

The Southern Yarn

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.



Jan. - Feb. 2026

downundercalendar

JANUARY

Australia Day and Waitangi Day

Saturday January 31, 2:00 pm

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 252

426 Osborne St, Wpg

This year, we are doing something different to our previously announced information for our Australia Day and Waitangi Day celebration – a reenactment of a typical Aussie / Kiwi RSL Saturday afternoon.

We have arranged with the Legion to nest together tables in their main bar area for our use, and we request you get there just after opening time of 2pm, before the afternoon begins with their regulars for the Meat Draw. This way we ensure we are all together.

There is limited snack food there (popcorn, potato chips, etc.), and you can also bring your own snacks/food into the room.

Unfortunately, children under the age of 18 are not permitted in the area. [See President's message on page 2 for more info]

APRIL

ANZAC Day Memorial Service

Saturday April 25

4:30 pm for 5:00 pm start

Scandinavian Cultural Centre

764 Erin St, Wpg

PLEASE NOTE – We request you arrive between 4:30 and 4:50 pm so we can start promptly at 5:00 pm. Make a date to commemorate ANZAC Day with a memorial service where the younger generation will once again play a significant part, and we will sing our national anthems.

This will be followed by a delicious POTLUCK. Bring a dish to share for the meal – main dish, or veggies, salad or dessert. This has been a particularly important event for our Club for 75 years, so come and be part of it and the social to follow. And yes, the bar will be open.



Christmas party

The Club made use of the Scandinavian Cultural Centre's "upstairs room" for their annual Christmas Party on Sunday December 7 and, once again, we enjoyed the warm and bright decorations put up by the SCC.

A smaller group than usual gathered and gave a lively welcome to Santa Claus who provided presents from his toy sack and stayed for a few photographs.

Thanks to all who brought the food for the delicious potluck; we seem to be able to provide both hot and cold dishes abundantly and cater for all appetites. Some games and a warm time of fun and good cheer followed.



Did you know ...

The Australian Returned Services League (RSL) and the New Zealand Returned Services Association (RSA) were formed in 1916 by returning ANZACs during World War I to provide support and comfort for service men and women and their families.



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



Due to Downunder House being closed over the Christmas and New Year period so that our hard-working staff could take a well-earned break and spend some quality time with family and friends, this issue of the *Yarn* is a slightly smaller version.

At least to start with, 2026 will see us still operating with a hybrid work arrangement to accommodate the different needs and preferences of our journalists. Some prefer to work from home while others find the office more suitable. So, most days it's a compromise – home/office. Nevertheless, be assured, you, our valued readers, will always come first.

We are grateful for your positive feedback – it is what keeps us going! We trust that herein, you will find something of interest, whether it's humorous, or serious, or educational, or uplifting, or all of the above.

Thank you to Jenny, Leon, Judy, Peter, Brian, our faithful advertisers and Kendrick Printing.

Did you know? ...

The "Mac source" of the Nile – Former North Island (New Zealand) farm boy, Cam McLeay, together with fellow expedition team members Neil McGrigor (co-leader, UK) and Garth MacIntyre (NZ) found the longest source of the Nile River in 2005. They travelled as much of the 4000+ miles as possible from Cairo south using special Zapcats. The final stage had to be by foot, trekking through forest in Rwanda to a source spring bubbling out of the ground.



president's ramblings

Peter Munn



Hi everyone,

Please mark Saturday 31st of January at 2:00 pm on your calendar for a reenactment of a typical Aussie / Kiwi RSL Saturday afternoon, including meat/chook raffle and pokies. This year, we are doing something different to our previously announced information for our Australia Day and Waitangi Day celebration.

We will be meeting up at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 252, located at 426 Osborne St, opposite the Winnipeg Transit Fort Rouge garage. Directly behind the Legion, off Woodward Avenue, is the large Legion parking lot, and there is also ample parking along both Woodward and Glasgow Avenues.

We have arranged with the Legion to nest together tables in their main bar area for our use, and we request you get there just after opening time at 2:00 pm, before the afternoon begins with their regulars for the Meat Draw. This way, we ensure we are all together.

There is limited snack food there (popcorn, potato chips, etc.), and you can also bring your own snacks/food into the room.

Unfortunately, children under the age of 18 are not permitted in the area.

There is no requirement to sign into the Legion, and you don't need to be a member of the Legion to attend.

One point of past protocol when I was a Legion member at Charleswood was that no hats were to be worn inside the Legion, as a form of respect to those who had served or were serving in the armed forces. This is no longer expected by the Legion organisation, but considering the background of our Club as a group of active servicemen in WWII, let's follow the original protocol – no hats worn in the building.

So, please save the date, meet together and shoot the breeze, and maybe win a few prime steaks for the BBQ. Really hoping to see a lot of our members there.

