



Agarwal defended /5



Golf season starts /4



Big bucks for Port /11



Kam River set to defend /17

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THUNDER BAY SOURCE



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LIBRARY BOMB THREAT

Drag Queen StoryTime event cancelled after a bomb threat was received last Saturday at the Mary J.L. Black Library /3

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Thunder Bay Police investigate a bomb threat at the Mary J.L. Black Library last Saturday, which led to the cancellation of a Drag Queens StoryTime event. (Justin Hardy)

Author writing Winston Hall story

By Gary Rinne – TB Source



An aerial view of Winston Hall, a former Second World War apartment complex on Montreal Street.

Lorraine Reguly's passion for a former a Second World War-era apartment complex on Montreal Street is driving her to write a book.

The Thunder Bay author, blogger and freelance writer is anxious to tell the story of Winston Hall not only because she has a strong personal connection to it, but because the people who lived there formed a unique community.

"It meant a lot to a lot of people. It was not just a building. It was home, it was a community, it was a community inside the building all unto itself," Reguly said.

Winston Hall was built in 1943 under the auspices of the Department of Munitions and Supply, the federal agency that principally coordinated domestic industry during the war.

It was constructed to house female aircraft assemblers at the nearby Can Car plant, many of whom came from Western Canada to support the war effort.

According to the Thunder Bay Museum, it was operated similarly to a school residence, and had facilities "to keep up morale" such as a dance hall, bowling alley and grocery store.

When the war was over, its hundreds of

rooms were converted into low-rent residential apartments.

Decades later, Winston Hall had deteriorated to the point that by 1996 it was closed because of unsafe living conditions.

Squatters then took over, and two years later

what was left of the building was destroyed in a massive fire.

Reguly still feels it's important to document its history and the stories of the people who lived there over the more than half a century that it existed.

"People looked out for each other. A lot of people formed lifelong friendships there. It was a family. It's difficult to explain that to others, but one of the reasons I want to write this book is because it did mean so much to so many people, and everyone that has lived there remembers."

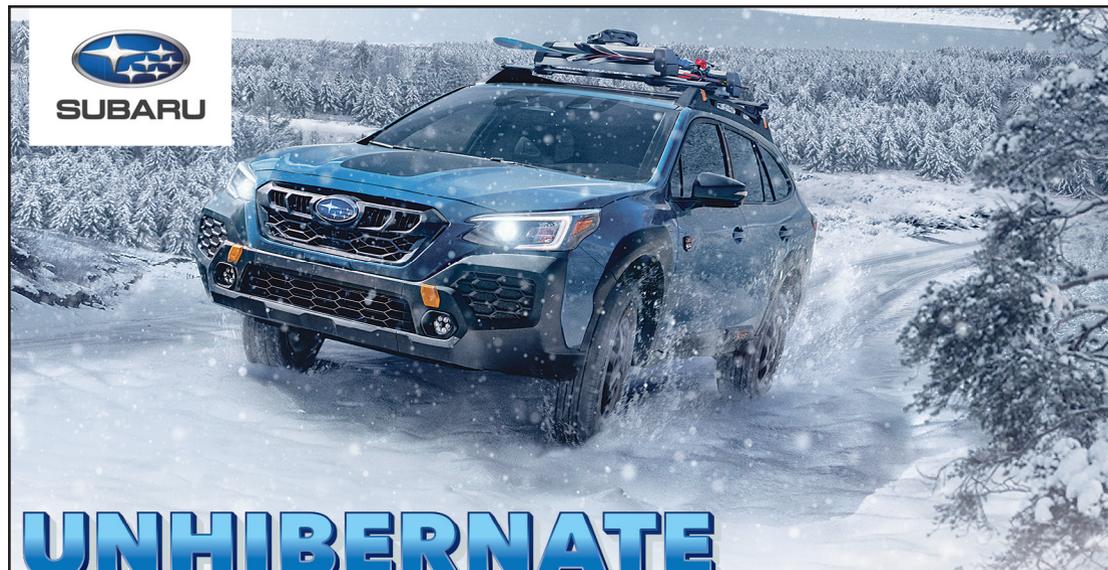
Winston Hall was part of her own childhood and young adulthood.

Her grandparents lived there for about 40 years, her mom ran a store in the complex for around 15 years, and she herself lived there with her son until he was about 18 months old.

Both of her grandfathers, and one of her grandmothers, worked at Canada Car.

She's done extensive research about Winston Hall in the City of Thunder Bay archives, the Thunder Bay Museum, the Northwestern Ontario Aviation Heritage Centre and the public library.

Reguly has created a list of tenants using the city's old assessment roll, a project that took five months to complete.



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VEHICLE ORDER MAY BE REQUIRED.



The Mary J. L. Black Library had to be evacuated last Saturday after a bomb threat was called in. (Justin Hardy)

Threat targets drag queens

Library event cancelled after bomb threat received

By Katie Nicholls – TB Source

City police are investigating a bomb threat that cancelled a weekend event at a Thunder Bay library.

The threat was sent via email to the Mary J.L. Black location, which was hosting a Thunder Bay Drag Queens StoryTime event.

Police were made aware of the threat on Saturday before the event, which was subsequently cancelled and the library closed.

Investigators secured the scene and determined there was no credible threat in the area. Police are conducting a thorough investigation.

A police release said, "Incidents like this are a significant draw on police resources and are disruptive and disparaging to many community members. While people have the right to voice or demonstrate views that oppose inclusivity initiatives, those who choose to break the law are subject to criminal charges."

Rainbow Collective, Thunder Pride and Wiggins Production released a joint statement regarding the incident.

"Attacking StoryTime with Drag Queens with a bomb threat not only undermines the safety of the participants and attendees but also aims to instill fear and division within the community.

This reprehensible act not only disrupts the event but also sends a chilling message that spaces of inclusion and celebration can be threatened, discouraging individuals from participating in similar initiatives in the future."

Scotia Kauppi, the chair of Thunder Pride, called the threat disgusting and the people making it "hypocritical."

"I think it's very silly that people who are on the other side of this, for us a non-issue but for an issue they've created, is that they want to talk about parental rights . . . Yet they do this to make choices for children that aren't theirs and where the parents have already made that choice for their children.

"I think it's very hypocritical that no one's protesting them going to their children's events that they choose to go to that fall in line with their family views, but they'll send death threats and bomb threats to us."

The joint statement detailed that a meeting with the police chief and senior police leadership will be held in April with both Rainbow Collective and Thunder Pride to discuss safety and security concerns with Thunder Bay's 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and the escalating numbers of hate incidents in Thunder Bay.

The library's CEO, Richard Togman, said the library will continue to host future LGBTQ2IA events.

"I think we'll be taking a cautious approach but one that we want to move forward boldly on.

"We're talking with the LGBTQ+ community right now, with the drag queens themselves, to make sure that they feel safe and secure. We'll be working closely with the police on the investigation, but also on any preventative measures that we can take ahead of time to make sure that everyone feels welcome, that it's a safe event that people are coming to."

WEATHER FORECAST

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Snow
Precipitation: 30% HIGH -5 LOW -12	Precipitation: 30% HIGH -2 LOW -14	Precipitation: 20% HIGH -4 LOW -11	Precipitation: 70% HIGH -4 LOW -6

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Golfers tee off

By Lucas Punkari - TB Source

Lenore O'Donnell spoke for her playing partner Jill Meyer and everyone else who arrived at Dragon Hills Golf Course for the opening day of the 2024 season.

"It's really crazy that we are out here this early, but it's great," O'Donnell said.

After opening up the driving range earlier this week, the facility kicked off play on its nine-hole course on Friday afternoon.

"Honestly, it's pretty shocking," Joe McDonough said. "I don't think I was out until mid- or late May last year.

"When I saw online that they were thinking about opening up on Friday, I had the clubs polished off and ready to go."

