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Oak River Legion celebrates 100 years



PHOTO BY CAROLYN PHILLIPS

Kelly Hissock, Harley Smith, Mike Mann, and President Comrade Diane Kuculym enjoyed a fantastic Oak River Legion Branch #150 event.

By Carolyn Phillips
RIVERS BANNER

On a hot, sunny day on Saturday, July 18, the Oak River Community Rink transformed into a sizzling hub of activity as the Oak River Legion Branch #150 hosted a BBQ cook-off to commemorate the Royal Canadian Legion's 100th anniversary. This event aimed not just to showcase culinary skills but also to bring together the community in a celebration of camaraderie, fun, and delicious food.

With six teams participating, the competition was fierce yet friendly. The event featured seasoned team captains including Greg Black, Harley Smith, Brendan Henderson, Bill Aaroe, Les Wedderburn, and Gavin Reynolds. Each team was provided with a budget of \$200 to gather ingredients and equipment, sparking creativity and excitement as teams prepared their unique dishes.

As hungry visitors gathered, the scents of smoky barbecued meats wafted through the air. Some of the more dedicated teams, specifically Team Black and Team Smith, even set up camp in their campers, ensuring they got a head start on their cooking, igniting the grills at the break of dawn. The commitment displayed by each team was commendable, reflecting their passion for BBQ and their desire to wow the taste buds of the attending crowd.

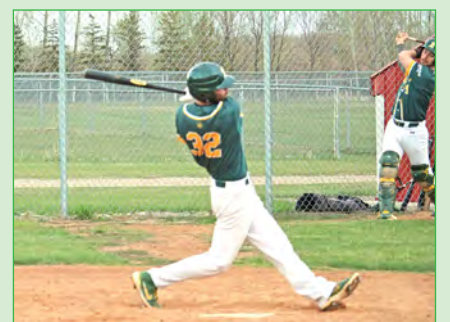
In addition to the BBQ fare, local volunteers rallied to contribute side dishes such as delicious salads, freshly baked buns, and homemade cookies, rounding out the meal that numerous attendees looked forward to enjoying. Supper tickets were sold, giving attendees the dual role of enjoying a hearty meal while also acting as judges in this culinary showdown.

Read more about the Legion BBQ Cook-Off on page 2...

Inside...



MILK RUN FUN
P5-9



SWBL BASEBALL
P11

Oak River Legion BBQ Cook-Off



Team 5 - Les Wedderburn team won third place.



Team 1 - Greg Black Team got second place.

PHOTOS BY CAROLYN PHILLIPS

Continued from page 1...

The atmosphere was electric, with the anticipation of tasting the mouth-watering creations and the spirit of competition palpable in the air. Comrade Janette Kirkpatrick ensured a seamless voting process; she meticulously counted the ballots cast by attendees, who relished every bite of the BBQ. The close results underscored the high quality of the dishes presented, making the decision difficult but rewarding.

When the winners were finally announced, the

crowd erupted in cheers. Harley Smith's Team 2 took home the coveted first place, while Greg Black's Team 1 claimed the second spot. Les Wedderburn's 'Low and Slow let the Smoke Roll' Team 5 rounded out the top three, each team receiving cash prizes to celebrate their achievements. The spirited camaraderie among competitors was further highlighted by Team Aaroe, who sported quirky team t-shirts emblazoned with the phrase, "I BBQ Because No One Wins Friends with a Salad."

With a turnout close to 200 people, including many from surrounding towns, the Oak River

Legion BBQ cook-off proved to be a roguishly delightful gathering. Generous sponsors and a lively raffle table contributed to the event's success, demonstrating the community's solidarity and support.

Ultimately, the BBQ cook-off was more than just about food; it was a heartfelt celebration of legacy, friendship, and the very essence of community spirit. Everyone who attended left with full bellies and smiles. With memories made and connections strengthened, it was truly a remarkable day for Oak River!

ITALIAN SAUSAGE STUFFED ZUCCHINI BOATS

Ingredients

- 4 medium zucchini
- 1 pound ground Italian sausage
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (24 oz) jar marinara sauce, divided
- 8 oz shredded Italian blend cheese
- 3 tablespoons seasoned or plain breadcrumbs
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
- 1/4 tsp ground coriander (optional)
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Cut each zucchini in half lengthwise. Use a measuring spoon or melon baller to scoop out the center of each half, leaving a 1/4-inch border. Set aside zucchini and chop flesh and set aside.
2. Heat a large deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage and cook until browned and crumbled. Add onion and cook, stirring constantly, until it begins to soften. Add garlic and reserved chopped zucchini flesh and cook until onions are softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add 1 1/2 cups marinara and stir to combine. Bring mixture to a simmer, reduce heat slightly and cook 5 minutes to slightly thicken. Remove from heat and stir in 1 cup cheese and bread crumbs.
3. Fill each prepared zucchini half with sausage mixture and place in a 9x13-inch baking dish.
4. Add 1/2 cup water to remaining sauce in the marinara jar. Add cinnamon, coriander, and nutmeg if desired. Cover and shake gently to combine and pour sauce around stuffed zucchini. Top with remaining cheese.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until heated through, browned and bubbly, and zucchini is tender, about 20 minutes.



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Canada Post and the Shuttering of Community Newspapers

Submitted
PAUL DEEGAN, NEWS MEDIA CANADA

The shuttering of Winnipeg’s Community Review means 200,000 households will no longer get the benefit of a free community newspaper delivered to their door. It also means that more than 800 people who deliver the paper and their families will be affected.

This is an unforced error that never should have happened. How did we get here? The answer is complex.

First, there is a high degree of concentration in the flyer printing market in Canada. Montreal-based TC Transcontinental enjoys the dominant position in the marketplace thanks, in part, to a 2012 Competition Bureau-approved asset swap.

Second, municipal and provincial politicians have passed environmental regulations, however well-intentioned, have unintended consequences. Former Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante passed a municipal bylaw that led to the end of distribution of Publisac (a plastic bag with flyers and a community newspaper). Several provinces, including Manitoba, have imposed extended producer responsibility levies on printed newspapers. Ontario’s Premier Doug Ford made the wise decision to exempt newspapers from this kind of stealthy journalism job-killing tax in his province.

