

The Southern Yarn

May-June 2025

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

downundercalendar

MAY

Breakfast at OEB Breakfast Co.
Saturday, 24th May – 8:45 am
100 – 330 Main St

Join us for breakfast downtown in the company of good friends. RSVP by Wed May 21 to info@downunderclub.mb.ca – max 16 people. PARKING: Validated parking underground on Fort St (2 hrs), and complimentary parking on Main St (2 hrs).

JULY

Pool Party
Sunday, 27th July – 3:30 pm
57 D'Arcy Drive, south Wpg

Lynley and family have offered their pool and backyard again for this summer social occasion for members and families. Swim, socialise and enjoy the BBQ. The Club will provide the burgers, hotdogs and buns. Members bring their own drinks, and a dish to share – salad, pasta or desserts. Let Lynley know ages of children attending. Remember to RSVP! Please call Lynley at **204-269-1510**, leave a voicemail, or by email to social@downunderclub.mb.ca

AUGUST

Annual DUCW Golf Tournament
Saturday, 23rd August – noon
The Players, 2695 Inkster Blvd.

This 9-hole game will again be “Best Ball” where you are part of a team of four, and you hit your next shots from the best positioned ball in your group. We gather after the game for results, a beverage, and perhaps a burger. To reserve a spot and get on a team, call Peter Munn at **204 237-1805**. Players of all skill levels are welcome! INVITE A FRIEND!

SEPTEMBER

DUCW 75th Anniversary BBQ,
Sunday 21st Sept. – 11am to 3pm
Assiniboine Park

Plan to join us for an event to mark the conclusion of our 75th year. The Club will provide burgers, hot dogs, buns and condiments, and members will be asked to bring salads and desserts. For more information, email info@downunderclub.mb.ca



Clockwise: Wreath bearers Arthur Robertson, Graham Somers, and Claire Somers; Liz Hydesmith and Samara Hand; Peter Debenham, Manitoba Protocol Officer Brad Robertson, Peter Munn, and Arthur Robertson; Trumpeter Rick Sellwood; Dana Haig and Jenny Gates. Photos: Brian Hydesmith.

Remembrance and camaraderie on ANZAC Day

The Down Under Club of Winnipeg gathered for our annual ANZAC Day Ceremony on Saturday April 26th, beginning with a moving 5PM service, followed by a lovely potluck dinner, cheerful banter and a few rounds of “Two-Up” to round out the evening.

The turnout was fantastic with so many people bringing our community together in remembrance and camaraderie. It was a wonderful opportunity to remember the profound sacrifices made by those who served, and to honour current service members.

We even had to find a few extra chairs at the venue to seat everyone, including **Dana Haig**, a recent arrival in the ‘Peg from Australia, and, for the last time, Samara and Rowan who are returning to Australia soon.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Reverend Teresa Moysey** for her opening remarks and closing prayer, talented trumpeter **Rick Sellwood**, our dedicated flag bearers **Owen Davidson and Samara Hand**, readers **Liz Hydesmith, Peter Debenham and Ryan Davidson, Claire and Graham Somers**, and **Brad and Arthur Robertson** for laying wreaths, and others for their various contributions to the solemn and respectful ceremony.

The ANZAC spirit shone brightly here in Winnipeg, a testament to the dedication of our club members. We look forward to welcoming everyone back again next year!

— Sam Dawson

Land Acknowledgement

The Down Under Club of Winnipeg meets on Treaty 1 in the Province of Manitoba and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live and gather, and all the lands from whence we came, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.



find us on facebook or the web
www.downunderclub.mb.ca
email: info@downunderclub.mb.ca

editorially yours

Charlie Powell



At the risk of overdosing on folate, I have no plans to change my regular enjoyment of Vegemite and toast (p. 4). Hopefully the powers that be will take note of the nationwide, multi-generational “study” that has been in progress for more than a century down under with no warnings coming from the Australian medical profession, and add fortified spreads to their allowable imports.