Dragon Hills Golf Course superintendent Darryl Moro said it was an easy winter for the turf and the greens.

"From tee to green, there's hardly any blemishes out there," Moro added. "It's like how I put it to bed back in November. With a little bit of heat, it will be back to business as usual.

"After some long winters, I definitely hoped and prayed for a normal spring but I couldn't imagine this. This is the earliest that we have ever been open."

While it's not exactly mid-season conditions, local golfers are enjoying the fact that they can get out on the links already.

"It's Augusta National conditions for Thunder Bay in March that's for sure," McDonough said.

"I still can't believe the course is open this early. The grass is in good shape for the first couple of swings I've taken and everyone here has done an awesome job.

"I think it's going to be a great spring for everyone in the golf community."



Jill Meyer watches a putt roll last Friday afternoon at Dragon Hills Golf Course. (Lucas Punkari)

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Council sticks up for colleague Agarwal

By Kevin Jeffrey – Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It will now be up to city staff to initiate and examine educational training opportunities for At-large Coun. Rajni Agarwal.

Council decided to amend the recommendation from their appointed integrity commissioner, Principle's Integrity, to remove Agarwal from the Fort William Business Improvement Area board, also known as the Victoria BIA.

The integrity commissioner's investigation started in Oct. 2023 with a complaint alleging Agarwal was "rude, abrasive and chronically late for meetings, resulting in significant disruptions and causing delays."

Many councillors, including fellow At-large member Trevor Giertuga, felt removing Agarwal from the board, as per the integrity commissioner's recommendation, was a punitive measure.

Janice Atwood of Principle's Integrity disagreed with Giertuga's assessment.

"We always turn our minds to opportunities for training and education. In this circumstance, it is our recommendation that removal from the board is in the public's best interest," Atwood said.

"We wouldn't consider removal from the board punitive but rather remedial. It's a remedial way for the board to move forward. This is about what is in the public's best interest, and what is in the general interest of those who sit on boards."

Giertuga noted that in conversations with those on the board, he's hearing that things are running "smoother than they ever have."

"There have been issues on this board for years," Giertuga added.

"This sounds more to me like personality issues clashing, so more education and training would be the way to go. I'm not prepared to vote to take her off the board."

At-large member Mark Bentz put forward the amendment to refer the matter back to the clerk's office and noted perhaps there should be some framework around councillors and what their roles are when they sit on committees.

"Given our position, maybe there is the thought that we could put ourselves in a position where we're trying to control what a committee does," said Bentz. "We as elected members do have insight into the corporation, which can help any board that we sit on."

Bentz added Agarwal is an effective person and can be straight and to the point with her comments.

Despite declaring a conflict of interest to the



At-large Coun. Rajni Agarwal at a meeting last year. (FILE)

clerk before the item was raised, Coun. Agarwal did remain in the room for the conversation and later spoke to her colleagues.

"This board is now a hardworking and progressively accomplished board that is working to their mandate, which is to represent the members of the Fort William BIA and not for their own interests," Agarwal stated during her speech.

"If any other member of council would like to sit on the board, I welcome them to sit there and make that effort to try to make things happen. Keep in mind that these business owners are suffering due to all the neglect that we've had over the years."

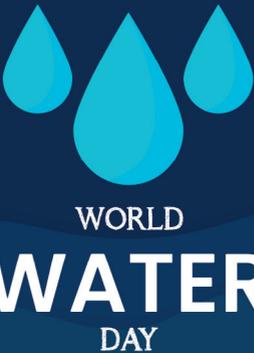
Agarwal also mentioned the support for her staying on the board that came in the form of a statement provided to council.

Agarwal felt governance training from the clerk's office would be helpful for the board, but council decided to just address measures pertaining to the complaint against her.

Northwood Coun. Dominic Pasqualino and Current River Coun. Andrew Foulds both voted against the amended motion.

Coun. Agarwal has already been docked 30 days pay in a separate finding by the integrity commissioner that she violated the code during a dispute with residents over the summer.

The clerk's office is expected to bring their recommendations back for the April 8 meeting.



World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance day held on 22 March that highlights the importance of fresh water. The day is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.



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EDITORIAL

Live and let live

A threat against drag queens is a threat against freedom.

It's also a threat against the very children these who would perpetrate such a threat, like the one that took place last Saturday at the Mary J.L. Black Library, purport to be trying to protect.

How traumatizing would it be for a child to be whisked out of a room in the library, as police descend on the facility in full tactical gear?

The same people who cry freedom of speech, who scream from the rafters about parental rights, are the same ones who shout the loudest about an event like last weekend's scheduled Drag Queen StoryTime event.

Newsflash: these parents are simply trying to exercise their right to bring their kids to an event they believe is appropriate, inclusive and - gasp - fun. They have every right to do so, regardless of what you mistakenly believe.

Drag queens are not grooming your children, they're just trying to put a smile on their faces. There's nothing inappropriate about dressing up in drag and reading to them at a public library.

Stop the insanity To the editor:

Recently police came to our seniors building to do a presentation on how seniors can be safe. There were two women from TBDSSAB present.

When the seniors told their stories about having drug addicts lining up at every entrance to follow them in and a few living and defecating in every stairway, we were told by housing it is the cost to put cameras in the hall and fobs on the exterior stairwell, and if a crime is committed phone police or maintenance.

Police said they do their best but with less than 15 police on any given day it's a challenge. The police come here all the time and people at housing do great work as well. We all sort of discussed MPP and city hall, and they said not their problem.

The provincial and federal government needs billions for golf courses and weapons for other countries.

Why do buildings have fire protocols but not standardized security? I have a card for the library, the bus, to drive, even to drink but in the age of artificial intelligence no building card?

Every store, device and app has our data.

We should have a card identifying us as tenants to gain access.

The counter argument was that the criminals would just go to other buildings. My conclusion was great -- then we know it works and put security tech in the other buildings as well.

We don't need a \$30,000 a year guard, we need

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



\$5,000 to \$10,000 worth of tech that would work for 10 to 20 years.

Why are office buildings and workplaces secure but we're put in harm's way needlessly?

Why are seniors trying to fight off drug dealers

from Toronto on a weekly basis just to get into their homes?

Erik Weisz,
Thunder Bay

Killers of the Flower Moon resonates today

Killers of the Flower Moon: oil, money, murder and the birth of the FBI by David Grann was recently made into a film directed by Martin Scorsese starring Leonardo de Caprio and Robert de Niro.

It is a riveting story of greed, serial murder and racial injustice. In the 1920s the richest people per capita in the world could be found in Osage County, Oklahoma. The reason? Oil. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage Indians had untold wealth. Then, one by one, they were killed off. Their primitive communist lifestyle was quickly consumed and destroyed by industrial capitalism.

The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target, her relatives

shot or poisoned. And, as the death toll climbed, the FBI took up the case and with the Osage began to expose one of the most chilling conspiracies in American history.

The film version focuses almost exclusively on the reign of terror led by William 'King' Hale, who was at the centre of many of the murders. He thought he could escape justice by killing off key witnesses to his crimes or bribing doctors, judges, lawyers, judges and law enforcement.

It was only when outsiders were brought in - the FBI with their modern scientific methods of crime detection - that Hale's criminal empire was exposed and brought down. Hale had masterminded the scheme to get white people to marry into rich

Indian families who they then systematically poisoned to inherit headrights and oil wealth.

But the real criminals were the ruling class who made these crimes possible in the first place by appointing 'guardians' who 'looked after' the financial affairs of wealthy Indians who were deemed 'incompetent' to manage their own finances.

This opened the door to all kinds of tricksters and hucksters who flocked to Osage County with one aim in mind - to get their hands on the Indians black gold. It was, in effect, another Gold Rush, but with deadly consequences for the Osage Indians.

