they need and what they would like. This next step is going to be phenomenal."

"When this place is all done we really need to have balloons absolutely everywhere because the celebration will be huge."

Through the BTHC Foundation, the community is contributing \$10 million towards the \$100-million cost of the project.

Foundation board chair Brent Menzies said it's taken a lot of support from countless people to make this a reality.

"Together with you all, we celebrate the completion of phase one of the Boundary Trails Health Centre expansion: a major milestone for our region and for patients and families who rely on this facility for care," he told the assembled guests. "This new inpatient unit represents increased capacity, improved spaces for care, and a stronger foundation for meeting the needs of our growing community well into the future."

"The communities and rural municipalities that surround this hospital have always displayed immense pride and willingness in supporting initiatives that enhance community wellness," Human agreed. "It's a beautiful thing to see ... it makes me proud to be a part of this region."



STANDARD PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS BTHC director of health services Joel Nelson leads a tour of the new inpatient unit, which features 24 acute care and palliative care beds (right). The two-storey building also includes both public and private gathering spaces for family and other visitors (below).



Left: A hallway in the inpatient unit. Above: The new Community Services Building is also preparing to open this week. It will be home to a host of programs, including the hospital's pharmacy, child and youth rehab, public health, and more.

Carman council advances recreation, utility projects

By Haley Cvar

Carman council advanced several recreation, infrastructure and governance initiatives during two January meetings, including plans for a new basketball court, water system upgrades and continued bylaw enforcement services.

At its Jan. 6 meeting, council approved a request from the Volunteer Basketball Committee to proceed with plans for a basketball court at Kings Park, with the proposed site located at the current skate park.

Chief administrative officer Susan Stein said the project will move ahead once fundraising is complete.

"The committee is in the process of fundraising for the new court. Once they have reached their goal, the project would be started. Eric Smith is in charge of the project," she said.

Council also authorized surveying work at the Carman-Dufferin Campground, approving an estimated \$4,500 to \$5,500 for the project, plus disbursements and applicable taxes, to support future planning and development.

Support for municipal facilities continued with approval for an accessory

storage building at the Carman-Dufferin Historical Museum, subject to council approval of exterior finishes.

Stein said the project is being led by the museum committee.

Equipment purchases were also approved, including an \$8,500 box blade to assist public works operations.

At its Jan. 15 meeting, council heard a presentation from the Carman Pickleball Club, which requested additional access to community hall space. The matter was referred to the recreation and cultural services committee for further review.

Council also approved a two-year agreement for bylaw enforcement services for 2026 and 2027, supporting enforcement of animal control, parking and other municipal bylaws.

Water and sewer infrastructure planning was a key focus, with council confirming several projects for submission to the Manitoba Water Services Board's capital funding program. These include lagoon expansion and rehabilitation, replacement of water lines from Second Avenue SE under the river to First Street SE, and water main upgrades in the northwest area.

Stein said lagoon expansion would

be the town's first priority for Manitoba Water Services Board funding.

"We have to annually submit a list. We are already working on a lift station in the NW corner of Town to allow for residential growth. The first priority for funding with the MWSB, would be lagoon expansion, we are okay right now but would need to expand if we see any significant growth and we would want to be prepared," she said.

Council also approved an agreement with the RM of Dufferin to extend sewer servicing connections east and south of the existing line to support future development.

Stein said the agreement will help facilitate regional economic growth.

"It will allow for additional businesses to grow or expand to the east. Any growth in Carman or Dufferin is good for each other and the region," she said.

Other business included approval of wage step increases for two municipal coordinators, effective Jan. 18, and the appointment of Coun. Richard Dyck to a further two-year term on the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation board.

Several additional community matters remain under review and are expected to be discussed further at a joint planning meeting in February.

> HISTORY, FROM PG. 5

for most coons and magpies; Sonatrice Singers perform at the Manitoba Ladies' Curling Association in Winnipeg; Carman's 1975 total for social welfare was just \$784; Carman Radio & TV antenna installs, regularly \$100, now \$29.95.

25 Years Ago, 2001 — Principal Bill Bunka announces retirement after 18 years in elementary; International Women's Day recognized; Carman AA celebrates 30 years; Brad Dyck named Tri-Star Rural School athlete; MP Brian Pallister reads in Graysville during I Love to Read Month; Five Finger discounts a concern at stores; D & M Foods sells Maxwell House 300 g coffee, two for \$5; Main Street four-lane project on hold.

Genesis House marking International Women's Day with a concert



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Brandi Vezina performs March 14 in Winkler as part of Genesis House's International Women's Day celebrations.

By Lorne Stelmach

Genesis House is marking International Women's Day next week with a free concert.

The organization is inviting people to join them in Winkler Saturday, March 14 in celebrating the achievements and contributions of women from all walks of life with a show featuring headlining artist Brandi Vezina. The evening will also include local band One Night Only and a message of encouragement from Lisa Currier.

The goal of the show is to amplify female voices and empower women in the community, said Sophie Gerbrandt, resource development manager at Genesis House.

"As a domestic violence shelter dedicated to supporting women and children fleeing abuse, Genesis House recognizes International Women's Day as more than a celebration. It is a call to action," said Gerbrandt. "Gender-based violence continues to disproportionately impact women, and shelters like Genesis House witness first hand the strength and resilience of survivors

every day.

"Marking International Women's Day provides us an opportunity to foster community dialogue around equality, safety and respect—and empower women and girls to know their worth and their voices

A Métis singer-songwriter, Vezina and writing partner Scott Nolan were honoured with the Manitoba Country Music Association's Fay Walker Songwriters award for "Paper Town." Inspired by true events, the song tells the story of a once-thriving mill town that lost its lifeblood when the industry collapsed.

Vezina has earned national recognition and has performed shows across Manitoba.

Thanks to support from Aspire Dental Centre Cornerstone, admission to the March 14 show is free. It begins at 7 p.m. at the P.W. Enns Centennial Concert Hall in Winkler.

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March 13 concert supporting regional humane society

By Lorne Stelmach

A group of musicians are teaming up next week for a fundraising show in support of the Pembina Valley Humane Society.

Shane Falk, who is a director on the Back 40 Festival board and also just a music fan, has organized a concert featuring Joey McNair from the band Ditch along with Ashburn House, Derek Helps and the Heart Cramps, and Talladega. It's at the Morden Legion upstairs Friday, March 13 at 8 p.m.

For Falk, who has a rescue dog named Indy, it was a natural fit for him to support the humane society through music.

"I've always loved live music and like to attend as many shows myself as possible," he shared. "When the opportunity came along to work with Joey to help put on a show and at the same time raise some money for a great cause that's close to my heart, it seemed like a win-win situation for everyone.

"The Pembina Valley Humane Society and their employees and volun-

teers do such important work, and anything we or anyone can do to help out their cause goes a long ways and is appreciated so much."

It is his sense that bands are often happy to help out and lend their time to good causes and worthwhile organizations.

"Musicians, especially the ones I know, are some of the most giving people, particularly when it comes to local causes and giving back to their communities," Falk said. "So involving bands in an event like this is pretty easy because they see the need to give back and also at the same time want to have people experience their music as well.

"We are fortunate to have a ton of great local musicians in the area, so if we can showcase them and give people the opportunity to come hear them and have a great time for a great cause, it's something that I think is valuable to the community as a whole and something I can see us doing on a regular basis."

Admission for the show will be by donation at the door.



STANDARD PHOTO SUBMITTED

Joey McNair from Ditch is set to perform alongside Ashburn House, Derek Helps and the Heart Cramps, and Talladega in a benefit concert for PVHS taking place at the Morden Legion March 13.

RM of Grey Council advances drainage project, staff training

By Haley Cvar

The Rural Municipality of Grey approved a drainage licence application, authorized staff training and finalized a farmland rental agreement during its Feb. 20 regular meeting.

Council approved applying to Manitoba's drainage and water control authority for a licence to carry out drainage improvements on NE 15-8-7, including ditch cleaning, culvert inspection and replacement, and installation of a new culvert to improve water flow and protect infrastructure.

The municipality also supported staff development, approving Utility Operator Aaron Gauthier's attendance at a Wastewater Treatment 1 course at Red River College Polytech in Winnipeg from April 20-23 at a cost of \$920 plus examination fees and expenses.

Council authorized Reeve Gail Johnson to attend the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' mayors, reeves and CAOs meeting in Brandon on April 21, along with four councillors attending the convention trade show.

Councillors Nathan Rey and Marcel Gauthier and CAO Allie Henderson were also approved to attend economic development training in Portage la Prairie in March.

Through its economic and planning work, council approved signing a contribution agreement under the bilingual municipal signage program and endorsed a conditional use and variation application to allow a proposed garden suite, subject to the Carman-Dufferin-Grey Planning District approval process.

Council also authorized the CAO to sign a three-year farmland rental agreement for waste disposal ground property with Ard Veldman of Matado Farms Ltd., following a tender process.

Several equipment-related purchases were ratified, including \$1,725.80 for replacement solar glass for a municipal grader and \$334 for a backup alarm kit and mirrors for a utility vehicle at the waste disposal ground.

> TUMBLER RIDGE, FROM PG. 2

cific guidelines:

Squares must be 12 inches by 12 inches with four corners.

Yarn must be #4 worsted (4-weight) acrylic.

Squares must be made in a smoke-free environment.

Gee said consistency in materials is important.

"#4 worsted acrylic yarn, 12 x 12 inches squares, so all squares are consistent in size and thickness and less work making them fit together," she said.

She also emphasized the smoke-free requirement.

"Smoke free because you cannot get the smell of smoke out of yarn. When I worked on the Humboldt Broncos blankets, I found that out — that even after two washes the smell remained."

There are no restrictions on colour or pattern, although the school colours at Tumbler Ridge Secondary are royal blue and gold.

