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# **Welcome to the Town of Lac du Bonnet**

Hello and welcome to the Town of Lac du Bonnet – where quality of life and opportunity live.

Our forebears knew this well. Our home and the Winnipeg River has been a stopping place and seasonal residence for Indigenous peoples for thousands of years, travelled by the Voyageurs and Métis, and is now a strong community for everyone to explore.

Our community is located on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

Lac du Bonnet is a hub for four seasons of activities located on the historic Winnipeg River. Our unique location provides access to trails for hiking, cross country skiing and motorized use with a well-established system and planned expansion in the works.

Water-based activities are nearly unlimited with our jointly-municipal maintained boat launch providing access to some of the best multi-species fishing in Manitoba. Enjoy the day at the new town dock and beach; the water is great!

Community sports and artistic activities abound in our venues with curling, hockey, bowling, baseball and social community events.

For music lovers, The Listening Room at the historic St. John's Anglican Church is a regular venue for live music and recitals, and of course the Fire & Water Music Festival occurs every August at

the Lakers Recreation Area.

Our schools and facilities provide a safe environment for learning and fun for everyone. The services and businesses located in our community can supply almost all of your wants and needs whether visiting or planning on making Lac du Bonnet home.

In the summer, everyone in the region comes to the Lac du Bonnet Farmers Market on Saturdays; the largest social and commercial event in eastern Manitoba. Locally grown produce, products by artisans and service providers gather to showcase their amazing goods and delicious foods, art and services to a very large and appreciative clientele.

You can't miss the annual Lions Canada Day Weekend for the best fireworks in rural Manitoba along with various activities and a fun parade, and an annual classic car show.

With our partners in the RM of Lac du Bonnet, we are creating a new approach where change and opportunity is flourishing in our entire community. We are after all, from Lac du Bonnet. Come and be part of it all.

Ken Lodge, Mayor  
Town of Lac du Bonnet



# **Welcome to the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet**

On behalf of Council and staff, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet.

Lac du Bonnet is situated a short scenic drive northeast of Winnipeg and we take great pride in our region being a "Four Seasons Playground" with something for all to enjoy. Our municipality is a sparkling gem, with beautiful lakes and rivers, stunning sunsets, and great people to meet.

When it comes to outdoor seasonal activities, our region has something for everyone!

In the summer, you can take to the Winnipeg River, Lake Lac du Bonnet, Lee River and Pinawa Channel to enjoy our countless kilometres of scenic waterways or tee up at our region's many first-class golf courses. If fishing is your passion, you can book a fly-in trip or try your luck in our local waters, which play host to professional tournaments.

If you enjoy nature, come walk a section of the Trans Canada Trail and view the abundant wildlife or take a hike in one of our nearby Provincial Parks. Or come camp at one of our many campgrounds for some quality family time.

If you enjoy history, you can get a glimpse by stopping at our regional Museum or the Old Pinawa Historical Provincial Park. If you're into aviation and can fly, check out the Lac du Bonnet

Regional Airport and learn about our rich aviation history.

In the winter, you can snowmobile our vast network of the best-groomed trails, snowshoe and cross-country ski our region's wilderness trails, or enjoy a session of ice fishing at the Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Association's trout ponds.

Visit our website at [www.rmoflacadubonnet.com](http://www.rmoflacadubonnet.com) to plan a day or weekend trip for you, your family or friends! Check out the RM of Lac du Bonnet website's Recreation tab for activities that appeal directly to you!

In the months ahead, we would be more than happy to welcome you to our region and community. After coming to visit us once, you may just find that you want to stick around. Many folks have come for a visit but ended up "staying for a lifetime."

On behalf of Council and our committed municipal staff, I extend everyone a warm Lac du Bonnet welcome. We look forward to seeing you in 2025!

Warmest regards,  
Loren Schinkel, Reeve  
RM of Lac du Bonnet



# Welcome to Lac du Bonnet Living

Welcome, readers, to the 12th issue of Lac du Bonnet Living.

Tourism is an important component of Lac du Bonnet's economy. To compliment that, we at Clipper Publishing Corp. – publishers of the Lac du Bonnet Clipper newspaper – annually print a full-colour tourism guide focussing on Lac du Bonnet and area while highlighting places of interest, recreational opportunities, events, culture and local history.

Under the current political climate of international tariff trade wars and a Canadian travel advisory warning people not to travel to the U.S. at this time, tourism experts predict 2025 to be a summer of rediscovery for Manitoba, the Winnipeg River corridor and what this **four-season playground** has to offer.

We would like to give special thanks to all those individuals who volunteered their time, supplied photos and articles, and shared their knowledge and professional experience to shape this publication.

Enjoy.

Mark T. Buss, Candace Kekish and Marlene Hrysió

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"Northern Flicker Baby in Nest"

by Rick McGregor

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# Lac du Bonnet

**One Community, Endless Possibilities!**

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**Our community is beautifully  
nestled in lush boreal forest and the  
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Enjoy snowmobiling or ice fishing in the winter along with cross country skiing and the option to skate indoors or out. In summer, boat the Winnipeg River and Pinawa Channel, bike the Granite Groove Out, hike to the top of Blueberry Rock, or take a leisurely stroll on one of our many trails. The Town beach features a large public dock and play structure that is in close proximity to many great restaurants and shops that showcase our welcoming personality.

Living in Lac du Bonnet will keep you busy as our community offers a variety of organized sports for people of all ages, such as hockey, pickleball, curling, yoga and more. We ample resources and programs available to all regardless of age or interest.

Community events like Canada Day celebrations, the Fire & Water Festival, Harvest Festival, LdB Ice Fishing Derby, and holiday activities are just some of our annual signature events you will not want to miss.

Our community thrives on our small-town environment, big hearts, and year-round community spirit. No matter the season, there is always plenty on offer. We invite you to join us and enjoy what makes Lac du Bonnet so spectacular and a wonderful place to live or visit.



**[www.lacdubonnet.com](http://www.lacdubonnet.com)**



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Photo: "Wood Duck Male" by Rick McGregor

# Emberley's Efforts Take Flight

## Lac du Bonnet aviation historian guides restoration of Junkers F-13

On July 23, 1933, pilot Bill McCluskey climbed into the cockpit of The City of Prince George, a Junkers F-13 aircraft, to take off from McConnell Lake, B.C., with three passengers.

The plane had only been airborne a short distance when McCluskey lost control and crashed in dense bush just south of the lake.

The plane was a wreck, but "except for a few scratches, no one was injured," McCluskey wrote in his official report to Junkers.

Thanks to decades of dedicated work by Lac du Bonnet resident Gord Emberley, the plane has been salvaged and is scheduled to go on display at the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada sometime this year.

When Emberley first saw the wreck in 1981, he thought, "We found it! Just like he'd flown it in, but the wings were gone."

Emberley and Keith Olson, two of the museum's founders, had been given the plane's exact location by bush pilot Gerry Norberg. Norberg spotted the plane's remains from the air in the summer of 1972, when he was flying for BC Yukon Air Service.

"My initial thought was, gee, there isn't much there... just the fuselage and bits and pieces of mangled-up metal," recalled Norberg, who went on to fly for Air Canada. "I never dreamed somebody would be interested enough to go and get it,"

"When Gord Emberley and Keith Olson decided, 'We've got to go and get this,' – Gord being the main driver of the thing – they went and got it," he says.

A local helicopter pilot volunteered to airlift the

fuselage out to the tractor-trailer waiting on the highway. The next day, the helicopter pilot donated another hour to the cause, dropping Emberley in on various trappers and prospectors who had taken pieces of the plane over the years.

"We found the handle off the back of the airplane, where it assists you to step on the wing to get into the airplane. It was on a biffy door," Emberley laughs.

A trapper took one of the floats, "cut the stern off and installed a one-cylinder engine and propellor. He had

made a little motorboat out of it. I wouldn't take his boat. I left it and we took out one float," he said.

Over the years, Emberley also found the plane's original radiator and got the original passenger and pilot seats donated by the people who had kept them. The pilot seat had its original mohair.

"It was in beautiful condition," Emberley said.

The Winnipeg museum's announcement of its

recovery of the Junkers F-13 aroused international interest.

The plane was designed by German engineer and entrepreneur Hugo Junkers and built by his company in Germany between the two world wars, according to the 2012 book *The World's First All-Metal Airliner*.

Two of the planes were bought and operated by the Air-Land Manufacturing Company for use in northern British Columbia.

Because of its importance to German aviation history, the director of the Deutsches Technikmuseum, the German Museum of



*Keith Olson (left) and Gord Emberley front the Junkers F-13 recovered from McConnell Lake, B.C. for the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada.*

*Photo: Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada*

Technology, came to Winnipeg with a generous offer. The German museum would pay for the restoration of the plane, in return for half-ownership. Originally, the plane would have spent five years in Germany, then five in Winnipeg.

But when a similar Junkers aircraft was discovered near Ear Falls, Ont., the German museum agreed to restore both in return for full ownership of the second one.

At the German museum's insistence, Emberley went back and got the second float from the trapper.

All the parts were shipped to the International Aviatik Museum Foundation (IAMF) in Hereg, Hungary, a metal and machine shop that specializes in restoring aircraft from that era. All the pieces have been either restored or replicated and shipped back to the museum in Winnipeg, awaiting reconstruction.



*Starfighter historian Steve Pajot (left), Gord Emberley, former Starfighter pilot Merv Kuruluk and Keith Olson review the final pieces as they were unloaded at the museum.*

*Photo: Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada*

Norberg calls Emberley's leadership in the Junkers project "huge."

"I don't think anything would have happened without his guidance and his interest in getting things moving. I don't think we would have done it without Gord. The airplane would probably still be up there beside that lake."

Emberley, who jokes he will be "97 pretty soon, God willing," was named a Member of the Order of Canada in 1995. The citation reads, "His tireless efforts in locating, retrieving and restoring vintage aircraft have been vital in helping to preserve our country's aviation heritage."

When Emberley received the Order, he told the Governor-General, "I'm the vehicle. Even though I was the founder, if it hadn't been for the volunteers, the museum would never have existed. I always give them the credit."



*Over the years, Emberley tracked down the plane's original radiator, floats and got the original passenger and pilot seats donated by the people who had kept them.*

*Photo: Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada*

"There's lots of stuff in a couple of big crates, all the float parts, struts and pieces, and there's no directions," Norberg said. "We've got a huge jig saw. We haven't started putting it together yet. That's very soon."

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# 100 Years of Aviation in 2026

by Jennifer Strassel

Lac du Bonnet has witnessed the evolution of air transport. From the flying boats of the 1920s to the varied fleets of today, airplanes continue to operate out of the oldest airbase on the Winnipeg River, and utilize flight paths that have been in use for over 100 years.

The following are teasers from my forthcoming book 100 Years of Aviation in Lac du Bonnet, 1926-2026, a combination historical text and photo book that documents Lac du Bonnet's unique aviation heritage. This book has an anticipated release in Spring 2026, to coincide with the official 100 year anniversary of the arrival of the RCAF in Lac du Bonnet.

There's still time to be a part of 100 years of aviation history in Lac du Bonnet. I welcome stories from pilots, mechanics, passengers and anyone involved in Lac du Bonnet aviation from the 1920s through today. Feel free to share light-hearted moments, thought-provoking incidents, or memories passed down through the generations. Anything that shows the uniqueness of bush flying.