The novel goes well beyond the book and digs deeper and wider into this genocide. Grann reveals that the killings of rich Indians started in 1918 and lasted into the early 1930s which was well beyond Hall's reign of terror

between 1921 and 1926.

Ultimately what stopped the murders was not diligent police work but changes in the law that made it possible for only those who were at least 'half Osage' to inherit head rights. The guardian system was also abolished so Indians could, at last, administer their own financial affairs.

Based on years of research and startling new evidence, this masterpiece of narrative non-fiction details an investigation full of sinister secrets and reversals. *Killers of the Flower Moon* is an utterly compelling - and emotionally devastating - story of greed, betrayal and injustice that still resonates. This is because settler colonialism is not a historical event but an ongoing process of cultural destruction and genocide. Its actions and consequences are evident in Thunder Bay today.



John Pateman
BOOK BANTER

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All roads lead to Thunder Bay

By JR Shermack – Special to TB Source

Our community may not have the cachet of some large Canadian cities but the road to Thunder Bay is getting easier to find and more difficult to overlook.

In fact, in his optimistic State of the City address Mayor Ken Boshcoff declared and backed up his bold assertion that “all roads lead to Thunder Bay”.

He meant it figuratively and literally, drawing on cultural traditions and referring to the physical site of our city in the geographical centre of the country.

Thunder Bay sits in a location that has been a gathering place for thousands of years, giving the Mayor’s comments a significant historical perspective.

Regional roads and waterways have always led to Thunder Bay and according to Mr. Boshcoff’s positive outlook we are positioned for a population increase and economic growth.

We have always had a resource-based economy and once again the bounty of Northwestern Ontario will be fueling provincial (and world) economic growth.

The Mayor observed that, “We are poised to become a mining powerhouse, positioned as a rising force in the mining industry.”



Cruise ships are a regular occurrence in the city.

The discovery and development of critical minerals such as lithium, graphite and cobalt could put us in the supply chain for clean technology and a growing green economy.

The world is looking toward Thunder Bay as a supplier of the mineral resources necessary to make the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable future.

That road leads to local employment opportunities and will be a boon to the regional economy - the road to Thunder Bay holds many other optimistic prospects as well.

We have seen record-breaking shipping seasons and increases in cargo volumes through the port of Thunder Bay.

Cruise ships, 14 last year and 17 expected this year, represent an opportunity for tourism dollars as well as service and supply work for local businesses.

Thunder Bay is a frontier for developments in energy, infrastructure, transportation, research and health sciences - not bad for a former lunch-box community.

Housing remains a priority and the city has aggressive goals for building thousands of new homes - \$20 million in federal funding will help cover construction costs.

The State of the City was full of optimistic and uplifting possibilities for the future and Mayor Boshcoff’s address signals a resurgence for the entire region.

It comes with the Mayor’s assurances that the mining boom is real, population growth is real and the future economic opportunities are real.

As a lifelong resident of Thunder Bay I often felt that Northwestern Ontario was regarded as Southwestern Ontario’s poor country

cousin.

When I met in Toronto with my colleagues they were curious and somewhat bemused by the yokel who drifted in from the Great White North.

They were puzzled that I flew to Toronto while most of them lived close enough to easily drive themselves - they had no concept of the distances involved.

Mayor Boshcoff put it this way, “Geographically we are massive. We serve an area larger than many countries.”

The vast expanse of NWO has always been a source of employment and wealth that benefits the entire country and provides resources crucial for future economic development.

Some of my big city associates had visited Thunder Bay before and they remarked on the friendly people and beautiful natural surroundings.

But for those who live here it is common knowledge that we are ‘Superior by Nature’ and as Mayor Boshcoff points out, that sentiment is becoming more apparent.

“We are a natural gateway by water, road, rail and air.”

All roads lead to Thunder Bay and it remains to be seen what a rosy future those roads will bring.

what's happening
in and around...

The Bay

To submit an event, email ldunick@dougallmedia.com.
Please include details about the event, including any cost

March 22-23

SIJHL Hockey Playoffs

The defending champion Kam River Fighting Walleye and last year’s finalists, the Thunder Bay North Stars, open at home this weekend in their hunt for the Bill Salonen Cup.

The Fighting Walleye host the Kenora Islanders on Friday and Saturday night at the Norwest Arena, with puck drop scheduled for 7:45.

The North Stars welcome the Wisconsin Lumberjacks to the Gardens at 7:30 p.m. both nights.

Tickets are available online for the Walleye and at the door. Cash only at the door for the North Stars.

March 23

Easter Bunny at Toy Sense

Stop by Toy Sense on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. to meet the Easter Bunny.

Get your kids’ picture taken with the famous rabbit and while you’re there, you might just get some inspiration

for an Easter gift or two.

They’re located at 309 Bay St.

March 23

Health and Wellness Expo

The 55 Plus Centre annual Health & Wellness Expo is happening this Saturday.

Join them for a centre full of health and wellness information from local professionals and businesses. Free admission and all ages welcome.

The event takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the 55-Plus Centre, located at 700 River St.

March 23

Dragiversary Show

Head out to Black Pirates Pub to celebrate the 20 year dragiversary of Thunder Bay’s most beloved drag queen, the one and only, Lady Fantasia LaPremiere.

Featuring 14 special guest performers from across the entire spectrum of drag in Thunder Bay.

The show does feature mature (and immature) subject matter & adult content.

Viewer discretion is advised.

Early bird tickets are \$15 and on sale until March 22. Cash at the door tickets are \$20.

March 24

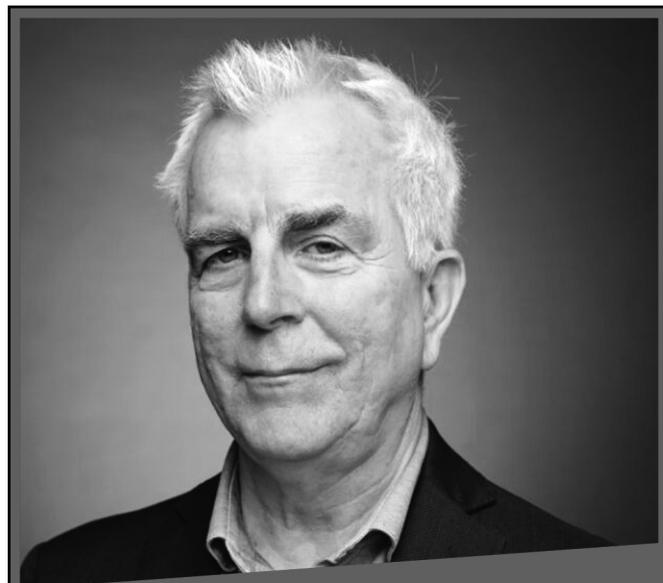
Crafts for a Cause

Why not check out a craft and vendor market in support of the 20th annual 2024 Walk to Make Cystic Fibrosis History at Oliver Road Community Centre on March 24 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Admission is a silver collection at the door.

There will be lots of great crafters and vendors, bake table, raffles and flavoured popcorn cart by The Popcorn Guy on site.

Contact Karen at 807-474-9567 or by email at kdanelisky@tbaytel.net for table opportunities or for more information.



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Thunder Bay-Rainy River

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Station opens on Hwy. 11/17

New \$30-million facility is meant to improve safety for all drivers

By Brandon Walker - TB Source

The province has opened a new commercial vehicle inspection station on Highway 11/17 near Shuniah.

The new \$30-million state-of-the-art facility is part of Ontario's plan to improve road safety and deliver faster and better transit infrastructure in the North.

Commercial motor vehicles using Ontario highways are subject to mandatory roadside safety inspections.

The release said Shuniah's new inspection station will come with "cutting-edge technology" to identify potential problems with commercial motor vehicles, such as underinflated tires and malfunctioning brakes.

"This inspection station will play a critical role in addressing road safety in our community," said Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, in a media release.