The deadline to receive squares is April 30, 2026.

"As unlike the Humboldt Broncos, I do not want squares still coming in December," Gee said.

Heppner has already completed

one square and is spreading the word locally. She said one square can take about an hour and a half to complete, depending on interruptions.

"If there are no interruptions, possibly an hour and a half," she said with a laugh.

Squares will be mailed to British Columbia, where Gee and two volunteers will assemble the blankets as they arrive.

Heppner hopes the finished blankets will send a clear message.

"I hope that these blankets will mean to the recipients that not just the community of Tumbler Ridge is behind them, but the entire nation of Canada," she said. "This is our

Canadian culture — to help those in need."

Before mailing squares, contributors are asked to contact Heppner at 204-918-7671 so dimensions can be confirmed. Alternatively, contributors can connect directly with Mary Marguerite Gee through Facebook or by email at something_treasured@yahoo.ca to have their square approved and receive the mailing address.

Those who do not crochet but wish to help can send an e-transfer to Gee at the same email address to help cover yarn and assembly costs.

Organizers say additional blankets will be made if more squares are received.

Southern MB Tech Conference looks to the future

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Southern Manitoba Tech Conference last week brought business leaders from Manitoba and beyond to Morden for a day of tech innovation, hands-on demos, and networking.

“We’ve got a whole cross section of people that have showed up from multiple industries, multiple levels of leadership,” shared John Chaput, president of Passionate Productivity, which hosted the conference.

“I’ve been hearing that this is a need here for a long time,” he said. “As I’ve been reaching out to local companies to tell them I can support them,

they’re telling me we really need to get together in southern Manitoba to talk about this stuff. This is our way to show we’re listening.”

The conference’s various panels and presentations were all meant to help attendees navigate the future of technology in manufacturing.

“The theme is really about being open-minded and bold,” Chaput said, explaining the event was designed specifically for business leaders looking for guidance from experts on how things like robotics, enterprise resource planning (ERP), and artificial intelligence can revolutionize their



STANDARD PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS

The Southern Manitoba Tech Conference last week brought together manufacturing leaders for a day of demonstrations, panel discussions, and networking.

operations. It’s not about using technology to take jobs away from humans, he stressed, but making those jobs easier and more efficient.

The guest speakers and in-depth panel discussions were invaluable resources for attendees, but so too was simply the opportunity to network with others in the manufacturing world to talk about what’s working for them and how they’re overcoming

common challenges.

“As part of any good conference, networking is half of it,” Chaput noted. “I hope they’re making connections that are meaningful to them.

“We also have the exhibitors that are here to help. They’re local, and it’s really helping the leaders in the room figure out, ‘Who do I call to help with the next steps?’”



> NURSERY, FROM PG. 3

adapted varieties would not be lost.

Over the decades, Touchette has witnessed — and helped guide — significant operational changes in the industry. Early in his career, many plants were harvested bare-root and shipped to garden centres, where staff potted them for sale. Today, most plants are grown in containers from the beginning. Winter protection methods have evolved as well, with growers now using insulated blankets secured by sandbags to help plants survive Manitoba’s extreme cold.

He notes that adaptation remains essential, particularly as climate patterns shift. Manitoba’s fluctuating spring temperatures and short growing season demand careful planning. Growers must also anticipate consumer demand years in advance — sometimes nearly a decade for certain trees and plant varieties — without certainty about future market trends.

“You may love to grow plants, but you still have to be profitable,” Touchette said.

Although he began a gradual retirement in 2020, Touchette remains connected to the industry, continuing to

share his experience and knowledge.

For him, the Life Membership Award is not just a personal milestone, but recognition of a career that began in Carman and grew into a province-wide legacy.

His honour was presented alongside four Awards of Excellence — the association’s highest project distinction — and 16 Awards of Merit recognizing high-quality residential and commercial landscape work across Manitoba.

“This year’s Award of Excellence projects represent the very best of our industry,” said MBNLA president Jeff Southam. “They demonstrate not only technical excellence and creativity, but also a deep respect for the environment and for how people live, gather and connect with outdoor spaces.”

2026 Awards of Excellence recipients In Residential Construction and Installation, Livingstone Landscaping Ltd. was recognized for R-5 Meadow Retreat, praised for seamlessly integrating refined outdoor living with the surrounding prairie landscape.

Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape received two Awards of Excellence.

The Wescana project was honoured for bold vision and sophisticated spatial planning, while Riverside Versailles was recognized in the Private Residence Maintenance category for exceptional coordination between design intent and long-term performance.

Alternative Group earned the Garden Centre Award for Alternative Choice Garden Centre, recognized for its holistic operations model, innovative programming, sustainability initiatives and community engagement.

Awards of Merit recipients

Sixteen additional projects received Awards of Merit:

- Deck City — Tangle Ridge
- Livingstone Landscaping Ltd. — Modern Recreation and Relaxation
- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — D’Arcy Drive
- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — Dorchester
- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — Beachside
- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — McNulty 2
- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — Cloutier
- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — McCreary

- Spruce Acres Landscaping Inc. — The Sandford Project

- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — Chatsworth

- Classic Landscapes — Cedarcroft

- Classic Landscapes — Cassowary II

- Skyview Landscaping — Lake of the Woods Luxe Retreat

- Alternative Landscaping — Klar-So Nordic Spa (Commercial Installation)

- Skyview Landscaping — South East’s Hidden Gem (Landscape Design)

- Geller’s Design | Build | Landscape — Linden Estates (Multi-Unit Residence Maintenance)

The association acknowledged Toromont Cat as the 2026 Awards of Excellence sponsor.

For Touchette, however, the recognition was deeply personal — a career that began in Carman in 1978 and ultimately shaped Manitoba’s green industry for more than 40 years.

Cutline:

Michel Touchette (right) receives the Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association’s 2026 Life Membership Award during the Grow26 conference luncheon in Winnipeg on Feb. 19.

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Lana Meier
Publisher

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Napier Emergency Consulting providing expertise and boots on the ground

By Patricia Barrett

As part of 115th annual International Women's Day on March 8, the *Standard* is celebrating women whose work helps people in the Interlake and who've made a significant impact in their industry.

Shelley Napier is the managing director of Napier Emergency Consulting, teaching people how to prepare for and survive an emergency.

Prior to setting up her consultancy, Napier worked with the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization before retiring in 2017.

Napier identifies risks, creates emergency plans and provides training for specific emergency situations that can range from floods, severe winter storms, tornados, wildfires, community evacuations and shootings.

Napier has overcome a number of challenges working in a male-dominated industry and has made a name for herself. She is a much sought after expert in her field.

"As a woman in this business, I've learned that you're going to have your challenges. You have to be willing to be strong and have your voice heard, and find a way to make that happen by being respectful, by building a good team and by working together," said Napier, who has decades of emergency management experience and is a founding member of the annual Manitoba Disaster Management Conference.

"You've got to deal with people where they are. It's not my job to change anyone's mind. It's my job to try to educate people and allow them to see how much stronger their community or organization can be if they implement the emergency plans and processes we teach them."

Napier delivers training to emergency managers across Canada, Indigenous communities, municipalities and other organizations. She works on getting people to the stage at which they can take charge of whatever emergency they happen to find themselves in and execute a carefully considered plan tailored to their unique physical location.

Those plans are very detailed and can include knowing exactly how many cars can fit on a ferry at one time when an island community has to be evacuated, how many boats a lakeside community has that can be used for escape, identifying how much gasoline a community has at one time, identifying muster points or staging areas for evacuation where a head count can be done, identifying escape routes for several thousand people attending festivals such as the Icelandic Festival in Gimli or the Corn



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHELLEY NAPIER Shelley Napier has earned several awards for her emergency management work, including a King Charles III Coronation medal.

and Apple Festival in Morden.

Napier's consultancy team is made up of professionals with specialized areas of expertise. They're academics who bring emergency management research and best practices to the table, and practitioners who've had their boots on the ground during emergencies - a team Napier calls "pracademics." The team includes "really strong women."

"We do phenomenal work. When I look at what we do and what we produce, everything is individually tailored and everything meets the clients' needs," said Napier. "We work on emergency topics that no one has really has looked at; there's not been a lot of work done on those with physical disabilities. And we work with numerous Indigenous communities across Canada, helping them build emergency programs. They're on the front line, and oftentimes they're unable to get help quickly if they're located in remote areas."

Climate change can be a challenging topic for emergency managers; the trend towards more severe weather events and disasters may not necessarily be viewed by some in the context of global warming.

"We can call it weather that is very different from what it used to be, or we can call it climate change - it doesn't matter. But I think we have to acknowledge that there are more frequent weather emergencies happening," said Napier. "We're having earlier and earlier fires burning. Last year [one of Manitoba's worst wildfire seasons] was not a one-off. I think we're going to see that again and again."

Emergencies in Manitoba may, in the public's mind, be primarily associated with weather. But Napier said it's not beyond the realm of possibility to imagine mass shootings here along



Napier found herself in lockdown in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, last month when cartel members with guns staged violent demonstrations in the streets of the popular tourist destination and set fire to Pemex stations.



Napier said 69 Oxxo convenience stores were destroyed in last month's cartel attack on Puerto Vallarta. From an emergency management standpoint, Napier said alerts in multiple languages should have been issued so that visitors could understand what was happening.

the lines of that in Tumbler Ridge, B.C., or in Nova Scotia where a gunman disguised himself as an RCMP officer and killed multiple victims.

"I think a lot of the events happening around our country are a wake-up call," she said.

Ironically, Napier found herself in lockdown last month when she was in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, at the time members of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel staged violent demonstrations in the wake of the government's capture of their leader, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes (El Mencho). Mayhem ensued in the streets of the popular tourist destination, with cars and buses commandeered and set on fire, as well as trucks carrying petrol. Oxxo convenience stores and Pemex gas stations were destroyed.