In this issue, we also farewell a long-standing member (p. 3), offer some viewing ideas (p. 5) and get the low-down on the AFL (p. 7).

And in case you're of the Scottish persuasion, we have inserted an announcement for the upcoming Manitoba Highland Gathering (p. 3).

The resident ornithologist is taking a break this issue, and instead of my Birds I view column (p. 8), we share (with permission) **Gord Mackintosh's** entertaining and informative bird tour of Manitoba.

All this and so much more – for your reading pleasure.

president's ramblings

Peter Munn



It has taken its sweet time, but Spring finally arrived in full force. High 30s this past weekend, which is perfect for sitting in the backyard and either admiring your yard work or your plan to get it all done. And then a mixed bag of weather this week as Summer tries to make its presence felt.

It's a good time in Winnipeg for Winnipeg Jets fans and especially fair-weather fans like me. On May 4, the Jets came from well behind to tie the seventh playoff game against the St. Louis Blues with just 2 or 3 seconds left in the 3rd period. And then after a scoreless overtime 4th period, they prevailed by scoring in the overtime 5th period to move onto the 2nd round of playoffs, thus breaking a dismal record of first round flameouts.

Kicking off the 2nd round, the Jets fell to the Dallas Stars in the first game, but then claimed a 4-0 victory against the Stars. Fingers crossed for the rest of the round and beyond.

For the fifth game against St. Louis, held in Winnipeg, my elder son Corey managed to snag a pair of tickets to the game. We



dressed in all white, for the “Winnipeg Whiteout”, courtesy of Home Depot painters' outfits, \$12 bucks a 'pop', \$12 bucks a 'son'.

Now, I have always been interested in sports, since I was knee high to a grass-hopper, especially the best of the best in any sport, be it soccer, weightlifting, sprinting, water polo or tiddly winks. So, the Olympics, especially the Summer Olympics, has been required viewing for me ever since 1956, when they arrived in Melbourne, and I watched them on a black and white TV at a neighbour's home. He must have been rich! I was talking with Corey after the Jets beat St. Louis in game 7, and we discussed the elation that comes to a city with a winning sports team. And for a city like Winnipeg, with a smaller population than most if not all NHL cities, it makes us feel a lot of pride that as many signs in Game 7 at the arena displayed, “WE BELIEVE”.

Have a great Summer,
Peter



Righthand drive on Kenaston Blvd, Wpg.
Photo by C. Powell



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MembersPage

Your stories and photos from here, there, and everywhere



Farewell Joy Hood

Long-time DUCW member Joy Hood passed away in mid-April surrounded by her beloved family.

Born in Sydney, Australia, Joy was the cherished wife of her devoted husband, Russ, for an incredible 69 years. Their enduring love story was a testament to their partnership, their shared values, and their mutual support throughout the years.

Together, they had five children, including talented folk artist Lynette who donated several pieces of her beautiful artwork to our 2020 Aussie Bushfire Fundraiser.


Joy was celebrated for her kindness, perseverance, and passion for life. She was a woman of many talents and interests – a gifted dressmaker, seamstress and knitter, played cards, board games and bridge, loved the outdoors, golf and curling, and always found comfort in nature. She volunteered on the board and as chair of the Victoria Hospital Foundation, and always sought to make a positive difference in the community.

Her wit, laughter, strength, and unshakable love for her family will never be forgotten. Joy's legacy lives on in her children, 26 grandchildren and great grandchildren, and all those who were fortunate enough to have known her.

Longer obituary – <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/winnipeg-mb/joy-hood-12346127>



57th Manitoba Highland Gathering
June 21 9-4pm
June 22 9-3pm
2025
East Selkirk Arena
East Selkirk, Manitoba
infomanitobahighlandgathering@gmail.com




V-E Day
 Father and daughter Métis musicians, Gilles and Sara Crevier, from Ste Anne, MB, have been honoured to be part of the Canadian delegation commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and Victory in Europe (V-E) Day, 8th May.