Third, Canada Post is the biggest culprit. TC Transcontinental, which had distributed Publisac door-to-door in Quebec, formed a strategic partnership with Canada Post, which as a Crown corporation was not beholden to municipal bylaws. They bypassed Mayor Plante’s new regulation by distributing a curated bundle of flyers called Raddar through the national postal service. Unlike Publisac, Raddar did not include a community newspaper. On the sidelines of this saga, news

publisher Métro Média and its more than 30 hyperlocal publications — including 17 print newspapers — shut down.

In partnership with Canada Post, TC Transcontinental recently expanded its Raddar offering across Canada. It is understood that Canada Post — which has a mandate to “charge postage rates that are fair and reasonable” — is offering TC Transcontinental rates below what it is offering to community newspapers. To its own benefit, the Crown corporation has effectively shut community newspapers — their private sector rivals — out of flyer distribution, lessening competition substantially in that market.

This is not the first time community newspaper publishers have felt the squeeze of Canada Post in the flyer distribution market. As of January 2024, community newspapers with commercial inserts were no longer exempt from Canada Post’s Consumers’ Choice program, which allows Canadians to opt out of receiving ‘junk mail’. Canada Post made that decision without stakeholder consultation or economic/social impact analysis and failed to recognize that community newspapers — with or without an insert — are not ‘junk mail’; they are a social good.

The juxtaposition of the shuttering of Winnipeg’s Community Review at the same time as the revelation of \$30.8 million in bonuses at Canada Post has not been lost on community newspaper publishers across Canada.

What should Ottawa do about it?

First, Joël Lightbound, the Minister responsible for Canada Post, should ensure the Crown corporation is treating community newspapers fairly and offering them comparable pricing to what it offers to TC Transcontinental.

Second, the House of Commons Standing Committee

on Canadian Heritage should conduct hearings into the role Canada Post can play in the sustainability of community newspapers — ensuring the relationship is one of partnership, rather than predatory and parasitic.

When a community loses a newspaper, like Winnipeg’s Community Review or Métro Média’s publications in Quebec, the information vacuum can lead to people getting their news from less than reliable sources — like AI and social media — which can create division that drives people apart. Without a check on local government, corruption, mismanagement, and wasteful spending often flourish, which can result in higher municipal taxes and borrowing costs.

It was not foreign Big Tech monopolists like Google and Meta that caused Manitoba’s largest community newspaper to shutter. It was Canada Post.

And it’s not like we weren’t warned...

Thirty years ago, in his review of Canada Post’s mandate, George Radwanski recommended that postal service get out of delivering unaddressed junk mail (i.e., flyers), concluding that the Crown corporation engaged in inappropriate practices that created unfair competition for private businesses like community newspapers.

As a former Toronto Star editor-in-chief, Radwanski knew the news business. He noted that Canada Post was actively siphoning advertising revenue away from the news industry and adroitly cautioned that the state-granted mail delivery monopoly should not be in the business of crippling the financial health of newspapers.

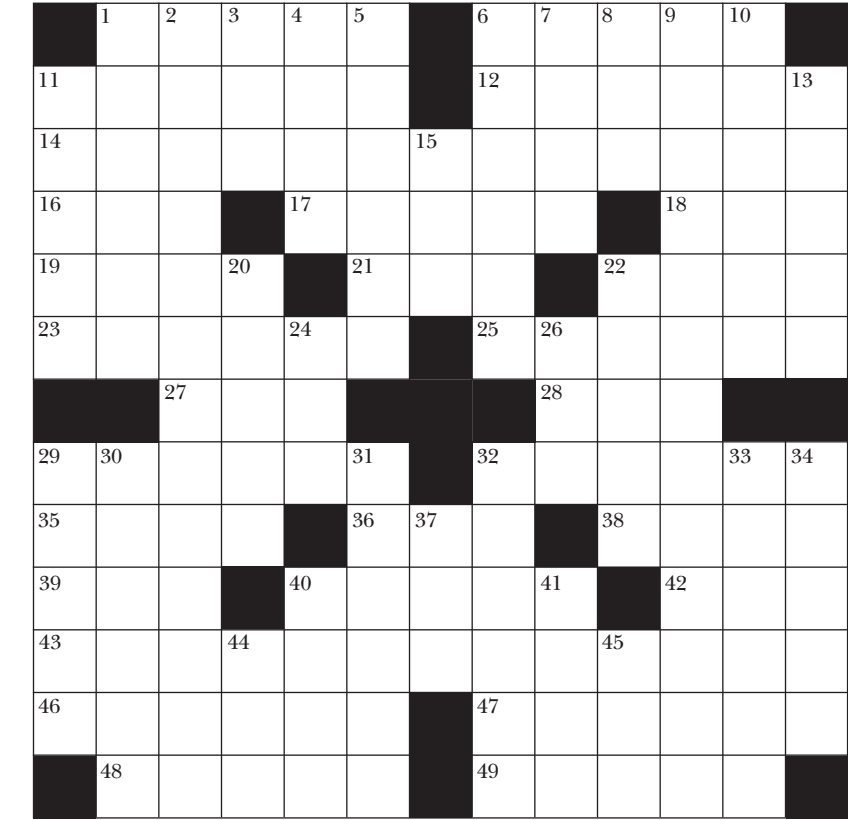
A healthy democracy demands a healthy community news media ecosystem. Let’s level the playing field and restore competition in the flyer distribution market before more community newspapers shutter.

