

EVENING READER

Prairie Weekly

Stories from the wide open land

VOL. I

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2025

PRAIRIES

COMPLIMENTARY

The Great Wheat Harvest of 1966



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In October of 1966, prairie farmers hauled in the largest wheat crop Saskatchewan had ever seen. More than 630 million bushels of golden grain poured into bins from Estevan to Lloydminster, filling every elevator until the boards creaked. The harvest ran late that year. A cool, wet spring had pushed planting into June, and farmers raced the first frost through long October days that began before sunrise and ended under the yard light.

Combines worked the fields in pairs, their headlights cutting the dark as wives and children brought suppers of roast beef and pie to the half-section. At the grain elevators, long lines of trucks stretched down Main Street in towns like Kindersley, Rosetown, and Weyburn. The Wheat Pool agents worked past midnight, grading samples by hand, the nutty smell of Number One Hard Red Spring hanging in the autumn air. The bumper crop of 1966 proved what prairie farmers had always known: the land, given a fair season, would provide. That October, the rail lines hummed day and night as unit trains of grain cars rolled east toward the Lakehead at Thunder Bay. The harvest of 1966 stood as a prairie record for years afterward, a season of abundance that old-timers still measure every crop against.

This Week in Western History

1947

LEDUC NO. 1 STRIKES OIL

On February 13, Imperial Oil struck a gusher near Leduc, Alberta, launching the prairie oil boom. The discovery transformed Alberta from a farming province into an energy powerhouse and drew thousands of workers west.

1964

GARDINER DAM COMPLETED

Saskatchewan completed the Gardiner Dam on the South Saskatchewan River. It was the largest earth-fill dam in Canada at the time. Lake Diefenbaker, the reservoir it created, brought irrigation, recreation, and hydro power to the region.

1967

WINNIPEG HOSTS THE PAN AMERICAN GAMES

Winnipeg welcomed athletes from across the Americas for the fifth Pan American Games. New venues were built, including the Pan Am Pool. The games put Manitoba's capital on the international sporting map.

Memories

1955

ON THE RADIO

Every Saturday morning, farm families across the prairies tuned to CBC Radio for the Grain Exchange report. Then came 'The Happy Gang' with Bert Pearl, filling kitchens from Brandon to Lethbridge with music and cheerful chat until 1959.

1963

HIT SONG

'Ring of Fire' by Johnny Cash played on every jukebox from the King's Hotel in Yorkton to the Cecil Hotel in Calgary. The song with its mariachi horns was a favourite at fall suppers, wedding dances, and Saturday night socials.

1972

POPULAR RECIPE

Flapper pie was the dessert of choice at every prairie fall supper. A graham cracker crust filled with custard and topped with golden meringue, it appeared on church basement tables beside roast turkey, perogies, and cabbage rolls.

From the Archives

The Richardson Rink: Prairie Boys Who Conquered the Curling World



The Richardson Rink: Prairie Boys Who Conquered the Curling World

In the winter of 1959, four young men from Regina walked onto the ice at the Quebec City Brier and changed curling forever. Skip Ernie Richardson, his brother Garnet, and their cousins Arnold and Wes were all in their twenties, making them the youngest team ever to win the Canadian championship. They threw their stones with a smooth, effortless delivery that old-timers said looked too casual to be serious. But the Richardsons were deadly serious. They repeated as Brier champions in 1960, then again in 1962 and 1963. When the Scotch Cup, the world championship of curling, was established, the Richardsons claimed that too, winning four world titles in five years. No Canadian team had ever dominated the sport like this. In curling clubs from Moose Jaw to Medicine Hat, kids with corn brooms tried to copy that easy Richardson slide. The team's success turned curling from a friendly Saturday bonspiel into a national obsession. On cold winter nights, families across the prairies gathered around the radio to hear Foster Hewitt call the shots. When the Richardsons delivered the last stone of a championship game, you could hear the cheers from one end of Main Street to the other. They were, quite simply, the best in the world.

