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Vol. 5, Issue 2

Tuesday, January 13, 2025

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LOCAL FAVOURITES TAKE THE STAGE!

Cole Patton and the Blackjacks played a special concert at the Luseland Homecoming Hall on Saturday, Jan. 3. The local musicians have been a crowd favourite at community events and will also perform at Telemiracle later this spring. PHOTO BY DEBRA SCHOLER – THIS LITTLE LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

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Carol Gerle shares some of her treasured memories from the past. PHOTO BY JOAN JANZEN



Carol on far right with her siblings. PHOTO SUBMITTED



Carol standing in front of the house at the experimental station. PHOTO SUBMITTED

From Ceylon to Kindersley: Carol Gerle shares treasured memories

BY JOAN JANZEN

Carol Gerle is a familiar face in Kindersley, having lived here with her husband, Dan, since 1979. She recently took time to share memories from her journey that eventually led her to this town.

She was born in the tiny community of Ceylon, Sask., located 70 miles south of Regina, on December 29, 1942. “I was born in a nursing home, but there was a doctor present. I was a blue baby with a cord around my neck,” she explained. The doctors had given up on her and handed her to her dad before she had taken her first breath. Years later, her dad recalled her birth and said, “I wanted you more than anything else, and I wasn’t giving up.” Carol thrived along with her two older siblings and later a younger sister.

During the latter years of WWII, Carol’s dad served as an instructor in Vancouver for new recruits in the navy. His willingness to learn, along with his farming background, helped him earn the promotion to instructor.

“Mom took the three of us by train to Vancouver for a short visit,” she recalled, though she was too young to remember the train ride.

After the war, her dad was immediately sent home to run a hardware store, which her grandparents had been managing in his absence. Around the same time, he connected with the administrator of Dominion Range Experimental Station in southern Alberta, located 40 miles from Manyberries, Alta. He was soon hired as foreman, and the family moved to the station.

As a preschooler, Carol enjoyed spending her days with her dad while her older siblings were at school and her mom looked after her baby sister. “Because it was a federal experimental station, a lot of war supplies were sent there,” she said, remembering rides

in a war troop truck she called the Big 9. “I remember going to where the little lambs were born, and at sheep-shearing time, I’d help push down the wool in big barrels.”

All the information about the animals was documented and sent to the agriculture department in Ottawa.

“We were self-sufficient at the station,” she said. “There was a gardener who supplied winter vegetables stored in a root cellar, and there was an orchard. The egg man and milk man was also the man who brought ice for the icebox.” Non-perishable supplies were stored in the administration building, where staff worked in offices.

“We had a secretary who boarded at the cookhouse and also cooked for all the single men,” she added. “Many of those men were riders who looked after the animals and fence lines.”

Because it was a federal facility, Carol’s family enjoyed modern conveniences that most people lacked: hot and cold running water, indoor plumbing, and electricity from generators.

“One winter, we were snowed in, and the station was running out of supplies. Dad volunteered to go to Manyberries, 40 miles away,” she recalled. He headed out with a team of horses pulling a sleigh, wearing his brand-new parka. It was bitterly cold, and there were no roads or signs, yet he managed to reach a farm each night where both he and the horses were fed and sheltered.

At one of the farms, her dad traded his parka for a farmer’s coat made of animal hide. On the return trip, the horses broke free from the lines and ran off. Her dad walked to the nearest farm where the horses had been caught and fed. He finally arrived at the station

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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...Carol Gerle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

wearing the hide coat instead of his new parka. "And everyone at the station was saved with supplies for the winter," Carol said.

While Carol learned much from her dad, she didn't gain much at the nearby one-room school. "Our teacher had taken a crash course over the summer and was then sent to this isolated community to teach grades 1-8," she said. "I don't remember any lessons being directed to me." After school, her dad helped teach her how to read.

Carol recalled an unwelcome visitor on the school property—a rattlesnake, common in the area. "We always had antivenom at the station," she said, noting that they often sent rattlesnake tails to cousins in Saskatchewan. Her brother and a friend killed the schoolyard rattlesnake, testing an old saying that "a rattlesnake doesn't die until sundown." After school, its body was gone. "We thought it didn't die, but the teacher may have gotten rid of it," Carol chuckled.

When Carol's oldest sister completed Grade 8, her dad decided to leave his job at the station and move the family back to Saskatchewan so the children could be educated closer to home. Back in Ceylon, he built a home while hauling farmers' cattle to auction in Regina. On each trip, he brought home supplies to finish the house, including all the amenities they had at the station.

"No one in town had indoor plumbing or hot and cold running water. People were amazed!" Carol said.

Her grandpa lived with them and drove the children to school during winter. Nearby was a large skating rink where they learned to skate in hand-me-down skates. "One Christmas, my younger sister got white figure skates. I always had boys' skates, and we were so happy for her white skates we didn't pay attention to our own gifts," she said. "I still have those skates in

my basement."

Carol caught up on her schooling in Ceylon and decided to become a teacher after Grade 12. She attended teacher's college in Regina for one year, then taught at Bradville, 16 miles from Ceylon, while taking classes. At the end of that year, she and Dan married and both taught at Lake Alma, a town of 200. "We would joke and say we taught at L.A.!" Carol laughed. They taught there for three years, commuting 220 miles round-trip to attend one night class. Every summer, they took a class at summer school in Regina or Saskatoon.

Later, Carol taught in Saskatoon while Dan finished his degree. The family moved to Rosetown, where they started their family. "I took night classes once a week while raising my boys and also took a class through the community college. I taught as a substitute while raising my family. Dan taught French, English, and geometry at Rosetown. He was very good in French. People always commented on his excellent French," she said.

Carol and Dan spent the summer of 1967 in Quebec City while Dan took French immersion classes. "It was amazing because that was Expo '67, and so many friends came to visit us," she said. "We saw everything in Quebec and would be tour guides for our friends. It was also strawberry season. It was one of the best times we ever had."

The next step in their journey brought the family to Kindersley in 1979, where they moved into their newly constructed home. "I did substitute teaching, and in the fall of 1982 I started teaching at the private Christian school until 2005 when it closed," Carol said.

Carol has always been a teacher at heart and continues to encourage people and pray with them. If you happen to see her, be sure to tell her you enjoyed hearing some of her treasured memories.



The Better Together group was on hand at the Friday night Klipper game. They set up contests, a carnival game and were tossing Better Together t-shirts to some lucky fans. PHOTO BY JOAN JANZEN

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Sask. author is “an open book”

BY JOAN JANZEN

Saskatchewan resident Chad Mierau felt compelled to share his story with the world. In 2021, he published his first book, *Surviving the Crash*, in which he recalled Jan. 3, 2016, as the worst day of his life. That was the day he received a phone call telling him his sister, her husband, and two young children had been killed in a car accident after being struck by a drunk driver.

“The response to my book has been nothing short of amazing!” Chad said. “I receive many emails, calls, and face-to-face shares from my readers. Most are super supportive and commend me for how I have dealt with such a travesty.”

Chad chose to deal with his personal travesty by forgiving the woman who had caused the deaths of his family members. “Some readers are shocked at how I could possibly find forgiveness. Most are flabbergasted when they learn I have met the drunk driver face to face a dozen or so times,” he explained.

His book recounts two stories. It relays the heartache his family endured and what they went through during their time of loss. But he also felt a duty to help his readers understand what it was like for the accused woman and her children while their mother was in prison for killing four people.

While displaying his book at local markets, Chad estimated about 90 per cent of people who stop to hear his story are shocked that he was able to extend forgiveness. “Some people have to keep moving along because they don’t want to allow the emotions to surface,” he observed.

Chad understands their feelings and admits the tragedy that occurred a decade ago completely trans-



Chad Mierau displays his book *Surviving the Crash: Finding Inner Peace Through Forgiveness*.

PHOTO BY JOAN JANZEN

formed him. The entrepreneur shifted from being primarily business-minded to making daily connections with people and caring about others his main priority.

Consequently, he established Lane 3 Consulting, designed to help others via coaching, mentoring, philanthropy, and charity. “It has not really taken form just yet, but that is still to come,” he admitted. “If I had things the way I want them to be, I would be doing this sort of

work full time for the rest of my life. This is my calling!”

He also feels called to the possibility of writing a second book and is open to helping anyone who contacts him. He said some people ask to be put on the list for his next book when it comes out. “Others simply can’t bring themselves to even read it because it brings up too much emotion or pain they admittedly are not ready to face,” he explained.

Chad understands. The loss of his sister impacted his family unit forever. She was the glue that held them all together, and her absence requires each family member to live more purposefully.

Not only does Chad welcome people to purchase his book, but he also describes himself as “an open book.”

“I would talk to anyone who reaches out and speak at anyone’s function if they saw value in my story,” he concluded.

For more information, contact Chad at saskychad@gmail.com

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Is digital ID about convenience or control?