I am also looking for photos of anything involving Lac du Bonnet aviation: people, places, airplanes, etc. from the 1920s to today.



Submissions are open on my website until Sept. 1, 2025. To be notified about book updates and pre-orders, join the mailing list at <https://jenniferstrassel.com/aviation>

## THE FIRST PLANES - 1921






A single engine Curtiss HS-2L flying boat at Lac du Bonnet, July 1921. G-CYDS was based at Victoria Beach.

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# *100 Years of Aviation* continued

In 1921, the Canadian Air Board (the precursor to the RCAF) established a base on Lake Winnipeg at Victoria Beach. During the summer, flying boats flew daily fire patrols and did aerial photography of the Winnipeg River for the Water Powers Branch. In 1922, Lac du Bonnet was a temporary base for aerial surveys. These planes caused considerable excitement and citizens rushed to the dock to see the planes and their crew.

## **THE OLDEST AIRBASE ON THE WINNIPEG RIVER – 1926 TO PRESENT**



In 1926, the RCAF moved their air station to Lac du Bonnet, where the sheltered Winnipeg River was better suited to the flying boats. They used tents until the buildings, sheds and hanger were constructed. A slipway led to the maintenance area.

Depression work crews built an airstrip in a section of spruce bog behind the base in 1934. By 1937, the RCAF closed the Lac du Bonnet substation. Following the RCAF's departure in 1937, the Lac du Bonnet airport fell into disuse as all the civil aviation companies had headquarters in the village.



In 1953, Central Northern Airways leased the airport for their spring and fall changeovers to floats or skis. Central Northern was taken over by Trans-Air in 1957 and continued to use the airport until 1967.



A Central Northern Airways Norseman outside the former RCAF maintenance hanger, mid-1950s.



Between 1967 and 1970, AV Air Service upgraded the runway and airport drainage systems. Ownership of the airport reverted to the Manitoba government in 1972. Numerous small companies leased the land that was once the RCAF base: Wendigo Wings, Lac du Bonnet Airpark, and Air Park Aviation.



On February 7, 1980, the over 50 year old former RCAF hanger collapsed. No one was there at the time. The photo shows the wreckage being cleared off the damaged planes.



Whiteshell Air established a float base just north of the former RCAF site in the 1980s. This family run business operated until 2005.



Adventure Air took over the float base in 2005 and continue to fly out of the Winnipeg River's oldest airport.

## THE MANITOBA GOVERNMENT AIR SERVICE



The MGAS was established in 1932 to take over fire patrols from the RCAF. They shared the air base until 1934, when the MGAS moved to the edge of Lac du Bonnet, near Park Ave. and First St. Fire detection and suppression were their main duties, though they also conducted search and rescue and medical evacuation flights.



In 1949, a brick building replaced the original hanger. When the MGAS left Lac du Bonnet, the building became the Manitoba Conservation office.

## FIGHTING FIRES



## 100 Years of Aviation *continued*



In the 1950s, float planes transported crews and supplies to remote fires. DeHavilland Beavers and Otters outfitted with water tanks were capable of extinguishing small fires. The Manitoba Government acquired their first water bomber in 1963. Helicopters with water buckets were not widely used until the 1970s.

The Lac du Bonnet Regional Fire Operations Centre opened in 2015 to consolidate the Wildfire Service for eastern and central Manitoba. Using the latest technology, staff monitor lightning strikes, soil

moisture and other conditions to determine areas most at risk for forest fires. Initial attack crews operate out of the Centre, and helicopter landing pads and runway access allows water bombers and other aircraft to use the facility.

### HELICOPTERS



Rotor Ways, Lac du Bonnet's first helicopter business, was located beside Whiteshell Air in the 1980s. Rotor Ways became Provincial Helicopters in 1996.

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# I Flew With Wings

## Douglas Tottle – Lac du Bonnet to Red Lake

*Lac du Bonnet was the hub for air flights into the central Manitoba mining districts and the Red Lake, Ont. area throughout the 1930s and 1940s.*

*Doing the bulk of flying out of Lac du Bonnet during this period were bush pilots for Wings, Starratt, Canadian Airways and Northern Airways. These aircraft companies cashed in on the movement of prospectors, geologists and staff, drill crews and drilling equipment to these remote locations where roads did not exist.*

*My dad lived to be 95, had a keen memory, loved history and wrote this article during the last year of his life. He was only 19 years old in 1936. Dad had earned enough to buy a camera by 1938, which is the date on most of the photos in his album.*

*Terry Tottle, Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society*



*Canadian Airways CF-AKT Red Lake.*

**I**t was in 1936, in the middle of the depression when Ken Watmough, Mine Captain at Madsen Gold Mine telephoned me to ask me if I wanted a job in a gold mine at Madsen, Red Lake. Ken offered to lend me up to \$100 to get me to Madsen, Red Lake if I took the job. I agreed.

The night before I attended the Weston Beaver



*On Lac du Bonnet Dock.*

*Photo: Norm McCoy collection*

Hockey dance at the Sons of England Hall at the corner of Alexander Avenue and Worth Street in the Weston district of Winnipeg. I was dating Dorothy Hartley and broke the news that I would be leaving the next morning.

I was picked up at the St. Charles Hotel (Notre Dame and Albert) by a Wings Taxi and driven to Lac du Bonnet. The "Wings Ltd." Office, M.E. Ashton, Gen. Mgr. was actually in the Marlborough Hotel.

At the Wings Office by the Lac du Bonnet dock, Jack Vance took my suitcase and loaded me on a DeHavilland Gypsy Moth float plane which conveyed me to Red Lake. From there Togeys Taxi took me



*Lac du Bonnet Dock.*

*Photo: Norm McCoy collection*

# *I Flew With Wings* continued



*Red Lake Ontario postcard.*

over the partly corduroy trail to the Madsen Lake Gold Mine where I was to work underground as a steel nipper, mucker and timberman until 1939.



*Douglas Tottle  
Flat Lake March 1939.*



*Douglas Tottle May 1939.*

In winter of 1937 and 1938, I took a holiday and flew on a Wings ski plane back to Lac du Bonnet from which the Wings limousine took me back to Winnipeg.

When war broke out, I decided to go home to Winnipeg and sign up with the RCAF. They rejected me because I had a perforated ear drum. A few months later I enlisted with the Royal Canadian Engineers and went overseas as a reinforcement with the 4th Battalion RCE. This was later broken up with the 29th and 30th and 8th Field Park Company Engineers.

Douglas H.C. Tottle

## BACKGROUND

The Madsen Mine is located 10 kilometres SW of Red Lake.

In 1934 the Madsen Lake, Ontario property was acquired by Marius Madsen for the Falcon Gold Syndicate. Madsen Gold Mine was incorporated in 1936. The next year three compartment shafts were sunk to a depth of 163.175 metres. In 1938 the mill capacity was increased and Madsen became the fifth gold mine in Red Lake and consisted 31 claims.

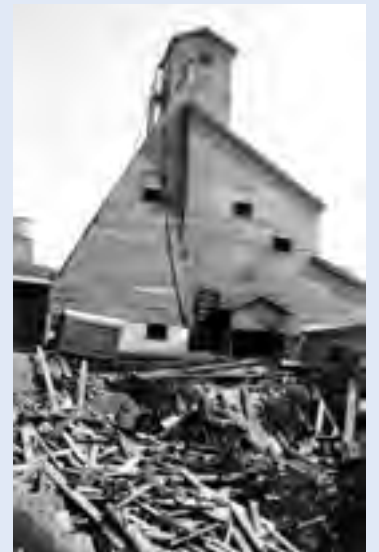
Like many gold mining producers, the property changed hands many times over the years. In 2022 Pure Gold suspended operations at the Madsen Lake Mine and placed the mine in care and maintenance.

## HOWEY GOLD MINES

Produced from 1930 through 1941. A shaft pillar collapse and subsequent cave-ins caused the mine to close and the mine was left to flood.



*Mine view from water tower.*



*Headframe.*



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# What Brought the Early Settlers to Lac du Bonnet?

*The RM of Lac du Bonnet includes a heterogeneous population of people, both by ethnic origin and employment. Most prairie towns were established by people of only a few ethnic origins and one primary source of employment such as agriculture or mining.*

*It is because of this versatility that the municipality has remained prosperous over the years and continues to attract new residents.*

## FUR TRADE

The Winnipeg River has long been a main transportation route through prairie. The people of the First Nations travelled by canoe along the river as they followed the herds of animals.

They also harvested wild rice in the area.

La Verendrye was one of the early explorers who travelled along the Winnipeg River in 1732 and is credited with naming the

lake, Lac du Bonnet.

Trappers and voyageurs followed and the fur trade from west to east travelled along the Winnipeg River. French, Metis and Scottish people worked in the fur trade.

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## MINING

The first European settlement in Lac du Bonnet was called Eureka. The Lac du Bonnet Mining, Manufacturing and Development Company was formed in 1896 and included land and mining claims to Seven Sisters and Bird River. The company's purposes were to prospect for possible mineral rights and timber limits.

Partners were W.J. Kirby of Oldfield Kirby and Gardner, Walter Vivran, Walter Wardrop Sr and Dr. Good. Others involved were Hon. W.W. Vivian, D.A. Kizer,

A.M. MacPherson, George Mills and Dr. J.K. Grey.

Considerable work was done on some of the claims such as sunk in pits and stripping. Traces of gold and copper were found, especially on the "Lady Marion" staked by John Larme, but not in sufficient quantity to mine.

The area around Bernic Lake, Shatford Lake and Bird Lake was found to be rich in a wide variety of minerals and metals. The mines located in that area have

employed many residents of the municipality both directly and as service industries and contractors for the sites.

The strong rapport has continued even today, with the Tantalum Mining Corporation (Tanco). C.T. Williams, a former manager at Tanco, said "The bright red drums with the trademark showing TANCO, Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba, have been spread with renown throughout the world, helping place Lac du Bonnet "on the map."

## BRICKS

Bricks were made from clay found along the Winnipeg River. During the spring and summer of 1899, the bush was cleared away, a few acres cleared for the plant, and a sample of clay was sent to the U.S. for testing. A very favourable report, together with a fine sample of fire brick, was received by the Lac du Bonnet Mining, Manufacturing and Development Company.

Among the men present at the

time was W. Wardrop, manager for the company, J. Bouchie (Cook), Alex Lemaire, Alex Isbister and Thomas Houston.

The bush work was done by residents of Fort Alexander. There was about forty families including Dave Gagnon and Isadore Lecaille.

The machinery for the brickyard was set up by a gang from the east. Mr. Carmichael, a brick expert, was in charge of operations. After a season's

operation, they found that they clay was not suitable for fire brick. Mr. Talman, his successor did not make a good brick either.

In 1901 J.D. McArthur took control of the company. This entrepreneur built the first commercial high rise building in Winnipeg on Portage Avenue near Main Street using bricks from the Lac du Bonnet plant.

The brick plant continued to operate until 1920.

## TIMBER

Much of the area covered by the RM of Lac du Bonnet was covered with forests and swamps. A small sawmill was erected and trees were cut for firewood, railroad ties and house construction in Winnipeg.

Horses and oxen were used to haul the wood to the sawmill from camps in the area. Many very early homesteader sold the wood they cleared from their land to the sawmill.