ARE YOU GAME?

The Bombers season gets underway at home on May 24 (preseason), with the regular season running from June 12 to October 25.

Last year we organised a very successful “DUCW at the Bombers” event, and are looking to do it again this year.

If you are interested in attending – and/or would like to organise the event – please let us know at info@downunderclub.mb.ca.

You will get all the help you need from Mason McClelland, Bombers Group Sales Manager, who will lead you seamlessly through the entire process. I did it last year, and have a few suggestions for making it work even better, so feel free to reach out to me at words@jennygates.com.

BTW, in addition to the Bombers, there is also the **Goldeyes** (baseball), **Sea Bears** (basketball), **Valour FC** (soccer) and **Manitoba Moose** (hockey) if anyone wants to get a group together to take in those pro sports.




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Australian owner of Toronto café chain fighting Ottawa to save \$8K of Vegemite

Ethan Lang [CBC News, Apr 14, 2025]
[reprinted with permission from CBC News at Six Toronto, and edited for space]

It's hard to get any further from Australia than downtown Toronto, so for a dual-citizen like Leighton Walters, the quickest way to be transported home is to take a bite of Vegemite on toast.

The yeasty spread, made from the byproduct of beer production, is hard to find in Canada, but back in Walters' home country, it's part of the national fabric. For five years, he says he's been importing jars of the stuff to offer at Found Coffee, his chain of Australian-inspired cafés in Toronto.

Until recently, Found Coffee sold jars of Vegemite directly to customers, who could also order Vegemite on toast or pastries with the spread baked in.

"I grew up as a Vegemite kid ... eating it for breakfast every second day," Walters told CBC Toronto. "It's an iconic Australian product ... we've been so proud to serve it to thousands and tens of thousands of Australians, Canadians, travellers and tourists."

But earlier this year, Canadian regulators flagged his latest shipment of Vegemite, which is only produced in Australia. After inspection, they told Walters he would have to pull the item. The reason behind the decision has left Walters — and the local expat community that buys his imports — frustrated and confused.

It's also put roughly \$8,000 worth of Vegemite, which Walters has already paid for, in jeopardy.

"The Vegemite product being sold was found to have added vitamins which are not permitted in this product as per the Food and Drug Regulations and is therefore not permitted to be sold in Canada," a CFIA spokesperson told CBC Toronto in an email. "As a result, the café was informed of the non-compliance and voluntarily removed the product from its menu and retail offerings."

All Vegemite products are fortified with

Vitamin B, according to the product's website, suggesting no Vegemite products should be permitted to be sold in Canada. [end of original article]

Suggestions for manufacturers "... to produce and sell a Vegemite product in Canada that is compliant with Canadian requirements" were confusing to those of us who can already buy it here, and online from Amazon Canada. And it didn't help that "... CFIA confirmed in its email that Vegemite is not banned in Canada."

Previously, whenever news of a ban on Vegemite reached us, the DUCW contacted both CIFA and the USFDA to enquire if there was a ban on Australia's national icon, and were always told no.

When word reached Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese about the situation at Found Café, he said, "I stand with the Aussie café owner. I love Vegemite. It's a good thing. ... It's rather odd that they're letting Marmite in, which is rubbish, frankly."

And while Kiwis in the DUCW might disagree with his comment about Marmite, few can deny the Vegemite exclusion is baffling.

Then an updated article by Sarah Petz [CBC News, Apr 19, 2025] offered hope. "In an email to CBC News sent late Friday, the federal agency says a health risk assessment

from Health Canada has since determined that the level of risk to human health from the added vitamins in Vegemite is low when consumed in suggested serving sizes. 'As such, CFIA will work with the importer to allow the product to be sold in the short-term, including revised labeling, while we collaborate with Health Canada, the manufacturer, and the importer, to find a longer-term plan for Vegemite sales across Canada.'"

So, Vegemite is back on the Ontario café chain's shelves for now, and we will close with last words on the matter from two Prime Ministers and a very relieved shop owner.