BY JOAN JANZEN

Do you know why leopards find it difficult to hide? The answer to the riddle is: because wherever they hide, they're always spotted. This week I'll take a look at things hidden within the federal government's budget that have been spotted.

In her December newsletter, MP Leslyn Lewis spotted a major shift in our country hidden inside Budget 2025, using language that is far too technical for most Canadians to understand. Let's face it, the average Canadian won't be reading Budget 2025, but Lewis studied it closely.

Buried within the 636 pages of Bill C-15 is a shift in how things operate in Canada. Lewis noted, "The government is not only automating and outsourcing decision-making to AI; it is also seeking to concentrate power and control in the process and how we are regulated."

On a recent podcast, David Krayden spoke about how the federal government is quietly moving forward with a national digital ID system, slipping the plan into the depths of the 2025 budget where almost no one would notice. On page 490, it says digital services would particularly benefit groups facing barriers due to outdated, paper-based processes, particularly seniors, newcomers, persons with disabilities and rural residents. Lower-income people may also benefit, as these amendments would



Opinion
By Joan Janzen

make it easier to access income support programs and benefits. These amendments would also benefit Canadians by reducing the burden of repeatedly providing personal information across government services.

However, Krayden observed that convenience could easily transition into a form of control, and digital ID is the gateway

to the carbon credit system, where every purchase, trip and choice is tracked.

Krayden showed evidence that the Government of Canada has silently deployed a digital wallet on the Google Play Store for digital ID. Canadians were invited to be the first to try the app in its development stages and provide feedback. At the EU-Canada Digital Partnership Council, cooperation with Canada was reinforced to boost competitiveness, innovation and economic resilience.

An example of how Europe is introducing digital ID was given by podcaster Survival Lily, who lives in Austria. Five months ago, she received a letter from healthcare offering her a monetary bonus; however, in order to receive it, she would need to go to the government website and get her digital ID. "They are slowly forcing the population to use the app, but first they are trying to lure us in with a bonus," she said.

She gave the example of a teacher who was threatened with dismissal if she didn't sign up for digital ID. And

in order for farmers to be able to apply for subsidies offered through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, they require a digital ID.

"The European Union is introducing the digital euro," she added, which will require Europe's citizens to have a digital ID. This digital money wouldn't be at a financial institution. Instead, it will be located directly at the European Central Bank.

"The digital money is programmable," she added, which means there can be restrictions as to where you can use it. "This is where the carbon footprint comes into play, and government overreach."

She displayed a recent news headline which said, "Government agrees on messenger surveillance." She also said citizens are now forced to pay a mandatory fee for government-sponsored television, even if they don't watch it.

Meanwhile in Canada, David Krayden observed that digital ID could be required in order to receive unemployment insurance, for travel, healthcare, in order to vote, and is the gateway to the carbon credit system, where every choice you make is tracked. So is digital ID about convenience or control?

In her newsletter, Lewis said people hear the word infrastructure and usually think it refers to investments in material projects like roads, bridges and buildings. However, the budget has created a new definition of infrastructure, as it directs huge amounts of resources towards digital systems. Lewis notes these systems "will increasingly shape how Canadians live and how govern-

ment operates."

In Budget 2025, the Canada Infrastructure Bank controls \$45 billion in taxpayer dollars and is focusing on expanding "AI infrastructure projects."

Lewis pointed out the creation of an Office of Digital Transformation on page 214 of the budget, a new program to track how Canadians are using digital technologies on page 92, and the modernization of digital compliance systems on page 146.

This is a digital infrastructural overhaul of government quietly introduced without any national conversation. It sounds technical, but what it does is influence how your applications are approved or denied, how you are identified, and how automated systems interpret your actions. Previously, these judgements were made by humans. This shift would take out the human values of compassion, discretion and fairness in decision-making.

Technology is definitely convenient and helpful, but at the same time it can jeopardize personal freedom when decisions are made without any human input.

Lewis emphasizes the impact these changes will have on Canadians, and yet they're hidden within a lengthy budget, so people are unaware and unable to have a say in the decisions that are made.

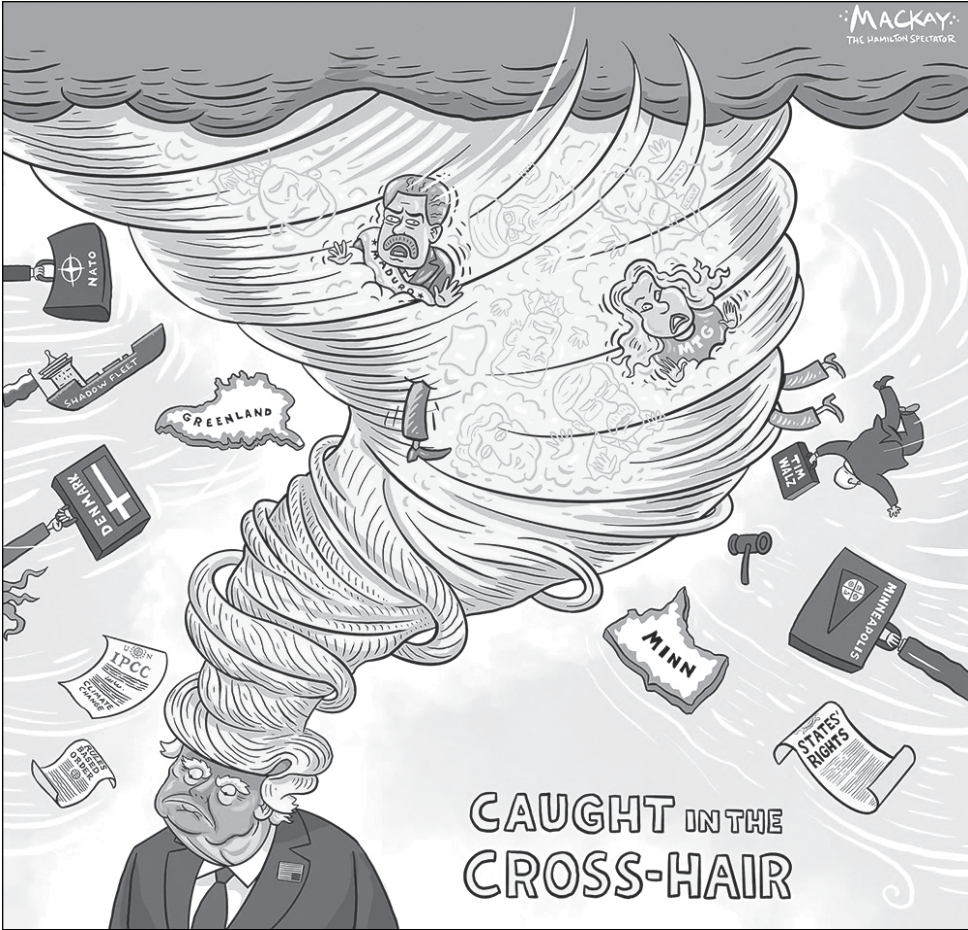
"A redesign of this scale should never be hidden in technical budget language," Lewis wrote. "Canadians deserve full transparency and a real voice in choosing a digital future that strengthens, rather than diminishes, our humanity."

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A fortunate rhythm

BY MADONNA HAMEL

One of the best things about living in Val Marie is: the animals outnumber the people. Critters remind me that I'm just another creature among many. And sometimes, the least dependable creature of all. Animals know when to grow more fur in anticipation of a cold winter ahead, to duck and cover before a storm, to save food for later. They know where to find the shady spots, the bushes with the most berries, the sturdiest trees for the coziest nests, the best route down a steep hill. They know all of this because they don't let hubris or stubbornness get in the way of their decisions.

This comes from observation. When the seasons are announced by birds and beasts, not fashion trends and Giant Sale Events, you get humbled by the brilliant innate awareness of creatures. Not to say animals don't have unique characteristics. The Indigenous belief in animal totem medicine is based on specific character traits inherent in animals. Our totems are animals we connect with, animals who can teach us about our abilities, talents, and challenges.

Left to their own devices, animals will be themselves. And are content to be so. Or so it seems. I'll never really know if a bat secretly wishes it were a butterfly, but I suspect, having seen both



Pop89
By Madonna Hamel

bat and butterfly in action, that they are pretty much occupied with their own style of flying. And eating, sleeping, and dying. They don't complain they could have been something else. While many of us never reach our full potential, butterflies and bats appear to embody their full butterflyness and batness.

Animals don't seem to care how they look, either. They don't fret over their whitening muzzles, their dragging rumps, or withered tails as they age. They don't pester their humans to buy them a step-counter or get them a tum-my tuck. They don't scroll social media posts comparing their insides to every other pet's outsides. What you see is what you get. And they don't, according to vets, try to stave off death when it approaches. Though I'm sure they sense something is coming. Do they know when the end is near? And is it not disconcerting for them because they've never died before, at least not in their doggie memories?