Looking at the riot and its aftermath from the perspective of an emergency manager, Napier said communication from the top could have been much better. She struggled to understand instructions in Spanish to not leave her unit and had to use Google Translate.

"I think a proactive approach would have had [emergency alerts in] mul-

multiple languages so visitors could understand what was going on. That can reduce fear and start to calm people," said Napier. "This was new for Puerto Vallarta. And there was a lot of AI-generated information that was not accurate."

Europe is a good example where public messages are relayed in multiple languages, she said.

She has worked with the Canadian International Development Agency overseas managing emergencies, with NATO, and in countries such as the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and in Asia.

"One of the things I recognized early on in my international work was how grateful I am to be Canadian because we do emergency management really well at home," she said. "We don't have a top-down system in Canada: we have a bottom-up system that's driven from a municipal level where a timely awareness of what's happening can help avoid damages."

In addition to training municipal and community leaders how to handle various events, Napier said it's important to also "build public

> NAPIER, FROM PG. 11

education" whereby people become more aware of how they can prepare and help themselves should an emergency arise. That messaging should be delivered frequently to the point where it really sinks in.

"What can you do to prepare yourself? You can prepare a go bag of essential items. You can identify neighbours who might need help. You can implement a buddy system in your neighbourhood. You can't expect a council in a small municipality with few resources and staff to be able to do everything," said Napier. "We need to start implementing better public education. That could be hand-outs reminding people when we're in fire season. People should know access and exit points. Make this so

common that it starts to sink in."

She heard stories from last year's wildfires that people didn't know they had to evacuate because they were in an area with no cell towers, she said. But they should have been given enough public messaging beforehand to make them aware of risks during fire season and to know how to get out.

"Maybe you want to have a satellite phone. You want to have your ID, medication, important documents and change of clothing in a go bag," she said. "If this message is delivered every fire season, it becomes muscle memory."

Part of emergency planning in communities can include identifying volunteers to be part of a response team, holding town halls where emergency planning is publicly discussed or arranging presentations from emergen-

cy management experts.

Napier said she tries to make emergency preparedness training fun for communities, and some of the tools she uses are games such as "Hazard Bingo" with emergency supplies as prizes.

"We try to make it so that the public is excited to try to build a safe community," she said. "That happens through knowledge-sharing and from backing from a municipal council."

Napier said the training uptake from councils has been "amazing." She cited The RM of Grahamdale and Victoria Beach - which is a peninsula surrounded by boreal forest - as being "so tuned in" to emergency planning and what sorts of programs they can implement to reduce the risk of fire damage.

And she has emergency exercises planned this month with the RM of

Armstrong.

In addition to in-person emergency management training, Napier offers monthly online workshops through her website. Called LearnEM Academy, the workshops are hosted by emergency management practitioners from across Canada.

Napier said she absolutely loves her job and the rewards it brings.

"This has never been work for me. I love what I do. I love the people I work with. I learn something new from each client. And I've made so many friends across the country," said Napier. "I feel very honoured to be given a chance to help somebody build an emergency management program for themselves. It's never been monetary for me; we do some pro bono work in certain situations. If it's going to save a life, I will help. I will help as long as I possibly can."



International WOMEN'S DAY When you share, you receive!

March 8 is International Women's Day. For 2026, the International Women's Day (IWD) movement is launching the campaign "Give to Gain."

GENEROSITY PAYS

The 2026 International Women's Day global campaign encourages individuals and organizations

to contribute to gender equality through concrete acts of generosity.

The theme is based on a simple but powerful idea: giving creates opportunities that uplift others. This approach, which values solidarity, also highlights the fact that progress in women's rights strengthens entire communities.

In other words, giving isn't a subtraction; it's intentional multiplication! By supporting women's rights, you help promote a more equitable, inclusive and prosperous world.

TAKE ACTION

The "Give to Gain" campaign sends a clear message to the public: women will ultimately achieve equality through many small, consis-

tent actions. Join the movement and show your generosity in different ways. For example, you could:

- Make a monetary donation to an organization dedicated to women's rights issues
- Give a lecture or mentor another person to share your knowledge
- Organize an awareness activity in your community or workplace
- Sponsor an event associated with International Women's Day
- Share posts from feminist organizations on your social media accounts to raise awareness

On March 8 and throughout the year, open your heart and reach out in the name of equality!

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MANITOBA'S LAW FIRM

Environmental series invites Carman Community to explore the natural world

By E. Antonio

The Carman Active Living Centre (ALC) is partnering with the Community Connector Challenge to host a three-part environmental presentation series this March, inviting residents of all ages to explore the natural world around them.

The free evening sessions will run March 12, 19 and 26 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the ALC, 47 Kings Rd. Organizers say the presentations are geared toward ages eight through adult, but all are welcome.

Lynne Wilkinson, on behalf of the ALC, said the partnership helps the centre connect with a broader audience. The evenings are free because guest speakers have donated their time.

"The opportunity for families to come together to enjoy the evenings is very exciting," Wilkinson said. "It creates fond memories and bonding opportunities to learn new things. I also hope it will spark new interests that can be the start of lifelong learning."

Each week highlights a different aspect of Manitoba's environment — soil, insects and plants.

On March 12, soil specialist John Heard will present The Coast-to-Coast Soil Safari, examining the ground that supports prairie agriculture and ecosystems.

"Our prairie soil is unique," he said. "Pioneers wouldn't have been successful farmers without the bountiful prairie soil, and today's farmers continue to prosper through this fabulous resource."

Heard noted that many provinces and all U.S. states have designated soils, and he has collected samples in 49 states and eight provinces. He hopes attendees gain a deeper appreciation for what lies beneath their feet.

On March 19, entomologist John Gavloski will present Diversity Gone



Soil specialist John Heard will present The Coast-to-Coast Soil Safari on March 12 at the Carman Active Living Centre, exploring the unique characteristics of prairie soils and their importance to agriculture and ecosystems.

Wild: Insects of Manitoba, exploring the vast number of species found in fields, forests and backyards.

"There are over 38,900 species of insects in Canada, including 8,300 species of beetles, over 5,100 species of moths and 306 species of butterflies," Gavloski said. "There are over three times as many species of insects in Canada as there are species of birds in the world."

He will discuss how to identify common groups and explain their ecological roles.

"Although some can be pests or a nuisance, overall they are very interesting and vital," he said.

The series concludes March 26 with Plants in Jeopardy, presented by botanist David Kaminski, focusing on species under pressure and the importance of conservation.

"The health of the planet and the lives of all animals — including humans — are entirely dependent on plants," Kaminski said. "They are our only source of oxygen in the atmosphere."

He encouraged planting flowers that support pollinators and properly caring for trees to help reduce environmental impacts.

"I am optimistic that, through education, we can show people — especially younger generations — how to love and care for plants," he said.

Organizers say the goal is to make environmental learning accessible and engaging, with interactive elements designed to spark curiosity across generations.

Doors open at 6:45 p.m. No registration is required. Handivan transportation may be available; call Lynne Wilkinson at 204-745-6673 if needed.

"I hope everyone can come out, learn and have fun," Wilkinson said. "All participants need to do is bring their curiosity."



STANDARD PHOTOS SUBMITTED

The Carman Active Living Centre is hosting three free presentations spotlighting Manitoba's environment on March 12, 19 and 26. John Heard will speak about soil, John Gavloski will present on insects, and David Kaminski will discuss plants. John Gavloski is pictured with a New Guinea spiny stick insect.



Botanist David Kaminski will present Plants in Jeopardy on March 26 at the Carman Active Living Centre.

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STANDARD PHOTOS BY DENNIS YOUNG

Carman's Wee Care Child Centre children enjoy a day out on the snow hill, making the most of winter fun in the fresh air.

Focus on FINANCE

Navigating Canada's New Economic Baseline in 2026

As we move through February 2026, many Canadians are breathing a cautious sigh of relief. The erratic price spikes and rapid-fire interest rate hikes that defined the past few years have finally leveled off. With the Bank of Canada holding its key rate steady at 2.25%, the economic “weather” has cleared—but for most households, the ground remains muddy.

While the inflation crisis has cooled, the “new normal” is expensive. Groceries and rent haven't returned to 2020 prices; they have simply stopped climbing so fast. Improving your finances today isn't about

waiting for a miracle; it's about mastering the new rules of the game.

First, look at your paycheck. Federal tax changes for 2026 have lowered the bottom tax bracket to 14% and increased the Basic Personal Amount to \$16,452. For the average worker, this means a few extra dollars every two weeks. Don't let this slip into “budget creep.” Instead, automate that small surplus directly into a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA). With the 2026 contribution limit adding another \$7,000 in room, it remains the best tool for mid-term goals.

Second, be ruthless with debt. While interest rates are lower than their 2023 peaks, credit card interest remains a wealth-killer. If you are carrying a balance, 2026 is the year to use the “avalanche method”—paying off the highest-interest cards first while rates are stable.

Finally, for those still dreaming of homeownership, the First Home Savings Account (FHSA) is your strongest ally. Maxi-

mizing your \$8,000 annual contribution is the fastest way to build a down payment that the taxman can't touch.

The era of “easy money” is over, but the era of stability has arrived. By capturing small tax wins and guarding against debt, Canadians can stop just surviving the economy and start building a foundation that lasts.



Do you feel confident in your financial plan? In a world of changing markets, rising costs, and constant uncertainty, many people are working hard—but aren't always sure their money is working just as hard for them.

At Victorious Financial Services, our goal is simple: to help you gain clarity, confidence, and a plan designed around your priorities. True financial progress isn't about chasing quick returns or reacting to headlines. It comes from thoughtful investing, tax-efficient strategies, and protection planning that work together over time.