Questions of the Week

- I.** *Did you ever curl in a bonspiel? What do you remember about the rink in your town?*
- II.** *What was the biggest harvest year you can remember on the farm or in your community?*

TALK ABOUT IT

From the General Store



Eaton's Fall and Winter Catalogue

Circa 1962

The new Eaton's catalogue has arrived. 600 pages of fashions, housewares, work clothes, and dry goods. Order by mail for delivery anywhere in Western Canada. Visit our Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary, and Edmonton stores.



Massey-Ferguson 510 Combine

Circa 1965

The new Massey-Ferguson 510 combine cuts a 14-foot swath and handles 40 acres of wheat in a day. See it now at your local Massey-Ferguson dealer. Ask about fall trade-in terms and low-interest financing.

Then & Now

THEN

In the 1950s and 1960s, most prairie families shared a party line telephone with four or more neighbours. You picked up the receiver and listened for your ring pattern: two short and a long, maybe, or three shorts. Everyone knew everyone else's business, sometimes before they did. A long-distance call was an event, and you booked it through the operator hours in advance.

NOW

Today, most of us carry a telephone in our pocket that can reach anywhere in the world in seconds. Party lines are a distant memory, but for anyone who grew up listening for that special ring, the sound of a telephone still brings back memories of neighbours who were more like family.

A Little Laughter

- ◆ Why did the farmer win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field!
- ◆ What did the wheat say to the farmer? I am all ears!
- ◆ Why do prairie farmers make good detectives? They always follow the grain!
- ◆ What do you call a cow with no legs? Ground beef!
- ◆ Why did the scarecrow win an award? He was outstanding in his field too!
- ◆ What did one Saskatchewan grain elevator say to the other? Nothing, they just waved!
- ◆ How do you know if a prairie winter is really cold? The politicians have their hands in their own pockets!

Did You Know?

- ◆ Saskatchewan grows more than half of all the wheat produced in Canada. The province is often called the breadbasket of the world.
- ◆ The world's largest moose statue, named Mac the Moose, stands over 9 metres tall in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.
- ◆ Winnipeg is closer to the geographic centre of North America than any other major city.
- ◆ Alberta's Wood Buffalo National Park is the largest national park in Canada, covering more than 44,000 square kilometres.
- ◆ Canada's first curling club was founded in Montreal in 1807, but the sport found its true home on the frozen rivers and backyard rinks of the Prairies.
- ◆ A single grain elevator could hold about 30,000 bushels of wheat. One bushel of wheat makes about 60 loaves of bread.
- ◆ The Trans-Canada Highway stretches 7,821 kilometres from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Victoria, British Columbia. The longest straight stretch is on the Prairies.