I've known dogs who've wandered off to die. I've come across a dead bison in the Grasslands. I smelled him first. I was walking along a ridge when a mangey scent rose up to my nostrils. My first thought was that I was about to encounter a live bison, as it's happened before, by surprise. Usually we frighten each other and we both gingerly back

away. This one was a young bull who'd probably lost a fight over a mate. One of his horns was broken off and maggots were dining on his chest. He found a place to die in a coulee. I've begun to think I'd like to go that way—if I knew it was the end, I could stride into the park on a cold day and walk till I dropped and fall peacefully asleep.

But meanwhile, I want no regrets. And no desire to be anyone but who I am. If the beasts can do it, and children can do it, then so can I. How do they do it? For one thing, they don't go looking in books for answers. They don't second-guess their sense of wonder. Or their suffering. They don't grieve the road not taken; they play where they are. There's no: if only, what if, woulda coulda shoulda. They follow instinct. And the rhythm of their hearts and the day.

Last night I watched a documentary about the fabulous actress Judi Dench and her love of Shakespeare. She is, as one person put it, a Shakespearean jukebox—she can recite him for hours. Why do you love him so much? she was asked. "It's the rhythm," she said. "It's my heartbeat. It keeps me here."

Animals know that rhythm inherently. It's in the flapping of wings, in the solid thumping of hooves hitting the ground. I believe every day has its own rhythm, and we need to find it and ride it.

And now I'm going to quote myself, so bear with me. This comes from something I wrote for the music magazine No Depression. It's my description of the way musician Kelly Joe Phelps

managed to slip into a relationship with rhythm and how it released him into a connection with his listeners, his music, his own body, and, ultimately, his God:

"His tempo is like that of a mountain stream in spring, melting its way to the sea in the way a kid runs down the staircase on Christmas morning. The joy in the strings makes us giddy. But the words and singing bid us sit by that very stream and watch what lingers on the banks, or how the stones, who have been there for years, day in and day out, find different ways of reflecting the sun's light.

"It takes a light touch in a heavy-handed world to make that kind of absorption possible. It strikes a balance that creates what the mythologist Joseph Campbell calls 'a fortunate rhythm,' when the aesthetic experience comes from beholding the harmonious rhythm of relationships. And when a fortunate rhythm has been struck by the artist, you experience radiance. You are held in aesthetic arrest. And there is an epiphany."

In 1991 I lived in Memphis, where I "held a wake for my bones" by listening to live blues on Beale Street almost every night. In a way, it was like living here, in rural Saskatchewan, exposed to the way animals follow the seasons, un-seduced by the rigid, man-made rhythms of the office and the markets—worlds that demand we move at the same pace, whether it's a hot August day or a freezing January morning. I got my sanity back. I found a fortunate rhythm.

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When a subscription sale sparks a new focus

BY KATE WINQUIST

After the Christmas break, I struggled a bit to find something to write about, which is why I kicked off the new year with a synopsis of columns from 2025. I didn't make many resolutions this year — or at least none that I said out loud — so I wouldn't be faced with the dreaded, "I told you so," from the peanut gallery (you absolutely know who you are).

I have mentioned to several people — family, friends, clients and coworkers — that I intend to be more organized this year. That's a plan I really do need to stick to, especially in this business, where weekly deadlines are not a suggestion. My sister Valarie once said to me, "How do you do it, week in and week out? It would be like having English assignments due every single week."

I suppose I could say the same thing about bookkeepers and accountants — how do you work with numbers all the time? I did take a break from writing over Christmas, but I still had to catch up on my books. It's not my favourite job in the world, but I've learned it's the most important one. After all, creativity is wonderful, but the mortgage prefers cash.

I had an interesting week and, at one point, a great idea for another column — but it involved my Mom. I stopped myself and thought, enough with the Mom stories for a while. Not because she isn't deeply loved and missed, but because even she might say, "Enough



already, Mary Kathryn."

Focus... hmmmm. Photography. I had a lightbulb moment on Wednesday afternoon. It was getting later in the day when a gentleman came into the Kindersley office and asked if he could purchase a subscription to Your West Central Voice. Now, this isn't something that happens every day (although I remain hopeful). He wanted to pay by credit card, so I asked him to come back to my office so I could process it on my computer.

He glanced behind me and noticed a photo of the Dankin elevators — a photo I took back in 2018, when one annex was already gone but the other still stood proudly, as if it knew its days were numbered but wasn't ready to admit it. We chit-chatted while I fumbled around trying to print his receipt, which should not be as difficult as it sometimes is. He mentioned an elevator between Kindersley and Glidden that had been torn down not that long ago. I told him both Inglenook and Sandgren had been gone for many

years. He assured me Sandgren was still around until about ten years ago.

I scoffed. Lightly, but confidently. It turns out Mark — yes, the gentleman has a name — was right.

After he left, I did a quick Google search and discovered Sandgren was demolished in 2014. I even found a Facebook page dedicated to the Prairie Sentinels of the Past. I joined immediately, because of course I did. I'm hoping it inspires me to revisit some of the photos I've taken over the years.

I had three of my photos hanging in my office, which Mark seemed genuinely impressed by. Robert then came in and pulled out three more elevator photos I haven't gotten around to hanging yet — Fusilier, Laporte and Penhold. That was the moment it really hit me: it might be time to dust off my camera again.

I haven't had as much time to enjoy photography this past year. Sometimes, I just like to hop in my vehicle and head out, searching for old buildings, churches and elevators — things that remind us of where we came from, and quietly ask us to remember.

I've long dreamt of turning an old structure into a gallery. I was almost convinced to fix up the Hoosier United Church a couple of years ago. I also had visions of the Kerrobert Library building when it came up for sale, or — when we lived in Brock — the impressive Credit Union building being cleaned up and renovated. These ideas were always met with a resounding "NO!" from Robert, who is very much a realist, while I remain the dreamer (someone has to).

In the meantime, I'll keep focusing on the important things — paying bills and meeting deadlines. But I'll also endeavour to find time to enjoy the photos of my past, and to make new memories for the future.

And for the unexpected inspiration behind this column, thank you, Mark.



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KCS Kobras mark season of firsts

The 2025 season proved to be a milestone year for the KCS Kobras football program, marked by new facilities, new leadership and competitive progress on the field.

After years of fundraising and planning, the team officially opened a new locker room this season. The facility includes 48 player lockers, a coaches' area, equipment storage and a dedicated trainers' space, representing a significant upgrade for the program.

The season also brought change on the sidelines with the arrival of head coach Derek Walde and several new assistant coaches. With an expanded coaching staff and improved facilities, the team entered the season well positioned for growth.

The Kobras carried a roster of 31 players from Grades 9 to 12. Nine Grade 12 athletes completed their final season with the program and were recognized for their commitment before graduating.

Competing in nine-man football for the second consecutive year since returning to the format in 2024, the Kobras opened the season with an exhibition game in Shaunavon in late August. The team finished the regular season with a 2-3 record, earning its first two wins since returning to nine-man play and narrowly missing a playoff berth by one game.

Several close contests highlighted the season, including a tightly contested night game against Delisle



The 2025 KCS Korea Award Winners included (L-R): Giovanni Arnan Outstanding Rookie Award, Preston Carter Leadership Award, Cole Hawkins Special Teams Player of the Year, Jett Douglas Outstanding Lineman Award, Ryan Martin Most Dedicated Award, Kingston Greschner Defensive MVP, Javier Gonzales Offensive MVP. See full team photo on page 4. PHOTOS PROVIDED

during Goose Festival weekend.

Another major milestone came with the introduction of the program's first-ever junior varsity team. Comprised of new players and students in Grades 9 and 10, the JV squad played a home-and-home series with Rosetown and competed in a jamboree. The team finished its exhibition schedule with a 3-2 record, closing the season with a 39-12 win over Rosetown.

The football program thanked its sponsors and supporters for helping make the season possible and providing opportunities for students to participate in the sport. Synergy Credit Union, Richardson Pioneer, Out-

law Equipment, Belitski Contracting, Rosana Farms, Edge Realty, Kindersley Denture Clinic, Holland's Hot Oiling, Whitecap Resources, Teine Energy, Simplot, Tisdale's, Reinbold Electric, RM of Kindersley, Kindersley Co-op and Your Southwest Media Group.

Looking ahead, the Kobras plan to continue building the program in 2026, with a focus on recruiting new players and growing participation. The 2026 season is scheduled to begin Aug. 20, with a week-long spring camp planned for the spring.

Fans can follow the team on Instagram at @kcskobrasfootball and on Facebook at KCS Kobras Football.

Three Saskatchewan credit unions complete merger, creating province's largest credit union

Three of Saskatchewan's largest credit unions have officially merged, creating a single financial institution serving more than 200,000 members across the province.

Conexus, Cornerstone and Synergy credit unions legally amalgamated Jan. 1, forming a new organization with more than \$16 billion in assets under management. The merged credit union operates 57 branches in 50 communities and employs about 1,400 people across Saskatchewan.