We believe growth should feel steady, purposeful, and aligned with what matters most to you—whether that's retirement security, caring for family, supporting the next generation, or giving generously in your community.

When your plan is clear, your decisions become easier and your future feels more certain.

Because financial success isn't only measured by numbers on a statement—it's measured by the confidence of knowing you're on the right path.

So we'll ask again: do you feel confident in your plan?

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A diversified portfolio helps manage investment risk. I can help you choose investments based on your risk tolerance, time horizon and financial goals. Ready to start?



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Deaf artist finds renewed purpose through painting; works displayed at GAAC in March

By E. Antonio

Golden Prairie Arts Council is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2026, and part of the excitement includes a variety of visual art exhibitions featuring eight rotating artists throughout the year.

Until the end of March, David Leon Crispo of Elliot Lake, Ont., will have 40 pieces on display. Crispo is primarily a landscape and nature acrylic artist who dove deeper into his passion for painting after becoming deaf in 1999.

"I couldn't hear, so my jobs were always limited, and most times I was pushed out the door with people saying I didn't fit in," he explained. But with painting, he was able to find his place once again.

"I had nothing to lose, so I thought I need to up my game and make big, colourful art."

Inspired by Monet and the Group of Seven, Crispo said those influences have had an immense impact on his career.

"I remember being in total disbelief at how beautiful these paintings were," he said, recalling his sixth-grade field trip to a college-level art show. "The emotions that some paintings gave me were life-changing — I knew I wanted to create like them. They had to drag me away because I was hooked."

Soon after, his mother signed him up for art classes at the college, where he learned a variety of skills — painting, pottery, sculpting and guitar — but

painting and guitar stood out as his two favourites.

Putting painting aside for many years to pursue his passion for guitar, he described his creative outlet as becoming "completely lost" once he lost his hearing. He decided there was no better time than now to pick up the paintbrush again. He said painting is an anxiety reliever, allowing him to escape into his own world.

"For a long time, I didn't share that I was painting again for fear of rejection," he added. "As word got out and I could see that people liked my art, my confidence grew, and now I want everyone to see it. Painting is a visual art and meant to be shared. I want people to get lost in my paintings as they gaze at them. I want them to feel happy and peaceful inside. In a world full of noise and upheaval, I want them to feel that everything's going to be okay."

He said each piece takes an average of two weeks to complete and follows a similar routine each time: prime the canvas with a solid colour to contrast the white, grid the panel to achieve the right perspective, sketch the design and then paint.

"This is the fun part," he said. "It's like an addiction."

Often surprised by how quickly time passes, he enjoys experimenting with colours and techniques to determine what works best. Once satisfied, he applies a clear coat to protect the paint and adds a hanger.

When asked about his favourite



STANDARD PHOTOS SUBMITTED

David Crispo, an acrylic painter from Elliot Lake, Ont., has 40 pieces on display at Golden Prairie Arts Council until the end of March.

painting, he always says it's the one he's currently working on.

"This is the type of thing you improve on constantly. Always learning your craft and developing your style," he said. "It's a fun process seeing your own style develop."

He is always willing to learn and strives to consistently improve his skills. He hopes to continue painting for as long as he is able.

"It is true that when you do something you love, it's never a job — and I love going to work every day."





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HOW TO RECOGNIZE PHARMACY APPRECIATION MONTH

You can take a few simple steps this month to express your gratitude to these highly skilled professionals who work for the common good. If you can, take a moment to personally thank your local pharmacist for their advice. Consider sharing posts about Pharmacy Appreciation Month on social media. To learn more about this worthy profession, visit the Canadian Pharmacists Association website at pharmacists.ca.



Accessible, dedicated experts Working in neighbourhood pharmacies, hospitals and other healthcare facilities, pharmacists play a major role in disease prevention and medication management. They can provide advice, assess prescriptions, ensure the safety of medications and help patients manage their health. The accessibility and availability of your local pharmacist make them an invaluable ally in the well-being of your community.

It's also important to remember that their work is backed by several years of university education, rigorous internships and continuous professional development. Their challenging career path is proof of their determination and genuine desire to help others. That's why they deserve recognition for their valuable contributions and gratitude for the ways they protect public health with competence and compassion.

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Manitoba Beef Producers reflect on a strong year at 47th AGM

By Jessica Eblie

Cattle producers from across the province gathered in Brandon on Feb. 11 and 12 for the 47th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP), an event that combined education, industry updates, financial reporting and recognition of leadership within Manitoba's beef sector.

Held at the Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre, the AGM, tradeshow, and President's Banquet provided an opportunity for producers and industry leaders to reflect on the past year and look ahead to priorities for 2026.

Manitoba's beef sector is riding a profitable wave, but producers remain mindful of the changing horizons ahead for the industry.

"There's a ton of unknown in the industry right now," said Carson Callum, the Chief Executive Officer of the MBP, following the AGM. He added, "Not just in our industry but in agriculture overall. Whether that's weather impacts that can be detrimental or quite positive, depending on the year, or geopolitical issues."

International trade remains a central component of Manitoba's beef sector.

"We're very heavily reliant on trade, and our relationship with our partner to the south is extremely important," Callum said. "As an industry, we export close to 50 per cent of what we produce here in Canada, and close to 70 per cent of that goes to the U.S."

With that trade-dependent relationship, stability is key.

"From a trade aspect, we always say 'do no harm,'" Callum stated. "We have a good free trade agreement right now (with the US), especially for our industry in particular. Any sort of hiccup in that partnership can lead to a really negative impact."

At the same time, producers are encouraged by diversification efforts. "We just got back into the China market that we were shut out of for a number of years," he said. "Diversifying our market is only going to lead to positive things."

While trade and geopolitics remain major considerations, business risk management tools closer to home were also highlighted during the AGM.

Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald and Manitoba Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshy announced at the AGM that Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) will test a new way to provide forage insurance for 2026. This initiative will use advanced satellite technology to make it easier for farmers to report their crop data and

provide more accurate estimates of forage production.

For MBP, the announcement reflects long-standing calls for stronger and more practical business risk management solutions for the beef sector. The organization sees the use of new technology to reduce administrative burden in forage insurance programs as a positive step and welcomed the collaboration between governments and MASC in advancing

Beyond risk management, this year's AGM also focused on topics such as sustainability, wildlife management and producer well-being.

"We had a really good discussion on sustainability," Callum said. "(There was) lots of great feedback because that's a real topic right now in the industry. We wanted to make sure that we were advocating for it to be done right."

Wildlife management was another key area of discussion, particularly the growing elk population.

"The populations have exponentially grown, especially over here," Callum said. "Elk can cause huge damage — whether that's to feed, infrastructure, corrals or fences."



STANDARD PHOTO SUBMITTED

Kyla (left) and Connor (middle), and family won the Environmental Stewardship Award at the 47th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP).

AGM delegates supported a resolution calling on MBP to lobby the province regarding the high population of elk and deer. The resolution focused

on identifying the impacts caused by these animals and conducting a

Continued on page 19

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> MEAL IDEAS



St. Patrick's Day Stew

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
Sprinkle beef chunks with 1 teaspoon salt. In large pot over medium-high heat, heat olive oil.

Pat beef dry with paper towels and add to pot, working in batches to avoid crowding pot. Cook until browned on one side then flip and brown.

Add garlic cloves to pot with beef and saute 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Add beef stock, water, beer, wine, tomato paste, sugar, thyme, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaves. Stir.

Bring mixture to simmer then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

In separate pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add onions and carrots; saute until golden, about 15 minutes.

After beef mixture simmers 1 hour, add onions, carrots and potatoes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Simmer uncovered until beef and vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes. Discard bay leaves and spoon excess fat.

Sprinkle with parsley and serve.
Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Recipe adapted from Simply Recipes
Prep time: 30 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour, 40 minutes
Servings: 6
1 1/4 pounds marbled chuck beef stew meat, cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
1 teaspoon salt, plus additional to taste, divided
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
6 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups beef stock
2 cups water
1 cup extra stout beer
1 cup red wine
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon dried thyme
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons butter
1 large onion, chopped
4 carrots, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
3 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
freshly ground black pepper, to taste



Luck O' the Irish Cupcakes

Preheat oven to 350°F and arrange rack in center of oven. Line 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. In medium bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In large bowl, using handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat granulated sugar and butter until light and fluffy, 3-4 minutes. Add egg whites and vanilla; beat until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add sour cream and beat until combined.

Add half of dry ingredients to wet ingredients. Beat on low until incorporated. Add milk and beat to combine. Add remaining dry ingredients and beat until combined.

Add batter to liners until three-quarters full. Bake 19-22 minutes, until slightly golden on top.

Remove cupcakes from pan and cool completely.

To make frosting: In large bowl, using handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter until fluffy. Add powdered sugar and beat until combined. Add heavy cream, vanilla and salt; beat until combined. Mix in green food coloring.

Transfer frosting to piping bag and pipe frosting onto cupcakes.

Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Recipe adapted from Delish
Prep time: 30 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour
Yield: 12 cupcakes
Cupcakes:
1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
3 large egg whites, at room temperature
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup full-fat sour cream, at room temperature
1/2 cup whole milk, at room temperature
Frosting:
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
4 cups powdered sugar
3 tablespoons heavy cream
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
green food coloring
To make cupcakes: Preheat oven to 350

Three signs you're not eating enough carbs

By Fitness Expert Julie Germaine Coram

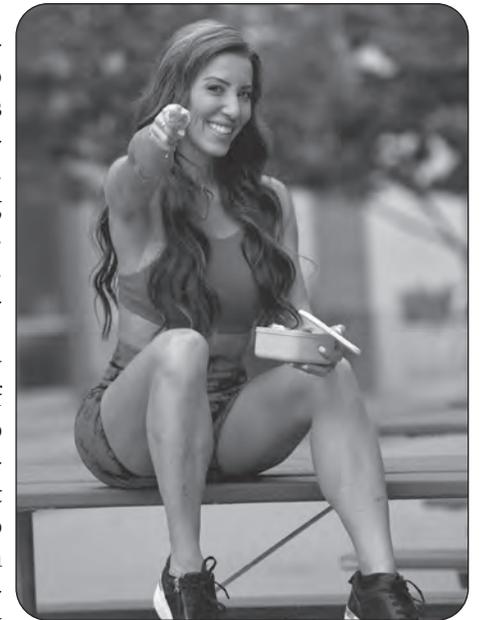
Carbs are a hot topic in diet culture, particularly with the keto diet. This approach to nutrition has been quite successful for individuals with weight-loss goals; however, many find that upon reintroducing foods such as fruit, bread or pasta, the scale climbs right back up again. This yo-yo dieting is not only frustrating, but unhealthy.