Paul Deegan is president and chief executive officer of News Media Canada

Locally created crossword

- Across
- 1. Folded fabric below the collar
 - 6. Future plants
 - 11. An attack by soldiers
 - 12. Mom or dad
 - 14. Person in cahoots with another
 - 16. Fire residue
 - 17. Night twinklers
 - 18. Fish eggs
 - 19. Marsh plant
 - 21. Inventor Whitney
 - 22. One ___ fits all
 - 23. Person making sounds while sleeping
 - 25. Joined forces (with up)
 - 27. Bottom point
 - 28. 67 ___ on a compass
 - 29. Assessed, checked out
 - 32. Quick look
 - 35. Old witches
 - 36. Rowboat propeller
 - 38. Basic particle of an element
 - 39. Millennium Films founder - Lerner
 - 40. Had title to
 - 42. Draw a bead on
 - 43. Living area
 - 46. Surveillance by foot police
 - 47. American bald birds
 - 48. Old Russian rulers
 - 49. Newscaster Robertson

- Down
- 1. Slacken
 - 2. Specialists studying prehistoric humans
 - 3. Power Take Off acronym
 - 4. One in Germany
 - 5. ___ B. Pearson - Canadian Prime Minister
 - 6. The soul



Answers on page 10 Created by David Harris of Oak River, MB

- 7. Hearing organs
- 8. Age of, period of time
- 9. In a harmful way
- 10. Take a nap
- 11. Battle reminders
- 13. Forested
- 15. Buddy
- 20. Falling rain
- 22. Capital of Yemen
- 24. Female sheep
- 26. Snakelike fish
- 29. Has a keen edge
- 30. Beware of certain conditions in an agreement
- 31. Round wooden pegs
- 32. Hansel’s sister (Brothers Grimm Tale)
- 33. Wrapped up
- 34. Television awards
- 37. ___ B. Davis of (The Brady Bunch)
- 40. Scent (American spelling)
- 41. Operate a rotary phone
- 44. George Gershwin’s brother
- 45. In the past

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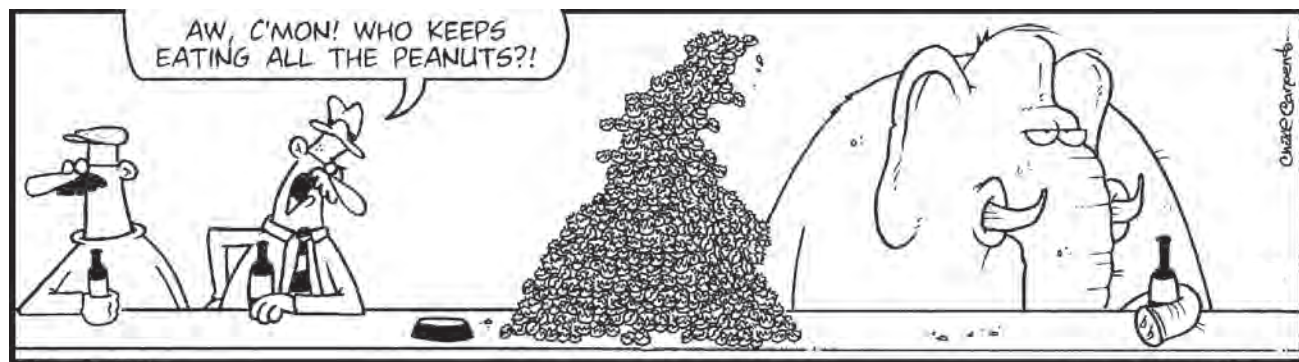




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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Many changes in the world of news and newspapers

I have noted a few times in this column that, over the past number of years, 20 or more Manitoba community newspapers have closed up shop. Almost all were corporately owned, unlike most community newspapers in Manitoba, which are privately owned.

There are only two corporately owned community newspapers left in Manitoba after last week's announcement that the Winnipeg Free Press is closing its last two Winnipeg weekly community news editions. At one time, the Free Press had five weekly community newspapers before reducing that number to two a couple of years ago. Now it has none in Winnipeg.

The Free Press' two remaining community newspapers are the Steinbach Carillon and the Brandon Sun's weekly edition, Westman This Week. As a long-time lover of newspapers, rural communities and the written word, newspaper closures sadden me greatly.

The latest threat to community newspapers and the factor that caused the demise of the two Winnipeg weeklies, is the removal of flyers from newspapers by Transcontinental Printing and its distribution arm, Targeo. TC has decided to move to an ad-bag system and will distribute bags of flyers through Canada Post under the brand name Raddar.

I am not sure how that will work, as up to 50 per cent of Canada Post mailboxes are labelled "Consumers' Choice," meaning those customers have opted not to receive flyers. Consumers' Choice is one of the reasons we don't use Canada Post. There are other reasons, but that was a major factor in this paper no longer being delivered through Canada Post.

Canada Post approved \$30.8 mil-

RIGHT IN THE CENTRE

KEN WADDELL



lion in bonuses for its managers and executives in 2025, the same year it recorded its largest pre-tax loss ever and accepted a \$1.03-billion taxpayer-funded bailout, according to government records obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

I am not sure in what alternative universe an executive receives a bonus after hundreds of millions of dollars in losses.

In the television world, Corus Entertainment, owner of the Global Television Network and multiple radio stations, says programming changes across Canada will result in dozens of job losses. Five of those positions are in Manitoba. There have been many other cuts at internet and television companies.

Most media outlets, including newspapers, television and radio networks, receive government subsidies. The most notorious is the CBC, which receives more than \$1 billion every year.

There is also the Canadian Journalism Labour Tax Credit, under which news outlets receive a tax credit for each journalist they employ. In addition, there is the Local Journalism Initiative, while Google funding is distributed by the Canadian Journalism Collective.

A couple of years ago, the federal government announced an agreement with Google over Bill C-18, the Online News Act. The tech giant had

threatened to limit Canadians' access to news on its platforms, similar to the approach taken by Meta.

Under the agreement, Google will pay Canadian news companies \$100 million annually.

Google has officially become the world's most profitable company, reporting \$116 billion in net income over the past year.

Meta took a different approach and blocked access to Canadian news content, including this newspaper. Facebook's parent company, Meta, reported a net profit of \$62.3 billion in 2024.

Large internet companies should be compensating news outlets for their content because they make a great deal of money from news content produced by other people.

There is something I have been wondering about for a while. With all the subsidies coming directly from government, as well as through government-mandated policies, will the day come when all media income comes from government? Or is that part of the plan, so that no news organization will hold government to account?

It is moving closer to reality.

I hope and pray that the media can continue to hold governments and businesses to account. But that means newspapers must stay local, produce good content, and continue to earn the support of advertisers and readers.

Homebodies

RITA FRIESEN



The night of the fireflies...

These tiny little portable flashlights have fascinated me since my childhood. We had a set of paternal relatives that lived several miles away, close to a set of railway tracks and with wet low lands nearby.