The merger marks a significant consolidation within Saskatchewan's credit union system and follows member approval votes held by the three organizations in 2025.

Heidi Schofer, board chair of Conexus Credit Union, called the merger a milestone for the sector.

"It is the exciting start of the next chapter for Saskatchewan's credit union system," Schofer said in a statement. "This merger is also a catalyst for economic growth in our province."

Celina Philpot, CEO of Conexus Credit Union, said the combined organization aims to strengthen local financial services while maintaining cooperative principles.

"Our members are our owners, our profits stay in our communities, and Saskatchewan is the place we call home," Philpot said.

While the legal amalgamation took effect at the beginning of the year, credit union officials say full integration of systems, products and operations will take time. For now, members will continue to bank as usual with their existing credit unions.

Accounts, cards, cheques and digital banking services will remain unchanged during the transition period, according to the credit unions. Members will continue to use the same branches and work with the same advisors while integration work continues behind the scenes.

Branch signage will also remain unchanged for the time being, though a legal disclaimer noting the amalgamation will appear in branches and on official communications. New accounts, loans or investments opened during the transition will reflect Conexus Credit Union as the legal name.

Before the merger, the three credit unions committed to maintaining all existing branch locations, noting there is no overlap in their combined branch

network. Officials also pledged to invest in digital banking, maintain low- or no-fee options, keep decision-making local and reinvest a portion of profits back into Saskatchewan communities.

The merged credit union has committed to reinvesting five per cent of

pre-tax earnings into local communities through sponsorships, volunteering and community support initiatives.

Credit union leaders say additional details about product alignment and system changes will be shared with members as integration progresses.



Conexus CEO Celina Philpot and Conexus Board Chair Heidi Schofer.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

2026 Junior Citizen of the Year Scholarship

JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Over the past four decades, the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, in partnership with SaskPower and the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, has recognized the youth of Saskatchewan through the Junior Citizen of the Year Award.

These prestigious awards are given to youths who:

- Have a positive lifestyle
- Volunteer within their community and school
- Has overcome a personal life challenge (physical, emotional or environmental)
- Have a strong sense of caring and responsibility
- Are between the ages of 8 and 18

This year, four deserving youths will receive a **\$3,000 bursary**, provided by SaskPower, to use towards their post-secondary education.

JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR STEM AWARD

Introduced in 2025, The Junior Citizen of the Year STEM Award will recognize a Saskatchewan youth who contains all the same qualities of a Junior Citizen of the Year but **has an aptitude for science, technology, engineering, or mathematics**. This award is eligible for all students, including but not limited to, young women, and underrepresented communities.

This year, one deserving youth will receive a **\$3,000 bursary**, provided by Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan, to use towards their post-secondary education.

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January is National Hobby Month

BY JOAN JANZEN

January is National Hobby Month, a time to pursue your passions while reducing stress and engaging in activities you enjoy. There are so many options available ... crafting, reading, hiking, or learning to play an instrument. It could also be a time to get back into a hobby you haven’t thought about in a while.

The Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan have a copy of a booklet entitled Knitting Instructions for War Work from the WWII era. During that time, knitters across Canada were called upon to help knit essential items for the war effort. In 1940, the Canadian Red Cross published the booklet, which provided knitters with patterns for socks, sweaters, and hats. Each division of the armed forces had different requirements for what they needed. Even hospitals needed knitted items for recovering soldiers.

You’re never too young to begin a hobby. A couple of years ago, I wrote about McKayla, who taught herself to crochet at the age of nine, simply by researching stitches on YouTube. Fast forward to the present, and she is selling her personally designed stuffies at markets or giving them as gifts.

A visit with a teen named Bennett was so enjoyable as he talked about how he has been writing and producing his own songs since he was 12 years old. Both young, old, and everyone in between can enjoy hobbies.

A few years ago, I visited a rancher who crafted a realistic-looking headless horseman out of scrap iron, which stands on Highway 884 near Veteran. His hobbies also include leatherwork, painting, making jewelry, stone carving, crafting knives and spears, carving wood, and doing taxidermy work on everything from deer to pheasants.

A talented local artist from Luseland paints on canvas and rock with acrylic and oil paints, as well as designing, sketching, and burning felt and suede hats. Sheryl creates beautiful work.

I also met Trina, who transforms chunks of old Saskatchewan farm glass into beautiful ornamental trees and other creations. She’s crafted a forest of hundreds



January is National Hobby Month. During WWII, the Canadian Red Cross called on knitters from across Canada to help knit essential items for the war effort.

PHOTO: PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF SASKATCHEWAN

of ornamental trees in just a few years.

If you enjoy quilting, there are quilting groups in many communities, including Kindersley, Plenty, and Oyen. Or maybe you like ceramics, pottery, or wood-working. After my brother-in-law retired, he began carving life-like animals out of wood, and no one even knew he liked wood carving.

If you love acting, you could join a drama group, or those who enjoy a good book can share their passion by joining a book club. January is the perfect time to begin a new hobby—or revive an old one—during National Hobby Month.

Doddsland and area rallies to rebuild Sports Centre

BY KATE WINQUIST

DODSLAND — Doddsland and surrounding communities have launched a major fundraising initiative to construct a new, modern, and safe facility after a devastating fire destroyed the Doddsland Sports Centre on July 18 of last year. The arena had been a cornerstone of community life for decades, and its loss has left both an emotional and practical void in the region.

The Arena Rebuild Committee has announced the Doddsland Sports Centre Arena Rebuild Campaign, with a fundraising goal of \$12 million. The committee aims to have all funds committed by Jan. 21, 2026, in order to meet the community’s timeline for reopening the rink and getting children back on the ice.

The project already has a strong financial foundation, including \$2,902,818.50 from insurance proceeds and a \$2-million commitment from the RM of Winslow. “We are honoured to invite community members and partners to become foundational sponsors of this effort,” the committee said in a statement.

The new arena is expected to revitalize Doddsland, serving as a hub for recreation, youth development, and community events. Hundreds of young athletes from across west-central Saskatchewan rely on programs hosted at the arena, and without a facility, these opportunities are at risk. Hosting tournaments and events also supports local businesses and jobs.

Major donors will have access to recognition opportunities, including naming rights for the building, dressing rooms, or community spaces. “Rebuilding is about more than replacing what was lost — it’s about strengthening what remains,” the committee noted.

The Doddsland and District Credit Union has joined the effort, offering interest-free personal loans of up to \$500,000 (aggregate) to members wishing to donate. Approved borrowers can access a five-year, 0% interest plan to support the rebuild. For more information, visit the Credit Union, call 306-356-2155, or email info@doddslandcreditunion.com.

An up-to-date list of donors and details about



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the building proposal are available on the Doddsland Sports Centre Facebook page. The committee thanked all who have contributed so far, noting that every dollar brings the community closer to its goal.

With broad support, Doddsland aims to honour its past while building a brighter future for generations of athletes, families, and community members.

Eston welcomes new Fire Department leadership, prepares for community improvements in 2026

BY KATE WINQUIST

ESTON — The Town of Eston is ringing in 2026 with changes to local leadership, updates on services, and plans for infrastructure and community programming.

Fire Department Changes

After more than 50 years of service, Richard Baran has retired from the Eston & District Fire Department. Darryl Elaschuk, who served for more than 28 years, is also stepping down. The town thanked both men for their dedication and commitment to public safety.

Jordan Hutchinson, long-serving deputy fire chief, has been appointed as the new Fire Chief. Mike Hill, formerly a lieutenant, will serve as Deputy Fire Chief. Tyler Mills and JD Bernard have been promoted to captain, while Amber Haug is now lieutenant. The town wishes the new leadership team well in their roles.

Community Events and Celebrations

December’s holiday season was busy with community events, including Win-

Tipping fees at the town landfill increased as of Jan. 1.

ter Kick Off (Santa Claus Day and Minor Hockey Day), Moonlight Madness, and the Christmas Lights Parade. The town reported strong attendance at all events and expressed hope for warmer weather at future outdoor activities.

Taxes, Fees, and Services

Residents are reminded that 2025 property taxes not paid by Dec. 31, 2025, are now past due. Payments can be made by debit, credit, e-transfer, or cheque.

Tipping fees at the town landfill increased as of Jan. 1. Members will pay \$115 per tonne (\$0.15/kg), while non-members will pay \$230 per tonne (\$0.23/kg). Annual water fob subscriptions and restricted animal invoices have been sent to residents.

Approved snow dumping sites are in place to prevent drainage and conges-

tion issues. Sites include 116 3rd St. NE, the southeast end of 1st St. W near the school, and the far south end of Main St. Emergency routes, including 3rd St. W, Main St., 7th Ave., and RCMP access, will be cleared first.

Library Programs

The Eston Wheatland Regional Library offers after-school programs for children, including “Crafternoon” on Thursdays from 3:30–5 p.m. and Lego Days on Fridays from 3:30–5 p.m.