"This is a win for Australian industry, but it's also a win for those people in Canada who get to enjoy this wonderful product that is so much a part of Australian culture and indeed, Australian pride as well." [Australian PM Anthony Albanese]

"This is the value of strong free trade with reliable partners like Australia — and mutual respect for our cultural treasures," [Canadian PM Mark Carney]

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart." [Lleyton Walters, owner of Found Coffee, 'Specialty coffee with an Aussie flair', 324 College St, Toronto, ON, where Vegemite is back on the shelves.]



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The Commonwealth

Rethinking health financing for a thriving Commonwealth workforce

On 24 April, senior government officials from health ministries across the Commonwealth met prior to the 2025 Commonwealth Health Ministers meeting to discuss investments to support health systems amid the current global financial context that has placed many vulnerable nations at risk.

At a preparatory Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) chaired by Mrs. Maneo Ntene, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health in the Kingdom of Lesotho, delegates outlined the priorities for the 37th Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (37CHMM) to be held in Geneva on 17 May 2025. These include climate adaptation and resilience, non-communicable diseases, cancers, healthy ageing and digital health innovations.

They emphasised the importance of unlocking new resources to promote health equity and develop stronger, greener, and better-funded health systems.

An invitation was issued to the 37th Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting 2025 from Hon Shirley Botchwey, Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Over 70 delegates attended the high-level virtual meeting. They made wide-ranging interventions on non-communicable diseases, mental health and the impact of climate on health.



Doughnuts or Donuts? ...

Canada has Tim Horton's - Australia (Qld) has Taste my Bean (TMB). Check them out here <https://tastemybean.com.au/about/>



North-east view from the northern top of Mount Kosciusko - Eugene von Guerard, 1863

Did you know? ...

Kosciusko is a city in Attala County, Mississippi, USA. It was renamed from Redbud Springs for General Tadeusz Kościuszko. He was a Polish officer who served with the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

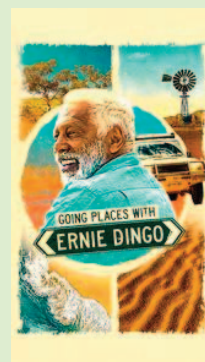
Australia's highest mountain was named by the Polish explorer Paweł (Paul) Edmund Strzelecki in 1840, also in honour of [Polish-Lithuanian] freedom fighter General Tadeusz Kościuszko because of its perceived resemblance to the Kościuszko Mound in Kraków, Poland.

WatchThis

A few ideas for shows to tune into...

Going Places with Ernie Dingo

This show explores Australia's iconic destinations from the Kakadu National Park to the Great Barrier Reef, and introduces us to the people who live there in a symbiotic relationship with nature. Now on APTN on Shaw Cable, and recommended by DUCW member Pam Sabourin.



Wellington Paranormal

Follow hilariously hapless officers Mark Minogue and Karen O'Leary, along with their senior Sergeant Maaka, as they tackle local crimes and misdemeanors of a supernatural nature. Created by Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement, and now showing on CBC Gem.



PHOTOS: Ernie Dingo [photo: <https://www.sbs.com.au>]

Wellington Paranormal [photo: <https://powpost.co.nz>]



<https://michael24833.wixsite.com/ruby>

Aussies overland across Asia

After travelling across Japan, adventurous friends of DUCW members the Hydsmiths just arrived in South Korea with their 4WD camping truck. Scan the QR code to follow Michael and Heather. What adventures await in Russia and beyond is anyone's guess.





75years&counting

75 Years and Still Going Strong

From unexpected and uncertain beginnings, the Down Under Club has become an active, long-standing and popular group here in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba. We continue to be one of four social clubs across Canada connected to Australia and New Zealand.

The others are the Toronto Australia New Zealand Club (Tranzac) in Ontario, Australia New Zealand Association (the ANZA Club) in Mt Pleasant, Vancouver, and the Downunder Social Club of Calgary in Alberta.

(Are there any more you know of?)