You need carbohydrates. They are your body's preferred source of energy — carbs are digested into simple sugars that fuel you throughout your busy day. Your workout requires energy, of course, but so do your workday, family life and even your time asleep. If you are not eating enough carbohydrates, you may experience negative side effects associated with deprivation, such as:

Brain fog — If you feel sluggish and sleepy during the day, you may not be consuming adequate carbohydrates. This obvious sign is important to acknowledge, as you cannot be your best self if you are unable to focus, have headaches or feel mentally exhausted.

Anger issues — Being quick to anger or easily irritated can indicate that you are lacking calories in the form of carbohydrates. Serotonin production is directly affected by carbohydrate intake. Serotonin is the hormone that helps us feel happy and content.

Digestive issues — Fibre, a non-digestible form of carbohydrate, is found in foods such as vegetables, fruits and whole grains. When you limit these foods in your regular diet, you deprive your body of nutrients that help you feel full after a meal and aid digestion. Without fibre, you risk feeling bloated or constipated, as it is essential for proper digestion.



Fitness Expert, Julie Germaine

The best way to reverse symptoms such as those listed above is to monitor your diet and take note of how many carbohydrates make it onto your plate. Canada's Food Guide suggests that a quarter of your plate should come from whole grains and about half from fruits and vegetables — is that what your meals look like?

Stop seeing carbs as "good" or "bad." Instead, pay attention to the timing of your energy-boosting meals (earlier in the day) and your food choices (non-processed whole grains and fresh produce).

Discuss your health goals or fitness struggles by scheduling a free online consultation at www.calendly.com/juliegermaine or email julie@juliegermaine.com.

Coach Julie Germaine Coram is dedicated to lifelong health. She is an active mom, registered personal trainer, two-time pro fitness champion, certified nutrition expert and fitness specialist. She has helped thousands worldwide improve their health since 2005.



St. Patrick's Day Sandwiches

lemon juice
lemon slices, for garnish (optional)
In bowl, mix cream cheese spread, mozzarella cheese and salt well.
Split English muffins in half. Cut each muffin half into shamrock shape. Spread cheese mixture over each muffin half.

Place three cucumbers on each "shamrock," one on each "leaf." Use green pepper slice as stem. Place cilantro leaf on top of each sandwich.

Sprinkle sandwiches with lemon juice and add lemon slices, for garnish, if desired.

Yield: 8 sandwiches
8 ounces plain cream cheese spread, softened
1 cup finely shredded mozzarella cheese
salt
4 English muffins
24 slices cucumber
8 thin slices green pepper
fresh cilantro leaves

Dr. Clinton North remembered for lifetime service

By Dennis Young with family notes

Dr. Clinton "Clint" North is remembered as a devoted physician, community leader and family man whose life of service left a lasting imprint on Carman.

Born Aug. 12, 1917, in Carman, North was raised in the town's north end as the fourth of seven children to Gustin and Roland North, a local lawyer. From an early age he excelled in athletics, participating in multiple sports and drawing the attention of scouts — including, at one point, the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Academically gifted, he advanced a grade and graduated from high school at 16. He completed medical school in 1941 as the Second World War intensified and soon enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

While stationed in Dauphin, he married Dorothy Hartley on Dec. 5, 1941 — two days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Military leave was immediately cancelled, and North was transferred first to Portage la Prairie and later to Winnipeg.

He served four and a half years as a medical officer before being discharged in 1946. By then, he and Dorothy had two daughters: Willa, born in Dauphin, and Marilyn, born in Portage. The family returned to Carman, moving into the Hammond Avenue (1st Street SE) home with his widowed mother.

North initially practised medicine from his living room before securing office space on Main Street South — now the PKF Lawyers location — where he worked from 1946 to 1952. He later relocated to the Grier Block (now the One Insurance property), where his mother served as his secretary and receptionist.

In 1961, he received the Winnipeg Clinic Institute of General Practitioners Award, allowing him to pursue further postgraduate study.

By that time, Carman had two physicians: North and Dr. Ken Cunningham. Dr. Bob Tjaden later joined them, and in 1963 the three established the Carman Medical Group in Cunningham's former office, now the former Adult Education building. Renovations created a reception area, three private rooms, six examination rooms and a business office.

North had a particular interest in obstetrics and childcare. Over the course of his career, he delivered more than 1,500 babies — including one famously delivered in the back seat of a car. He also served as Chief of Staff, Health Officer and as an executive member of the Manitoba Medical Association.



In 1977, Dr. Clinton "Clint" North and his wife, Dorothy, accept the Citizen of the Year Award from the Carman Chamber of Commerce.



STANDARD PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Dr. Clinton "Clint" North practised medicine in Carman for more than 30 years.

Beyond medicine, North was deeply engaged in civic life. As a town councillor, he advocated for improvements to Carman's water system. Before the late 1950s, the town drew its water directly from the river. North played a pivotal role in establishing a treatment plant in the 1960s. In 1977, he was named Citizen of the Year.

He was also a familiar presence at the York Café, where he joined friends Barrie and Blake Sanders, Howard Bennett and Clarence Bedford in regular coffee discussions that ranged from local happenings to world affairs.

Family members remember a man constantly on call.

"We were accustomed to late-night phone calls and Dad rushing out," daughter Willa recalled. "Farmers would often compensate him with produce or poultry at the house."

Karen noted that "family outings were often postponed due to baby arrivals or medical emergencies, as Dad was the coroner."

Marilyn remembers "my father playing street hockey, singing while preparing breakfast, and organizing family photos at Christmas, though he seldom appeared in them as he was usually behind the camera."

His youngest sibling, Bruce, shared a cherished memory from the 1980 Clear Lake Tamarac golf tournament, less than a month

before his father's death.

"Although visibly frail, he followed my match in a golf cart," Bruce recalled. "I was leading by two on the 13th hole when my second shot went into the bush. While I was joking with spectators, my father admonished me, urging greater focus. I reassured him he would see his son win the Tamarac once more — and I did."

Diagnosed with leukemia in 1979, North fought the illness until his passing in 1980 at the age of 63.

He is remembered not only for the thousands of patients he cared for and the babies he helped bring into the world, but also for his unwavering commitment to his family and the Carman community he served for more than three decades.

> BEEF PRODUCERS, FROM PG. 17

population survey to better inform future decisions.

But perhaps the most significant conversation at the AGM centered on mental health and well-being. Callum noted that Agriculture and farming often carry pressures that are unseen but deeply felt.

Keynote speaker Brett Gardiner, a mental health and wellness advo-

cate with strong ties to agriculture, addressed the importance of breaking down stigma and encouraging producers to be intentional and "chase the good in the world."

"I truly think (his message) was well received," Callum said. "It's a hard topic. Coming in there and talking about your feelings is not something that most beef producers

really want to do."

The AGM also recognized two outgoing directors for their contributions to the organization and honoured Connor and Kyla English, who were the recipients of the Environmental Stewardship Award.

As the 47th AGM wrapped up in Brandon, producers reflected on a year of strong markets while ac-

knowledging the work ahead: maintaining stable trade relationships, addressing wildlife concerns and continuing conversations around sustainability and mental health.

Young fans meet NHL defenceman at MJHL game

By Kieran Reimer

Local boys surprised by NHL defenceman visit

What started as a routine night at the rink turned into an unforgettable experience for a group of Interlake hockey fans.

Warren's Jase Sawatzky was among several local boys attending a Winnipeg Blues game last week when they unexpectedly met Denton Mateychuk of the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Mateychuk was home during the Olympic break watching his brother Kasen suit up for the Blues in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League.

"It was pretty cool meeting him because I never thought I'd meet an actual NHL player at that game," said Sawatzky.

The boys were fist-bumping Blues players as they left the ice when they learned an NHLer was in attendance. After tracking him down, they spent the intermission chatting and taking photos with the 21-year-old Dominion City product.

It marked the first time Sawatzky had met an NHL player.

"It's always cool to see kids excited about meeting NHLers or guys they look up to," said Mateychuk. "You see how excited and passionate they are about the game."

The 2022 first-round draft pick said he attended several local games during the break. He also dropped the puck at a Capital Region Junior Hockey

League game at St. Jean Arena.

"It's awesome to see the game growing like that," he said. "If I'm able to help out in any way by signing mini-sticks or whatever, I'm more than glad to do it — put a smile on their face."

Mateychuk is in his second season with Columbus, recording nine goals and 13 assists in 2025-26. He has played 95 NHL games and is approaching the 100-game milestone.

"Looking back, I've learned a lot in that time," he said. "I've taken steps on and off the ice and I think it's made me a better person. It's gone quick considering I'm almost at 100 games and have been here for a year. I just try to take it day by day and enjoy it."

Before the Olympic pause, the Blue Jackets had won 11 of 12 games and were among the league's hottest teams. Columbus has since returned to action for the remainder of the regular season.

Coached by former Winnipeg Jets bench boss Rick Bowness, Mateychuk said the team is focused on maintaining its momentum.