Kind regards,
Peter...

And feel free to call me – 204-237-1805 – with any enquiries.

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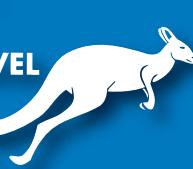
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Photos: Corinne Napper, Brian Hydesmith

Book Launch for “Of Gum Trees and Maple Leaves”

After 43 years editing and helping other people publish their books and scientific publications, I fulfilled a lifetime goal of publishing my own book.

On the afternoon of Sunday December 14, sixty people gathered at the Bill and Helen Norrie Library at Grant and Poseidon to launch my first book, *Of Gum Trees and Maple Leaves – a life lived through miscellaneous literary scribblings*.

The book includes a variety of writings from Australia and Canada, including stories, poems, articles, blogs, songs, ditties, opinions and

reflections, all bridged by an autobiographical account and supported by more than 670 photos.

It's for everyone who has been part of my life in one way or another, for the two places I call home, for those who have stood by and with me here and there, and for anyone who has ever wondered what I've been doing all my life.

A launch for DUCW members is currently being organised, and I'll email everyone when I have a date and location.

— Jenny Gates

Two of Our Most Popular Members

Based on messages to the DUCW, two of our most popular members right now are Janet and Dennis Woodford. Both were recently contacted by friends trying to reconnect. One of those friends was Bob Charlton, and this is what Dennis shared with us about Bob.

“We were in the same grade in our one-room schoolhouse with its single teacher. In our teenage years – before television – we formed a bush band and played at country



Photo caption - The Bobinawarraah community hall today with the supper hall beside it.

dances at Bobinawarraah, a community in the region south-east of Wangaratta in north-east Victoria.

“Those were the days where we played polkas, waltzes, evening three steps, Boston two steps, pride of Erin, progressive barn dances, rock around the clock, and fast and slow fox trots.

“The farmers sat outside on car bonnets, talking about farming and the weather. Little kids had a great time running around everywhere, and the grandparents were in the supper hall playing cards. Our band was up on the stage, and the girls sat along one side of the hall, their mothers on the other, and the young bucks conglomerated around the front entrance. Whenever one young man danced with the same girl more than a couple of times, the mothers whispered conspiratorially to each other.”

A note from the Speewah ...

... where the chooks are as big as emus.

It is so fertile there that if you want to plant pumpkins, you go the end of the paddock on a fast horse, drop the pumpkin seeds, and gallop to the gate and hope you get out and shut the gate before the vines catch up and strangle you.

— from Dennis Woodford [presented by Neville Woodford to Alan Marshall who, back in the 1960s, collected Speewah stories. Alan grew up in Victoria with polio and later wrote *I Can Jump Puddles* about his experience].

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[SOURCE: *The Commonwealth*, 15 Dec 2025] Barbados took bold, practical action to tackle plastic pollution with support from the **Commonwealth Blue Charter Project Incubator**. By providing financial support, the Incubator has been instrumental in assisting Barbados' progress towards achieving the ambitious goal of reducing plastic pollution by 74 per cent over the next decade through the development of a **National Adaptation Plan (NAP)**.

The success of Barbados' approach is grounded in its robust policy framework. The Ministry of Environment and **Common Seas** used the **Plastic Drawdown tool** to analyse plastic flows and to model the potential impact of various interventions.

Following extensive stakeholder consultations, the NAP identified five core policy actions: tackling single-use items, improving waste separation, promoting circular design, expanding drinking water refill infrastructure, and strengthening monitoring and enforcement. Together, these measures form a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to reducing plastic pollution, positioning Barbados as an example of international best practice for sustainable plastics management.

Even after 35 years here, I am still getting asked by every new acquaintance: "What brought you to Canada?!"

Of course the short answer is "QANTAS".

I don't mind giving them the story, but what gets me is the innuendo that I/we must be bonkers to want to live here. Though most have never been downunder, they have this fixed notion that it's paradise and to choose to stay here over living in Australia is beyond comprehension. Well, next time, I think I'll spin a yarn, and it might go something like this ...

Well, you see mate, we eloped! Yeah, back in those days they came up with this law that you couldn't marry someone if they came from a different state (I was born in Queensland and Judy in South Australia) – fair dinkum! (then I have to explain what fair dinkum means, because they don't have a clue). Yeah, it's Western Australia's fault. They were losing too many of their girls to eastern blokes. So, there were hardly any left for the WA males. You see, for whatever reason, WA girls are the best lookers. They reckon it's got something to do with the water. In fact, there's these two towns in WA, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie – both mean capital/pretty girls in the aboriginal dialects of the two tribes – where scientific studies have found traces of gold in the water – fair dinkum! Must be what makes the girls irresistible - so the WA government had no choice but to complain to the Feds that easterners should stick to their side of the country when it comes to choosing a mate. The Feds couldn't afford to alienate half the country, so they came up with this same state marriage law. So, long story short, we had no choice but to elope to Canada.