"Our government is investing in northern transportation with infrastructure projects that will make a real difference to families and businesses."

One of 34

In Ontario, 34 inspection stations across the province have highly trained enforcement officers who inspect the condition of commercial vehicles and monitor the behaviour and qualifications of drivers.

"Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is working to ensure Ontario's highways are among the safest in North America," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation.

"The new Shuniah commercial vehicle inspection station will help reduce the risk of accidents, protect everyone on the road and ensure the safe movement of goods across Northern Ontario."

The province increased enforcement in 2023 on Highways 11, 17, 144, and 101, with officers conducting more than 4,000 inspections and laying 3,200 charges,

including 700 for speeding. More than 1,000 vehicles were placed out of service.

Expanding inspection facilities is among more than 60 actions listed in the government's Connecting the North: A Draft Transportation Plan for Northern Ontario. This will help keep more people and goods moving safely, improve travel options for people in remote communities, and support economic growth in the North.

Greg Rickford, Minister of Northern Development and MPP for Kenora-Rainy River, said the government has heard from community members about the importance of improving road safety across the North.

"As we attract families and businesses to our beautiful and vast part of Ontario, we are investing in the necessary infrastructure to ensure our highways are safe and reliable," Rickford said.

Safety a necessity

Wendy Landry, president, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and Shuniah's mayor, said NOMA has been a long-time advocate of highway safety.

"The investment of \$30 million to open a new commercial vehicle inspection station near Thunder Bay is a welcomed and necessary step to address highway safety concerns and accidents on Highway 11/17," Landry said.

"We greatly appreciate this investment and anticipate it will improve highway safety near Thunder Bay and across the North."

Sheila Maxwell, Conmee's mayor, said people in the township also appreciate the investment.

"This state-of-the-art facility will help increase highway safety for truck drivers - and all vehicles - travelling through Thunder Bay and Northern Ontario."

Ontario Provincial Police Deputy Commissioner Rohan Thompson said the OPP's partnership with the province on commercial vehicle safety is a critical component to keep roads safe.

"This new facility is an excellent example of our partner's commitment to ensuring commercial vehicles meet all safety requirements, and our joint efforts to reduce the number of commercial vehicle-related collisions and save lives on our roads," Thompson said.



The new inspection station on Highway 11/17 opened for business last Friday. (FILE)

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Turf facility on track for 2025

By Kevin Jeffrey Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

City staff will continue their work to get shovels in the ground for the proposed indoor turf facility by June 2025.

Pending ratification, Council did agree to push back a final report on the facility to June 3 after it was discovered a deeper foundation dig would be necessary due to poor soil conditions at the site.

"There were some soft soils that were found within the footprint," explained Kayla Dixon, the city's Director of Engineering & Operations. "The shallow foundation that was originally proposed now has changed to a piled foundation. That is a more expensive foundation and is why there was a \$600,000 addition to the budget."

Dixon told council that despite the added cost, the project still falls within the city's approved financing strategy for up to \$44.6 million. However, it would be over the \$38 million upset limit for the facility approved

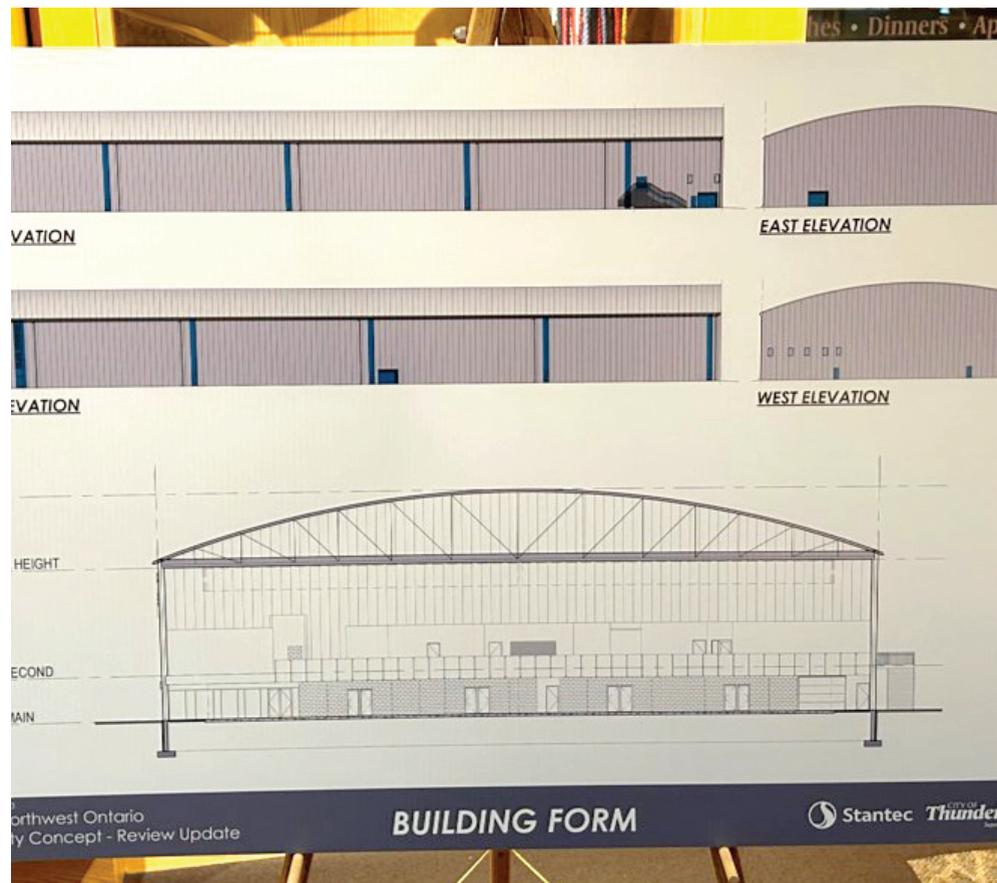
by council last November.

Dixon maintained Monday that inflationary impacts have already been included in the costs that have been presented to council.

"Council has asked for public engagement but we also have some stakeholder engagement to organize as well," Dixon added. "For example, we will chat with the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium as well as those who use the adjacent dog park and the Canada Games Complex.

"We will continue with preliminary design work to confirm the impacts of the geotechnical and environmental assessment that was completed. We also have some financial analysis that's required to look at the operating impacts of that facility."

An open house was held in January to garner feedback from the public, determine general community support for the proposal and determine the willingness of the public to pay additional taxes to cover the costs of the debt financing needed to build the turf facility.



This is a conceptual plan for the design of a proposed indoor turf facility in Thunder Bay. (Kevin Jeffrey)

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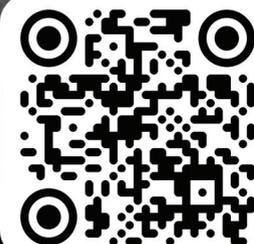
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Keefe Terminal will see two major projects undertaken after Ottawa handed out money to fund them. (Katie Nicholls)

Feds give Port \$6.7M to expand

Money will be used to build capacity, infrastructure

By Katie Nicholls - TB Source

Keefe Terminal is on the receiving end of significant funding from the federal government.

An announcement Friday morning for up to \$6.7 million will be coming from the National Trade Corridors Fund to invest in two large projects at the port.

MP Marcus Powlowski was on hand to deliver the announcement in lieu of the transport minister, Pablo Rodriguez.

"Given the importance of the terminal to our country's economy, this funding is welcome news not just for Northwestern Ontario, but also for the Prairies and our entire country," Powlowski said.

CEO of Port of Thunder Bay, Chris Heikkinen, called the two projects important for the port and the city.

"We're able to provide more capacity for those back-haul cargoes in the port, and really the bottom line here is we're providing more work for locals. It's an economic injection into this city in the region."