"I think it's about keeping the mindset we had before the break," he said. "Keep building, keep trusting your teammates and things will fall into place. We know what we have — we're a really good hockey team. We just have to put it together for 60 minutes and trust each other, and we'll put ourselves in a good position to get



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Warren's Jase Sawatzky, 12, got to meet Columbus Blue Jackets defenceman Denton Mateychuk at a Manitoba Junior Hockey League game last week. For Sawatzky, it was his first time meeting an NHLer.

into the playoffs."

Columbus sat six points out of a

playoff spot as of last Friday, with 25 games remaining.

Flashback: Cougars capture Zone 4 championship

By Dennis Young

The Carman Cougars, dominant in the early years of the Zone 4 High School Hockey League, reclaimed the championship in 1974 after a two-year drought.

Following a 12-game regular season, the Altona Aces, Winkler Zodiacs and Carman Cougars finished in a three-way tie atop the standings heading into the final matchups.

Carman's final game — the third in a season series against Winkler — ended in a 5-1 loss, costing the Cougars a shot at first place. Meanwhile, Altona defeated Winkler to secure top spot, leaving Carman in third place and Morden in fourth.

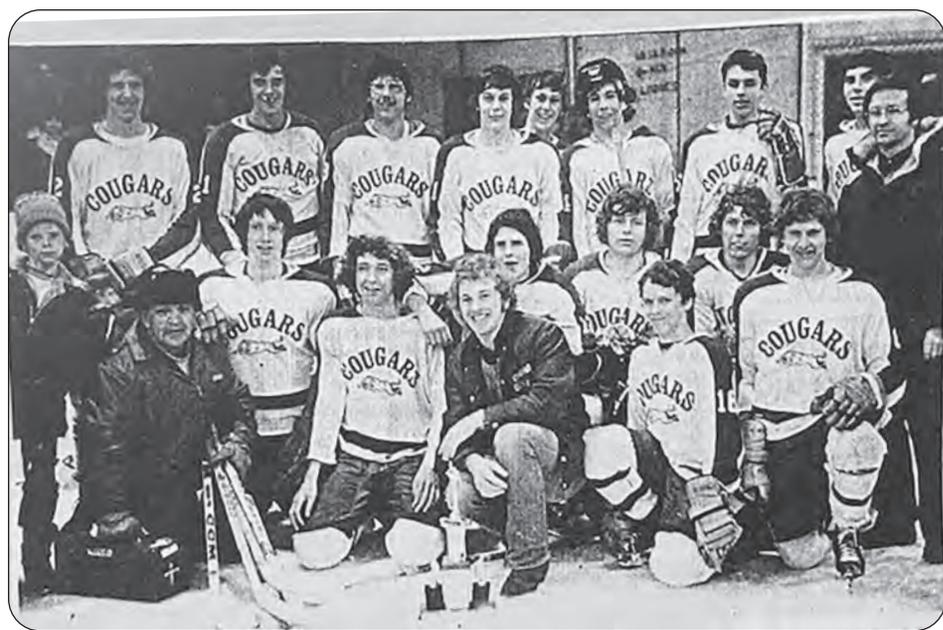
In the best-of-five semifinals, Carman faced Winkler while Altona squared off with Morden. The Cou-

gars and the Mohawks advanced to the finals, where Morden won Game 1. But Carman responded on home ice, winning Games 3 through 5 to clinch the Zone 4 title.

The Cougars also captured their own 4th Annual Invitational Tournament with three straight wins. Out of eight teams, Carman defeated Winkler 3-0, edged Vincent Massey 4-3 — thanks to Bruce North's overtime penalty-shot goal — and beat Kenora 6-4.

Chris Sutton remembers a pivotal moment from the playoff series.

"What I remember in that series vs. Morden was David Whitehead putting a hit on Darrell Einerson behind the Morden net," he said. "That kind of injured him for the rest of the series, which helped a lot because Darrell was pretty darn good."



STANDARD PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Carman Cougars reclaimed the Zone 4 High School Hockey League title in 1973-74. Pictured left to right, back row: Harvey Takvam, Harry McKnight, Rick Penner, Glen McIntosh, Ken McMahon, Chris Sutton, Randy Neufeld and Rick Preston; middle row, Reid Hodgson, Ron Bartley, Jack Bates, Allen McEachern and Coach Marsh Kennedy; kneeling, equipment manager, Chic McIvor, Bruce North, Kraig MacLean (captain), John Neufeld and David Whitehead. Missing from the photo are Warren Johnston, Bill Coates and Michael Coates.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Cougars complete historic comeback for 'AA' crown

By Annaliese Meier

The Carman Cougars are champions of the 2026 Dairy Farmers of Manitoba Provincial AA Boys Hockey Championship.

Carman captured the provincial title Saturday afternoon, storming back from a three-goal deficit to defeat the Niverville Panthers 6-5 at the Carberry Plains Community Centre.

The championship marks the Cougars' first provincial banner since 2017, adding to previous title years in 1969, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1978, 1979, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2004.

Saturday's final was anything but routine.

Carman trailed 3-0 midway through the first period after Niverville goals from Haven Wiebe, Emry Gonzaga and Tom Bray. Ryder Delaquis responded at 6:10 of the opening frame, finishing a feed from Bryson Hiebert to cut the deficit to 3-1 heading into the intermission.

Grant Friesen pulled Carman within one early in the second, but the Panthers struck twice more — including a goal with just two seconds remaining in the period — to take a commanding 5-2 lead into the third.

What followed will live in Cougars lore.

Delaquis scored his second of the game at 17:26 of the third period to spark the rally. Froebe cut the deficit to one at 16:18, finishing a feed from Friesen. Friesen then tied the game at 9:02 with his second of the afternoon before completing the comeback with 43 seconds remaining, wiring home his third goal to give Carman its first lead of the contest at 6-5.

Friesen finished with a four-point performance — three goals and one assist — and a game-high 17 shots on goal, including the winner. Delaquis added two goals, Froebe scored the equalizer and Best recorded two assists from the blue line.

Goaltender Bryce Robitaille made 36 saves on 41 shots under pressure, while the Cougars fired 46 shots at the other end.

The contest featured multiple penalties on both sides, including several contact-to-the-head minors assessed to Niverville. Carman's discipline proved pivotal in the third period, allowing the comeback to unfold at

even strength.

When the final horn sounded, sticks and gloves flew into the air as the Cougars celebrated their long-awaited return to the top.

For a program steeped in championship tradition, Saturday's rally stands among its most dramatic triumphs — a four-goal third-period comeback sealing another banner for Carman hockey.

Head coach Mike Heatherington said the championship carries deep meaning — not only for this year's roster, but for the generations who built the program.

"Winning the provincial championship means a great deal to me individually and even more so for the program," Heatherington said. "It's been a long time since Carman's been able to get that final win. We've been right there multiple times in recent years, so to get it done this weekend was just amazing."

He pointed to the many players, coaches, managers and supporters who have sustained Carman hockey over the decades.

"They all truly have a part in this weekend by laying down the foundation for success," he said.

Trailing 5-2 entering the third period, Heatherington said the focus in the dressing room was simple — belief.

"We really just wanted to ensure that there was still belief in the room," he said. "I thought we played a strong second period and were on the wrong end of a couple bad breaks that they capitalized on. The effort was there — we just needed to keep going."

When the team returned to the ice, he sensed a shift.

"No one was hanging their heads. They knew what they needed to do and embraced the moment."

Heatherington credited the team's leadership group and overall composure for the four-goal surge that followed.

"The composure going into the third just makes you feel so proud of the players," he said. "We have a fantastic leadership group that have believed in themselves and everyone on the team all year. As a coaching staff, we couldn't be more proud of every single player."

He added the group's resilience was



STANDARD PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Carman Cougars pose with the provincial banner after rallying for a 6-5 win over the Niverville Panthers to claim the 2026 Dairy Farmers of Manitoba Provincial AA Boys Hockey Championship in Carberry on Saturday.

forged long before championship weekend.

"Their resilience throughout the year earned them a spot in the championship game, and it paid off in a big way in the third period."

Heatherington also praised goaltender Bryce Robitaille, who delivered standout performances in both the semifinal and final.

"Bryce was fantastic for us in the last two games," he said. "There were times where we were under heavy pressure and he kept us in the game and gave us a chance to get that go-ahead goal. He earned himself goaltender of the tournament and it was very well deserved."

For Heatherington, what ultimately set this team apart was its belief from day one.

"What was so special about this group was the belief they had from the start of the year that we could win a championship," he said. "We had some players that could have played at higher levels, but they wanted to stay and try to do something special together."

Many of the returning players, he noted, carried the sting of last season's league and provincial final losses.

"I think learning from last year really helped and lit that fire in them," he said. "Coaching this group has been an honour and a privilege. We're just so happy for them and for their hard work paying off."

Cougars rally past Mavericks to reach final

Carman punched its ticket to the championship game Friday with a 3-2 semifinal win over the Morris Mavericks.

After falling behind 2-0 late in the second period, the Cougars responded with three unanswered goals.

Morris opened the scoring at 4:20 of the first period when Justin Lavack found the net. Cedric Gosselin doubled the lead at 19:00 of the second.

Friesen got Carman on the board at 17:58 of the second, finishing a play set up by Griffin Graham and Lachlan Young. Campbell Park tied the game at 3:30 of the third on the power play, converting a feed from Friesen and Jaxon MacLean.

Delaquis scored the winner at 5:56 of the third, finishing a pass from Best.

Robitaille delivered one of his strongest performances of the season, stopping 50 of 52 shots as Morris outshot Carman 52-29.

Cougars strike early in win over Wildcats

Carman opened Thursday evening with a 6-3 victory over the Glenboro/Carberry/Baldur Wildcats.