Strategic Priorities for 2026

The town has outlined strategic priorities for 2026, focusing on continuous improvement, customer service, planning, and communication. Key initiatives include:

- Planning for a future community pool and maintaining disciplined contributions to reserves.
- Upgrading infrastructure, including roads, water and sewer systems, parks, and campground facilities.
- Completing the Fairground project, including irrigation installation and

- finishing dugouts.
- Continuing community events such as the Summer Bull Bash and Winter Kick Off.
 - Improving governance through joint committees with the RM of Snipe Lake and reviewing bylaws and emergency measures.

In Memoriam

The town marked the passing of former Mayor Al Heron, who died Dec. 27 at age 90. Heron served as Eston’s mayor from 2006 to 2020 and was remembered as a devoted community member. The town extended condolences to his family.

Community Preparedness

Residents are reminded to be prepared for emergencies and maintain supplies to sustain themselves for at least 72 hours. For more information, visit the town’s website at eston.ca under Emergency Preparedness.

Information taken from Gopher Bites: January 2026



PHOTO BY DEBRA SCHOLER – THIS LITTLE LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Luseland Arts Council launches 2026 concert season

LUSELAND — The Luseland Arts Council kicked off its 2026 concert season with a lively performance by Cole Patton and the Blackjacks on Jan. 3 at the Homecoming Hall.

The band, featuring Ava Watchel and Preston Carter, had the crowd of about 100 tapping their toes to a mix of classic country favourites.

The Arts Council, made up of 13 members plus one junior member, Grade 10 student Laynee Thompson, plans a total of five live performances this year, promising more music for the community to enjoy.



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OPINION

Trump's takeover of Venezuela means Canada needs those west coast pipelines ASAP

BY BRIAN ZINCHUK

Anyone remember when Trump said back on Jan. 23, 2025, "We don't need their oil and gas. We have more than anybody"?

It was in the same statement where Trump was making some of those initial 51st state comments, a couple days after his second inauguration. You know, the ones we were supposed to get our elbows up for.

Well, as of Jan. 3, 2026, he may soon be proven correct, but not in a way you might expect.

For the last nearly 20 years, there's been a maxim of Canadian oil production – even though most of our oil comes from the oilsands, making it heavy and sour, the US will take as much as it can. We just needed the pipelines to deliver it.

That's why we got the original Keystone pipeline built. That's why Enbridge built its Alberta Clipper. That's why crude-by-rail trains rumble past my mom's backyard along one of the CPKC mainlines, through Yorkton.

But we never really asked ourselves why? Why would the US need our heavy, sour crude?

Industry insiders would understand, but the general public likely does not.

It's because the US needed Canadian oil to backfill declining imports of heavy, sour crude from Venezue-

la and Mexico.

Go back in history long enough, and you will find that the US was initially the largest oil producer on the planet (and is again, by the way, despite not being in the highest echelon of oil reserves). But as light, sweet crude production declined, as did American oil production overall, US Gulf Coast refineries retooled to take in what was readily available and close – heavy, sour crude from Mexico and Venezuela.

Venezuela turned out to have the largest oil reserves on the planet, eclipsing even that of Saudi Arabia. Depending on your source, these days the nations with top reserves are, in order, Venezuela, Saudia Arabia, Canada. Some sources say Iran has more than Canada. Whatever. Two of those top three (or four) are within spitting distance of the US of A.

Back in 2002, Venezuela was producing 3 million barrels per day, exporting most of it, and most of that to the United States. By 2020, Venezuelan production had fallen to closer to 300,000 barrels per day, less than Saskatchewan. Now it's closer to 1 million barrels per day.

But since 1998, Venezuela under socialist President Hugo Chavez, and then his appointed successor Nicolás Maduro, became increasingly hostile to the US and American oil companies and services. I distinctly remember talking to folks at the 2008 Lloydminster

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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- Ability to work independently
- Work congenially with office staff and Committee members

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 - Cleaning all surfaces in the offices, boardrooms, and bathrooms
 - Emptying garbage and recycling
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- Accept additional duties as reasonably requested by office staff and Committee members


This is a contract position, and salary will be negotiated. A complete and detailed job description is available upon request.

Applicants should submit a detailed resume, including expected salary, by February 17, 2026, to:

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Specific Skills:

1. Advise ratepayers on how to prevent pest infestation
2. Place and set traps to capture and remove animals if necessary
3. Inspect buildings and outside areas to detect signs of infestations.
4. Neutralize pests through control measures such as pesticide application, baiting and trapping.

Personal Suitability:

1. Effective interpersonal skills
2. Flexibility
3. Team player
4. Reliable
5. Organized

This position will remain posted until filled. Please submit your contract rate, which would include travel, along with your qualifications, certifications and references by mail, email or drop off at the RM Office located at 128 Kingsway Street, Sceptre, SK.

R.M. of Clinworth No. 230
Box 120
Sceptre, SK S0N 2H0
rm230@yourlink.ca

The R.M. of Clinworth No. 230 wishes to thank all applicants for their interest. However, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

7 signs you need help managing your debt

No matter how deeply you're in debt, there's always a way forward. However, to regain your financial footing, you'll need to work with a professional. Here are seven signs it's time to get help dealing with your debt.

1. You pay monthly expenses (bills and rent) and purchase essentials such as food and medication on credit because you don't have enough in your bank account.
2. You take on new debts as a way to pay off old ones.
3. You continually draw on the money you've put aside for a home, retirement or other future purposes.
4. You pay your rent or mortgage late or skip payments due to a lack of funds.
5. You're living beyond your means by continually spending money on non-essential expenses.
6. You're receiving an increasing number of letters, emails and calls from creditors.
7. You have an unhealthy level of stress due to your financial problems.

Your best resource for overcoming debt issues is a reputable credit counsellor or licensed insolvency trustee.

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The R.M. of Clinworth No. 230

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- Repairs of equipment • Backhoe or loader work • Landfill supervision
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Candidate Must Possess:

- Valid class 5 driver's license • Class 3A or 1A would be an asset
- Experience in operation of heavy equipment and mechanical experience
- Pesticide applicator license would be an asset or willing to obtain.

Willing to Obtain:

- Power Mobile Equipment Course • First Aid & CPR • WHIMIS • Rat Control Program

Applicants can submit a resume including:

- Education & Skills • Current Drivers Abstract • Work Experience
- Salary Expectations • Two References

By one of the following ways:

Mail: R.M. of Clinworth No. 230
Box 120
Sceptre, SK S0N 2H0

Email: rm230@yourlink.ca

Fax: 306-623-4229

Applications must be received by March 5, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

The successful applicant will work under the direct supervision and report directly to the foreman. Employment includes benefit package and enrolment in the Municipal Employees Pension Plan. Housing is available in Sceptre.

The RM wishes to thank all applicants for their interest, however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Alzheimer's disease: how to raise awareness about the condition

Do you know someone living with Alzheimer's disease? Have you been diagnosed with this neuro-cognitive disorder? January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month, an ideal time to raise awareness about this important cause. Here are some ways you can make a difference.

Spread the word. Share reliable, up-to-date information via social media about Alzheimer's, such as symptoms, treatments, resources and statistics. You can also spread awareness by email or through your community networks. Use a variety of formats, including infographics, articles, videos or posters. Every format helps get the message out.



Volunteer. Do you have free time and want to get involved? Contact your local Alzheimer Society and offer to volunteer. You might end up helping organize an awareness activity or fundraiser. If possible, encourage your friends, colleagues and neighbours to join you, even if only for a few hours.

Share your experience. Do you enjoy expressing yourself and feel comfortable speaking in public? Share your story as a caregiver or someone with early-stage dementia. Your advice and experiences could

help dispel myths about neurocognitive disorders.

Remember that raising awareness is the first step in fighting discrimination and prejudice against people with Alzheimer's disease. It also helps strengthen their rights and drive policy change.

Visit alzheimer.ca to learn more about the disease and find out how you can get involved.

In January 2025, it was estimated that nearly 772,000 Canadians were living with a neurocognitive disorder.

Classifieds

CLASSIFIED AD RATES
(20 words or less).
\$10.00 plus GST.
Additional words are
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Deadline is Friday noon.
306-463-2211

COMING EVENTS

Saskatoon Farm Toy & Collectible Show at the Saskatoon Western Development Museum, January 16 - 18, 2026. Friday 5pm-9pm; Saturday 10am-5pm; Sunday 10am-4pm. Special features: Farm toys and scenes, construction equipment, vintage toys and much more!