The first project is receiving \$3 million to redevelop the existing marshalling yard, including adding new heavyweight rail tracks and switches.

The second project, valued at up to \$3.7 million, will improve the port's capacity by upgrading the wharf, expanding the cargo laydown area, and improving the rail crossing infrastructure between Keefe Terminal and the marshalling yard.

"One of the components is to reconstruct our marshalling yard across the street from Keefe terminal. This is a large swath of rail that isn't meeting the demand of today's cargoes," said Heikkinen.

He said the design work has already started. Construction is expected to start this spring and last until the end of 2026.

As each stage is completed, that space will become available to be used for cargo and customers.

The Soo Locks will open early this year, on March 22, and the first vessel to arrive at the port is expected within 24 to 36 hours after that.



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Fry Society growing

By Lucas Punkari – TB Source

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario has a large territory to cover for a small grassroots group.

The charitable organization works with individuals who are incarcerated and assists with reintegration back into the community, as well as support on individuals living in the community who are chronically homeless.

Although it's based in Thunder Bay, the branch's region spans from the Manitoba-Ontario border to near Timmins.

"The individuals that we serve, we're able to sort of come in upstream a little bit and provide some supportive safer housing options for folks who are living in the community," executive director Lindsay Martin said.

"That's sort of a new venture that we took on in 2021 -- to start more of a supportive housing program, which is relatively low barrier and that's the first of its kind to support women and gender-diverse people in our community that aren't experiencing a domestic violence situation.

"We're really trying to tap into their basic needs to help individuals stabilize and get on the path where they need to be."

That process was aided in June 2023 by the opening of a seven-unit home on the south

side of Thunder Bay.

The home offers 24-hour support for women and gender-diverse people who have been involved in the criminal justice system, who are living in active addiction, experiencing chronic homelessness or exploitation, and those who may be at risk of criminalization.

"We're just looking to grow that and expand it because we see the need in the community," Martin said.

"We also see that there is a huge gap in services for the region. So we're really trying to come in and sort of fill that gap as best we can with the supports that we have available to individuals.

"I think it's important to note as well that poverty is a huge factor in some of the reasons why folks are incarcerated and the lack of stable housing is another reason why the incarceration numbers are so high.

"We're really just trying to combat that by providing the resources that folks need to prevent incarceration. That's really key for us in the work that we are doing right now."

To help offset the costs with their initiatives, the Elizabeth Fry Society is currently holding a 50/50 raffle, to fund local programming, client care, release kits and outreach efforts. Tickets are available online. The draw is scheduled for May 10 at 3 p.m.



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Multicookers cater to Gen Z

A couple weeks ago we talked a lot about restaurant trends on a more larger broader scale.

Today we're going to discuss trends that may affect you at home here and now. Thanks to the big booming appliance of a few years ago, the air fryer, lots of us find countertop appliances easy to use but we're moving away from single-use devices and want something multipurpose and cool-looking to keep on our countertops.

That's why leading companies and DTC brands are introducing compact, multicooker ovens that can air fry, bake, roast, toast, broil, reheat and more, all for an average price of \$300.

Instagram-famous cookware brand Our Place debuted the Wonder Oven, its first-ever appliance; Ninja's 12-in-1 Double Oven; and major brands like GE, Breville and Cuisinart all carry versions with bells and whistles like steam cooking, dual oven space or a built-in probe.

The trend is to take all the possible uses of the commercial rational combi oven and miniaturize it for your home.

Gen Z is cooking more at home than ever before.

A holdover from the pandemic, more people made friends with their own kitchens and experimented with their own tastes and now they are feeling more confident in their own cooking abilities. Great. The issue sometimes lies where it does with everyone. Time.

Time to create healthy meals when you sometimes won't get home at a reasonable time. Two-thirds of grocery shoppers say they want more heat-and-eat vegetables, side dishes and globally inspired choices; and a WGSN report reveals that Gen Z cooks in particular like to blend homemade and prepared foods.

Frozen foods companies and major personalities are creating products to cater to demand: Heinz recently launched Homebake 425°/30, which contains mix-and-match sides and mains.

With plant-based and flexitarian eating on the rise, people are looking for ways to pack in protein, often without the carbs or meat. As of June 25, 2023, MyFitnessPal, the no.1 global nutrition and food tracking app, has seen a 70 per cent increase in people logging cottage cheese year-over-year.



The Wonder Oven can air fry, bake, roast and toast.

Which is just shocking.

Maybe I should do a cottage cheese recipe column.

Inventive, high-protein recipes abound on TikTok, where content creators love "protein oatmeal" with peanut butter powder.

Plus, all sorts of products that are packed with protein are hitting retail shelves and DTC sites, including protein rice, protein ramen, watermelon seed protein powder, nut protein powders and Love + Chew Protein Cookies, which are made with upcycled oat-milk flour.

A personal favourite of mine albeit often scoffed at as "not real chocolate" by those who prefer the bitterest of darks, the white chocolate market is predicted to grow by \$9 billion or 5.03 per cent through 2027.

Bon Appetit recently compared small batch chocolatier

Askinosie's white chocolate bar to "grown-up Hershey's cookies and cream," and a whole lot of people are looking to make white chocolate matcha cookies, according to Google Trends.

2024 seemingly is going to be an interesting year for new things, feel free to get out and try some of them.

Derek Lankinen is an award-winning chef, author, and restaurateur. He is the Owner/Operator of Beefcake's Burger Factory with two locations in Westfort and Current River and Co-Owner of Elite Beef.



Derek Lankinen

Here's Cooking at You Kid



The grasshopper was paraded through the Streets of Thunder Bay on Saturday, a highlight of the St. Urho's Day Parade. (Justin Hardy)

St. Urho's Day returns

By Justin Hardy - TB Source

In honour of St. Urho's Day, People of Finnish heritage took to the streets to march in the return of the annual sidewalk parade.

The story of St Urho is uniquely an American one, and began more than 50 years ago in Northern Minnesota in response to St Patrick's Day. It claims St Urho chased the grasshoppers out of Finland wielding only a rake, saving the

country's grape crop.

"You know, those pesky grasshoppers, they get into everything," said Adam Nousiainen, who portrayed St Urho during the celebrations.

"So, I started kicking them with my boots, but it didn't work too well so I grabbed the rake and started hitting them with it. So to get a bigger span to get the grasshoppers out."

This is the first time in 5 years that the parade and celebration were able to be

held. Heleena Stephens, volunteer coordinator with the Finlandia Cooperative Thunder Bay, said that it was great to see so many people come out.

"Just the show of Finn pride here in Thunder Bay is so heartwarming right before Saint Patrick's Day weekend," she said.

"It's good to see that purple mixed in with all that green and I love the energy today and the vibes have been really great."

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Enigma cryptograms are created from quotations and proverbs from around the world. Each letter stands for another letter. Hint: "S" = "N"

"NSGYEUNGK NQ CANSE GVV UNEVG
 GVNSE, YTYZ ZVYS SA ASY NQ
 ZOGIVNSE."