The Cougars scored four times in just over three minutes in the first period. Delaquis opened the scoring at 5:05, assisted by Zac Pritchard and Froebe. Eight seconds later, Park made it 2-0.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Stingers claim Zone IV 'A' banner



From left: Shane Vander Vegte (coach), Daim Yaqoob, Guido Slaa, Izaak Vanderveen, Carter Vanderveen, Lincoln Van Veen, Jaxon DeWit, Alek Van Assen, Lucas Kooiker and Garrett Hillmer (coach).

STANDARD PHOTO BY MARSHA BULTENA

By Lana Meier

The Dufferin Christian School Stingers are Zone IV 'A' champions.

The Stingers hosted the Miami Marlins last Thursday in the Manitoba High School Athletics Association varsity boys Zone IV 'A' banner game, earning a 66-49 victory in front

of a strong crowd of supporters from both schools.

Both teams battled hard throughout the contest, but Dufferin Christian pulled away to secure the win and cap off an undefeated season in zone play.

With the zone title in hand, the Stingers now advance to the provincial championship tournament. They will compete in Round 1 of provincials this Saturday, with hopes of moving on to Round 2, scheduled to be held in Ste. Rose.

> COUGARS, FROM PG. 21

Brayden Poirier extended the lead at 4:29, and Hiebert capped the surge on the power play at 2:22.

Delaquis added his second in the third, and Ben Minty sealed the win with an empty-net goal. Robby Keith stopped 33 of 36 shots.

Cougars erupt for eight in tournament opener

Carman began its provincial run with an 8-3 win over the Major Pratt Trojans.

Friesen opened the scoring at 13:39 of the first. Pritchard doubled the lead before Russell tied the game with two power-play goals.

Linden Findlay restored Carman's lead at 8:44 of the second, igniting a stretch in which the Cougars scored five goals in just over six minutes. Young, Graham, Friesen and Delaquis all found the net during the surge.

Young added his second on the power play in the third. Friesen and Young each had two goals and an assist. Graham recorded a goal and two assists, while Findlay and Delaquis each added a goal and a helper. Robitaille made 27 saves on 30 shots.

From early adversity to late-game heroics, this year's Cougars wrote their own chapter in program history — one built on belief, resilience and unfinished business from a year ago. When the final horn sounded Saturday, it wasn't just a comeback completed — it was redemption realized.

Macdonald books semifinal showdown with Niverville

By Haley Cvar

The Macdonald Swarm are moving on to the Hanover Tache Junior Hockey League semifinals after eliminating the East St. Paul Gators in their quarterfinal series.

The Swarm took control of the series with a 10-1 win Friday, building a 5-1 lead after the first period and never looked back.

Austin Spicer led the offence with four goals and one assist, including

two powerplay goals and a short-handed marker. Kayden Robertson added two goals and three assists, Carter Campbell scored twice, and Talon Weselak had a goal and an assist.

Macdonald then clinched the series with an 8-0 shutout victory Saturday in East St. Paul.

The Swarm scored twice in the first period before adding three goals in

each of the second and third periods. Spicer had two goals and two assists, Campbell scored twice, and Robertson added two goals. Slade Sotheran recorded four assists, while Jeremy Wuerch had a goal and an assist. Goaltender Jack Martin stopped all 20 shots he faced to earn the shutout.

Macdonald now turns its attention to the semifinals, where it will face the Niverville Clippers in a best-of-

five series.

The series opens Thursday, March 5 at 8 p.m. at the Niverville CRRC. Game 2 is scheduled for Saturday, March 7, also in Niverville, before the series shifts to Sanford Arena for Game 3 on Sunday, March 8 at 7:15 p.m.

The Swarm enter the semifinal riding momentum following their decisive quarterfinal performance.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

End of the line for female Pembina Valley Hawks

By Lorne Stelmach

The season came to an end last week for the female U18 Pembina Valley Hawks.

An 8-3 loss to Westman Feb. 24 in Hartney brought the best-of-five quarter-final to an end with the Wildcats taking the series in three straight.

The sixth-place Hawks faced a tough task in taking on the third-place Wildcats, but they had given Westman a bit of a battle with Pembina Valley having only lost the first two games by one goal with 6-5 and 5-4 defeats.

In game three, Pembina Valley opened scoring, but Westman then

rattled off five unanswered goals before the first buzzer.

Casey O'Brien, Delaney Darby, and Mackenna Steeves scored for the Hawks, who were outshot 34-30.

Pembina Valley had ended the regular season in sixth place at 9-18-0-1 for 19 points, and coach Matt Victor was proud of how the girls never gave up, even despite, for example, finding themselves down 5-0 in game one and 4-1 in game two.

"We found ourselves down 5-0 after two periods, and honestly, the way the game was going, I wouldn't have thought we had it in us for a come-

back like we did," he said. "That was really quite a comeback. Being able to score five goals in under 15 minutes in the third period was remarkable. We were super proud of them.

"Westman is a great team though, and they were able to capitalize on a power play late in that game ... so it was a crazy one.

"We put everything that we kind of built through the year into the playoffs. I was quite impressed ... believed that we could do something in the playoffs," he added. "We didn't get the outcome, but everything that we worked on and talked about

through the season, we had really seen through these last three games that they grabbed on to it."

Victor cited how he felt the girls really progressed through the season.

"I'm quite happy," he said. "The big thing for me is the things we talked about, like our identity, at the start of the year, they really came to fruition in the playoffs. It was really great to see the grit, the character, being relentless.

"I'm actually impressed and proud of what they showed in the last three games in the playoffs."

Ernst earns pair of shutouts for Winkler Flyers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers kicked off the final month of the regular season with a narrow loss, following closely on the heels of two wide-margin wins.

Sunday's game against the Blues in Winnipeg began with Winkler up 1-0 after 20 minutes thanks to a goal from William Lyons.

But despite outshooting the home team 42-18 overall, the Flyers just couldn't get past Winnipeg netminder Kannen Kirkwood the rest of the night. His teammates, meanwhile, snuck two around Winkler's Liam

Ernst (who made 16 saves overall) to win it 2-1.

The defeat came a few days after the Flyers had handily trounced both the Neepawa Titans and the Northern Manitoba Blizzard.

The Feb. 24 game against Neepawa was a 5-0 shutout victory, with Ernst a wall in net with 27 saves.

His teammates fired 44 the other way. Ryan Winklebleck contributed two while Tanner George, Charles Bernier, and Rhylan Baxter chipped in singles.

Ernst had another shutout three

nights later, this time making 23 saves against the visiting Blizzard in what ended up being an 8-0 rout.

George had a hat trick that night, while Bernier and Connor Rieger scored twice and Kade Stringer once.

With that, Winkler is in fourth place in the MJHL East Division standings with a record of 33-18-1-2 for 69 points, just behind the Portage Terriers in third (also 69 points but with two games in hand), the Steinbach Pistons in second (88 points) and the Neepawa Nighthawks in first (93 points). Filling out the bottom of the

standings with no chance of catching up are the Selkirk Steelers in fifth (39 points), Winnipeg Blues (31), and Winnipeg Monarchs (20).

This weekend the Flyers break in the Winkler Centennial Arena after its recently completed renovations with their final home games of the regular season against the Pistons Friday night and the Nighthawks Sunday. Puck drops at 7:30 p.m. both nights.

They then close out the season in Winnipeg to play the Blues March 11 and in Selkirk March 13.

Hawks facing off vs. Wild

By Lorne Stelmach

It was a rough start to the playoffs this past weekend for the male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks.

They kicked off their best of five quarter-final series Saturday in Winnipeg with a 9-2 thrashing by the Wild.

It was sure to be a tough task for the Hawks, who finished seventh in the regular season, to take on the second-place Wild, although Pembina Valley was relatively competitive with the Wild through the regular season with two of the four matchups being one-goal games. Winnipeg won three of the four.

In game one, the Hawks opened scoring in the first period, but they then trailed 4-2 after 40 minutes before giving up five more unanswered goals in the third.

Pembina Valley was outshot by a wide margin of 42-15. Koen Bleznuk made 33 saves for the Hawks, while Ocean Fehr and Tyson Pethybridge each scored a goal.

Game two in the series went Monday night in Morden. Results were not available at press time.

Game three is back in Winnipeg Wednesday night. Game four, if needed, is in Morden Friday.

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INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Royals strike early in SEMHL, take Game 1 on the road

By Annaliese Meier

The Winkler Royals opened their South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League semifinal series in strong fashion Sunday afternoon, skating to a 5-3 victory over the Red River Wild to grab a 1-0 lead in the best-of-five matchup.

Winkler wasted little time responding after Red River opened the scoring on a first-period power play. Brendan Harms put the Wild ahead at 3:40, finishing a setup from Alex Tetrault and Tyler Anderson.

The Royals answered less than a minute later when Braden Hildebrand buried a feed from Mike Heppner and Aaron Lewadniuk to tie the game 1-1. Lewadniuk then gave Winkler the lead at 13:42, scoring unassisted to send the visitors into the intermission up 2-1.

Winkler extended its advantage in the second period. Assistant captain Phil Letkeman capitalized at 7:06,

converting a pass from Justin Augert to make it 3-1.

The Royals seized full control early in the third. Hildebrand struck again just 1:23 into the frame, netting what stood as the game-winning goal. Lewadniuk added his second of the night at 4:22, giving Winkler a 5-2 cushion.

Red River pushed back with goals from Jared Magne and Harms — his second of the contest — but could not close the gap.

Lewadniuk led the Royals offensively with two goals and an assist, while Hildebrand also scored twice. Letkeman added a single, and Augert and Heppner chipped in with assists.

Between the pipes, Matthew Thiesen turned aside 32 shots to earn the win. Jayden Catellier made 28 saves in the loss for the Wild.

Special teams played a role early, with Red River going 1-for-3 on the power play and Winkler finishing

0-for-3.