In 1901, the CPR line was built to Lac du Bonnet. The J.D. McArthur

Co. shipped a train load of fuel wood each train run day to their lumber and fuel yard on Higgins Avenue on the corner of Princess in Winnipeg. The wood was used as fuel wood for warehouses, apartment buildings and houses. Lumber was also shipped to Winnipeg for building.

Among men employed by the mill were A. Weiss, sawyer; Hans Johnson, engineer; H. Park, millwright; and F. Allard, planer.

The sawmill operated until 1918. After 1923, Alex McIntosh

operated a sawmill for five years. He also had a planning mill and lumber yard in Lac du Bonnet.

In the 1920s, work began on the Pine Falls pulp and paper operation. First called the Manitoba Pulp and Paper Company, it later became an Abitibi-Price operation. Since opening in 1927, the company has purchased pulpwood from contractors in the Lac du Bonnet area.

Many people were employed seasonally and full-time by these operations.

# *What Brought the Early Settlers?* continued

## POWER

The Winnipeg River was viewed as a possible site for power production as early as the 1890s. The Winnipeg River had been surveyed for its potential and land purchased in the seven portages (Seven Sisters) as early as 1897.

Construction on the Old Pinawa site began in April 1903. It was built for an investment of \$3,000,000. The railhead was at Lac du Bonnet and at that time there was no bridge across the Winnipeg River. The tons of heavy equipment were towed across the river on barges by a steam tug called Little Bobs, operated by Harry Nystedt during open

water. In winter the equipment was hauled over the ice. Some 15 miles of corduroy road were constructed over muskeg and rock. The going wage for labourers was 10 cents an hour for a 10-hour day. The rock drillers received 15 cents an hour.

The official opening ceremonies took place May 31, 1906. Among the employees were E. Kingston, W. Gilles, J. Erickson, F. Waters, Dr. Malcolm, A. Hunt, H. McDonald, H. Phillips and L. Lindsay. At times as many as 1,500 men were employed.

Shortly after the Pinawa plant was completed, work was started on the city hydro at Pointe du

Bois. The railway was built to take their machinery. Their transmission line furnished work for a lot of the settlers of the district.

In 1905, J.D. McArthur was awarded a big contract from the federal government to build the Transcontinental Railway Line 250 miles east from Winnipeg. This was the most difficult and largest railway contract awarded in Canada at that time. It is related that when the engineers informed J.D. McArthur of the difficulties involved, he remarked "Give me enough Swedes and enough snuff and I'll build a railroad to Hell."

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# FISHERY

Although settlers and fisherman in the late 1800s scorned the sturgeon as nuisance fish with little food or commercial value, King Edward II of England decreed the sturgeon a royal fish. As a result, sturgeon eggs became a valued source of caviar and the sturgeon was transformed from a worthless nuisance to a time when it was the most valuable commercial freshwater fish in North America.

By the mid 1850s, sturgeon were used to fuel steamboats and a large quantity of sturgeon oil was made into machine oil in Manitoba. A 50-pound sturgeon could yield a gallon of oil.

In 1887, a large-scale commercial sturgeon fishery began operation when the railway linked Manitoba with eastern markets.

By 1900, the sturgeon fishery was in full production with intense indiscriminate fishing. It is estimated that during that time over 2.8 million kilograms of sturgeon had been removed from the waters, quickly depleting the population.

Commercial sturgeon fishing flourished in Lac du Bonnet for a short time. In a June 8, 1910, a Winnipeg Tribune article condemned the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries for doing nothing to check the inevitable extermination of the species by commercial fisherman.

The fish company was out of business by 1913.

In the 1930s people used hooks to catch sturgeon up until 1955 when they were banned. The new regulation was in place from 1955

to 1959 when only netting was allowed. Quite a few people were netting sturgeon in the 1950s as an individual only needed to apply for a domestic licence, which allowed people to net for



*Alfie Apsit 1957 with a 60-pound sturgeon.*

sustenance with no restriction.

Many Latvian immigrants who settled in the Lettonia area supported their families by fishing sturgeon.

In 1960, the lake sturgeon was classified as a species at risk, and in 2006 it officially became an endangered species.



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# What Brought the Early Settlers? *continued*

## AGRICULTURE

Many people who came to work in the various industries stayed to farm land in the RM of Lac du Bonnet. Under the Homestead Act and the First World War, people could claim a quarter section of land and keep it if they made certain improvements on it.

At this time, Canada was opening its doors to European immigrants. Thousands came west on the railroads and settled in isolated areas lured by the cry of free land.

In the early days, the natives, French from Quebec and Metis with French and Scottish names comprised the majority of Lac du Bonnet population.

Times were changing and as the immigration from Europe increased, the population

became more diverse. There came the Ukrainians, Polish, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and Latvians from Russia. Lac du Bonnet residents returned with war brides from Great Britain and sometimes their relatives followed.

Writing in 1926, R.W. Murchie and H.C. Grant noted that "some settlers moved into the Lac du Bonnet area over 20 years ago." It was also noted that "these settlers were attracted to the district in the first place by the construction work in connection with the hydro-electric power plants."

Probably because of this, the writers said "Most of the first farms were on the east bank of the Winnipeg River on the island

formed by the Pinawa Channel (Riverland)." This land was considered "good for mixed farming purposes... dairy, cattle, hogs and poultry and should rapidly become paying

ventures."

This mixed farming was not terribly successful due to the isolation of the area. It was not until roads improved, that farming beyond the subsistence level developed.

Farmers specialized in areas such as pigs, cattle and poultry. A large processing plant was located in the area in later years for poultry and turkey farming flourished for a time.

Gradually, beginning in the 1940s, the number of farms became less, farms larger, families smaller, as a result of an increase in machinery and new technology for farming which came as an aftermath of the Second World War.

The nature of the soil, topography and climate has had a limiting effect on agriculture since the earliest settlement. Situated as it is on the edge of the Canadian Shield, the area was settled only after the prime wheat lands in central and western Manitoba were taken.

As in most prairie communities, the settlers battled isolation, loneliness, disease, poverty, struggles to learn a new language,



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ignorance of Canadian farming methods, weather and fatigue. Their weapons were faith in God, new friends who learned to work together, reliance on their immediate families, courage, inner strength and hope for a better tomorrow. For the most part, they were happy and provided a living for their families.

Major problems existed for many settlers. They had to clear land, drain swamps and build roads. Most of the early work was done by hard labour with hand tools and horse and ox driven equipment.

One of the first concerns of the municipal council was to construct roads. Since then the battle to find sufficient funds and expertise to create passable roads over impossible terrain has continued.

Swamps, rocks, peat moss, trees and bogs are not the best foundation for good roads. Councillors, over the years, have devoted long hours and tried to find the best roads possible for the tax dollars available.

Some roads were constructed with municipal grants. In the old days, farmers could work for the municipality for part of their taxes called Statute Labor. Until the late 1960s, businessmen could haul gravel or build roads and have the costs deducted from their business taxes.

During the very early days, farm wives found it especially difficult. Many had to come from cities and did not know how to do all the farm chores. Their husbands were away for long periods of time, working off the farms. They were left to care for the children, animals, gardens, chop wood,

pump water and contend with a harsh climate with inadequate shelter. Some women never left the farms for month at a time.

Occasionally, their nearest neighbours did not speak their language. Eventually, they learned to communicate and developed as friends from a different culture.

In the early days, house parties were the only entertainment. Eventually, the social circle moved to the community hall, church or school. A trip to Lac du Bonnet was a big event, planned months ahead.

During the depression, some farmers could not pay their taxes. The council took animals, grain or land in payment.

There are also a few pioneers still around. They have hundreds of stories to tell about the old days.



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# What Brought the Early Settlers? *continued*

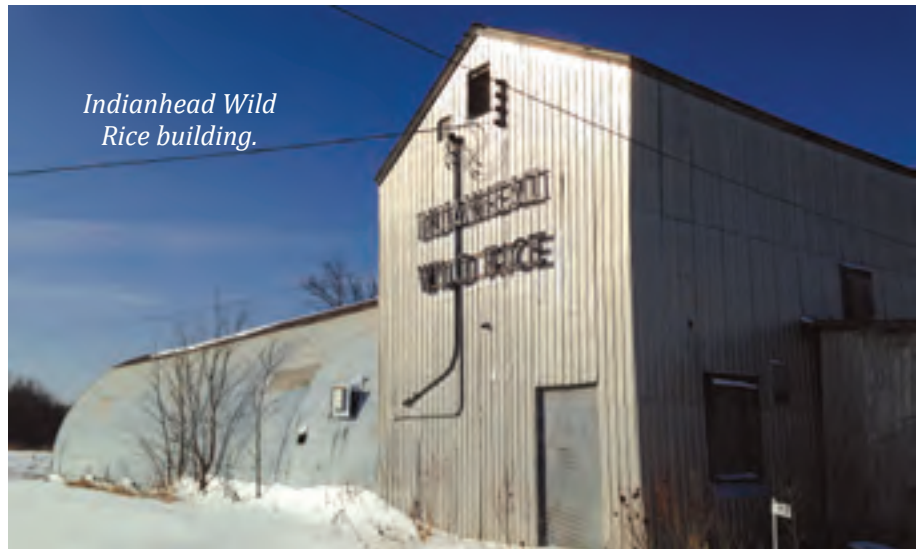
## WILD RICE

Wild rice is a special aspect of agriculture in the Lac du Bonnet area.

In Eleanor Stardom's graduate studies paper for Prof. G. Friesen of St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba, 1978 entitled *Some Aspects of the Economic Development in the Lac du Bonnet Area*, some consideration is given the wild rice production.

"One little-known business that has operated on a relatively small scale in the Lac du Bonnet vicinity for many years is wild rice harvesting. The area east of Lake Winnipeg and the Winnipeg River, particularly the Whiteshell, provides the most suitable habitat in the province for wild rice which was prized as a food source by both Indian and Voyager. It is usually found in stands along the edge of lakes, marshes and slow moving streams and flourishes best in muddy soil where its dense masses keep out other competitive water plants as well as making access difficult for harvesters.

Local native people are the main source of labour for harvesting as mechanical harvesters are not allowed on crown land. Usually there are two men in a canoe, one to propel it through the rice stands while the other books the stalks into the boat and taps off the heads with a picking stick. This process is repeated several times in the same stand during the two to three week ricing period until the entire crop is harvested. The average yield is 300 to 400 pounds a day, but it can fluctuate widely due to the sensitivity of wild rice to climatic changes, disease and water level variations.



*Indianhead Wild Rice building.*

A second form of harvesting is the mechanical harvester, used by companies or individuals who have obtained a concession for a particular lake that allows them to manage its water levels and harvest the rice.

Due to the high cost of processing, the crop is usually sold unhulled to modern processing plants where it is dried, toasted, dehulled, winnowed, cleaned and packaged. The largest market is the U.S. but it is also shipped to Europe and Asia. However, with a growing interest in gourmet cooking shown by the general public, it should have a greater marketability at the local level.

The Government of Manitoba views the wild rice business as a means of developing local initiative and economy as well as helping to spread Manitoba's name around the globe".

Charles Lagsdin was a pioneer in wild rice and designed one of the first parching machines for wild rice. The machine was powered by a small Briggs &

Stratton motor. Joe Sparman and Paul Romanyszyn did the needed welding on this machine.