— I. Q. PYZNQ

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ACROSS

- 1 Mascagni heroine
- 5 Legislature
- 9 Fiddler crab genus
- 12 N. Caucasian language
- 13 Therefore
- 14 Name (Fr.)
- 15 Broad structural basin
- 16 Food
- 17 Here (Fr.)
- 18 Payable
- 20 Immature insect
- 22 Tibeto-Burmese people
- 25 Political action committee (abbr.)
- 27 Civil War commander
- 28 Amer. Dental Assn. (abbr.)
- 29 Anatomy (abbr.)
- 31 Verbal
- 34 Some (Fr.)
- 35 Sea goose
- 37 Hindu title
- 38 International (abbr.)
- 40 Fissure
- 41 Turk. title
- 42 Extravehicular activity (abbr.)
- 44 Horse
- 45 Card game
- 46 Eaglestone
- 49 Cereal grain or grass
- 51 Lion of God
- 52 Afr. gazelle
- 54 Rhine tributary
- 58 Cuckold
- 59 Swiss card game
- 60 Heddles of a loom
- 61 Uncle (Scot.)
- 62 City on the Irtysh
- 63 Jap. pit viper

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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DOWN

- 1 Asian desert
- 2 Harem room
- 3 "Abner"
- 4 Academy (abbr.)
- 5 Air
- 6 Anger
- 7 Equal (Fr.)
- 8 Perfect
- 9 Global
- 10 Narcotic shrub
- 11 Female friend (Fr.)
- 19 Poison tree
- 21 Classic car
- 22 Arabian judge
- 23 Arabian Sea gulf
- 24 Idle (2 words)
- 26 Lead-tin alloy
- 30 Atle
- 32 Jason's ship
- 33 River into the Yellow Sea
- 36 Hung. hero
- 39 56 (Rom. numeral)
- 43 Shortcut
- 46 Berne's river
- 47 Ancient Per. province
- 48 Cheese
- 50 Apiece
- 53 Manuscripts (abbr.)
- 55 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
- 56 Jewish scholar
- 57 Flightless bird

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58				59				60			
61				62				63			

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A lack of snow has mountain bikers out and about testing out their bikes on ready-to-use trails.



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No snow leads to early cycling

Minimal snowpack this winter and an early mid-March thaw has Thunder Bay's mountain biking community getting excited about hitting the trails early this spring. However, this is a crucial time in the yearly cycle of the trails as riding before the trails dry out and firm up will cause significant damage to the tread surface.

Just like the potholes on our roads, bike trail damage is caused by the repetition of the freeze-thaw cycle that is so typical at this time of year in our climate. During freezing, wet soil particles are forced apart by expanding ice crystals. This essentially loosens up the trail and removes the structural integrity, leaving it brittle and unable to properly support the weight of a rider and bike through the narrow contact patch of a tire.

The Blacksheep Mountain Bike Club, who are responsible for building and maintaining our amazing trail network, always remind their membership, which consists of over five hundred

dedicated riders, to be aware of the spring conditions and avoid the soft trails until they can dry out and firm up.

Riding or walking on the trails too early will result in deep ruts and footprints that collect and channel water, causing increased erosion which further slows down the drying process. Ultimately, a lack of patience will lead to mud puddles and unnecessary trail damage that requires extra time and money to repair.

We are exceptionally lucky to have the expansive network of quality trails right in

the city of Thunder Bay. With a trailhead at Kinsmen Park, the Trowbridge Forest Trail System consists of 30km of mountain bike-optimized singletrack trail, a bike skills park, and an additional 25km of Nordic Skiing doubletrack in Centennial Park.

Even when these trails are dry enough to ride, we will inevitably still encounter a few puddles. Trail etiquette dictates that, counter to what you might think, we should stay on the trail and ride right through the puddle. Trying to avoid it will only widen the trail and quickly turn the wet area into a much larger mud pit. Fixing these problem areas unnecessarily uses up a lot of volunteer time every year.

While the Trailforks app was previously used to update riders on the condition of the mountain bike trails in Trowbridge Forrest, the Blacksheep have also adopted the Trailbot App for this new season. Trailbot, which is also linked to the Trails tab on the

Blacksheep website, uses a colour-coded map of the entire trail network to show what trails are wet, which ones are dry, and where the remaining muddy areas are located.

Currently, it is indicating that we are in the middle of the freeze-thaw cycle and that the trails are only open when they are frozen solid.

While we wait, there are lots of great bike paths, bike lanes and rural roads to ride while we wait for another amazing season of off-road riding to start.



Keith Ailey
the GOOD LIFE

Law school turns 10

By Brandon Walker - TB Source

Believe it or not, Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law is turning 10 this year - and the university will celebrate with a series of events.

"Please join us as we take a look back at the first decade of Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, while also celebrating the people, communities, and collaborative efforts which continue to support the faculty's innovative program and exceptional students," said a statement from the school.

Events are planned from March 21 - 23.

Some are open to everyone while others are for students, alumni, and employees with the faculty.

The March 21 event at 3:30 p.m. includes a piping-in ceremony and a feast - in the Paterson Auditorium.

This will be a chance for the university to acknowledge the faculty's 10-year milestone.

There is also a Doors Open event on March 23 from 1 to 3:30 p.m., featuring access to the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law's PACI building, tours, meet and greets with staff and faculty, merchandise sales, refreshments, and displays.

Winter weather won't go away

I need a new calendar. Or, I need a memory retrofit. Either way, I forgot all about St. Urho's Day and St. Patrick's Day. I meant to wish you all a happy one on each.

It seems that I do that a lot - be oblivious of important celebrations even if the one on the day before St. Patrick is a Minnesota spoof creation by our neighbour Finns to the south. Oh, I remember the big ones, Easter and Christmas easily enough especially when my wife, Laura, brought in two dozen white eggs and all kinds of paint with which to decorate for Easter. That "artistic" endeavour will be taking place this Easter weekend ("What? Is it Easter already?").

Actually, I can't blame the calendars we have posted in Casa Jones. I just looked at the one on the wall behind my desk in my library. There it is - St. Patrick's Day but the print is so small that for Farmer Fred with 20-20 blur, squinting has become the norm.

This past weekend we saw flurries of snow some of which stayed briefly on vehicles and the ground. Quite the sight of horizontal snow while the sun is out. The snow was streaming

in from the northwest where the sky was overcast while to the south Ol' Sol was beaming away.

And speaking of "Ol'", I took a chance on Saturday that Ol' Man Winter was packing his bags - more or less - for another year.

Sure, it snowed most of Sunday - great horizontal stuff streaming by, but none of it staying.

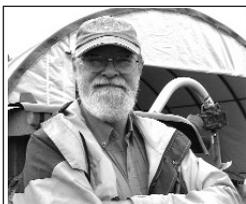
Both Saturday and Sunday we experienced fierce winds all day long.

So, I gambled: With the help of our son, Doug, we traded places in the tractor shelter between the boat and the snow blower.

We pulled the boat out of the shelter and backed the tractor in with the attached blower only to detach it at the back of the shed and then move the boat back inside

where it will be easy to connect to the back of the truck when we wish to go boating. Even if we get serious snow (which I doubt), both bucket and blade on the tractor's rear will do any clearing job.

Each time I go for a walk on our trails with our dogs, there is less snow on the ground.



Fred Jones
RURAL ROOTS

A cold start to spring

By Gary Rinne - TB Source

Residents of Thunder Bay can expect to be greeted with mid-winter-like temperatures when spring makes its debut this week.

The change of seasons officially begins on Wednesday, but Environment Canada is predicting overnight temperatures well below normal from Tuesday night through Thursday night.

"It's a major shift in the weather pattern for the coming week right across Northwestern Ontario and north of Superior," said meteorologist Geoff Coulson.

At this time of year, the thermometer should bottom out at about -10 C, but the current forecast calls for lows of -17 to -20.

Daytime highs this week will average a few degrees below normal.

"We've had air masses coming in from the west or the southwest, tending to give us overall mild conditions throughout the area" recently, Coulson said. "Now we're really drawing down the cold arctic air from the northwest. And this arctic air is likely gonna be with us through the remainder of the week."

A return toward normal temperatures is expected on the weekend, but Coulson said the reprieve may only be a short one.



Sunny, but cold is the weather to expect to start spring.

"Some of the forecast models are indicating a major system that could move south of Thunder bay and could pull down more cold air for next week as well. But the exact track of that system is still uncertain."

Overnight Monday, the city is expected to receive two to four centimetres of snow, followed by a spell of sunshine from Wednesday through Saturday due to the arrival of a large area of high pressure.

Treading the trail can still be tricky in places as the snow melted and then turned to sheer ice.