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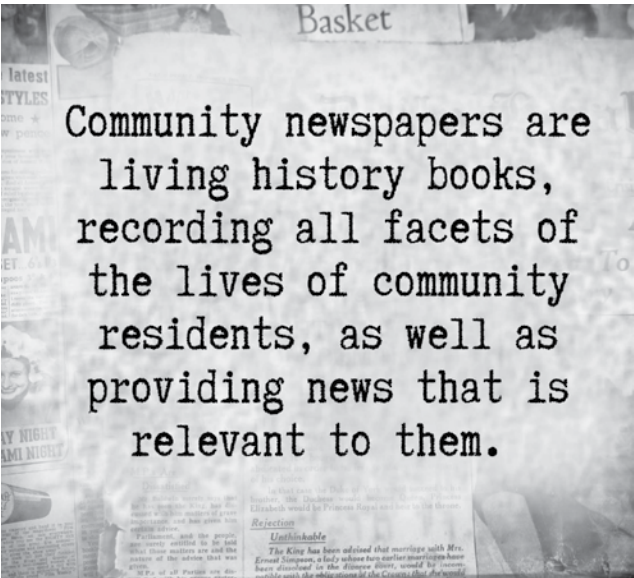
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8:00 PM, Legion Hall, 118 - 2nd Avenue East
AA Upstairs, Alanon Downstairs

Tuesday: Brock AA Meeting
8:00 PM, Vesper Club, 1st Avenue North


Tuesday: Leader AA Meeting
8:00 PM, Leader United Church, 1st St. W.

Wednesday: Eston AA Meeting
8 PM, St. Andrew's United Church, 1st St. W.

Friday: Kindersley AA Meeting
8:00 PM, Lutheran Church, 807 - 3rd Ave. W.

Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday: Kindersley NA Meeting
7:30 PM, 113 Main Street



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Town of Burstall announces new assistant CAO, enacts Public Conduct Bylaw

BY KATE WINQUIST

BURSTALL — The Town of Burstall has appointed Shawna Smith as Assistant to the Chief Administrative Officer following the CAO recruitment process. Smith will begin her new role on Jan. 12, 2026, and will commence online Local Government professional development through the University of Regina to meet the educational requirements for certification as a future Chief Administrative Officer.

Council and administration welcomed Smith to the municipal team, praising her skills and commitment. Tim Marcus of Prairie Rising will continue to serve as CAO during the transition, providing more than 40 years of experience and guidance to the team. Helen Caywood will remain part of the administrative staff in a volunteer capacity, offering continuity and institutional knowledge.

"The Town of Burstall looks forward to working collaboratively with this administrative team as it continues to serve the community," said Mayor Colleen Bodnarchuk in a statement.

In a separate initiative, Burstall Town Council has enacted Bylaw 2025-218, the Public Conduct Bylaw, in



response to an unusually high volume of complaints, many of which have been repetitive, frivolous, or harassing. Council noted that addressing these complaints has increasingly diverted time and resources from core priorities.

The bylaw establishes guidelines for respectful communication with the Town and promotes a workplace free from harassment for council

members, staff, and the public. It addresses behaviours such as unreasonable or unfair conduct, requests for information based on rumours, frivolous or vexatious complaints, and persistent requests that consume disproportionate staff time.

When such behaviour is identified, the Town may issue a written notice requesting that the conduct cease. In cases of severity or continued non-compliance, restrictions on contact with the Town may be applied. Copies of the bylaw are available at the Town Office.

"As we enter 2026, we encourage all community members to engage constructively, share concerns respectfully, and collaborate with us to build a sustainable, welcoming, and forward-looking future for Burstall," said Bodnarchuk.

Council updates policies, approves bylaw, reviews finances

BY KATE WINQUIST

KINDERSLEY— Kindersley Town Council held its regular meeting on Monday, Jan. 5, addressing a mix of policy, financial, and operational matters.

Council approved an updated Cellular Phones Policy for inclusion in the town's Human Resource Policy Manual, reflecting ongoing updates to employee guidelines.

On the financial side, council accepted a total of \$426,614.96 in accounts and \$203,569.58 in payroll,



ensuring town operations remain on track.

A major focus of the meeting was Bylaw 01-26, which sets the rates for water use and wastewater discharge. The bylaw passed all three readings, officially establishing the charges for both consumption and sewage services in the town.

Council also approved the Consent Agenda, which included routine items such as the WSA Permit to Operate and the RCMP report for November 2025, both accepted for filing.

Who are your Welcome Wagon Ambassadors?

BY JOAN JANZEN

Welcome Wagon was introduced in Kindersley during the fall of last year. During these chilly winter months, we are taking the opportunity to introduce members of the Welcome Wagon team. This month, we'll introduce Connie Ness, who lives on a farm near New Brigden.

"I was a newcomer to Kindersley just six years ago, and looking back, it would have been fantastic to have received a package about the town, the activities, and opportunities for involvement in the community," Connie said. "To have a welcome package delivered by a friendly resident would have been a beautiful gift."

Now Connie is pleased to have the opportunity to be that friendly Welcome Wagon representative who visits newcomers to the community. "I have been to



Connie Ness is one of seven Welcome Wagon ambassadors in Kindersley. She resides on a farm near New Brigden. *SUBMITTED*

various businesses in town and have seen the openness of owners to display Welcome Wagon posters and give coupons or items from their stores to add to the welcome packages," she added.

Even though information is readily available to newcomers online and via social media, there's nothing quite like a smile, a friendly greeting, and receiving tangible gifts to make a person feel like they belong in their community.

Connie said she appreciates how Better Together, the Town, local businesses, and Welcome Wagon have partnered to make this a welcoming place to live.

Welcome Wagon in Kindersley is operating thanks to volunteers giving their time and talents, and because of

the generosity extended by local businesses, for which we're truly thankful. If anyone meets a new resident in Kindersley who would like to receive a Welcome Wagon packet, please call 306-500-1173.

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- Retail Sales

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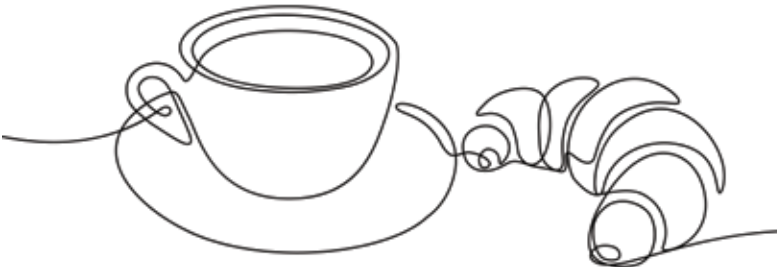
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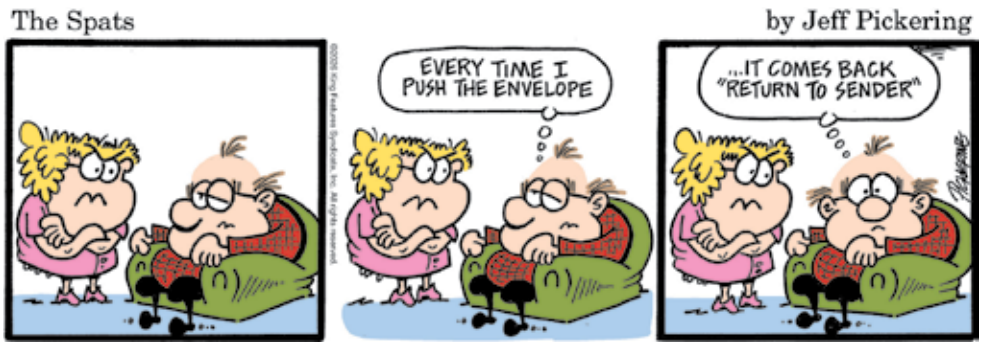
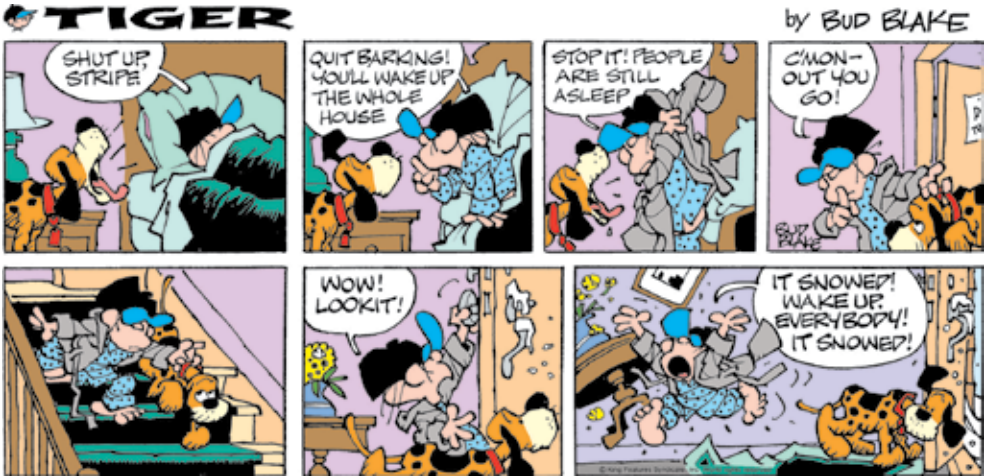
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coffee time

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Band around hat is wider. 2. Blinds are different. 3. Chart is different. 4. Plant is taller. 5. Briefcase handle is missing. 6. Thumb is moved.