The United Grain Growers built a processing plant in Lac du Bonnet in 1950 and sold it to Jack Wade who operated it until the early 1960s. He then sold it to several Americans who operated it under the loyal direction of Mike Vandermeer.

In 1975, the processing plant was sold to Harry Arseniuk who operated it under Indian Head Wild Rice.

Other wild rice producers in the area are August Osis, Alfie Apsit, Shorty Holden, Bill Williams (both father and son), Art and Don Gaffray, Jim McIntyre and Tom Johnston.

In recent years with increased production, prices have dropped and wild rice is no longer as profitable as it was a few years ago.

**— This article was written  
by Linda Dalglish  
and published in the  
Lac du Bonnet Leader in 1992**

# Breretons Recognized for Carving Efforts

Lac du Bonnet wood carvers Rick and Cathie Brereton received the 2024 Carver's Award of Excellence at the Prairie Canada Carvers Association (PCCA) competition recently held in Winnipeg.

The Carver's Award of Excellence was established in 2006 to acknowledge individuals, organizations and businesses for excellence and achievement in promoting and engendering the art of carving in North America. Recipients should have a long term commitment to the advancement and promotion of carving, ideally leaving a lasting influence upon the community.

Rick and Cathie, the first couple to ever receive the award, are recognized for the 30-plus years of achievement in advancing the art of traditional wood carving in Manitoba, nearby provinces and U.S. states. Nominated for the award by past PCCA president Ted Muir, their contribution and commitment to the carving community involves augmenting and nurturing carving clubs, workshops, competitions, exhibits and festivals. Along the way they honed their craft and won numerous carving awards on both sides of the border.

The Breretons are well known in Lac du Bonnet and surrounding areas, for their mentoring of many local woodcarvers. The group is known as the Bear Country Woodcarvers. On their retirement to their lakeside home, they built a woodcarving shop in the second storey of their garage. Then by word of mouth they encouraged woodcarvers of all levels to drop in to the shop on Thursday afternoons, to learn or improve their carving skills.

Some of their mentored carvers annually receive awards at Prairie Canada.

The Breretons started woodcarving in 1992, with Les

Gens de Bois Woodcarving Club in Winnipeg. Under the guidance of carving club mentors, the Breretons became involved with a variety of clubs, organizations and competitions in Canada and the U.S.

From 2000-2010, they coordinated the Winnipeg Woodcarvers Weekend, held at St. John's College, U of M Campus. They convinced carving instructors from as far away as Wisconsin and BC to volunteer their time and efforts to improve carving.

In 2001, Rick was asked to serve on the board of the PCCA, which organized a well known Waterfowl Carving Competition, with a limited participation from Traditional Carvers. With Rick's knowledge and input, PCCA moved the traditional carvers to be on an equal level of competition for recognition of awards, especially at the Best of Show level. This improved the prominence of the show, plus brought in international level traditional carving instructors and competitors.

Since moving to Lac du Bonnet permanently,

as well as mentoring the drop in carvers, Rick has assisted with judging at the 4P Festival chainsaw carving, providing insurance evaluations on carvings for St. Francis of Assisi Church in Pinawa. Both have participated in the Eastman Judged Art Exhibition and provided a carving class at École Communautaire Saint-Georges plus a student class at Mrs. Lucci's Resource Centre.

Both Rick and Cathie value the hundreds of special friendships they have made around the world through woodcarving. They are strong believers in jointly sharing together their love of woodcarving, plus the satisfaction that they have in some way contributed to improving the art they love, while having a wonderful time enjoying life.



*Lac du Bonnet's Cathie and Rick Brereton are the first couple to receive the Carver's Award of Excellence at the Prairie Canada Carvers Association competition.*

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# Whitefox Shamanic Services Rooted in Nature

by Rick McGregor

Brycie Klassen has brought a unique form of therapy to the Winnipeg River corridor and it is worth investigating.

Whitefox Shamanic Services offers shamanic psychotherapy, similar to traditional counselling, but at a soulful level, Klassen says. The teachings of this discipline are centred around earth-based spirituality and a connection with nature.

Formally trained as a mainstream counsellor, Klassen holds a bachelor's degree in art and psychology and a master's degree in counselling psychology. In 2009, she was introduced to shamanism and is a senior graduate of the Kimmapii School of Shamanism.

"Shamanism understands that people are at their optimum of health when part of the cycle of nature," Klassens said.

As an undergrad, she started studying art, finished her major in that and then moved on to major in psychology. Studying both art and psychology together led her to ask questions about how the mind fits into the world.

"I started noticing that the way we perceive our world affects our world. So perception is really important in constructing reality," she added. "Science will back this up in terms of quantum physics and particle entanglement. I started asking a lot of questions about how that all works and how



*Brycie Klassen said shamanic psychotherapy is centred around earth-based spirituality.*

*Photo: Rick McGregor*

humans make meaning in their life, and that led me down a path in my life that led me to start studying shamanism.



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## Whitefox Shamanic Services *continued*

Raised in Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa, Klassen offers her services in person or via video call and will travel to your location or counsel you in her healing room in her house, which is currently being renovated.

Asked who her target client base would be, she answered anyone who wants to try therapy that goes a little deeper than the cognitive realm.

"People looking for a more holistic approach to taking therapy to the next level."

She does a lot of work with older clients where she offers Art Therapy for Seniors. This requires no previous art experience but simply offers, "a gentle, enjoyable way to express yourself, stay mentally active and reconnect with your sense of purpose."

Klassen explained that she had a world view from studying at Kimmapii and also had certain belief systems from her studies in western psychotherapy. She has since used art making as a bridge between those two teachings. She also studied for one year at the Kootenay Art Therapy Institute and learned that

art making dovetails nicely between connecting to nature and working with earth-based medicine. She calls art inherently therapeutic saying all you really need to do is engage in it to reap the benefits.

The advantages of art therapy include reduced stress and anxiety, help with processing grief, loss or major life changes and improving memory and cognitive function. Essentially, it is a relaxing way to explore your thoughts and emotions.

Klassen also works with teens who may be struggling with any of the multitude of angst and stress that come with trying to fit in and find their place in the world and also provides family therapy to address the same types of struggles or behavioural problems experienced at a family level. Essentially, she can provide help to anyone looking for purpose, struggling with mental health issues, stress and disconnection. A major cause of that in today's world is screen time on any of the various electronic devices that dominate our lives.

Shamanism is a pancultural practice that aligns

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*A medicine bundle – or mesa – contains special stones.*

*Photo: Rick McGregor*

with cultures from all over the world; African, European, Australian, Asian and various Indigenous civilizations. Klassen said if tracked back to their ancient roots, they all had this fundamental belief that we all are connected to nature. As such, Shamanism is in perfect alignment with Indigenous

ways of knowing so it can be a safe place for Indigenous people to come for counselling because it is decolonized.

A tool that Klassen uses in her sessions is a medicine bundle, called a mesa, which is the Spanish word for table. While doing a ceremony for people to heal, she opens the bundle and inside are special stones that have been through ceremonies, so they are packed with energy. This allows her to do the energy healing in a lay down treatment where the stones are placed on the person's chakras helping them clean their energy and solve the problem that they are there to address.

Klassen believes shamanism is becoming more popular as society continues to evolve with technology and predicts that people will be looking for something that gives them a deeper sense of purpose and a connection to nature. She added that as society continues to breed disconnection from each other, nature and the world, she believes a mental health crisis is imminent.

Klassen offers 30-minute consultation calls for free to help determine a fit. Connect with her through the business website at [www.whitefoxshaman.ca](http://www.whitefoxshaman.ca)

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# State of the Arts

## Artistic events, activities and organizations along the Winnipeg River corridor

*Art is all around us. Whether you hear your favourite song on the radio or drive by a mural or sculpture, you experience art every day. These meeting points elevate our everyday experiences, but it's common to lose sight of the overall impact of the arts. The reality is cultures big and small unite through the arts to build better communities.*

*The importance of art in society can't be overstated as it transcends beyond borders or cultures. Beyond personal development, the overall social impact of the arts is essential to understand. From art shows to concerts to community theatre, the arts provide an opportunity to gather with other people from all walks of life. Several case studies have*

*actually demonstrated that art in rural communities specifically can help boost economic growth and strengthens the bonds between people in these places.*

*Along the Winnipeg River corridor, there are several organizations and individuals making sure the local arts scene remains vibrant and a communal experience.*

### EASTERN MANITOBA CONCERT ASSOCIATION

The Eastern Manitoba Concert Association (EMCA), an incorporated non-profit, volunteer organization, has maintained a professional venue for artists, provided educational opportunities for students and enriched the cultural life of Eastern Manitobans for five decades.

Starting in the fall of 1973, a small group of Pinawa residents established what later became known as the EMCA and dedicated their volunteer efforts to continue bringing high quality entertainment to the area as a subscription series. Pinawa became a host for Overture Concerts run by world-class bassoonist George Zukerman of Vancouver. For six years, three or four performances were held annually in the Upper Lounge of Kelsey House, and later the Pinawa Community Centre.

In 1979, local volunteers took over the series and the independent Eastern Manitoba Concert Association was launched. The concert organization introduced primarily classical music but over the



*Northern Pikes' Bryan Potvin and Kevin Kane delight the EMCA audience.*

years, performances have become considerably more varied to include jazz, folk, Celtic, country, big band, comedy and some indefinable categories – making EMCA a favourite destination for performing artists across the country.

Fun, achievement, community enrichment, a quality venue, an audience for artists, and of course, enjoyment of the concerts defines the substance and value of EMCA's fall to spring concert series to cultural life in eastern Manitoba for over 50 years.

[www.emcaconcerts.com](http://www.emcaconcerts.com)

## FIRE & WATER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Organizers of Lac du Bonnet's award winning Fire and Water Music Festival have put together an exciting line up of entertainment for their August long weekend gathering.

Fire and Water Music Festival is a three-day event (Aug. 1-3 ) featuring music and art with a focus on local and provincial talent. Held at the Lakers Water Ski Club site, the festival provides important opportunities for upcoming acts to introduce their talents to a broader audience and showcase their original material.

The festival is organized and run by volunteers, many of them being artists and musicians as well. The laid back environment of the festival encourages up front and personal contact with artists who often leave the stage following their performance and join the audience to catch the next act.

The 2025 list of artists includes Winnipeg singer-songwriter Madeleine Roger, Manitoba country music artist Quinton Blair, Winnipeg-based Anishinaabe and settler folk-soul musician Ila Barker, musical duo Kara Hummelt and Patrick



*Little Miss Higgins at Lac du Bonnet's Fire and Water*

Boggs of Simply Kara, Regina alt-country artists Wolf Willow, Winnipeg's all-star salsa band Curubandé, Grammy and Juno Award-winning singer/songwriter and ukulele player Jessee Havey and the Banana Band,

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## State of the Arts *continued*

### BOREAL SHORES ART TOUR

Scheduled for August 16 and 17, the Boreal Shores Art Tour (BSAT) is a free, road-trip worthy, self-guided art tour featuring artists at their studios or group locations scattered throughout the beautiful and diverse Boreal Forest and shore regions of North Eastman. From the eastern shores of Lake Winnipeg through the Winnipeg River system to the Whiteshell Provincial Park, the tour showcases artists from diverse communities who love to explore all aspects of visual art.