"But why Canada? Why not New Zealand?" you ask

We'll have to save that for another yarn.

– Charlie Powell



Now on CBC Gem from New Zealand – If you've read the book or heard of this author, you might want to check out this new series on CBC Gem. *The Luminaries* by New Zealand author Eleanor Catton won the Man Booker Prize back in 2013. And now it's being told in a television miniseries starring Eve Hewson, Eva Green and Himesh Patel. The story is an intricately woven, suspenseful tale of love, murder, magic and revenge, and is set on the wild West Coast of New Zealand's South Island at the height of the 1860s gold rush. Despite receiving mixed reviews from critics, it earned 14 nominations at the 2020 New Zealand Television awards, and won 8 of them. Definitely worth checking out.

Now on Netflix – Aussie shows well recommended include *The Survivors*, *Territory*, and *Boy Swallows Universe*, and several others, including comedies *Fisk* and *Kath and Kim*. And a Kiwi documentary that is getting good reviews on Rotten Tomatoes is *The Volcano – Rescue from Whakaari*.



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Thank you, RPO Ferry Rd ...

It was a sad day when I learned that our local postal outlet on Ferry Road was closing. That had been my 'home' outlet for more than 20 years. Not only was it convenient – just a 3-minute walk away – but populated by some of the finest people I know.

Led by the inimitable Crystal, staff Jaiden, Elaine, Tracy, Natasha, Todd, and several others managed the outlet with friendly precision and knowledge, always greeting customers with a smile and taking care of every mail-related detail and request.

So, why does any of that matter to you as a member of the DUCW?

Because for at least 15 of those 20 years, RPO Ferry Rd is where we've been mailing our newsletter, *The Southern Yarn*.

Occasionally, when they weren't busy, staff even offered to help me fold and stuff the newsletters into the envelopes. And another time, one of them calmly helped solve a small mailing issue that resulted from a misunderstanding, in between helping other customers arriving at the outlet.

Staff got to know me, my mailbox number, and especially the newsletter, and became friends along the way.

All of which adds up to service, with a capital "THANK YOU!"

I really miss the Ferry Road postal outlet. Convenient, reliable and beyond friendly. And while I'm slowly – very slowly – getting to know folks at our new postal outlet – which is more than a 20-minute walk away – there will always be a special place in my heart for the folks and the service I'd become accustomed to for more than 20 years.

One thing's for sure. Dropping this and future issues of *The Southern Yarn* into a red postal box rather than the trusted hands of an RPO Ferry Road customer service expert simply won't be the same.

– Jenny Gates



60 years ago

Sixty years ago they stopped making the **EH Holden Ute**. Replacing the EJ, the EH was produced in Australia from 1963 to 1965 and was the first Holden to incorporate the new red engine, with a seven main bearing crankshaft instead of the four main bearing crankshaft used in the grey engine.

The newly released Red engine initially came in two capacities, the 100hp 149 and the 115hp 179 cubic inch displacement.

Read more about the EH at Wikipedia. And read more about what happened to the Holden Brand here:





birds iview

by Charlie Powell

Bald eagle

Some Manitobans choose to go somewhere warm to avoid as much of our winter as they can. They get the nickname “snowbirds”. Some snow birds (a.k.a. snow bunting) can be seen here throughout the winter. One bird I didn’t expect to still see here at the end of November is the bald eagle. It was perched above a riverbank, keeping an eagle-eye on a not-yet-frozen patch of the river. Canada’s largest bird of prey was adopted as the national emblem of the United States of America in 1782. That was only made official on Christmas Day 2024 when Joe Biden signed the Bill. I doubt that it is aware of its noble distinction, or where the border lies. Its range takes in Alaska, Canada, the contiguous US and northern Mexico. As a member of the sea eagle family, it dines predominantly on fresh-caught fish. As an opportunistic feeder, it is not above stealing, eg, from an osprey, or feasting on road-kill. Wikipedia informs me that the nest, built with sticks high in old-growth trees, can get as large as 4 m deep and 2.5 m across, and weigh a metric ton! In north American indigenous culture, it is revered for its strength, courage and wisdom. Australia’s member of the family is the white-bellied (or -breasted) sea eagle.

Before finishing this article, I came across the group of 4 in the second photo, in early January just south of Winnipeg! Definitely no fish in their winter diet; maybe some field critters – rabbit, hare, feral cat, squirrel?



Photos by C. Powell

A Haiku by Dan Higgins, 2024

Eagle's piercing gaze,
A beacon in wilderness,
Nature's raw strength blazed.



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