Back then, we cautiously captured the flying insects, keeping them in glass jars and watching the flickering glowing lights. We always released them before heading home, never thinking of trying to relocate them. I never noted them around our farmyard, perhaps too dry and not as much natural habitat.

The years we lived on the acreage east of Neepawa it was common to spot, and watch, the fireflies, usually on a humid evening in late June. On the east side of our home was a second floor balcony. One evening, before last rounds, I stepped out on the balcony. I simply stopped and stared. And then I summoned the grandson that was spending time with us that summer. We stood there, surrounded by fireflies.

They settled on the railing, on the balustrade, on us. Watching the miracle, it seemed a reflection of the Milky Way, so numerous and so twinkling, a band that flitted and sparkled above the dry creek bed. I don't know how long we stood there, in real time. The saying 'time stood still' applied that evening. The silence — even the highway traffic had stilled, the broken darkness, the beauty, we simply stood.

That moment of beauty took me back to a summer night in 1974. Travelling home from Carman, the announcer on the radio suggested that anyone that could get away from bright lights hasten to do so. The Northern Lights were putting on a quality show. I was away from any lights, miles from home yet miles from the nearest town. I pulled over and stepped out of the vehicle. Now this was Southern Manitoba, near Carman, and the lights were dancing directly above me. These last few seasons we have been blessed with incredible photos of the aurora borealis. That summer night outshone them all. In the perfect silence, one could hear the angels singing as they danced across the night sky.

The colours were brilliant, they moved, melded, and spun. Hues so intense one could only marvel. That segued to a summer night on a boat dock at Camp Koininea. A night of a meteor shower so stunning that we broke curfew for all who wanted to witness the wonder of falling stars, shooting stars, meteors flashing and reflecting in the still lake water.

By nature I am a night owl. The quiet of the dark invites me to sit and think a bit. I am ever thankful that my home here in town is close to the tracks, away from too many bright lights. I can step away and again see the wonder of the Northern Lights, the brilliance of the night stars, and every once in a while — the fireflies. It will be on a warm, humid, summer night, and there they are. Waiting for me. And so, as an anticipated guest, I pause and admire. I no longer feel the need or desire to capture them. I simply admire and wonder.

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Hamiota Show n' Shine draws crowd



Ceilia Nolan, Airdrie Knight and other volunteers supply a steady stream of customers with pork on a bun sold at Hamiota Show'n Shine Wednesday evening.



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

This '37 Chevy is almost restored beyond recognition, drawing admiration from two generations.

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

Hamiota's Wednesday evening car show seems to get bigger and better every year with added features.

Organized by Mid-West Arts Council, this year the event registered 67 gleaming classic vehicles lined up on downtown Hamiota's Maple Ave.

A corvette from Brandon was the Fan Favourite. The owner received a very cool clock crafted by Hamiota metal artist Ken McMillan.

A 50/50 draw brought in \$980 and barbecued pork on a bun was also a fundraiser for Hamiota's Heritage Art Centre.

Featured within the gallery was McMillan's welded sculptures - a former sewing machine, clamps, horse shoes, rebar - all re-purposed metal transformed into art. You have to look twice to recognize the metal shop materials. His display continues through July.

Under a tent young entrepreneurs sold crafts and baking in a business fair. Rollin & Tumblin' live band covered favourites and DJ Dawson Brooks entertained between sets.

Friends and neighbours caught up on visiting while ogling the gleaming beauties marking the evolution of the auto industry.

Hudson pin-up car in Hamiota

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

Classic cars come with a story that's part of their attraction. Add in human showmanship and you get Megan Hamill perched on her 1946 Hudson Coupe in the line-up of nearly 70 vintage vehicles at Hamiota Show'n Shine. Her story includes an upcoming trip to the Western Canadian Nationals Car Show (originally The Super Run) in Moose Jaw, July 31-Aug. 2 for a special event.

She says, "So, in two weeks, I'm hosting my first interprovincial pin-up contest."

It was nine years ago, with Brandon's Road Rebels that Hamill began putting on 1950s style pinup beauty contests born from a unique story behind her Hudson with its flashy paint job.

Hamill purchased this personality car from Gary Antonation, a top-notch Brandon upholsterer and hot rod builder.

"I'd gone to Viva Los Vegas Rockabilly weekend, the biggest rockabilly weekend in the world. I saw the pin-up contests, the hot-rodders and the rockabilly folks...."

Already inspired, a car came for sale at just the right moment. "As soon as I came back from that trip, Gary's wife had told him to sell the car." It was right in her own neighbourhood.

"So, it was serendipitous that I return from Viva,



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Megan Hamill is looking casual today perched on her Hudson Coupe at Hamiota's Maple Ave. car show on July 15.

Gary put this one for sale and I wanted a rockabilly car. And I've been using this for pin-up shoots ever since."

Its charm goes beyond the exterior paint job. She points to the back seat interior upholstery, and the shaved door handles.

"You've got to get in through the window," says Hamill, reaching into the car. "On my key fob there's an electronic button that rolls the windows down. The interior was a big selling item for me." Matching upholstery includes the trunk.

Under the Hudson hood - a 350 Chevy small block. "It goes pretty good," she grins, but admits, "it's not the smoothest ride in the world." The motor is a legendary 5.7L V8 known for its versatility, performance, and availability for restorations.

Hamill happily switched from riding her motorcycle to the Hudson 10 years ago. "I had a young daughter, so this was really great for the whole family."

The interprovincial pinup will feature gals in vintage dress in a classic car line-up at Anderson Car & Memorabilia Museum in Moose Jaw.

The horses are miniatures but the stakes are big



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Amanda Forbes from Virden and red ribbon winner, Whisper.

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

At Hamiota Fair Miniature Horse Show, Glenda Goerzen of Selkirk was thrilled to win a Grand Championship. Through the 'milk run' you might say she scored a hat trick.

She attended Shoal Lake, Hamiota and Harding and says of her horse: "JEM Be Dazzle Bobbi was a pleasure to travel with, taking it all in stride, and winning Grand Championship under 34 inches at all three.... and even taking home a first place in the 3-year-old futurity driving class at Harding."