First held in 2017, visitors met 34 talented artists at 16 locations during the two-day tour.

This year there are 45 artists already on the 2025 BSAT list, and a wide range of art forms including woodcarving, glassworks, painting, pottery, jewellery, knives, and photography. Each artist has their own, unique approach to their work.

Artists annually sell thousands of dollars worth of art on those two days with reports purchased items were sent across Canada as well as the UK, Germany, France and the U.S. Less than half of the visitors were from the region while the rest came from all parts of Manitoba as well as from B.C. to the Maritimes.

The Boreal Shores Art Tour is also good for businesses across North Eastman as tour goers buy fuel, eat meals and often pay for overnight



*The Boreal Shores Art Tour is a great way for Richard Cline and similar minded people to come together and talk about art*

accommodations to make sure they get in all the stops during the two-day event.

For more information go to [www.borealshoresarttour.ca](http://www.borealshoresarttour.ca)

### LISTENING ROOM

Lac du Bonnet's Listening Room boasts intimate concerts held in the 115-year-old St. John's Heritage Church, located at 86 McArthur Ave. in Lac du Bonnet. The Listening Room was developed by a

team of musicians and indie music lovers as a way to promote independent music to residents and visitors.

Created to bolster the fundraising efforts of the Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society, the Fire and Water Music Festival took over the venue in an effort to present concerts at different times of year, other than the August long weekend festival, as a natural extension of their mandate to bring live music to Lac du Bonnet.

In addition to Listening Room concerts, volunteers hold Wednesday night Open Mic sessions starting in March and running on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. It is an opportunity for people to have their 15 minutes of microphone time to sing some songs, original or covers, read a poem, an excerpt from their novel or do a comedy routine.

[www.facebook.com/TheListeningRoomLdB](http://www.facebook.com/TheListeningRoomLdB)



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Pinawa Players is the oldest continuing amateur theatrical group in Manitoba, presenting a wide range of productions from 1964 to now.

Over 50-plus years, the Pinawa Players have presented over 100 plays including comedies, dramas, musicals, dinner theatre and children's shows.

The Players continue to support community building. In 1982, they helped found the Association of Community Theatres (ACT), which connects Manitoba's amateur theatre groups and sponsors an annual drama festival. They've hosted four festival weekends.

[www.facebook.com/pinawaplayers](http://www.facebook.com/pinawaplayers)

*Pinawa Players Devon Hemmett  
and Jessica Ginter in Fox on the Fairway*



## WINNIPEG RIVER ARTS COUNCIL

The Winnipeg River Arts Council (WRAC) is a non-profit organization, created to raise awareness of arts events, services, partnerships, workshops, grants and talent development opportunities, and to remind people about the economic, health and social benefits of arts and culture.

Open to artists, individuals, arts organizations and businesses, some of the events, organizations and programs supported and promoted by WRAC include 4P Festival, Fire and Water, Eastman Judged Art Exhibits, Pinawa Players, Eastern Manitoba Concert Association, Whiteshell Winter Arts Festival, Boreal Shores Art Tour, Pinawa Art Gallery, Truck Stop Circus, photo exhibits, art shows and sales, library

events and displays, school drama productions, concerts, workshops, author readings and youth mentorships.

Since 2014, in partnership with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, WRAC has hosted annual touring productions in Great Falls, Pinawa and Lac du Bonnet. WRAC artists or arts organizations are featured in The Lac du Bonnet Clipper, the arts council's newsletter and on the website.

WRAC artists create quilts, books, paintings, fibre art, theatre, plays, videos, music, concerts, crafts, photography, wood carvings, sculpture, needlework, pottery, and much more.

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# 1940 Movie Madness

## Famous film company in Lac du Bonnet for *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*

by Jennifer Strassel

Throughout the summer of 1940, Manitoba was invaded by a British film crew shooting a war picture called *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*. At the time, it was the “biggest film” ever made in Canada, and the “largest undertaking by the British film industry since the beginning of the war.”

Created by the famous duo of director Michael Powell and writer Emeric Pressburger, *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is the story of a German U-boat crew trying to evade capture. Despite its plot, all involved were adamant that it was not a propaganda film. The story was set in 1940 Canada, so “it was inevitable that it should reflect the life of the people under war conditions,” however, producer Rolland Gillett thought the film “would be popular in peace time as well as in war.”

The film company travelled from the east coast to the west coast and up to the Arctic capturing the actual scenery of places portrayed in the film. They were “shooting the story from back to front.” The film was made up of “four or five main episodes, each centering in different regions of Canada” with a connecting story linking them all.

Writer Emeric Pressburger remained in London and took precautions to ensure the script arrived in Canada by sending “one copy by boat and a duplicate by plane.” Additionally, to protect the script from London air raids, Pressburger distributed copies to various people to ensure they



*Film crew and spectators at Lac du Bonnet, August 1940.*

*Credit: Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society Archives.*

“would not be lost in bombing disasters.”

In mid to late-July 1940, while “continuous rain” delayed production in Lethbridge and Banff, actors began arriving in Winnipeg. They were asked not to give out information on *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, as the whole thing was “being kept pretty secret,” however, the *Winnipeg Tribune* and *Free Press* printed almost daily coverage of arrivals to the Royal Alexandra Hotel (located on the northeast corner of Higgins Avenue and Main Street) and the film company’s progress.

The arrival of actress Elizabeth Bergner on July 27 made headlines across the country. The remainder of the actors not already on location in the west made the Atlantic crossing under wartime conditions, took a train from Halifax to Montreal,



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## 1940 Movie Madness *continued*



*Scene from 49th Parallel on shore of Winnipeg River at Lac du Bonnet. Actors (left to right): Niall McGinnis, Raymond Lovell, Eric Portman, Peter Moore, John Chandos.*

*Credit: 49th Parallel, directed by Michael Powell (1942, Ortus Films, United Kingdom)*

posted in the Royal Alexandra Hotel. Despite the repetition that “exact locations for work around Winnipeg cannot be publicized since people would come and disturb our sound apparatus,” the newspaper printed any details they could get, including the times cast and crew were expected on set.

On Aug. 3, the film company left Winnipeg by bus and car to shoot “an exterior foreign settlement” scene on location. Two days later, it was revealed that they were at the Iberville Hutterite Colony north of Elie.

Elizabeth Bergner was the focus of reporters, and they had nothing but praise for her, especially as she stooked wheat in the summer heat. Bergner



*Crew and actors filming a scene at the former Lac du Bonnet RCAF base, August 1940. Actors in centre are Niall MacGinnis (light shirt), John Chandos (light pants) and Peter Moore.*

*Credit: Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society Archives*

and continued either by train or plane to Winnipeg.

By July 31, the cast and technical crew were assembled in Winnipeg, “awaiting the arrival” of director, Michael Powell, to “shoot the first big scenes in *49th Parallel*.” Powell had flown to Hollywood to sign an unnamed “internationally known star” to play the role of a Hudson Bay trapper.

Some of the cast and crew took this time to explore Winnipeg, and took in an evening of swing dance at a local dance hall. Before the night was over, witnessing “a couple of lusty fist fights” caused actor John Chandos to remark that Winnipeg was “one of the toughest cities he’d ever been in.”

The *Tribune* kept close watch on the daily call sheets



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*Film crew and actors at the former Lac du Bonnet RCAF base, August 1940. Director Michael Powell on left, facing front. Actors Eric Portman, Niall MacGinnis, John Chandos and Peter Moore, on right.*

*Credit: Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society Archives*

later commented, "I am not used to your heat... and at first, I was surprised when I saw so many people drinking pop. But I can understand it now."

Production was delayed yet again when actor Eric Portman was "poisoned by a mosquito bite." Powell used this time to scout locations at Lac du Bonnet.

The actors were "relieved" when filming at Elie was completed. Niall MacGinnis had been "evaporating for days in an extremely heavy gray woollen shirt," typical of the arctic climate from which the fictional German submarine crew had travelled.

The cast and crew rested on Aug. 9 before travelling to Lac du Bonnet by train that evening. They lived in railway cars parked in the rail yard on the northern edge of the Village, and spent four days here filming "some of the most dramatic scenes" of the movie.

On Aug. 10, a Riverland farm approximately four miles from Lac du Bonnet doubled as a Hutterite farm. The company was secretive about their whereabouts, but tourists and locals alike "scouted it out and sat on farm fences," autograph books in hand as they followed the camera crew between locations. The "harassed assistant director" spent a "hectic afternoon trying to keep cars and slack-suited visitors out of camera range."

Elizabeth Bergner filmed her final on-location scenes, one of which happened to be among "her most dramatic": Anna exits a barn with Vogel (MacGinnis) as the three other German submarine crew members approach, and there is an exchange

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## 1940 Movie Madness *continued*

of dialogue. This “short, simple scene” was repeated multiple times before it was finished. (It appears in the film at about 50 minutes.)

Afterwards, Bergner went around to the “actors, camera crew and assistants bidding them goodbye.” She signed autographs for waiting admirers and “with a wave of an arm, stepped into a waiting taxi.” The car sped away, rising dust behind, and Bergner was on her way to the Rockies for a rest.

More scenes were filmed that afternoon. One involved a giant scarecrow with its arm pushed up in a Nazi salute while wearing “an old-fashioned paper hat” made from the German language newspaper, *Der Nordwesten*. Another scene at a location two miles away had an unnamed actor peer through the bushes.

They filmed until dark before returning to Lac du Bonnet, where they were “soon diving off the plane docks” and pouring back dozens of soft drinks.

Over the next two days, scenes were filmed at the former RCAF base (one of which depicted the

execution of a German crewman, at 1 hour 17 minutes in the film), though high winds and smoke



Actress, Elizabeth Bergner, with reporter, Kathleen Ryan.  
From *Toronto Star Weekly*, August 31, 1940.

*Credit: Toronto Star Weekly*



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from Interlake bush fires delayed filming of the “thrilling plane crash sequence.”

On Aug. 13, they determined that the “tricky atmosphere was excellent” for filming the scene in which a seaplane, stolen from a northern Hudson’s Bay post, crashes due to “atmospheric conditions and the shiny calm of the water.” The crew then escapes the wreckage and swims to the safety of the shore.

A Fairchild 71 on floats was used for the scene, and Les Shapland - owner of Lac du Bonnet’s Holiday Beach resort - helped set up pieces of a separate wrecked plane in the water “with all but the tail submerged,” somewhere on the east side of the river, across from the air base.

Lac du Bonnet pilot Roy Brown “stunt-crashed” the plane with five actors on board: Eric Portman, Peter Moore, John Chandos, Niall MacGinnis and Raymond Lovell, all of whom determined that the crash was “almost too real.”

The crash occurs at around 47 minutes into the film. Brown appears to have brought the plane in fast and at a steep angle, before gliding over the river and making a hard landing. The scene then cuts to the simulated wreckage, where Lac du Bonnet resident Omer Levasseur doubled for one of the actors swimming around the plane’s partially submerged tail.

As the actors breathed in “water, oil and smoke,”



*Photos of scenes filmed at Lac du Bonnet: along the shore of the Winnipeg River (top right) and at the former RCAF base (bottom left). Also features Glynis Johns and Laurence Olivier.*

*Credit: Winnipeg Free Press*

the scripted rescue of Kuhnecke (Lovell) by Vogel (MacGinnis) turned from acting to “dire necessity.” The plane “sank faster than anticipated” and a stink bomb tossed in to “heighten the turmoil” only “added to the chaos.” A member of the camera crew had to jump in to save the drowning Lovell.