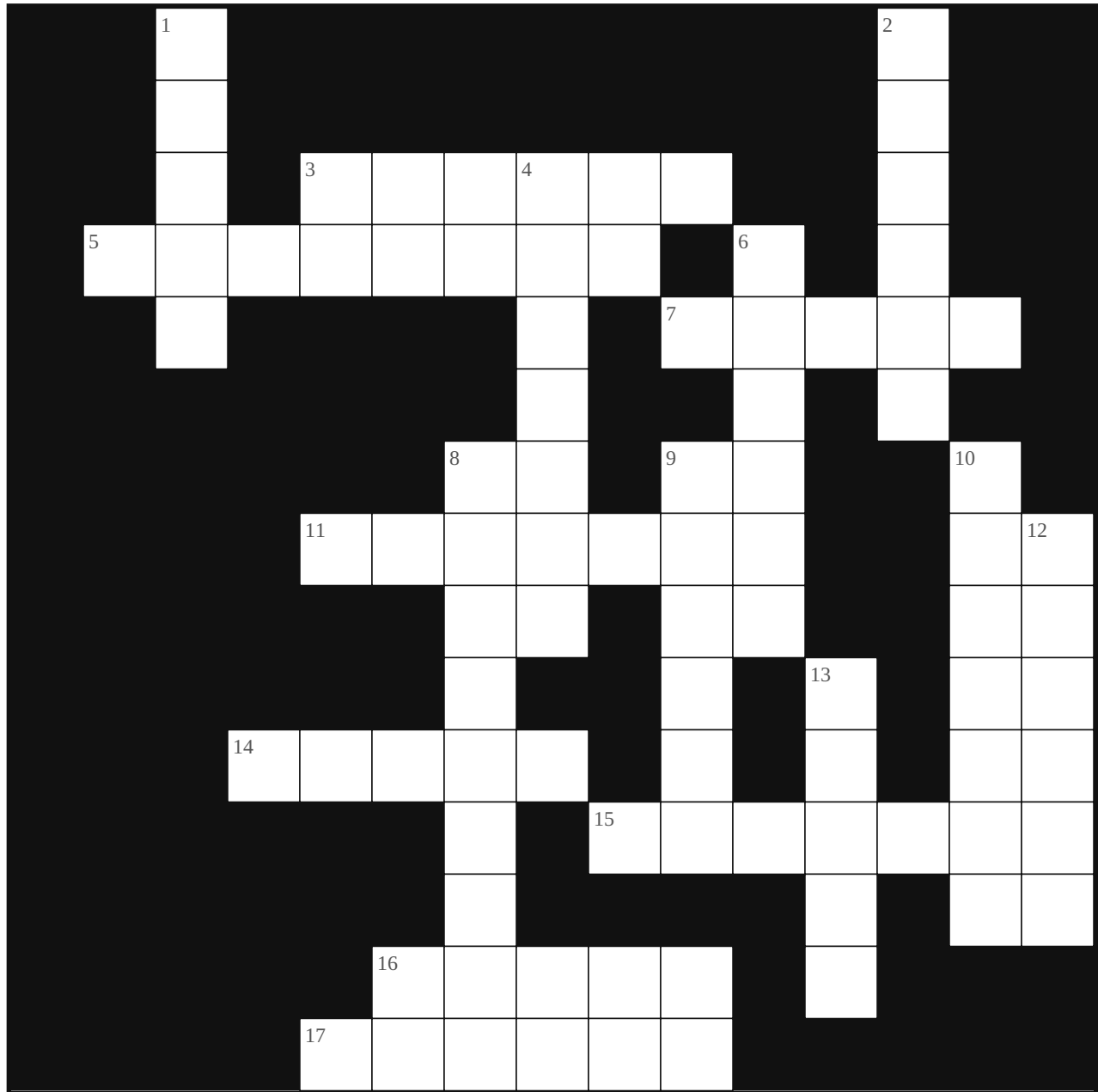
Poetry Corner

The Harvest Call

William Wilfred Campbell (1905)

The gold is on the prairie grass,
The gold is on the grain;
The summer with her breath has passed,
And autumn calls again.
The binder clicks across the field,
The stooks stand straight and tall;
The prairie yields her golden yield
To answer harvest's call.