Another miniature owner, Amanda Forbes said she's happy to be back in show biz. Two of her miniature horse entries to the Hamiota Fair are also JEM horses, bred by the late Mary Ann Bartkewich. One, a black beauty and another a cremello (cream body, mane and tail with blue eyes).

Forbes' is planning to drive her miniature horses as they mature. She's returned to miniature horse showing, after a five-year hiatus. With her recent move to an acreage near Virden, Forbes is into her second show season.

Kimberley Dinwoodie of Portage la Prairie had a string of horses at Oak River Fair, Monday July 13, and at Hamiota Fair. Some of them also Bartkewich breeding.

"I got real lucky on this one, because she's already got her Hall of Fame," said Dinwoodie.

It's a prestigious recognition program that awards lifetime championship status to the breed's best. To qualify, a Miniature must score 70 points in either Halter or Performance including five Grand Champion competitive wins.

The award is presented in the USA, but points may be collected at Canadian shows.

Dinwoodie was showing a string of eight horses, less than usual, but she was missing a helper. However granddaughter, Presley Dinwoodie an experienced show person, was along.

Dinwoodie said it's more difficult for Canadians with a limited show season to accumulate points toward Hall of Fame. "Down in the States, it's every weekend, from January 1st... because they're, like, summer all year round in some states...."

For that reason, 'milk run' fairs play a key role for Miniature Horse show circuit.

Hamiota Fair weathers rain

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

Rain changed the story for Hamiota Fair on Thursday, July 16. An overnight deluge left parts of the agricultural grounds and the Red Sox diamond underwater.

Breakfast was served. By 9am under an overcast sky, the most determined parade entries wove through town-the Hamiota Fair was underway.

Bicyclists and barefoot kids splashed through grassy puddles several inches deep to visit the petting zoo, food trucks, the clown, face painting, and toss games.

A heavy horse entry pulled out of the muddy unloading area, heading for drier ground at the next fair on the milk run (Harding) and Hamiota's light horse show and MGRA gymkhana events were cancelled. It was sad to see the trailers heading off.

The cattle show including the Manitoba Angus Association Gold and Junior Show had a great show.

The miniature horses had the ring to themselves, with judge Dee Longfield of Bradwardine picking the placings.

Cattle Show

President of the Hamiota Ag Society, Russell Thompson opened the livestock show. MLA Greg Nesbitt, followed by MP Dan Mazier and Mayor of Hamiota Randy Lints brought greetings to this longstanding 'milk run' stop.

Cattle judge Baxter Blair of McLean, Sask. got to work judging the Angus classes and then Simmental, Gelbvieh,



Kate Hinsburg of KCH Cattle Co., Rapid City, Man. with a 2-year-old cow calf pair KCH Annie K 412M, KCH Annie K 611 at side receiving overall female supreme champion award, with judge Baxter Blair and Man. Angus Association director Austin Richard (R).



Despite the horse show's cancellation, local exhibitors had a practice round in the light horse lead line class. Judge Dee Longfield tells these young horsewomen, Rose and Josephine Thompson, "These horses are worth a million bucks!"

Charolais, Shorthorn and Speckle Park.

With an animal science and marketing degree and experience on the USA National Champion Livestock Judging Team, Blair got the job done decisively. It was a pleasure to hear him describe the winning qualities of his picks.

Jordan Frey of Freyburn Angus, Oxbow, Sask. topped the Angus show with supreme champion bull Cottonwood Profound 400M. Kate Hinsburg of KCH Cattle Co., Rapid City, Man. took the female championship.



Aboard the Hamiota Municipality float: (L-R) CAO - Lorra Eastcott, Couns. Ed Brethour and Ken Lawn, Mayor Randy Lints (waving up front), HEDC - Armi Adair and summer student for Recreation - Alyssia Kirk.



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Birch Lodge entry of lily grouping in the plants and food class.

Secretary-treasurer Linda Wilson said that while cattle classes were strong, numbers were down in other divisions, including garden produce, flowers, baking and the like. Hamiota Fair's third Thursday coming earlier than some years, the date snuck up on them, some said.

"Even considering the bad weather, we came out okay," Wilson said. She estimated that the horse show cancellations meant about 125 people headed down the road. However, the food trucks reported steady traffic and the supper crowd enjoyed roast beef.

Harding Agricultural Society hosts 122nd Fair



PHOTOS BY GERRY NOLAN

The Heavy Horse teams returned to the fair this year with thanks to Shaun Hunter for bringing it back with help in the ring from Mel Hunter.



President Trav Hunter and guest Bob Good who officially opened the fair. In his speech Bob mentioned the first Harding fair was held on October 3 in 1904. There were two farmers and three head of livestock that day. From small beginnings great things will come forth.



Jim Wilson Memorial Supreme Champion Breeders Herd won by Jaymarandy Livestock, Beausejour MB.



PHOTOS BY WENDA BEST

Ron Sangster Memorial Supreme Champion Bull won by Freyburn Farms, Oxbow SK

By Gerry Nolan
RIVERS BANNER

The 122nd Harding Agricultural fair was held on Friday, July 17. Although the fair was down in exhibitors this year due to the flooding, closed roads and the storms we have had in this area, Harding fair would be deemed a success once again.

The breakfast crew served 300 people. The Community Club served a daily total of 180 cold plate meals. The Woodworth Firemen and a

few local volunteers looked after the gates with a total attendance around 400.

Loree Wedderburn's Saskatoon pie entry won the Grace Kent Memorial class and Best pie award. She donated it to the Ag Society to auction off as a fundraiser. The syndicate of Cam and Shelley Ramsey, Ag-Land Farms and Double H Farms purchased the prize-winning pie for \$650.

Heavy Horse hitches were from Boulder Bluff Clydesdales, Strath-

clair; West Spring Percherons, Minnedosa and West Oak Acres, Westbourne. They exhibited three 4 horse hitches and two 6 horse hitches. Sponsorship for heavy horses came from BASF, Syngenta, Cargill and Prairie Gateway Tourism.

Light horse winners were as follows: Champion Pony shown by Morgan Rampton of Cromer. Champion Light Horse shown by Lisa Moore of Brandon and Costume Class winner was Lane McLeod of



Friday, July 17 started with a pancake breakfast, which was served by from left to right, Don Carter and Logan McGonigal in the front and by Blake Krahn operations manager of Valleyview coop, Vaughn Wilson Valleyview coop President and Ken Hutchison. A crowd of well over 300 attended the breakfast.