Game 2 of the series is scheduled for March 3 in Winkler, with the Royals looking to build on their early momentum and push the Wild to the brink of elimination.

UPCOMING GAMES:

- Tue., March 3 — 7:30 p.m. — Red River at Winkler (Game 2)
- Thu., March 5 — 7:30 p.m. — Winkler at Red River (Game 3)
- Sun., March 8 — 3:00 p.m. — Red River at Winkler (Game 4, if necessary)
- Tue., March 10 — 7:30 p.m. — Winkler at Red River (Game 5, if necessary)

In the league's other semifinal, the Ile des Chenes Northstars opened their best-of-five series with a dramatic 4-3 overtime victory over the Springfield Winterhawks on Saturday night. Matthew Osadick scored the winner at

4:52 of overtime, finishing a feed from Caleb Paisley to cap a back-and-forth contest. Ile des Chenes built a 2-0 lead on goals from Noah Keating and Ty Naakens before Springfield responded with three straight tallies — two on the power play — to move ahead in the third period. Burke Heide forced overtime with a late equalizer, and Mason Swerdyliak was sharp in goal for the Northstars, turning aside 46 shots in the win.

Ile des Chenes leads the series 1-0.

UPCOMING GAMES:

- Wed., March 4 — 8:00 p.m. — Springfield at Ile des Chenes (Game 2)
- Thu., March 5 — 8:00 p.m. — Ile des Chenes at Springfield (Game 3)
- Sat., March 7 — 7:30 p.m. — Springfield at Ile des Chenes (Game 4, if necessary)
- Tue., March 10 — 8:00 p.m. — Ile des Chenes at Springfield (Game 5, if necessary)

Sanford girls open quarters, boys eliminated

By Annaliese Meier

The Sanford Sabres' girls hockey team is set to begin its playoff push this week in the Manitoba Women's High School Hockey League.

Sanford will face the CJS Olympians in a best-of-three quarterfinal series, opening Game 1 on the road March 3 at 4 p.m. The series shifts to Sanford

for Game 2 on March 5 at 4 p.m. If necessary, a deciding Game 3 will be played March 6 at 4 p.m. in an away matchup.

The Sabres will look to establish momentum early as they aim to advance beyond the quarterfinal round and continue their postseason run.

Meanwhile, the Sanford Sabres' boys team saw its season come to an end in the Winnipeg High School Hockey League's Winnipeg Free Press Division.

Sanford was swept in its second-round series against the Springfield Sabres, dropping Game 1 by a 6-0

score Feb. 25 in Springfield. The series returned to Sanford the following night, where the Sabres were unable to extend their season, falling 4-0 on Feb. 26.

With the back-to-back losses, Sanford's playoff run concluded in the second round.

Twisters drop pair as MMJHL season winds down

By Annaliese Meier

The Pembina Valley Twisters dropped two games last week as the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League schedule nears its final stretch.

Pembina Valley hosted the first-place Transcona Railer Express on Feb. 25 at the Morris MultiPlex, falling 5-2 despite a stronger finish after a slow start.

Transcona jumped ahead early on goals from Noah St. Laurent and Declan Whiteman, outshooting the Twisters 19-6 in the opening period. Rylan Keck got Pembina Valley on the

board early in the second, converting a feed from Lucas Thomas and Josh Guilford at 2:46, but Whiteman answered later in the frame to restore a two-goal cushion.

Owen Vanrobaeys brought the Twisters back within two midway through the third, finishing a play started by Ethan Wilde and Darby Olson, but the Railer Express added two more — including an empty-netter late — to close it out. Myles Ganske made 43 saves on 48 shots in the loss.

Pembina Valley was back at home Sunday and built a 4-1 lead after 40

minutes, but couldn't hold off a late push from the St. Vital Jr. Victorias in a 6-4 defeat.

Vanrobaeys opened the scoring at 14:40 of the first period and Guilford added another late in the frame as the Twisters carried a 2-0 lead into the intermission. Darby Olson made it 3-0 midway through the second before St. Vital got on the board through Ben Dnes. Kai Hildebrand answered 13 seconds later with his first MMJHL goal to restore a three-goal advantage.

St. Vital took over in the third, scoring five times — including two pow-

er-play goals in the opening two minutes — to erase the deficit and pull away. Liam Saxberg scored twice in the period and Dnes finished with a two-goal night. Ganske stopped 27 of 33 shots for Pembina Valley.

The Twisters sit 10th in the MMJHL standings at 7-32-2 with 16 points and are slated to visit the St. Boniface Riels on March 2, travel to face the Charleswood Hawks on March 6, then return home March 8 to host the Ft. Garry/Ft. Rouge Twins.

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PUBLIC NOTICE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF GREY

Pursuant to Section 194 of the Municipal Act, notice is given that the financial statements and auditor's report for the Rural Municipality of Grey for the 2024 fiscal year are available for inspection by any persons during regular office hours at the RM of Grey office located at 27 Church Avenue East in Elm Creek or on our website at www.rmofgrey.ca. Dated this 4th day of January 2026.

Allie Henderson
Chief Administrative Officer
Rural Municipality of Grey

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The Carman-Dufferin **STANDARD**



PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that the Carman Golf and Curling Club intends to conduct the following Pesticide Control Programs during 2026:

1. To control weeds on the Golf Course property. The projected dates of application will be from May 1, 2026 to November 15, 2026. The herbicides to be used include:
 - Premium 3-Way XP - Start Up
2. To control disease and growth on the Golf Course greens. The projected dates of application will be from May 1, 2026 to November 15, 2026. The fungicides to be used include:
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Responsibilities

- The Loadout Operator will be responsible for a variety of tasks at the Yara Carman, MB agricultural fertilizer storage facility. This includes operating mechanical machinery and equipment, performing preventative maintenance, and troubleshooting basic issues. The primary duties will focus on safely executing operations within the terminal to efficiently manage the receipt, storage, loading and shipping of product, all while ensuring strict adherence to SOP's and HESQ procedures.
- Perform a variety of responsibilities in the assigned terminal area that may include loading and unloading bulk materials, operate truck weigh scale, bulk packaging, monitoring computerized control systems, de-dusting control system, and making infrequent basic machine adjustments.
- Learn operating procedures, receive guidance from peers/supervisor, and expected to provide feedback on clarity and effectiveness of guidance and procedure documentation.
- Perform routine maintenance and troubleshoot assigned equipment and processes, collaborating with the team to resolve issues.
- Record production and inventory activities in computerized systems.
- Operate mobile powered equipment (ie. wheel loader, compact track loader, various machine attachments, Shuttlewagon & other outdoor power equipment).
- Understand and adhere to all HESQ safety policies and operating procedures, maintain a safe and clean work environment, control work pace and improve knowledge of equipment or processes.
- Perform pre-Inspection, loading and final inspection of trucks/rail cars.
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OBITUARY



Fredrick (Fred) Abram Letkeman

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Fredrick (Fred) Abram Letkeman, of Roseisle, Manitoba, son of the late Abram and Olga Letkeman, and devoted husband of the late Lilla Letkeman.

Fred is survived by his children Matt (Courtney) Dingle and Daniel (Bernadette) Dingle; grandchildren Kailer, Keain, Adrianna, Alexandria, and Allanah.

A service honouring Fred's life will be held on March 14 at 2:00 p.m. at the Roland United Church, followed by a gathering at the Roland Hall.

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

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TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CREDIT UNION

VOTING FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TAKE NOTICE THAT voting for the Board of Directors is open to all members who have a share at any Credit Union branch. Voting will be done by electronic ballot and will be tallied electronically by a third-party provider. Voting will be open from 9:00 a.m. CDT on Wednesday, the 25th day of March, 2026 until 5:00 p.m. CDT on Wednesday, the 8th of April, 2026. Members of the Credit Union are invited to vote online at www.accessvotes.ca. Each member may vote on a personal electronic device or should any member prefer, devices for the purpose of voting will be available at all branches of the Credit Union during operating hours.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TAKE NOTICE THAT the AGM of the members of the Credit Union will be held on Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. CDT via virtual means, for the following purposes:

1. 2025 Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report
2. Board of Directors Report
3. Appointment of Auditors
4. Director Elections Voting Results

All eligible members wishing to participate in the AGM are required to register online at www.accesscu.ca prior to April 9, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CDT. Instructions for voting processes and how to ask questions will be displayed on the screen commencing at 6:45 p.m. CDT. These instructions will also be reviewed at the opening of the meeting.

More information can be found at: www.accesscu.ca.

DATED this 5th day of March, 2026
ACCESS CREDIT UNION LIMITED
By Order of the Board of Directors



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MARCH

National MS Education and Awareness Month

It's time to get involved with the MS community!

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a complex neurological disease that affects over one million people. Despite how common it is, MS remains widely misunderstood. Each March, National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month helps shine a light on the realities of the condition to support those living with it and promote continued research.

Many are misled by certain myths about MS. Here are a few common ones, along with the facts:

Myth #1: Everyone with MS will end up in a wheelchair

Some people with MS experience mobility issues, but many remain active and independent throughout their lives. The course of the disease varies greatly from

person to person, and it's impossible to predict how symptoms will progress.

Myth #2: MS affects only older adults

MS is most often diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40. Still, it can appear at any age, including in children and older adults.

Myth #3: MS is fatal

MS is rarely fatal. Thanks to modern treatments and disease-modifying therapies, most people with the diagnosis have a normal or near-normal life expectancy.

Myth #4: MS is contagious

MS cannot be caught or spread from person to person. However, certain genetic and environmental factors, such as a family history of the disease or certain viral infec-

tions, can increase a person's risk of developing MS.

Myth #5: People with MS can't work or live full lives

With proper medical care and support, many individuals with MS raise families, travel and continue working for years after they're diagnosed.



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