Director Powell commented to the *Free Press* that “it’s just all in the day’s work. Just another day in the life of an actor.”

Some of the cast and technical crew returned



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## 1940 Movie Madness *continued*

to Winnipeg on Tuesday evening. Others left by automobile the following morning.

By that Wednesday evening, part of the film crew was in Regina shooting scenes with the RCMP. Then, during the afternoon of Sunday, Aug. 18, the film company welcomed “spectators to the filming of a movie scene” and several thousand Winnipeggers “swarmed across the landing ground” at Stevenson Field to be part of the crowd.

The scene involved a Trans-Canada Airlines plane, two prisoners of war (Eric Portman and John Chandos) escorted by RCMP, and air hostesses played by Tamara Densi and former Winnipegger Carla Lehmann. Cameras were set up on the roof of the TCA building to get the plane and the crowd in the frame.

The next day, Aug. 19, the main unit and cast travelled by train to Churchill, where they spent weeks on a chartered ship to film scenes in Hudson’s Bay, at Wolstenholme (northern Quebec), along the Labrador coast and through the Strait of Belle Isle to the St. Lawrence.

A small second unit, with producer John Seabourne in charge, was left in Winnipeg to film “incidental

sequences with a prairie background.” Some of these locations were “a Greek orthodox church in Tyndall,” the Headingly bridge and Winnipeg street scenes with the neon signs and “electrically lit billboards” turned on. A larger scene in front of the *Free Press* building on Carlton Street was also filmed, which involved the reaction of a small crowd as a special bulletin announcement was posted.

In his 1986 autobiography, Michael Powell said this about his time in Manitoba: from British Columbia’s Lake O’Hara we “ran helter-skelter down the Rockies to the wheat fields of Manitoba. We were in a hurry... shooting from west to east and the days were getting shorter. At the Hutterite village near Winnipeg they had held back the harvest for us.” From there, “we rushed north to

Lac du Bonnet where we shot Elizabeth Bergner’s scenes on a farm near the lake. We crashed the stolen airplane in the lake and nearly drowned Raymond Lovell with, as Eric Portman claimed, malice aforethought. We rushed back to Winnipeg. It was already August... there was very little time left before the ice would close the bay.”



Credit: Winnipeg Free Press



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*Scene from 49th Parallel with Lac du Bonnet farm.*

*Credit: 49th Parallel, directed by Michael Powell  
(1942, Ortus Films, United Kingdom)*

After five weeks filming in the Arctic, the cast and crew travelled to Montreal, where interior scenes were filmed at the Screen News Ltd. sound stage. Canadian actor, Raymond Massey, also filmed scenes at Niagara Falls.

By mid-October 1940, the film company returned to England to finish the film at Denham Studios, outside of London. Only major updates on the film's

progress reached Canadian newspapers.

On Dec. 6, 1940, the Winnipeg *Free Press* reported that Elizabeth Bergner had been “dropped from the cast.” She was in Hollywood and “refused to return to England for additional scenes.” By February 1941, Glynis Johns had been cast in the role of Anna. Background scenes taken while in Canada permitted “reshooting of the sequences containing the original Bergner role.”

In late March 1941, a French-Canadian Cpl. Tony



*Crew and sound equipment in the reeds. Lac du Bonnet, August 1940. Actor, Eric Portman, on far right.*

*Credit: Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society Archives*

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## 1940 Movie Madness *continued*

Onraet made headlines across the country as he taught Laurence Olivier “how to speak with a French-Canadian accent.” Cpl. Onraet, serving with the Canadian Forces in Britain, was “considered an authority on the subject of northern accents” since he came from a small village “within the Arctic Circle.”

In May 1941, the *Free Press* reported that *49th Parallel* was completed. The Denham Studio offices had been “burned out in an air raid, but the actors and the film” were safe. It was expected to premiere at Canadian theatres “within the next few months,” however, further delays pushed the Western premiere back.

*49th Parallel* opened at Winnipeg’s Capitol Theatre on Jan. 29, 1942 to rave reviews. This “long-awaited” film was deemed “worth waiting for” and “a rattling good evening’s entertainment.”

The film “takes one on a wide sweep of the Dominion” and “shows for all to see the inherent courage and loyalty of the Canadian people,” no matter their racial background or religion. This was



Scene from *49th Parallel* with wreckage of a Fairchild 71.

Credit: *49th Parallel*, directed by Michael Powell  
(1942, Ortus Films, United Kingdom)

the “first major feature with a completely Canadian story” that was “technically accurate in every possible detail regarding Canadian life and customs.”

Nearly 10,000 Canadians took part in the filming, including Indigenous, Inuit, French-Canadians



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and Hutterite settlers. Everyone seemed to agree that *49th Parallel* was a “thoroughly exciting, well acted melodrama.”

The Capitol Theatre’s premiere night capacity audience gave hearty applause to Laurence Olivier as a “superb” French-Canadian, and Anton Walbrook’s speech as a Hutterite. A line from Leslie Howard also “got a very big hand” and viewers could not tell Howard had “never stepped foot outside of Britain” yet due to the blending of the Canadian outdoor scenes with the London studio-made ones, he was “to all intents and purposes, in the Canadian Rockies.”

The scene at Stevenson’s Field was omitted from the final film, but the extensive scenes filmed at Lac du Bonnet and Elie remained.

At the 1942 National Board of Review awards, Glynis Johns and Anton Walbrook both won best acting. And in 1943, Emeric Pressburger won the Oscar for Best Writing, Original Story. *49th Parallel* was also nominated for Best Picture and Best Writing, Screenplay.

Watch for *49th Parallel* to come around on the Turner Classic Movie (TCM) channel, or search for a version on YouTube.



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# Wedding Band Recovered at Lac du Bonnet Dock

## Local scuba diver locates gold ring lost following post-ceremony splash

**K**amryn and Tristan Land were happy to take the 'plunge' into marriage in Lac du Bonnet, but a post-ceremony leap off the town dock will be remembered for other reasons.

The young couple from Winnipeg were married at Abundant Life Chapel last summer. After taking their wedding pictures at a local park, they moved to the Lac du Bonnet beach for a final photo of them jumping off the dock in their clothes.

Unfortunately for the groom, he realized his new gold wedding band had slipped off in the water when he surfaced.

"We had gotten married about an hour beforehand and our last stop on the picture route was to jump in the river with my maid of honour and his best man, so we had all jumped simultaneously," Kamryn said. "As I was swimming away, Tristan showed his finger and gave a blank stare... and then said, 'I lost my ring.'"

While everyone thought he was joking, Kamryn said it quickly became clear her husband wasn't kidding around. Getting out of the water, they realized the seriousness of the situation and started talking about how to dive into 15 feet of water next to the dock to try to find it. The best man and the maid of honour borrowed masks and goggles from swimmers on the beach and dove the area for

about an hour. Unfortunately, no one could get deep enough, and they abandoned the effort for the day.

Family friend Crystal Caruso put out a call to the community for help and recommendations for someone who does underwater recovery work or has experience retrieving objects from the river bottom. Darren Mulhall soon contacted her, who advised his father-in-law, Doug Leroux, loves scuba diving and was willing to try.

Doug and his wife Janice came down to the dock the next morning. Wearing full scuba gear, Doug said his metal detector was rendered useless because there was just too much interference from other items in the water. Doing a search with less than a foot of visibility, he kept his hand on a rope about the same distance out from the dock that he figured a person could jump and focused on that area.

Moving slowly along the bottom for over two hours, not to disturb anything, he noticed items in a pocket between some big rocks.

"I looked down there, and I saw something white. I reached down very carefully and grabbed a little piece of paper, but I noticed something else beside it was just slightly curved, like a piece of clamshell," Doug said. "I just went down to get it with my finger and touched it. My finger went right through it, and

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there it was.”

Giving the rope one more pull, he came to the surface and made it look like he was packing it in for the day.

“I gotta play this out a little bit,” Doug joked.

Handing over items, including his metal detector, he said, “Hang on, hang on... got it!” and raised his index finger to show the ring safely looped around it as people at the beach cheered.

“I never thought in a million years you’d find a ring in there,” Kamryn said. “Bikes off the end of the dock, sure, but a ring in the river... no way.”

Kamryn said she thanked Doug and Janice repeatedly as they took an afternoon out of their lives to help out a young couple they didn’t even know.

Caruso said if Kamryn and Tristan ever feel they are growing apart in their marriage, they should remember their day at the dock. Like the ring, they can find their way back to each other.

“This was definitely an amazing story to pass down now. I am so amazed that people are so nice and willing to help,” Kamryn said. “We can’t thank this gentleman enough for finding it. We will be paying it forward for all the kindness we received in losing it.”



*Doug Leroux comes up from diving at the dock Sunday with the wedding ring lost there the day before.*

*Photo: Crystal Caruso*

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# Fishing the Winnipeg River Never Disappoints

by Don Lamont

Over the last 40-plus years, I have fished almost every section of the mighty Winnipeg River.

I got my start in the fishing industry as a guide at Eagle Nest Lodge, some 38 kilometres upriver from Lac du Bonnet. My first tournament was held at Tall Timber Lodge located at the mouth of the Bird River. The Bird was the place where I caught my first smallmouth bass and what a thrill that was.

What I am trying to say is that this river has been in my DNA right from the beginning. I almost always make at least one trip there every year, usually in the spring. This part of the world with its large expanse of fishable water and great scenery is just a spectacular destination. It doesn't hurt that much of the river edges on the Canadian Shield.

A couple of years ago my wife and I headed out for a day to fish the Winnipeg River just south of Lac du Bonnet. When we arrived at the boat launch just off PR 211 to Pinawa, things were relatively quiet. When we loaded up the boat at 5 p.m. to head back to Winnipeg, that had changed dramatically. There were many families shore fishing and enjoying the great outdoors.

On the water though, we had a nice quiet time with no boats in sight. We fished many sections of the river, trying to find some active fish. Finally, around 3 p.m., we found a school of walleye tucked behind a shoreline point, out of the main current flow. With a water temperature of 8 Celsius it appeared the fish were still in the spawning mode. We were also lucky enough to land three fish under the 45-centimetre slot size to take home. The highlight of the day was a



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doubleheader of walleye, one near Manitoba Master Angler size. These were caught while drifting a jig in four metres of water.

This is just one small sampling of what is available. This section of the river provides a plethora of fishing opportunities. While walleye is the most popular target species, the smallmouth bass fishery has exploded. You will find them everywhere and they grow to massive proportions. Local angler Matt Gelley has made many YouTube videos on catching these great game fish.

For those looking to catch a massive northern pike, this section of the river from Pinawa to the McArthur Falls dam holds some of the largest pike in the province. I can remember many a day when trolling for walleye when we have hooked into a massive pike. In the spring they will be related to bay and weed edges, but when summer rolls around they are the rock humps and drop-offs around the many islands in this section of the river.

In late summer many of the anglers turn their attention to the mooneye that abound in the faster water in the section by Lac du Bonnet, down river from the Seven Sisters Dam. There is also a good fall run of walleye up to the dam.

One other species that has gained popularity is the black crappie. There is a very good population in the



*My wife Thora and I with a double header of nice walleye.*

*Photo: Don Lamont*

Lee River along with some jumbo perch.