Ron Sangster Memorial Supreme Champion Female (White Cow/Calf Pair) won by Steppler Farms, Miami MB

Virden.

Thank you to the Harding Community group for the delicious meals and all the volunteers like the Woodworth firemen who tended

the admission gate and all those who do their thing to make the day so wonderful. Thanks to Mark Hunter for the caretaking of the grounds which were in

great shape. See ya all next year!

The writing of this article was assisted by Wenda Best from the Harding Ag Society. Thank-you Wenda.

Oak Lake Fair: 138 years of tradition



PHOTO BY CELINE KRANTZ
Staff members Tammy Hall, Shelly Riglin, Kendra Stothers, Val Podobni, and Celine Krantz of the Oak Lake Care Centre were all smiles alongside their students Kacey Ryall, Sadie Bailey, Emmett Krantz and Wyatt Krantz after capturing first place for Best Decorated Commercial Float.



The Exhibit Hall showcased wild floral arrangements, canned and baked goods, art and quilts and even animal sculptures crafted with food!



PHOTOS BY LAUREN HALOWATY

By Lauren Halowaty
RIVERS BANNER

The local agricultural fair circuit concluded last weekend as the 138th Annual Oak Lake Fair took over the community from July 17 to July 19, 2026. Hosted by the Oak Lake Agricultural Society, the three-day event served as the final stop of the region's traditional 'Milk Run,' drawing residents and visitors alike for a weekend packed with heritage, competition, and family entertainment.

The festivities kicked off Friday evening at the Hall with a performance by musical guest Lyle Baldwin. As night fell, a brilliant fireworks display illuminated the sky at dusk, officially launching the weekend's celebration.

Saturday morning brought the highly anticipated Oak Lake Fair Parade, which filled the local streets with a vibrant display of beautifully decorated floats, classic vehicles, and vintage tractors. Competition was fierce

among the entries, but it was the Oak Lake Care Centre that won the prize for best Decorated Commercial Float.

The rest of Saturday offered a packed itinerary highlighting the area's deep agricultural roots and community talents. Early risers filled up at the Valleyview Co-op Pancake Breakfast before taking in a full day of events, including the Light Horse Show, the high-energy Bacon Chase, which is exactly as it sounds, chasing pigs, and the start of the Slo-Pitch Tournament.

Meanwhile, the Exhibit Hall showcased the community's domestic arts, featuring competitive categories in baking, sewing, canning, and floral arrangements. A major highlight inside the hall was the incredible display of kids' art and schoolwork, proudly submitted by the Oak Lake Community School with dedicated competitive categories for every single grade.

Afternoon spectators were treated to a yummy Beef

Stew and a Ranch Horse Competition, capped off by the adrenaline-pumping Lawn Mower Pull Competition just as the Beer Gardens opened for the evening.

The fair concluded on Sunday with a focus on fellowship and tradition. A combined community worship service was held at St. Alban's Anglican Church Museum, followed by a sunny afternoon picnic at the Hall hosted by the local Garden Club.

Of course, an event of this scale only comes together through a lot of team effort. The entire weekend was made possible by the many amazing volunteers who poured countless hours of hard work and heart into the fair, proving once again how much Oak Lake thrives on community spirit. With excellent attendance, delicious community meals, and a brilliant showcase of local talent, the 138th Oak Lake Fair successfully put a cap on another memorable summer season.



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Youth accidents high, a tragic weekend

Submitted Manitoba RCMP is urging everyone to take steps to stay safe following a tragic weekend on the water, on the roads and on the trails that saw two different suspected drowning incidents and two fatal collisions in a 39-hour period – all involving young people.

These incidents include:
On July 18, at approximately 3:40 a.m., an 18-year-old Dauphin male died following a single-vehicle collision on Highway 20 near Road 156 North, in the RM of Dauphin. It appears the driver of the vehicle may have lost control while rounding a corner and went into the ditch.
On July 18, at approximately 12:40 p.m., two boys – ages 13 and 10 – are believed to have slipped into fast-moving rapids at Nutimik Lake in Whiteshell Provincial Park and did not resurface. The RCMP Marine Unit – supported by the Hutterian Emergency Aquatic Response Team (HEART) and Lac du Bonnet RCMP – continue to search for the youths today, with divers searching in the falls while patrols are made along the shoreline.

On July 18, at approximately 2:50 p.m., a 16-year-old male youth from Virden died following a collision in Oak Lake, in the RM of Sifton. The youth had been riding his dirt bike with friends when he struck an unmarked guy-wire.

On July 19, at approximately 9:30 p.m., an 18-year-old male went swimming at a gravel pit in the RM of Hanover, went under the water and didn't resurface. Divers from the RCMP URT joined St. Pierre-Jolys RCMP officers at the scene earlier today.

"The death of any young person is a tragedy that devastates their families, friends and entire communities. We offer our deepest sympathies to those who have been affected by these tragedies," said RCMP spokesperson Melanie Roussel. "We know summers in Manitoba have so much to offer, but we are urging everyone to take precautions and make safe choices — whether you are on the water, on the road or riding off-road."

Additionally, there were some close calls, including:
On July 18, at approximately 5:20 p.m., an off-road

vehicle rolled over on Gosselin Road in the RM of De Salaberry, injuring three youth – a 15-year-old female, 13-year-old female, and nine-year-old male. All were sent to hospital with minor, non-life-threatening injuries.

On July 19, at approximately 2:25 p.m., a motorcyclist lost control of his bike on the off-ramp entering Portage la Prairie, causing the bike to tip over. The 47-year-old driver was taken to hospital with what appeared to be serious injuries but has since been upgraded to stable condition.

The RCMP encourages Manitobans to take the following advice when on the water:

- Don't swim alone;
- Don't overestimate your swimming abilities;
- Be aware of currents and strong waters;
- Never dive head-first into a body of water;
- With children, don't rely on water wings, swim rings and other inflatable toys to replace adult supervision;
- Children should be kept within an adult's sight and reach at all times when in and around bodies of water; and
- Wear a lifejacket while boating or doing water sports.