I usually try to find a path to the side where the ground is snow/ice free. The pooches don't care and race around, grateful for being outside on the go, as it were.

Sophie, the black lab, tends to stick near me although she charges back and forth exploring; Lily starts off with me and then disappears to show up towards the end of the romp.

Where she goes, I have no idea. I see evidence of deer, bunny rabbit, and ruffed grouse tracks in what snow remains but have yet to encounter these critters.

Well, usually I meet the grouse on our road and have to pay attention so as not to run the stupid birds over.

The talk at both the local store and at the local dump tends towards how little snow we received this winter certainly as compared with last winter, and the hope for rain.

Usually, we can count on lots of snow and a good melt to replenish groundwater levels for our rural wells, to dampen the forest floor to lessen the risk of forest fires, and for us boaters, higher lake levels for easy launching and retrieving.

A steady rain would also be good for gardens when in-ground planting takes place and for fields, especially in our case, the making of good hay for our horses. I don't think that the snow we got this past weekend counts as it didn't stay.

The ground is still frozen though.

On Saturday afternoon my wife, Laura, The Gardener, keen to get her hands in dirt, took a spade in the hopes of digging up parsnips she planted last season.

She came back inside and announced that she managed to dig all of two inches before hitting frozen earth. So no parsnips yet and no planting.

But in our greenhouse, the seeds have sprouted, and the trays of green are multiplying.

But the thermometer is zig-zagging up and down - a couple of days even in the double digits and then back to the serious minuses. Saturday, the plants didn't go out into the greenhouse since the temperature in that enclosure didn't get above 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

So, we wait to see what Ma Nature will deliver.

Let us give her a hint: pray for rain.



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Dark, twisty, bloody thriller

The title for *Love Lies Bleeding* (SilverCity) perfectly encapsulates the lurid spirit of this twisty neo-noir thriller where passion leads to mayhem of the graphic kind. Fasten your theatre seat belts for a truly bumpy ride.

The setting: a rundown, desolate nameless little town in New Mexico. It's 1989. Lou (Kristen Stewart) is a thorny manager of a dingy muscle-head warehouse gym. Unclogging gross toilets are part of her job..

Breezing into the gym one day is drifter Jackie, (Katy O'Brian) a robust brunette. Jackie is looking to do tune-up training before hitchhiking to a muscle-building competition in Vegas. She quickly parlays a hook-up in a car to get a waitressing gig at a shooting range.

When Lou and Jackie meet, it's like two atoms of lust smashing together. Acetylene sex gives way to white-hot passion that launches them into very dark and dangerous territory. Lou is queer. Jackie goes both ways. Both are edgy.

But complications encroach. Lou is questioned by the FBI because of her

gun-running crime lord dad, Lou Sr, (craggy Ed Harris sporting nutty hair) who also happens to be Jackie's new boss. Lou is protective of her sister Beth (Jena Malone) who endures her abusive, cheating husband, JJ (Dave Franco) who was Jackie's car hook-up. Such coincidences can only happen in a claustrophobic small town.

There's also Daisy (Anna Baryshnikov, daughter of Mikhail) a strung-out ditz in need of dental work who has the clingy hots for disinterested Lou and a knack for showing up at the wrong time. Added to the mix are steroids, a crooked cop, muscle poses, and a curious cat.

Lou's sister winds up battered in hospital, setting off a chain reaction of revenge, leading characters to a deep dark place, figuratively and literally. Carnage ensues.

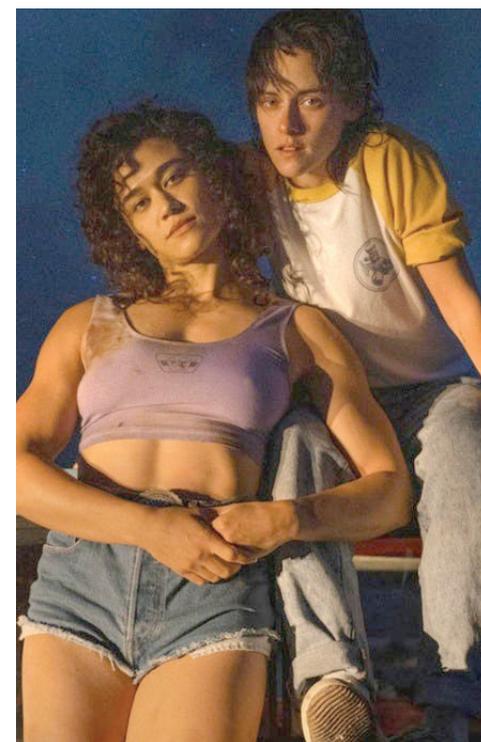
Bodies wind up wrapped in rugs. Lou's oddly adept at clean-up. Flashbacks bathed in red suggest a dark past Lou resentfully shares with her father. (Absent for 12 years, was Mom a victim too?)

Director/co-screenwriter Rose Glass ("Saint Maud") and co-writer Weronika Tofiliska offer a gender-bending take on the archetypal revenge saga. Glass infuses the film with a grungy, shopworn, and pulpy atmosphere thanks to Ben Fordesman's cinematography, Clint Mansell's moody soundtrack, and authentic set design. Scenes are drenched with sex, sweat, greasy hair and cigarette smoke. (Lou fruitlessly listens to nicotine withdrawal tapes.)

Stewart, who's able to convey what's ticking inside her, and O'Brian, who was actually a body builder, tackle their roles with panache, thoroughly convincing in a sexually-charged instinctive relationship sparking a devotion knowing no bounds. Bruised by dysfunctional family life have left Lou and Jackie coiled and combustible, and perhaps more vulnerable than they care to admit.

Love is darkly funny and starkly gruesome. A surreal sequence near the end suggesting female empowerment is a real stylistic curveball that is polarizing.

Love Lies Bleeding is definitely not for all tastes but will appeal to the cinematically adventurous.



Katy O'Brian and Kristen Stewart star in *Love Lies Bleeding*.



Marty Mascarini
MOVIE TALK

Mossman authors book

By Lucas Punkari - TB Source

As an elementary school teacher up in Nibinamik First Nation, local author Dave Mossman had a dream of writing a children's book.

Mossman did just that with the help of co-author Brian Nolet. Together they released *Jungle Buddyz: A Race to Remember*, available now on Amazon.

The book focuses on social-emotional learning issues that kids face today, in terms of how to manage their emotions and their behaviours.

"Those are a big focus across the school curriculums in Canada," Mossman said.

"We also really want to help kids with how to handle their emotions and their feelings of anger, sadness or feeling left out. That's a big reason why we created these books."

The book tells the story of a nervous sloth named Scooter, who faces anxiousness before a big race in the jungle. Scooter gets help from his friends throughout the event.

Mossman and Nolet have been working on the book since last spring. They also received help from Ottawa illustrator Chris Rose.

"To feel that copy of our book in our hands after seven months of working really hard was

very rewarding," Mossman said.

"What's even more rewarding was all of the feedback that we've gotten so far from parents and educators in Canada and in the United States. We've also had people purchasing the book from France, Australia, and the U.K."

This is the first in a series of *Jungle Buddyz* books that will be coming out over the course of this year, focusing on different emotions that kids go through.

"In that (next) book, we're focusing on Milo the Monkey, who will be left out of a certain situation. His friends are going to help him out through those emotions and help him process that."

Mossman's goal through the book series is that parents, teachers and social workers can have a resource they can use to help kids as they go through a variety of feelings.

"As a teacher, I see a lot of kids in our school deal with different kinds of emotions, whether that's feeling sad, angry or left out," Mossman added.

"Brian and I really wanted to focus our books on teaching kids on how to deal with that."

More information on the *Jungle Buddyz* books, which are available in both English and French, can be found on their website.