Don't be too intimidated by all your options and the amount of water that is fishable in this section of the Winnipeg River. There is some great detailed mapping available to anglers. LakeMaster has an HD Map of this section of river as does Anglers Edge Mapping.

Purchase of these products will cut down searching time dramatically and might save you a lower unit on your outboard.

When it comes to an angling destination this section of the river has it all. It is a multi-species bonanza and with reduced limits along with a slot size it will only get better as the years go on. Give it a try this year, you won't be disappointed.



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# Waterway Rules Anchored

## Transport Canada Restrictions on Lee River and Pinawa Channel follow public consultation

**T**ransport Canada rules have officially been moored in place to regulate and restrict the use of waterways along the Lee River and Pinawa Channel to address previous concerns about public safety, property damage and environmental degradation.

The Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations (VORR) for the two heavily used waterways are in effect following a lengthy process steered by a committee guided by feedback from public consultation.

"They have been in the works basically for the last four years," Lac du Bonnet Reeve Loren Schinkel said. "It was quite a process with Transport Canada because they hadn't done one of these apparently in 30-plus years, so that slowed the process down."

The RCMP will be monitoring the waterways to gauge the situation, he said.

"Certainly their marine division will be out here, and now they'll have some more tools at their disposal if they need to enforce the regulations," Schinkel said. "I think that it's going to be an interesting year."

The rules largely apply to the use of pleasure craft, primarily ballast vessels. The regulations for the Lee River and Pinawa Channel include a prohibition on towing from 2-8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays along the Pinawa Channel between the entrance to the channel and the Old Pinawa Dam.



*Wake surfing on Lee River between the entrance to Pinawa Channel and the Rock Pile is prohibited.*



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Additionally, the rules prohibit towing at all times on Lee River within 100 metres of the shore between the Rock Pile – the narrow passage on the Lee River – and the mouth of the Lee River.

Wake surfing is also prohibited at all times on Pinawa Channel between the entrance to Pinawa Channel and the Old Pinawa Dam, as well as on the Lee River between the entrance to Pinawa Channel and the Rock Pile, or the narrow passage on the Lee River.

“The reality is that the Pinawa Channel is too narrow to continue to support the high-impact sport of wake surfing and tow activities at peak use times,” reads part of the VORR committee’s previous report.

“Many comments indicated that (wake boat) operators are not mindful of proximity to shore distances, which respondents have indicated are producing safety concerns while participating in shoreline recreational activities, such as swimming and using non-motorized watercraft, and is adding to natural shoreline erosion issues.”

Schinkel said if everyone would simply act responsibly along the waterways, such rules might not be required. A major issue identified by the consultations was property damage caused by the owners of larger boats, which can create large waves with the potential to throw smaller boats up onto docks – an impact exacerbated by the channel’s narrow section.

“That was a big concern for a lot of the public,” he said. “It’s unfortunate we had to go this route, but here we are.”

However, Schinkel said rules regulating the use of personal watercraft are nothing new and already exist in numerous other jurisdictions throughout North America.



Photo: “Peregrine Falcon” by Rick McGregor

“It’s public safety on the waterways, just like it is on the roadways,” he added.

There will be more of a focus on educating boaters than resorting to enforcement. The municipality installed signage at all of the boat launches as mandated by Transport Canada.

The reeve also anticipates neighbouring municipalities will sooner or later adopt similar legislation.

“They’re looking for similar restrictions, and I would think that will be in place before too long as well.”

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# New Water Rules Will be Put to Test

## Schinkel encourages rec boaters to be “good neighbours” this summer

**R**M of Lac du Bonnet council believe the upcoming boating season along portions of the Lee River and Pinawa Channel will put the recently revised Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations (VORR) to the test.

“Everybody’s aware that the Vessel Operation Regulation Restrictions are in place,” Reeve Loren Schinkel said at council’s April 16 meeting. “It’s going to be certainly an interesting summer for the municipality as we move forward with this.”

The new rules restrict the use of waterways along the Lee River and Pinawa Channel and address previous concerns about public safety, property damage and environmental degradation. They largely apply to the use of pleasure craft, primarily ballast vessels, and include select days, time and locations where towing and wake surfing are prohibited.

The rules were introduced as a result of numerous concerns expressed by the public about safety, property and the environment. Extensive public engagement through the Lac du Bonnet Community Development Corporation and a committee ensued.

Schinkel said that Transport Canada ultimately has jurisdiction over the waterways.

“We look forward to open dialogue on this because it

doesn’t mean that the regulations can’t be changed now that we have these in place,” Schinkel said. “We’ve been advised of an easier process to go through if they require some tweaking as we move forward.”

Coun. Cindy Kellendonk said from the number and nature of calls she has received, the biggest concern is restrictions that run from the dam to the Rock Pile in the Lee River, adding there may be an explosion of wake boarding and wake boarding boats in the area from there to the mouth of the Winnipeg River.

“We don’t know if that’s going to happen yet, we’ll have to wait and see,” Kellendonk said.

In the meantime, Schinkel implored everyone to be “good neighbours.”

“We certainly ask everybody to be cognizant of the regulations and yet respectful of one another as we move into this process,” he said.

John Fleming, director of Lac du Bonnet emergency management, was part of the committee that conducted open houses to glean public input from those for and against the regulations. That process led to recommendations being submitted to Transport Canada, which conducted its own review before one final round of community consultation, Fleming told The Clipper.

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"After that process, (Transport Canada) then signed off on them and made them regulatory," he said, adding the new VORR primarily address recreational watercraft such as wake boats that create large waves for surfing."

"They make huge waves; that's the fun of those boats," he said, adding those in tow surf along waves as large as three feet. "Transport Canada says that it takes around 900 metres for that wave to flatten. We heard stories of boats being washed out of their mooring; furniture washed off decks, Sea-Doo watercraft washed off their moorings because of these large, excessive wakes."

So, the intent is to restrict those types of watercraft during certain times of day.


"I think it's a step in the right direction. There's a lot of boating that takes place on the Lee River," Fleming said.

During the consultations, a resident north of the Pinawa Channel along the Lee River spent one hour during a regular Saturday afternoon counting the number of boats passing by the end of their dock. Even though it wasn't even a long weekend, they reportedly counted 227 boats, said Fleming.

"That's bumper-to-bumper traffic," he said. "With that level of usage, I think the restrictions are quite reasonable, and they speak to the safety of boaters on the Lee River and Pinawa Channel."

The erosion caused by the massive artificial wakes – particularly along the Pinawa Channel's banks, where the ground is a marshy mixture of clay rather

than rocky granite – was becoming a significant concern as property owners watched helplessly as 10 to 30 feet of their shoreline was, over time, eroded by wake boats.



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---

### GRANITE HILLS GOLF CLUB

Just 20 minutes past Lac du Bonnet on Cape Coppermine Road, Granite Hills Golf Club may be one of the youngest courses in Manitoba and one of the most spectacular.

Opened in 2007, this par 72 semi-private championship course boasts four sets of men's tees maxing out at 7,082 yards and a slope rating from 118 to 140, along with two sets of women's tees with slopes of 129 and 138.

Winding along Lake Lac du Bonnet, Granite Hills' plush fairways lined with mature trees, well-manicured greens and elevated tee boxes among the towering granite outcroppings are impressive.



*Granite Hills Golf Club.*

It also maintains 35 sand bunkers, five lakeside fairways and numerous elevation changes.

The course is a test for all skill levels, but also a lot of fun. The four par fives and 10 par fours are long with the four par three holes giving you a chance to make up a stroke.

A pro shop is on hand and carts and clubs are available for rent. A tournament coordinator will assist those interested in holding an event in keeping things moving smoothly. There is a dress code.

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*Beautiful morning for a round  
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## BLACK BEAR GOLF CLUB

Black Bear Golf is a short drive east of Lac du Bonnet on PR 313 and north on Lee River Road.

A prime nine-hole golf experience with two sets of tees, the locally owned and operated Black Bear course has become known as a fun course, for adults and kids of all ages. There are three par three holes, five par four holes and a par five hole.

The course is a par 34 and 2,662 yards long. There is no driving range, but practice greens are available. Power carts are also available for rent.

The bordering Lee River acts as a water hazard on holes three, five and eight.

[blackbeargolf.ca](http://blackbeargolf.ca)

204-345-9977

[facebook.com/blackbeargolfcourse](https://facebook.com/blackbeargolfcourse)

## PINAWA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Described as 'the course that nature built', the Pinawa Golf Club opened as a nine-hole course in 1967 as a firebreak for the town site.

Some 25 years later, nine more holes were opened to create one of the more scenic and challenging 18-hole public courses in Manitoba with plush fairways, cushy greens and well-groomed tee-boxes.

Stretching out over 6,270 yards (128 slope) and three sets of tees, golfers must hit the ball straight and accurate on this course to avoid the gaping sand-traps, rocky out-crops and water hazards along the edge of the Pinawa Channel.

It can be a tricky course because of the number elevation changes and the unique layout, but most will find it challenging, manageable and well worth the ride from Winnipeg.

This full service, championship golf course has it all including a pro-shop and teaching pro, driving range and practice greens, rental carts and clubs.

The club hosts their women's and men's open tournaments in June, senior men's in July and club championships in August. They can also accommodate tournament packages for those looking to host an event.



*Pinawa Golf.*

[pinawaclub.mb.ca](http://pinawaclub.mb.ca)

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## PINE FALLS GOLF CLUB

Built in 1927, the Pine Falls Golf Club is a nine-hole public course located between the communities of Pine Falls and Powerview.

The course provides women's and men's tees – white (men's) tees layout a par 35 course at a distance of 2,962 yards (slope rating 118) with red (women's) tees playing 2,677 yards and a par 37 (slope 117).

Generally flat with some elevated areas, most of the

holes feature a sand trap with water hazards on the first and ninth holes.

Pine Falls is the home of the Northeastern Open (men's tournament) in August and the Ladies Open in July. The club championships are in September.

The course has a driving range and practice putting greens. Carts and clubs are available for rent.

[pinefallsgolfclub.com](http://pinefallsgolfclub.com)

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Photo: "Deer in Trees" by Rick McGregor



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# New Owners at Campbell's Foods

**I**t is a long way from small farming villages in India to Lac du Bonnet, but it's a journey that Henis Patel and his wife Achal made, and they are not looking back.

The newest owners of Campbell's Foods both got their starts on those small farms. Henis went on to become a financial auditor but wanted to work for himself. Achal studied agricultural sciences in university in India and taught small farm family operators like Henis's parents about irrigation, crop selection and nutrients.

Henis moved to Toronto in 2017 and later to PEI and Nova Scotia. To chase his dream of working for himself, his next stop was Ignace, Ont. where he purchased a gas station with a convenience store, which introduced him to the world of retail. Married a year later when Achal came to Canada, both of the Patels are small town people. Ignace however was too far away from any major cities for their liking. Henis got a tip about a grocery store that might be for sale in a small town in Manitoba only an hour or so from Winnipeg and they were intrigued. Patel contacted Dave Cameron, the owner of Campbells at the time, and eventually a deal was struck.

Lac du Bonnet had the small-town atmosphere they both coveted and close enough to a city to fit their needs. They eventually settled into a house right in town, close enough to walk to the store for Achal as she does not yet drive.