When driving on the road, motorists should follow the rules of the road, drive to conditions, wear a seat-belt and drive sober.

For people riding on off-road vehicles (ORV), drivers are reminded to:

- Learn about the area you're riding in and ensure you are carrying your cellphone and/or GPS device;
- Tell someone where you're going and when you expect to be back. Better yet, ride in a group of two or more;
- Wear your seat belt if your ORV is equipped;
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Not carry a passenger unless your ORV is designed for two riders;
- No person should be operating an ORV without a helmet – and it must be securely fastened;
- No person under the age of 14 is allowed to operate an ORV unless supervised and accompanied by an adult;
- Not operate an ORV on a roadway. Crossing a roadway is permitted if you hold a valid driver's license.

Paper Cups Now Accepted in Manitoba Blue Bins

By Clara Buelow, Director, Marketing & Communications
MULTI-MATERIAL STEWARDSHIP MANITOBA

Manitobans can now place empty paper cups in blue bins across the province, including empty coffee cups, fountain drink cups, and other hot and cold paper beverage cups.

The change follows work led by Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM) in collaboration with the City of Winnipeg, the Canadian Beverage Container Recycling Association (CBCRA)/Recycle Everywhere, and recycling service providers to review processing requirements, market conditions, and local recycling data before adding paper cups to Manitoba's recycling system. Communities and partners across Manitoba have been notified of this update to the list of accepted materials.

"This is an important step forward for recycling in Manitoba," said Christa Rust, Executive Director of MMSM. "Adding paper cups to the blue bin removes a long-standing exception and makes recycling simpler, clearer, and more convenient."

Paper cups are a common everyday item, but they have historically been difficult for recycling programs to accept because of their liquid-resistant coating and the dyes used in some cups. They can now be accepted because MMSM and its partners have confirmed they can be sorted with mixed paper and responsibly recycled through Manitoba's existing recycling system.

"Adding a new item to a recycling program requires careful review of processing requirements," said Mark Kinsley, Superintendent of Waste Diversion with

the City of Winnipeg. "The City is glad to work with MMSM on this important improvement to recycling."

Here's what Manitobans need to know the next time they have a paper cup to recycle: empty the cup, remove the lid, and put the cup in the blue bin. Coffee cup lids are not accepted in Manitoba's recycling system.

MMSM is working with CBCRA/Recycle Everywhere to support clear and consistent public communication across the province, helping ensure Manitobans receive aligned recycling information whether they are recycling at home, in public spaces, or on the go.

"We congratulate MMSM on the expansion of blue box material coverage," said Ken Friesen, Executive Director of CBCRA/Recycle Everywhere. "Strong collaboration between producers, municipalities, stewardship organizations and the public is essential to building a greener future for us all. We look forward to continuing to work together to improve recovery for Manitoba."

Restaurants Canada has also welcomed the update. "Restaurants are committed to reducing waste and improving recycling. We welcome this practical change, which makes it easier for restaurants and Manitobans to recycle paper cups," said Jillian Rodak, Vice President, Sustainability, Restaurants Canada. "It's a great example of how industry, municipalities and recycling partners can work together to deliver simple solutions that benefit both the environment and the communities we serve."

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SPORTS

COMETS, DODGERS SPLIT OPENING GAMES OF DIVISION FINAL

By Robin Wark
RIVERS BANNER

Neither the Rivers Comets nor the Oak River Dodgers have been able to seize momentum in the South West Baseball League North Division final, with the clubs splitting the first two games of the best-of-five series.

Home field advantage and dominant pitching told the story in the opening two contests of the series. Behind dominant performances from two of the SWBL's premier pitchers, both teams recorded shutout victories, with Oak River winning 6-0 in Game 1 and Rivers responding with a 5-0 victory in Game 2.

With the series tied 1-1,

the best-of-five South West Baseball League North Division final was set to continue with Game 3 on July 21 in Oak River and Game 4 on July 23 in Rivers. If the series remained undecided, a winner-take-all Game 5 would be played July 24 in Oak River.

SWBL North Division Final Game 1

Dodgers 6, Comets 0

Oak River hurler Anthony Friesen delivered a dominant performance on July 16 for the hosts. He struck out 12 and allowed only three hits. Dylan Schroeder batted in three runs for the Dodgers, while Kaden Rozdeba drove in a pair. Aidan Lewis also had an RBI.

For the Comets, Hayden Mackedenski struck out

four. He allowed five runs on seven hits. In one inning of relief, Nolan Wright allowed one run on one hit.

Game 2

Comets 5, Dodgers 0

On July 19, Rivers ace Scott Beever was a force on the mound and at the plate. He fanned 10 batters and allowed just one hit. Beever had a no-hitter going into the seventh and final inning. At the plate, he was two-for-three and drove in two runs. Mackedenski also had an RBI. Rivers took advantage of two Oak River errors.

Rozdeba started for the Dodgers. He allowed four runs, three of which were earned, on three hits over four innings. Schroeder allowed one run on four hits in two innings of work.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

REF TO
WRITER
GERRY
NOLAN



The Toronto Blue Jays who played in the World Series of baseball last season and were expected to easily make the playoffs this year are on the outside looking in. The way the second half has started for them, it's not looking good for the Jays to be in the postseason this time around. The Blue Jays sit in last place in the American league east division with a win-loss record of 46 wins and 53 losses as of this writing, with the Tampa Bay Rays the American league leaders coming to Toronto this week. With only 63 games left on the schedule the Jays will be in tough to make the playoffs. There are several teams ahead of them in the wild card race, but again they trail in the race by a few games.

The first of August is the trade deadline. The question is do they buy or sell?

What has gone wrong for them this year? Injuries have really hurt them; they have played all season really without Addison Barger who hit more than 20 home runs last

year. Bo Bichette left in free agency and is in New York with the Mets.

They have not replaced either one of these bats offensively and are at or near the bottom of the league in hitting. Vladdy has lost his power, only six home runs so far this season. The team as a whole swings and misses at too many pitches that are out of the strike zone.