We all exist to bring Australians and New Zealanders together for social events, keep them informed about news back home, and ward-off the homesick blues. Keeping our cultures thriving across Canada – kudos to us all.

DUCW members have always been our priority, and our commitment to providing a social club for expat Aussies, Kiwis, and our Canadian families and friends has never wavered over our 75 years. Membership has ranged from more than 400 to the current number of about 100 active members, and there are many other expats living in Winnipeg and beyond.

We continue to organise a variety of social and formal events, provide assistance

and information for members living here and others passing through, maintain links with official entities here and in Australia and New Zealand, and share stories and updates from down under in our long-standing newsletter, *The Southern Yarn*.

Although we are many miles from our original home countries, we haven't lost our connection with them, our love for them, our contact with distant families and friends, and we are keenly interested in and inspired by all things Australian and New Zealand.

And the DUCW is still the most affordable gig in town, with dues only \$30 for a couple or family, and \$20 for single members. Our only criteria is to be from or have some connection with or an interest in Australia and/or New Zealand. And while the pandemic succeeded in forcing our meetings online, that didn't even deter members from staying connected and organising creative ways to mix and mingle as health regulations allowed.

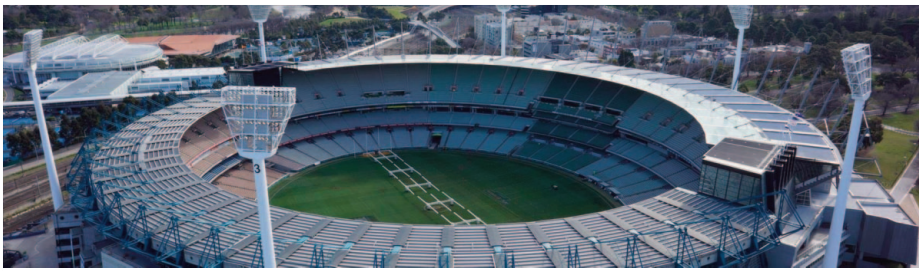
Now, as a little bonus for you all, we have introduced a new page on the DUCW website. Down Under Fare in Manitoba features places in and close to Winnipeg, as well as online sites, where you can buy yummy



treats and eats from or inspired by Australia and New Zealand. If you discover other food and beverages from the lands down under, please email us at info@downunderclub.mb.ca with all the details, and we will continue to add and update your discoveries and ours to that page as often as possible.

For the past 75 years, we have enjoyed fostering Australian, New Zealand and Canadian relations, and promoting 'down under' so far from 'home'. The Club is assured of a successful future if the present interest and support of members continues.

NEXT ISSUE – Members Reflections and Memories



The Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Photo provided.

AFLreport

G'day footy supporters,

The home-and-away season is approaching the halfway mark with plenty of the usual teams vying for not only the finals.

Leading the way are 2024 and 2023 premiers Brisbane and Collingwood, followed closely by Hawthorn and surprise packet Gold Coast Suns.

With two teams in the top 4, footy in Queensland is well and truly thriving because everyone loves to back a winner!

Rounding out the 8 are Adelaide, perennial contenders Geelong, Footscray, and the GWS Giants who are looking to avenge a straight sets exit from the finals last year, losing two finals games in which they relinquished massive leads in the fourth term.

Hot on the heels of the top 8 are Essendon, Carlton, Fremantle, St. Kilda, and Port Adelaide. To the surprise of many, last year's runner's up, the Sydney Swans, are languishing in the bottom third of the ladder. Poor form, injuries and the taxing nature of a flag tilt may be catching up to the group who have been in flag contention for the better part of the past 15 years. New coach and WC premiership hero Dean Cox has work to do if the Swans are to figure in September.

No surprises that the bottom three ladder spots are occupied by Richmond (16th), North Melbourne (17th), and the West Coast Eagles (18th), the Eagles having yet to register a win from nine matches. Out of the three, Richmond has punched above their weight by registering three wins from nine matches as many punters picked them to not salute once this year and to claim the uncoveted wooden spoon.