Dick Campbell started Campbell's Food in 1979. The business was started by his mother and brother as Campbell's Corner Store in 1976 in the current location of Myles' Corner Store. Dick and his family operated the store for 37 years, moving to its present location at the corner of McArthur Avenue and Fourth Street in 1983, expanding it to its current size in 2003.

Dick sold the business to Brian and Carol Cameron in 2013. Their son, Dave, took over the store in 2021. The Patels took it over in October 2024.

When asked how they are enjoying Lac du Bonnet, they both said they have received a very warm reception from the people in town and find the customers in their store to be very friendly and welcoming. They have gotten to know Pastor James Schwab of the Abundant Life Chapel across the

street and had only wonderful things to say about the outpouring of friendship and help they received from Pastor James, his wife and members of their congregation. Schwab provided tremendous assistance and support in helping them move in while the Patels were busy learning the ropes in the store. Henis commented that all of this made them realize they had made the right decision to come to Lac du Bonnet.

When asked what the most challenging learning experience at the store has been, Henis said learning how to cut meat.

"Meat cutting is a skill, and we have a very good cutter, but I want to know how to do it in case I ever have the need to fill in as it is a very important part of the store," he said.

The Patels say the staff at the store has also been very welcoming. Besides helping them learn the intricacies of the grocery business, they have also been educating them about various events and attractions in the town. Henis has joined the Lac du Bonnet Chamber of Commerce and is a part of the recent revitalization of the Chamber, becoming a director at large.

If you have yet to meet these new Lac du Bonnet residents, stop in and say hello.



*Achel (left) and Henis Patel have received a very warm reception from the people of Lac du Bonnet.*



Lac du Bonnet ski trails. Photo: Donna Besel

# Ski Trails in Eastman

by Donna Besel

## AGASSIZ SKI TRAILS

Lac du Bonnet Cross Country Ski Club maintains classic ski trails in Agassiz Provincial Forest, about 15 kilometres west of town. Surrounded by spruce bogs and poplar bluffs, ski-



Lac du Bonnet Ski Trails.

Photo: Donna Besel

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ers enjoy gentle inclines set in mixed mature forest and pine trees. With only a couple of bigger hills, the trails suit beginner and intermediate skiers. Also, they can be accessed earlier in the season; the sandy ridges have no rock outcrops or swampy spots to delay packing and tracking.

In the mid-1980's, inspired by Lorna Kos-

tiuk and Bruce Sedleski, former residents who lived near the Agassiz Forest, interested skiers joined together to create the trail system. For years, this group held events such as Jackrabbit lessons, adult lessons, trips to other ski trails and resorts, cookouts, and moonlight ski outings. It had a clubhouse at the trailhead for warmups and socializing, but this building no longer exists.

When club membership declined, Carl and Karen Nilsson took over maintenance, grooming, and fundraising. In the fall of 2020, the Blue and Red Trails, located on Crown Land, were logged to harvest mature pine trees, but Carl resumed setting a track there in 2024. A newer Yellow Trail connects from the Green Trail west of Pit Road, so there are now 16 kilometres of trails.

All trails have excellent signage. Also, a new trailhead map shows the connected loops which allow skiers to turn back or increase their distance. Visitors will find a porta-potty at the trailhead, and another one on the Blue Trail near an old shelter.

Donations can be sent to: Lac du Bonnet Cross Country Ski Club, Box 1198, Lac du Bonnet, MB, R0E 1A0, or by Interac e-transfer to mzienkie@live.com



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## *Ski Trails in Eastman* continued

### DUCK LAKE SKI TRAILS

In the town of Powerview-Pine Falls, next to the hospital, skiers will find 11 kilometres of trails winding through a forest with balsam fir, black spruce forest, tamarack, and black ash trees. The rolling terrain has one major climb, and the trails suit mid-level skiers who welcome a few downhill. Volunteers Lenny Berthelette and Jean-louis Guay love grooming and start tracking after each snowfall.

In the late 1970's, the trail system was established, and over the years, volunteers have improved and expanded the network. The latest addition is Rabbit Run, which does not show up on trailhead map. Club events include an annual poker derby, and numerous social gatherings, moonlight skis, and cookouts. In 1985, they hosted the Eastman Games.



*Lenny Berthelette, volunteer trail groomer on his snowmobile with track setter behind.*

*Photo: Donna Besel*

When skiers reach the charming Doyle-Pitre Chalet, they benefit from local builders' hard work. This warm-up spot features large south-facing window, indoor seating with foam padding, solar lights, fire-



*Duck Lake Ski Trails.*

*Photo: Donna Besel*

starting materials, and a massive stove. Outside, there's a giant fire pit, stacks of seasoned firewood, cozy outhouse, and huge outdoor benches.

Information on membership fees is available online and donations can be sent to: Duck Lake Ski Club, Box 98, Pine Falls, MB, R0E 1M0 or by Interact e-transfer to [ducklakeskiclub@gmail.com](mailto:ducklakeskiclub@gmail.com)



*Duck Lake Ski Chalet.*

*Photo: Donna Besel*



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*Red Cabin Pinawa Ski Trails.  
Photo: Donna Besel*

## ***Ski Trails in Eastman*** *continued*

### **WHITESHELL SKI CLUB**

On the golf course and rocky hills, this club's trail system spreads out for 40 kilometres around the Pinawa townsite. Many sections offer scenic views of the Winnipeg River and Pinawa Channel. Also, skate skiers can enjoy 12 kilometres of designated track, set alongside the classic track. At night, insomniac skiers can work up a sweat on 1.2 kilometres of track lit by streetlights. Trailhead parking and maps are available at the Manitoba Hydro Substation and the diversion dam at the end of highway 211.

Although there are a few hills, beginning and intermediate skiers often choose to explore the golf course trails. Also, they may also enjoy the Red Trail across the Pinawa Channel. For food and drinks, they can visit the Pinawa Club, a licensed restaurant and lounge, open year- round. Skiers are welcome to use this facility.

Across the Channel, WSC has created an expansive array of longer, more challenging loops, twisting and turning through the Canadian Shield. This terrain includes stunning views of boreal forests, swamps, ponds, beaver dams, creeks, and granite outcrops.

The club maintains warming huts on the Red, Orange, and English River Trails. Given the more challenging terrain and longer distances to these cabins, the club reminds users to be prepared to handle lack of firewood, injuries, accidents, poor signal strength for cell phones, and the possibility of sharing premises.

In the fall of 1973, thirty skiers and enthusiasts gathered at Gilbert School and formed the Whiteshell Cross-Country Ski Club. Shortly after, they set to work, developing trails, teaching cross-country skiing, and organizing ski races. At first, they stuck to the golf course, but in 1974, then crossed the diversion dam and

pieced together trails north of the Channel. As these trails expanded, volunteers built the three warming cabins.

In 1980, the Club started a Jackrabbit program to teach children cross-country skiing. It proved successful. with many kids going on to race at higher levels. For older athletes, they offered the Racers and Pacers program.

WSC has hosted numer-



*Pinawa Ski Trails. Photo: Donna Besel*



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ous competitions, including Canada Cup, Western Canadian Championships, and Manitoba Winter Games. Also, in 1977, they started the annual Loppet (citizen's race). Now called the Manitoba Loppet, it attracts dozens of competitors from across Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. In 2012, Ben Dearing competed with the Manitoba team at the Canadian National Championships in Quebec City.

For fifty years, Whiteshell Ski Club has persevered. Like all cross-country ski clubs, it relies on volunteers. With such extensive trails, it's estimated WSC helpers work 3000 to 5000 hours each year. They organize the above-named winter events and, like the Lac du Bonnet and Duck Lake Clubs, provide unique opportunities for generations of skiers to explore the boreal forest, view wildlife, and experience the beauty of the Canadian Shield.

Donations pay for maintaining WSC trails and warming huts. Club fees and other information is available online. Mail: Whiteshell Cross-Country Ski Club, Box 438, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0 or E-transfer: [info@whiteshellskiclub.com](mailto:info@whiteshellskiclub.com). Alternatively, donations can be left in boxes located inside each cabin, and at the trailheads.

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# Ray Lansard Named Groomer of the Year

Eastman SnoPals' senior groomer operator Raymond Lansard was recently named the Snowmobilers of Manitoba (Sno-man) Groomer Operator of the Year at the 12th annual Snoman congress held in Brandon Nov. 9.

Lansard first discovered a love for the sport at the age of 20 after finding a snowmobile for sale at a store in Winnipeg in November 1966.

"I bought it and I took it home, and the bug's been with me ever since. There's no cure for it," Lansard said. "I've always had a snow machine ever since."

Lansard moved to Lac du Bonnet in 1974. Unlike snowbirds who fly away for the winter, he has never missed a snowmobiling season and fully embraces the fluffy white stuff and is always eager to hop back onto the trail groomer.

In recognition of his continued dedication to the club, Lansard was awarded a lifetime membership

with the Eastman SnoPals Inc. in 2020. He helped found the organization in 1996 when four clubs amalgamated.

Now 78, Lansard's affinity for all things snowmobiling has not waned. His tireless commitment to the club inspired Eastman SnoPals president John Fleming to nominate him.

"When you have a volunteer of that calibre, we were almost feeling remiss that we hadn't done it before," Fleming said. "He is just such a dedicated individual. He is absolutely the dictionary definition of a lifetime volunteer."

Lansard was completely unaware of his nomination until Fleming brought it up during a lunch meeting leading up to the Snoman congress.

"I was just taking a bite in a hamburger and I just about choked when he men-

tioned my name. I couldn't believe it. It was almost emotional," said Lansard. "I didn't know anything



*Raymond Lansard (left) accepts the Groomer Operator of the Year Award from Snoman president Jason Wiebe.*  
Snoman



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about it and I was shocked – I couldn't believe it."

The nomination clearly presented a compelling case that convinced Snoman's panel as he ultimately went on to receive the award. Lansard said he'd never before been recognized for the time and sweat he's put in over the decades.

"We're just a bunch of volunteers working together and I never expected anything like that," he said. "You just do it because you love to do it."

Yet there's also a sort of informal competition with neighbouring clubs driving volunteers to see who can deliver the best trails, he said.

"I think volunteers have a lot of pride in their work, and it's trying to see if you can get a better trail than the next club so that your riders are going to be happy with what you do."

Asked his thoughts on winning the award, Lansard said he felt a tinge of pride.

"I'm proud to see that I did get the award. Even though there's a lot of volunteers that deserve it, my turn came up I guess," he said with a chuckle.

Fleming praised his colleague's invaluable

contributions to the club.

"I've been with the club for 10 years; that seems like a long time and a lot of work, but when you measure that against the decades that Ray has been doing this without a peep, without a complaint, it just sets the bar so high for volunteers," he said. "If we could all have a Ray Lansard in our club, it would be a much easier world."

Lansard also patrols his trails, along the way cutting back brush and removing dead fall and dangerous trees. He has been a member of the club so long that he designed some of the first trails, Fleming said.

"He means so much to our club," said Fleming. "I'm thrilled that our application met the criteria and that Ray received the nod in recognition of his years and years."

Lansard said tending to the trails is "my favourite thing to do."

"When you sit in a machine and you look ahead and it's all moguls and rough and you can't get any worse than what it is, and then you look behind the groomer and it's like a tabletop – it just makes you keep on going. You just want to do more."



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