In a game the other night the pitcher of the visiting team walked the first two Blue Jay hitters in the inning. He threw nine pitches, eight of them were balls. Two runners on and nobody out, it looked like a promising inning. The next two batters that came to the plate swung at the first pitch they saw. One flew out to an outfielder, the other fouled out to the catcher. Two pitches, two outs and the threat of a big inning is over. We have seen this happen too many times this season and nobody seems to be putting a stop to this. What is the Jays manager doing? Why is there no take sign?

This past weekend they lost the first game in a blow out. In the next two games they scored one run and that won't get it done this season. I would think they will be sellers this year in a couple of weeks.

The Blue Jays have some real good players; it is disappointing to watch them struggle. They gave the whole country a lift last season and we thank them for that. Next year Gadget, next year!

BULL RIDING

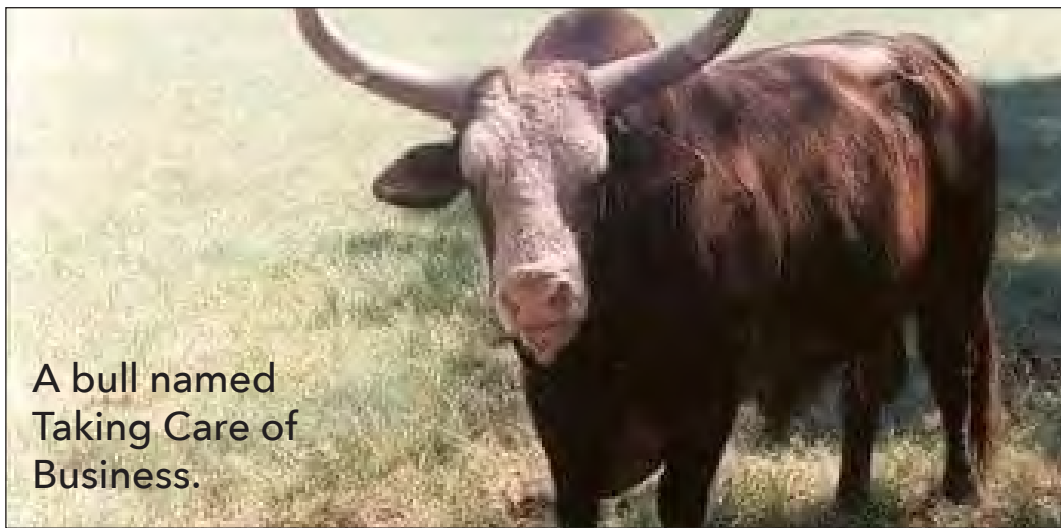


PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK

A bull named
Taking Care of
Business.

By Gerry Nolan
RIVERS BANNER

As you may have guessed by now, I like watching bull riding. The men who ride these animals are some of my favourite people. With the Virden Indoor Rodeo just around the corner, it reminded me again of a bull rider who lost his life. Bull riders may be a little crazy to try this sport or profession, but they entertain us and we love it!

Not all rides are successful, such as the one that Lane Frost took on a bull named "Taking care of business".

Lane Frost was a professional bull rider who died on July 30, 1989. He died from severe

internal injuries he sustained during a pro bull riding event at the Cheyenne Frontier days in Wyoming.

After successfully riding the bull for 8 seconds, Frost dismounted. During the landing the bull turned and struck Lane Frost in the back as he was down on the ground. The impact broke several ribs which severed an artery leading to his heart and caused fatal internal injuries. Lane initially managed to stand up and call for help before collapsing in the arena. He was rushed to a local hospital but was pronounced dead upon arrival, at the age of just 25.

The Lane Frost tragic accident later inspired the wide-

spread adoption of protective safety vests in bull riding and was the subject of the 1994 film, 8 seconds.

Lane Frost had been a professional bull rider for 8 years. On August 2, 1989, his funeral service was held in Atoka, Oklahoma with an estimated crowd of 3500 people in attendance.

In honour of Lane Frost, Tuff Hedeman dedicated his 10th round ride in the National final rodeo. Hedeman rode the bull for an astonishing 16 seconds. Tuff stated prior to the ride, "I am gonna ride him for an extra 8 seconds for Lane!"

To all the rodeos that are going on, stay safe cowgirls and cowboys, and thanks for all the rides!

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Old Sayings

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



Here are a few more of old sayings that you may not have heard in awhile, but it may bring back to your memory other old sayings that have been around for awhile, so here we go. “Well butter my biscuit”. This is a phrase used to express great surprise or delight. It is like saying, I can’t believe it, as you react to unexpected news. Another one that people used to say is, “Well I’ll be a monkey’s uncle”. It was used to express complete surprise, amazement or disbelief upon hearing unexpected news. “Slower than molas-

ses in January”. This is a common meaning used for someone that is extremely slow. It refers to that molasses, which is thick on a good day does, not pour well in cold temperatures. “Never look a gift horse in the mouth”. It really means you should be grateful for a gift or an opportunity without critically examining its flaws. Pointing out the shortcomings for something given to you for free is considered ungracious. Editor Note, I think it was common to check a horse’s teeth

to determine age. So if the horse is free it would be ungracious to question the value of the gift. KW “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throwstones”. It means that you shouldn’t criticize or judge others for faults that you possess yourself. If your own character of behaviour is flawed, attacking others leaves you vulnerable to the exact same criticism. “It costs an arm and a leg”. This simply means something that is really expensive. Even today, almost anything you purchase would fit into that category. Food, fuel, vehicles etc... could fall into this phrase. That’s a wrap for this week. Get out and enjoy the outdoors, but don’t forget the MOSQUITO spray. They are a hungry bunch of varmints!

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Aug 1

Rivers Legion
Bingo 11:30am

50 + Card
Games
1pm



50 + Club
Pool 1pm



Darts Rivers
Legion 7pm



50 + Club
Cribbage 1pm



Rivers Food Bank
9:30 - 11:30am



Rivers Legion
Cribbage 7pm



50+ Floor
Games 1pm



Chase the Ace
Rivers Legion 7pm



2



3

4

RIVERDALE
Municipality
Council Meeting

50 + Club
Pool 1pm



Darts Rivers
Legion 7pm



50 + Club
Cribbage 1pm



6

Rivers Legion
Cribbage 7pm



50+ Floor
Games 1pm



7

Chase the Ace
Rivers Legion 7pm



8