North Melbourne has shown signs of being a contender, having been in a number of close matches, none more encouraging than last week's drawn match versus reigning premiers Brisbane. Finally the Melbourne Demons have underachieved considering they boast a talented list and plenty of experience. Senior coach Simon Goodwin will have the next four months to get his men fit and fir-

ing to give Demon supporters some hope of September glory.

The bittersweetness of footy was on full display as Magpie Jack Crisp broke the long-standing record of consecutive games played, pulling on a footy jumper for the 245th time in a row. But the footy gods clearly smiling on the Collingwood utility for 11+ years came to an abrupt end when he had the chance to seal a win versus the Cats in his historic game. Alas, his set shot for victory, post final siren, sailed wide right for a behind and the Pies went down by 3 points.

Finally, the overall state of the game has never been better in most areas. Record number of crowds in all seven states are turning up to watch, revenues and viewership continue to grow, and the quality of footy has never been higher. The league's expansion into Tasmania is clear evidence AFL footy is the most popular sport on the island continent.

However, there are areas that will likely always be in flux as they involve human interactions and subjective decisions. In-game supporter player interactions seem to be on the rise, and the banter is often antagonistic instead of good natured. Increased scrutiny on umpiring decisions by coaches, players, supporters and the media is not leading to an improvement in officiating games. And the process of delivering justice via an outdated and stagnant tribunal for in-game transgressions is far too erratic and unpredictable, which makes for plenty of bewilderment and much anger amongst those invested in the game.

As the game continues to grow and evolve, we as supporters will continue to bar-rack hard, stay in our lanes, and enjoy the amazing skill and ability on display week in and week out. The passion and unpredictability of playing and watching sport remains one of the true milieus that brings people together. Let's take it one game at a time!!

- Michael J. Workman

Birds-i-View, cont'd from page 8



Another family awoke to unbearable daily cawing. Finally, the dad hosed the loudmouth. The dad became the summer-long target of dive-bombing sorties and relentless, disparaging heckling from a nearby fence. No one else in the family. No one else in Thompson.

On Winnipeg's Main Street, Margie yelled, "Stop!" Seeing a string of ducklings ahead, I braked. Margie jumped into traffic. Barefoot. I shockingly activated flashers to alert vehicles. Margie dashed into the other lane, stopping four SUVs and a dump truck.

She shooed nine ducklings to the boulevard. Two somersaulted. One couldn't jump the curb. With cupped hands, Margie coaxed it. Not one driver honked. Folks waved.

Margie was just giving back to duckdom. A duck's quack, without fail, makes her slap her leg and laugh uproariously.

And, ah, the loon's yodel. Here's a poem I finally memorized to make Margie swoon: "Hear the loon, under the moon, soon."

For lakeside fun, I challenged her, "Whoever predicts closest where the loon surfaces, gets to name it!" One lucky afternoon, I named my Falcon Lake loon "Loo." I explained, "With two Os." Next day, Margie won. She named her loon "Lorenzo" She explained, "With two Os." And who was likely Loo.

Along the Mississippi Flyway, Canada geese offer cautious optimism that spring might come. Officials post, "In Winnipeg, we are fortunate to have... geese to co-exist with us."

But 70,000 migrating geese cause migrating headaches. They nest on rooftops, restaurant patios, airport runways. Officials suggest deploying strobe lights, flags, scarecrows or scare-cannons called "bangers." That's co-existence. And at Kildonan Park, they hiss at me. Not Margie. Just saying.

For Manitobans, life is a flyway.
gordmackintosh9@gmail.com

(Reprinted with permission)

NON-STOP FLIGHT by GORD MACKINTOSH

*A new perspective on our
province's prolific plumage*

WELCOME, buffleheads! Greetings, bobolinks! Manitoba hosts bird species galore. Behold dark-eyed juncos, marbled godwits, goofy-gaited screw-eyed wingnuts.