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Sketch

5 Old name for France

9 Microwave

12 Top-of-the-line

13 Golden Rule preposition

14 "As I see it," in a text

15 Lady of Spain

16 Teen fave

17 Stannum

18 Out of control

19 Pool unit

20 Faction

21 Humorist

23 Follower (Suff.)

25 Cerebral

28 Car safety feature

32 Tree bumps

33 Unfettered

34 Closed tight

36 Outlaw

37 Summer in Paris

38 Flavor enhancer, for short

39 Aspici shaper

42 Pair

44 Now, in a memo

48 Rock producer Brian

49 TV's Griffin

50 Painter

51 Thesaurus wd.

52 DLI doubled

53 Partner

54 Chopper

55 Diminutive suffix

56 Dance move

8 Texter's guffaw

9 Tubular pasta

10 During

11 Corn concoction

20 Coerces

22 Map feature

24 "The Da Vinci Code" monk

25 Small ammo

26 Wish undone

27 Coach

29 Physique

30 "— was say-day ing ..."

31 Retrieve

35 Sense

36 Low-budget flick

39 Small plateau

40 Cameo stone

41 Single

43 Legal document

45 Plane reservation

46 Pot starter

47 Incubator noise

49 Bovary's title (Abbr.)

DOWN

1 Baby's father

2 Leeway

3 Part of A.D.

4 Easily swayed

5 Culpable

6 Forever —

7 Perfect place

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

Solution time: 21 mins.

Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. GEOGRAPHY: What is the name of the festival of lights that's celebrated in some European countries as the start of the holiday season?

2. MOVIES: Which actor played folk singer Pete Seeger in "A Complete Unknown"?

3. SLOGANS: Which company uses the advertising slogan "The Best a Man Can Get"?

4. HISTORY: What was the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention about?

5. TELEVISION: What is the name of Liz Lemon's show in the sitcom "30 Rock"?

6. SCIENCE: What kind of substance does Boyle's law govern?

7. FOOD & DRINK: What is the primary ingredient in the Italian dish calamari?

8. LITERATURE: Which Shakespeare play introduces the characters Beatrice and Benedick?

9. MATH: What kind of number is pi (3.14)?

10. MUSIC: What is the name of the house band on "The Tonight Show"?

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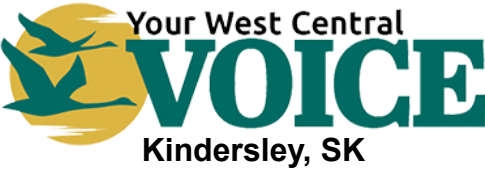


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MP Patzer Hosts Municipal Forum in Kerrobert

KERROBERT — Federal MP Jeremy Patzer met with municipal representatives from across west-central Saskatchewan on Thursday, Jan. 8, at the Prairieland Community Centre in Kerrobert. The West-Central Saskatchewan Municipal Forum was sponsored by the R.M. of Mariposa No. 350, the Town of Kerrobert and the Town of Luseland.

The forum invited municipalities newly added to Patzer’s Swift Current–Grasslands–Kindersley riding following electoral boundary changes in the 2025 federal election. Patzer said he was eager to connect with new municipal representatives from the rural municipalities and towns now in his riding.

Mayor Kathy Wurz of Luseland and Reeve Jeremy Welter of the R.M. of Mariposa No. 350 delivered greetings to the group, which included representatives from about 20 municipalities. An open-mic session followed, allowing participants to raise questions and concerns on a range of issues, including property crime, RCMP staffing and funding, federal infrastructure cost-sharing programs, tariffs, foreign aid, and the downloading of health responsibilities onto lower levels of government.

Patzer said the forum provided a valuable opportunity to identify shared challenges, raise concerns, and exchange perspectives that can inform federal advocacy and action.



In the photo: Mayor of Kerrobert Mike Mitchell, MP Jeremy Patzer, Mayor of Luseland Kathy Wurz and Reeve of the R.M. of Mariposa No. 350 Jeremy Welter.

Eston 95 Lions support local kids and community

Lion President Nicole McCormac recently presented a cheque for \$1,360 to Eston Recreation Director Eric Rutherford to support the Eston Kids Can Play program. The funds were raised in November through a Lions soup sale, and the club is pleased to help local children participate in sports and recreational activities.

The Eston 95 Lions also extend heartfelt thanks to the community of Eston and surrounding areas for their generous donations to this year’s Christmas Hampers. A total of 103 recipients received hampers, and the club raised \$19,570. Your continued support makes a real difference.



Finally, congratulations to Myrna Hauta, winner of the Annual Christmas Eve Ring Draw! Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets to support the Eston 95 Lions Club.

St. John’s United Church installs commemorative gate



LUSELAND — Luseland St. John’s United Church has completed the installation of a new cemetery gate, marking a special tribute to the centennial of both the church and the United Church of Canada.

The project was funded through donations collected during the church’s centennial celebration in June. The gate, described as a “beautiful work,” was designed and crafted by Trevor and Travis Kasas, who also straightened and reinforced the existing gate while constructing the new additions.

Volunteers played a key role in the installation. Brad Schlosser used a skid steer to install screw piles, Travis Kennedy contributed with his picker truck to position the sign, and Bill Holton assisted with the installation.

The completed gate will serve as a lasting landmark, honouring the church’s history and community for generations to come.



The Prairieland Players presented a donation to the Town of Kerrobert to support the Prairieland Community Centre. The cheque for \$2,328.26 represented the proceeds from the 2025 dinner theatre “Scenes from the Carol Burnett Show”, when the community came together for two nights of laughs and entertainment. The Prairieland Players make a positive impact while simultaneously giving back to their community. Shauna Meek (right) presents the cheque to Town of Kerrobert CAO, Tara Neumeier. PHOTO COURTESY PRAIRIELAND PLAYERS

REMEMBERING WHEN

The indestructible little dog

One Saturday when my brother was young, he was invited into town for a winter playdate by a couple of his friends. There was a hill close to where his friends lived, and they made plans to spend the entire day tobogganing on the hill along with most of the other kids in the neighbourhood.

The hill usually attracted most of the local kids in the area, who spent many happy winter days barreling down the hill on Krazy Karpets, assorted sleds, and even large pieces of cardboard—anything that would fly down the hill at the usual breakneck speeds that kids loved. My brother brought along his own Krazy Carpet, and he and his friends had a fun time that morning.

When my brother and his friends took a break from tobogganing to go back to their place for lunch, their mom had the traditional Canadian winter fare prepared to warm up the kids: Campbell's tomato soup, grilled cheese sandwiches, hot chocolate with marshmallows—that sort of thing. Very Canadian, very tasty, and very warming and welcome on a cold winter day.

After finishing lunch, everyone went back over to the hill for more tobogganing fun.

And everywhere my brother's friends went, they were happily accompanied by their family dog. A small, long-haired dog, breed unknown, he loved to play with his children and reveled in every moment he spent with them.

Wanting to be a part of every moment of the fun, the dog loved to run up the hill with the kids, and when they hopped back on their sleds and barreled down the hill again, the dog loved to run alongside them, tail wagging, sharing in the joy of a children's moment in that special way that only a happy dog can.

After running down the hill happily chasing one of his kids, he saw his other kid up on the top of the hill preparing to come down. He began to run up the hill again to meet his other master.

The kid started down the hill on his Krazy Carpet. As he built up speed, he saw his dog running up the hill straight towards him. The kid quickly began to realize what was about to happen. He frantically tried to wave the dog out of his path as he barreled down



Remembering When
By Keith Schell

the hill. When his master was almost upon him, the dog finally began to realize what was about to happen. He turned tail and began to run down the hill! But rather than running slightly off to one side and to safety, he ran straight down the hill, still in the path of his master, as his kid on the Krazy Carpet got closer and closer.

Finally, his master on the Krazy Carpet overtook the little dog and ran him over! When the dog came out the back of the Krazy Carpet, he rolled and rolled until he finally rolled down to the bottom of the hill.

Because the scene looked like something out of a canine comedy farce, many of the children were innocently laughing at the poor dog as he got run over by his master on the Krazy Carpet.

But the laughter ceased very quickly when the dog stopped rolling and lay very still in a heap at the bottom of the hill.

The scene got very quiet. The dog wasn't moving. The kids on the hill held their breath in concern for the little dog.

But after a moment, and to everyone's relief, the dog stirred. He stood up at the bottom of the hill and vigorously shook his head to clear it.

And after his head had cleared, God's "canine reset button" kicked in: the dog's eyes lit up again, the tongue lolled out, the tail started wagging, and the doggy smile returned.