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Walleye already in playoff form

By Leith Dunick – TB Soutce

SIJHL PLAYOFFS (ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Friday, March 22

Kenora at Kam River	7:45 p.m.
Fort Frances at Sioux Lookout	7:30 p.m.
Wisconsin at Thunder Bay	7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 23

Wisconsin at Thunder Bay	7:30 p.m.
Kenora at Kam River	7:45 p.m.
Fort Frances at Sioux Lookout	7:30 p.m.
Red Lake at Dryden	7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 24

Red Lake at Dryden	3:30 p.m.
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Monday March 24

Thunder Bay at Wisconsin	7:05 p.m.
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Tuesday March 26

Dryden at Red Lake	7:05 p.m.
Thunder Bay at Wisconsin	7:05 p.m.
Sioux Lookout at Fort Frances	7:30 p.m.

The Kam River Fighting Walleye were going to have a target on their backs regardless of how they entered the playoffs.

Hitting Round 1 on a 15-game winning streak only makes it that much larger.

It's also why it was important for the defending Superior International Junior Hockey League champions to battle their way to the regular season's conclusion, finishing with a pair of close-knit games against the Red Lake Miners, the first team they've played in nearly a month that boasted a winning record.

Trailing 1-0 after one at the Norwest Arena, the Fighting Walleye scored four second-period goals on Saturday night and went on to down the Miners 5-3, a team that beat them three times in seven outings this season, handing Kam River three of its nine regulation losses.

"I think we're feeling pretty good. Fifteen straight is a big accomplishment and going into playoffs with wins is definitely big. We're going to keep it going and see how far we can run it this year," said Kam River forward Ryan Doucette, whose second-period assist gave him 50 points on the season, third most on the Fighting Walleye.

Getting a couple of games in against a contender, and coming out on top, was important for the team, Doucette added.

"It felt like a playoff game out there. I thought the team battled very hard and that was a full team effort win. Our goalie played unreal and everyone came together," he said.

Kam River coach Jesse Messier agreed wholeheartedly.

"It was huge. Tip of the cap to Red Lake. They play a really hard, playoff-style hockey, so it was really good. We went through a stretch where we weren't playing too many tight games, but it was kind of the message that we sent to our group every day we came in – holding ourselves accountable to doing what we do and not what our opponent does," Messier said.

"But it was definitely great to play Red Lake because they could be an opponent in the second round, if we're lucky enough to get there."

If Vegas was taking odds on the SIJHL's opening round, there's a good chance they might not even offer up the Fighting Walleye's series against the two-win expansion Kenora Islanders, a team they outscored 54-6 in their five most recent encounters.

Still, the playoffs aren't the time to start taking teams for granted, no matter how far

the separation in the standings – in this case a 74-point gap.

"It's a fresh start for everyone," Messier said, reiterating the accountability he asked his team to seek out.

"We're going to have all four lines and all three sets of D going. We've got to play fast. We've got to get on top. I think we strive when we play a good transition game, when we get out of our zone clean," Messier said. "The less time we spend in our zone is going to be to our advantage."

Red Lake's Nathan Dann scored the only goal of the first period in this one, going high on Kam River goaltender Travis VanderZwaag with 4:04 to play in the opening stanza.

Matteo Salvatore tied things up 3:50 into the second and less than two minutes later Braeden Duchesne put the Fighting Walleye on top for good, beating Noah Davis at the 5:17 mark.

Isiah Kinnvanthong made it 3-1 before the midway point of the second, but Red Lake's Aiden Corbett notched his 31st of the year, bashing home a rebound on back-to-back-to-back shots from in close on VanderZwaag.

Carter Nailen, however, spoiled the comeback bid on a breakaway, and the Fighting Walleye took a 4-2 lead into the third. The Miners climbed to within a goal on a scramble in front of the Kam River net, Ethan Cerone finding the twine, but Max Wright put the contest out of reach with an empty netter with 73 seconds left in regulation.

Kam River will open the playoffs at the Norwest Arena on Friday night against Kenora. Red Lake will travel to Dryden to face the Ice Dogs on Saturday night.



Kam River's Ryan Daponte (right) and Red Lake's Kai Hughes take a faceoff last Saturday night. (Leith Dunick)

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March Madness furious frenzy

March Madness is back, the one time a year I pretend to care about U.S. college basketball.

Back in the '80s, when Patrick Ewing was patrolling the glass for Georgetown, I was a huge fan, but these days, I know more about Caitlin Clark than Cody Williams, the Colorado forward projected by some to go No. 1 in the NBA's 2024 draft.

And yet somehow I always get hooked into the Madness frenzy, at least until my bracket blows up and I've got no reason to watch any longer.

Is there another sporting event that brings this kind of hype? The World Cup might be a challenger, but it's a global phenomenon more so than a North American one.

The NHL playoffs certainly get the attention north of the border, but best-of-seven series play out over a week or two. The thrill of a one-and-done showdown is palpable. Upsets rule and trying to figure out which No. 12 seed is going to take out a No. 5 in the opening round is always fun.

The Connecticut Huskies drew the No. 1 overall seed, with Houston, Purdue and North

Carolina also taking the top spot in their respective conferences.

Apparently the odds of filling out a perfect bracket (it's never been done, at least not since results were made public and tracked by the NCAA) are 1 in 9.2 quintillion. That's one in nine billion billions, or what Jeff Bezos will be worth in five years or so.

I'm sure I'll pick mostly favourites, sprinkle in a few underdog picks, because they always win a few first-round games, and throw a few darts and hope for a little luck.

If you're seeing this and still have time to make your picks, keep in mind that the top two seeds almost always win their first game.

No. 1 seeds are 150-2. In 2018, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, stunned No. 1 Virginia 74-54 and then last year, Fairleigh Dickinson ended Purdue's championship hopes with an opening round 63-58 triumph.

No. 2 seeds are 138-11 since 1985.

No. 3 seeds are slightly better odds, with 22 wins over the past 38 years, but in 19 of the past 38 seasons, at least one No. 14 team has

made it out of the opening round.

That said, only two have escaped the second round - Cleveland State in 1986 and Chattanooga in 1997.

At least one No. 4 seed has lost in the first round in 14 of the past 15 NCAA men's basketball tournaments, so if you're looking for a likely big-time upset, maybe start there.

□□□

As a Vikings fan staring at the possibility of Sam Darnold under centre this year, you've got to wonder if they were one of the four teams spurned by Chicago quarterback Justin Fields.

The Pittsburgh Steelers shocked the football world by acquiring Fields for a tentative sixth-rounder, which could bump up to a fourth if he plays 51 per cent of the snaps for his new team.

With Russell Wilson contemplating signing a multi-year deal in Pittsburgh, having signed in free agency, it makes you wonder why Fields was so adamant about going to the Steelers, where presumably he'll be a back-up for at least a season or two, barring a Wilson injury.

I'm no NFL general manager, but if I'm the Vikings, I'd have at least offered a third to see

what Fields can do.

Eventually you'll have to pay your quarterback, and presumably they plan to draft one this year, with two first-round selections, but I'm enough of a gambler that I'd have at least tried to land Fields.

Whether or not the Bears would have dealt him in-division is a moot point now.

□□□

The SIJHL playoffs open on Friday on four fronts.

The defending champion Kam River Fighting Walleye should sweep the Kenora Islanders, a first-year team that just doesn't have the guns to compete this year.

The No. 3 Thunder Bay North Stars may have a tougher time against No. 6 Wisconsin, but did beat them six times in seven meetings. I think the Lumberjacks will pull out one win and fall in five.

No. 2 Sioux Lookout went 6-1 against the No. 7 Fort Frances Lakers, but the games were mostly close, so I think it'll take the Bombers five games to advance.

Dryden and Red Lake will be the series to watch. The Ice Dogs have home-ice advantage, but Red Lake took four of seven match-ups. I'll say the Miners win in seven.



Leith Dunick
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