Maybe I made up that last one.

Joining birders at FortWhyte Alive to count our feathered friends, I asked what to do. They explained, "Go like this: one, two, three...."

We discovered 50 nifty species — in Winnipeg! I then asked the group, "Hey, what would 10 pounds of feathers weigh?"

Thick clouds of raucous birds at Lakeland astounded Margie and me.

An agitated farmer explained, "Them's those dang blackbirds stealin' the corn!" So, they're not always feathered friends.

During migration, discover Delta Marsh's bird bedlam or Whitewater Lake's honking hordes of snow geese rising with black-tipped wings into silvery, swooping masses. Marvel at Oak Hammock Marsh's wall of birdsong.

Hearing a boisterous overhead flock, a three-year-old exclaimed, "What's going on up there?" And Churchill drives birders berserk with over 250 species including snowy owls and ptarmigans.

As they say, "See them ptime and ptarmigan."

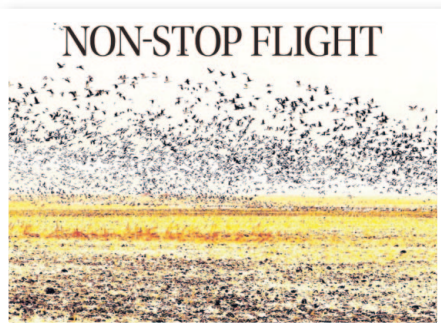
Watch Lockport's pelican population compete with buoyant fishers for the Red River's bounty. Look for strikingly homely, carcass-eating turkey buzzards. And spotting a distant bald eagle always thrills Margie. (They're usually planes, pigeons or plastic bags.)

Sixteen raptor species converge at Pembina Valley Provincial Park.

Officials also call the park "a songbird auditorium." And weary vacationers know the arousing squawks of otherwise attractive Wasagamung magpies, Whiteshell blue jays and those Gimli gulls that are so full of surprises.

East of Brandon, a sign announces "Welcome to Douglas. Home of the Yellow Rail." It displays a bird too. I drove into Douglas to see this golden track.

A Railway Street sign shows a silver track. Bewildered, I asked at the General Store, "Your rail, it's a train track? And yellow?" The woman replied, "It's a bird." So much, once again, for the English language.



Snow geese take flight near Whitewater Lake. Count them! Photo by Gord Mackintosh

She explained, "Folks come from all over to see rails. But they're hard to see. They hide in our marsh. You only hear its call — like tapping stones."

A sign at the marsh says Douglas enjoys among the continent's highest densities of yellow rails. Douglas hosts a major transcontinental railway. The sign warns against trampling into rail habitat. Maybe that's why yellow rails are hard to see.

On the coldest days, cars and people won't start, but sparrows and chickadees sure do. When I heard sparrows riotously chirping in our hedge in March, Margie said, "They're mating! Don't look!" And Margie adores Birds Hill Park's Cedar Bog Trail for sweet-tweeting chickadees that swoop to her hand and tickle — or sit on her head. Never on mine. Just saying.

The free-range parading peacocks of Souris vigorously scratch on windows to ward off their reflection — images that defiantly stand their ground.

Gaggles of Winnipeg turkeys get their laughs attempting Knock Off Ginger and riling up dogs. La Rivière celebrates area turkeys with a nine-foot-tall monument called Tom the Turkey, plus an annual Turkey Fest with, yes, a rubber-duck race.

The so-called "Thompson Turkey" is the North's supersized black raven.

Revered for cunning perseverance, they flip lids off garbage containers, then lift and drop bags for bountiful buffets. A resident told me they sit atop streetlights once they turn on — for warmth. Another insisted one crossed the street once the light turned green.

I skeptically replied, "Have another drink."

A FRIEND'S new boat came off the lake, luckily with fish. Next morning, he shockingly found a hole in a seat. His children pleaded not guilty. Later, he noticed a Thompson Turkey at the scene. Aha! Pickerel-scented seating.

continued on page 7



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