Weekly Crossword



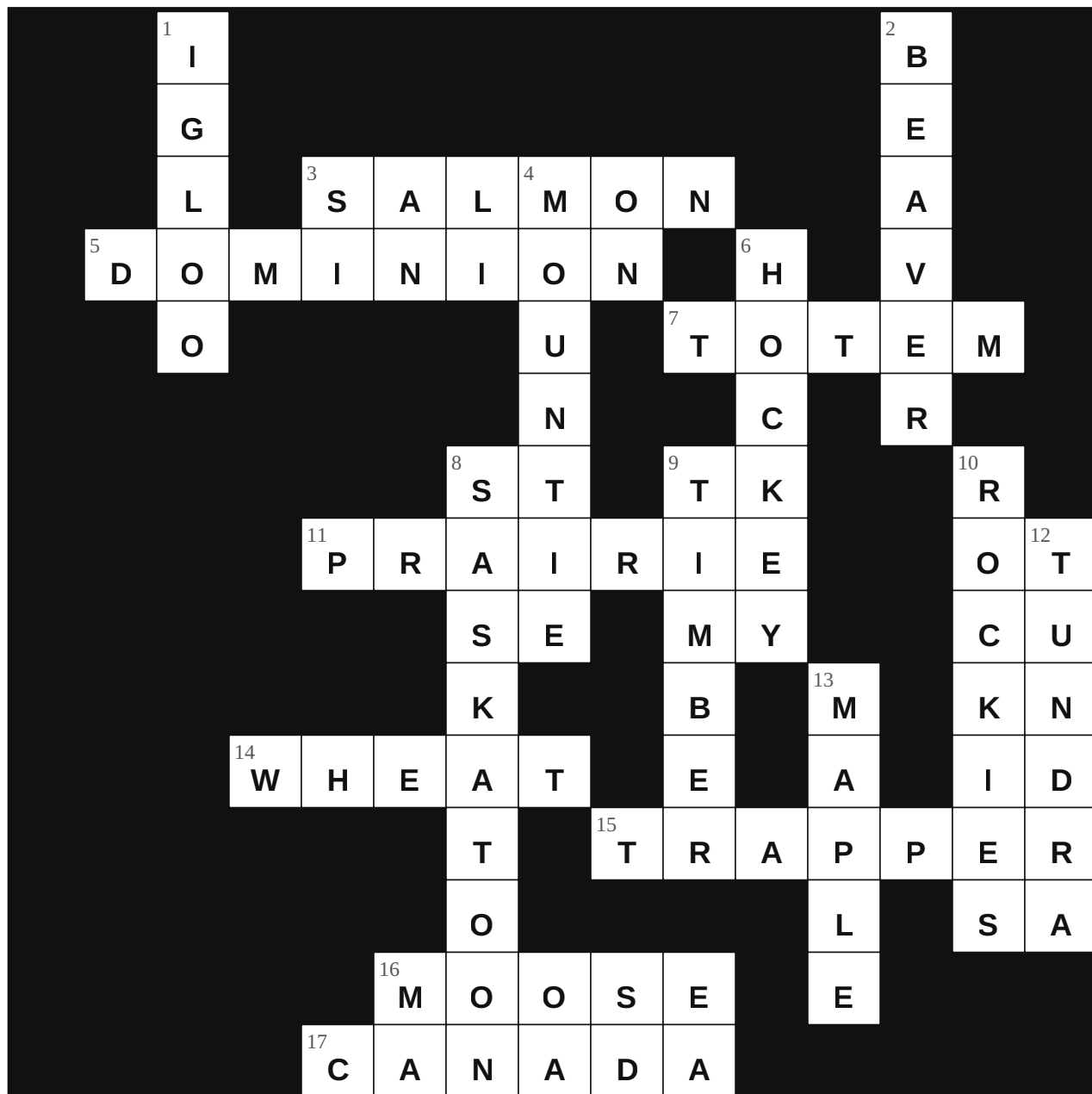
ACROSS

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|--|---|
| 3. Pacific fish that swims upstream to spawn | 14. Golden grain of the Prairies |
| 5. Canada's official title before 1982 | 15. Fur hunter of the northern wilderness |
| 7. First Nations carved cedar pole | 16. Large antlered animal of the northern woods |
| 11. Wide open grassland of the West | 17. Our home and native land |

DOWN

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|---|--|
| 1. Inuit snow house | 9. Lumberjack's harvest |
| 2. Hardworking rodent and national symbol | 10. Mountain range spanning BC and Alberta |
| 4. Red-coated RCMP officer | 12. Frozen northern plain |
| 6. Canada's national winter sport | 13. Leaf on the flag |
| 8. Berry named after a prairie city | |

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