And then the little dog joyously ran full speed back up the hill again towards his children, happy to be a part of what was happening and more than willing to do the whole thing all over again.

I have no doubt that the little dog was probably more than a bit sore when he went home that night. But it was a happy type of sore—the type of sore that any loving dog would gladly trade off in exchange for spending the entire day doing what a dog was meant to do: joyously playing with children. It was the type of sore that comes from being a beloved and integral part of your children's lives and having the loving willingness to occasionally accept the accidental mishaps that might happen in the name of doggy loyalty and unconditional family love.

And even though he got accidentally run over that day by his own kid flying down the hill on a Krazy Carpet, you could never truly crush the indefatigable spirit of the loved and loving family dog—truly an integral part of a happy, functional family and forever devoted and destined to be every child's best friend.

Saskatchewan's 911 Highlights of 2025

Lost phones, loud snorers and pork chop crimes

Saskatchewan RCMP Operational Communication Centre employees provide a critical service within the RCMP by supporting both public and officer safety. In 2025, calls ranged from misdials and false alarms to serious incidents regarding matters of public safety.

"We release our annual list to remind people that misusing 911 can delay emergency responders from reaching someone in a life-threatening situation," says Jocelyn James, manager of the Saskatchewan RCMP OCC. "Saskatchewan RCMP 911 call-takers and dispatchers answered 422,378 calls this year – an increase of 15 per cent compared to 2024. Every moment that we're spending speaking with someone who is complaining about their family member's loud snoring is a moment that could have been used helping someone in a serious emergency."

Here are the top 10 calls that "missed the mark" in 2025:

10. End of the roll: A frustrated individual called to complain that they were out of toilet paper.
9. Rocky road: 911 dispatchers received a call from an individual that was upset because they had to drive their expensive vehicle through a construction zone.
8. Are you there? A caller advised that they called 911 because the TV show they were watching inadvertently triggered their phone to place the call.
7. This isn't an aisle: An individual called to complain that someone left a shopping cart in their driveway.

6. Where to next: A frustrated individual called looking for a phone number for a taxi service.
5. Don't get into a spin: 911 dispatchers received a call from a concerned individual about their neighbours not following the rules of laundry day.
4. Order up: An individual called to complain that a restaurant was taking too long to make their lunch.
3. Zzzzzz's: 911 dispatchers received a call from an individual because their family member's loud snoring was keeping them awake.
2. How dare you: A frustrated individual called because their friend cooked their pork chop without permission.
1. Can you send a pin? 911 dispatchers received a call from an individual saying they had lost their phone and were wondering if an officer could give the phone a call so they could hear it. (Read that again...)

Please remember: whether you're out of toilet paper, upset about your late lunch, or you've lost your phone – these are not reasons to call 911. Doing so must be reserved for life-threatening emergencies and crimes in progress.

Saskatchewan RCMP would like to remind the public that there are ramifications for those who misuse 911. Not only is there a chance of preventing someone with a life-threatening emergency from getting help, there is also a summary offence charge under the Emergency 911 Systems Act with fines up to \$2,000.

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Upcoming

EVENTS

ALSASK
SATURDAY, JANUARY 17
• Ukrainian New Year Celebration. Kaiser tournament at 1:00 PM. \$5/person entry. Cash prize. Supper served 5-9 PM featuring homemade perogies, sausage and veggies for \$25/plate or \$10 (under 10). Help support the Alsask Drop-Inn Centre (206 Main St). Contact Dave at 306-463-0169 for more info.

EATONIA
- Every Thursday from 11:30 AM -1:30 PM come to the Eatonia Library for puzzles, visiting and grab your books for the week!
- Check out our TOPS Chapter ... it's free to try! Every Wednesday. Weigh in: 5:45 PM. Meeting: 6:00 PM at Corcoran Place. Contact Cora Knuttila 306-460-9047.
- The Lions Club meets on the last Tuesday of each month.
- The Rec Board meets the second Monday of each month 7:00 PM at the Town Office.
- Town Council meet the second Tuesday of each month 7:00 PM at the Town Office.

ESTON
- Wheatland Centre Potluck Supper fourth Friday of each month 6:00 PM. \$5.00. Bring your own utensils. Coffee & tea provided.
- Wheatland Centre Bingo - 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month 7:00 PM. Regular Bingo plus Bonanza, 50/50 Draw. Must be 14 years of age. Call 306-962-7117 (ask for Linda) for more info.
- Every Monday - Adult Exercise Program 10:00-11:00 AM at the AGT Community Centre
- Make sure to check the AGT Community Centre recreation calendar on eston.ca for ice schedule.
- Drop in Bowling Sundays 1:00-4:00 PM. \$5 bowling. No need to book, just drop in.

HOOSIER
- Sunday Service Hoosier Community Church 10:30 am at the Community Hall. Contact Joel Hamm 306-460-7056 or Curtis Kornelson 306-460-7327.

KERROBERT
- MS Support Group at Kerrobert Health Centre Meeting Room every 3rd Saturday 2:00-4:00 PM. Contact Gail Wiebe for more information 306-834-7068.
- Walk This Way Group Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-11:30 AM
- Walk This Way with Lao Thursdays at the PCC from 9:30-10:30 AM. Everyone is welcome and it's FREE.
- Shuffle Club Mondays at the PCC 1:30-3:00 PM
- Winter Wear Drive ongoing until March. Drop off at the Seniors Hall Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30-11:00 AM. Contact Yvonne at 306-834-8292 if you need an item.
- Make sure to check the Kerrobert Memorial Arena schedule for upcoming games.

KINDERSLEY
SATURDAY, JANUARY 24
• Kindersley Screen Arts presents "Deliver Me From Nowhere" (Bruce Springsteen) 4:00 PM at the Sunset Theatre. \$10 cash at the door. Wine & Beer available for purchase.

- Parkinson's Support Group Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month 1:30 PM at 401 - 4th Ave West (New Life Church). Everyone welcome! For more info call Nancy at 306-463-4514.
- Monday Night Jam Sessions at the Norman Ritchie Community Centre. Doors open at 6:30 to set-up, then the fun begins at 7-11 PM. Call Keith 306-460-8633.
- Interested in a support group for weight management? TOPS meetings; every Monday at 6:00 PM in the Kindersley Senior Centre OR contact Jill at 306-463-4210.
- Pickleball meets Sunday & Wednesday evenings 7:00 PM at Elizabeth School for the indoor season. Cost is \$50 for the season or \$5 drop in. Our club is a part of Pathway To Wellness. More info call Teresa Knight 306-460-7304.
- Fit Fighter Group Class. Helping individuals with Parkinson Disease, Fibromyalgia, MS, Arthritis and mobility issues. Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00 PM at Anytime Fitness. Call Karen 463-3607 for more info.
- 365 Kindersley Air Cadets meet Thursday evenings

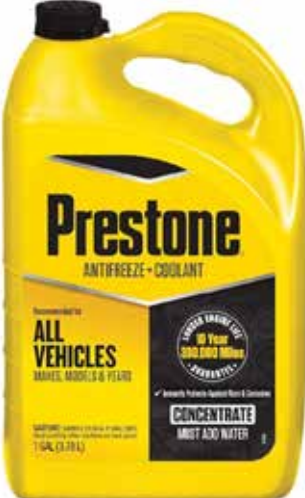

at the Kindersley Museum. No charge to be a member, youth ages 12-18, must be a Canadian resident. Contact Ian Kehrer via text at 306-460-0057 or Sheila Kehrer via text 306-604-9044. Come Fly With Us!
• Every Tuesday: Community Badminton 6:30 - 9:00 PM at Westberry School. Everybody welcome.

LEADER
- Make sure to check out the G3 Iceplex Arena Schedule online at leader.ca
- Community Walking Club Monday - Thursday 7:00-8:00 PM at Leader Composite School (Use student parking lot door). You must pre-register at the Town Office.
- Community Badminton SUNDAY evenings 6:00-8:00 PM. \$2/Sunday at the LCS Gymnasium (use student parking lot door). Under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Racquets and shuttles available.

LUSELAND
- The Luseland Homecoming Hall will be available for indoor walking on TUESDAY & THURSDAY mornings. Please pick up the key at the Town Office to unlock the door. Silver collection at the door.
- The Luseland Library Art Gallery has a new exhibit on display: A Collection of Sketches featuring Local Artists.
Recurring events at The Luseland Pioneers Club Members
- Monday-Saturday 8:30 AM - Noon, Coffee, Pool, Visiting, Cards
- Cards are played several days of the week
- Third Friday of the month Birthday Lunch at noon
- Exercises 9:00-9:30 Am Monday, Wednesday, Friday

MAJOR
- MS Support Group at Kerrobert Health Centre Meeting Room every 3rd Saturday 2:00-4:00 PM. Contact Gail Wiebe for more information 306-834-7068.
- November / December Church Times 5:30 PM Saturdays.

Got an event coming up?
Let us know about it!




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