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Canadian Publications Agreement No. 0662445 Vol. 23 No. 15

Thursday, April 10, 2025

  
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This site, located on Cumberland Street, is council's choice to house a temporary shelter village, though the decision has yet to be finalized. (Leith Dunick)

# Council will remain the same

By Matt Prokopchuk – TB Source

City council members have rejected the sweeping changes proposed to the city's ward system and the makeup of council itself.

At Monday night's committee of the whole meeting, Thunder Bay city council voted against the recommendation of adopting a new four-ward system, with a mayor, two councillors per ward and two at-large councillors. That model was developed by city staff on behalf of an ad hoc citizens committee struck about a year and a half ago to investigate council composition and ward distribution options.

Only Couns. Kristen Oliver and Trevor Giertuga and mayor Ken Boshcoff supported it.

Council also narrowly voted down an amendment brought forward in the meeting by Coun. Mark Bentz, which would have tweaked the

recommended four-ward system by having one councillor attached to each ward, six councillors at-large and the mayor.

Council voted twice on that motion after Bentz requested a re-vote, citing potential confusion earlier. Ultimately the motion lost by one vote. Couns. Bentz, Rajni Agarwal, Albert Aiello, Giertuga and Kasey Etreni supported Bentz's amendment, while Couns. Dominic Pasqualino, Andrew Foulds, Greg Johnsen, Brian Hamilton, Shelby Ch'ng and Oliver opposed. Coun. Michael Zussino was absent from the meeting, and mayor Ken Boshcoff didn't raise his hand either for or against.

The mayor's vote ultimately didn't matter in this case, as the motion was already lost.

A memorandum from Coun. Andrew Foulds was also defeated. Foulds' memo requested council defeat the citizens' committee proposal

but task administration with a review of the city's existing wards and their boundaries with an eye on population equity

Rebecca Johnson, a former longtime member of Thunder Bay city council herself, has been the chair of the council composition review committee. She watched the debate in council chambers and told Dougall Media after the series of votes that maintained the status quo that, overall, she was disappointed.

"We brought forward a recommendation which we felt had some value to it, but at the same point in time, council has not only turned the recommendation down but they just turned (down) an opportunity to make some change in our community and so that's a little bit disappointing," she said.

Johnson said the six-person volunteer committee has been hard at work, researching what's being done in other municipalities as well as soliciting feedback through public surveys, focus groups, community pop-ups.

"There was a lot of work that went into this, a lot of time," she said.

The results of the committee's public consultations were inconclusive.

The votes on Monday bring council one step closer to wrapping up years of deliberations about how council will look for the foreseeable future. Oliver said during the meeting that the current conversation around council composition and ward distribution goes back to 2019.

Council's final decision, however, is still contingent on ratification at a future city council meeting.

Under the citizens committee proposal (or Bentz's amendment) council would have decreased by two members from 13 to 11. The four wards would have been essentially drawn along parallel east-west lines, encompassing rural and urban constituencies.

Throughout the debate, many council members showed appreciation for, and thanked, the citizens committee for its work.

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Police attend the scene at a Robertson Street home, where 63-year-old Richard Jung was killed. (FILE)

## Six years for manslaughter

By Jodi Lundmark – TB Source

A Thunder Bay man charged in the death of 63-year-old Richard Jung has been sentenced to six years in jail.

Randy Andrews, 25, pleaded guilty to manslaughter last June and was sentenced in December to six years in jail minus credit for time served pre-trial.

Andrews has a little more than four years left to serve.

Thunder Bay police responded to reports of an assault at a residence in the 200 block of Robertson Street the morning of Sept. 20, 2023.

Jung was located at the residence with life-threatening injuries. He was transported to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre for treatment but succumbed to his injuries several days later.

Following Andrews' arrest, police said they did not believe the incident was related to gang activity or drug trafficking.

Andrews was initially arrested and charged with aggravated assault, but the charge was upgraded to second-degree murder following Jung's death.

The aggravated assault and murder charges were both withdrawn on June 25, 2024.



Charla Robinson, who heads up the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, says tariffs are a huge concern. (Clint Fleury)

# Tariffs top local election issue

By Clint Fleury – Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce wants federal candidates to pay attention to several economic opportunities for the region.

Charla Robinson, President of Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, said “we know that different parties have different priorities but the number one strategy is we want parties to be focused on how can we make Canada, how can we make Thunder Bay businesses, competitive, productive, and grow jobs and grow opportunity here in our region and across the country.”

Robinson said their number one recommendation is to ensure federal support for businesses hit hardest by the trade war.

She said government support is needed “to help businesses to transition to new export opportunities.”

One opportunity she highlighted was breaking down interprovincial trade barriers between provinces.

“Let’s make Canada one country right now. It’s almost like 13 different countries because there are different rules in every province and territory, so let’s really focus on that as a way to provide more opportunity for Canadians, more opportunity within our country so that we don’t have to be quite so reliant on others,” Robinson said.

Another priority the chamber wants federal candidates to consider is streamlining the

regulatory approval processes for mining and energy projects.

She said the regulatory approval processes are “not efficient” as companies need to have to get approval for every aspect of the project.

“You have to consult around the road, and then you have to consult around the X, and then you have to consult around the Y. Why can’t you do one consultation that really speaks to the larger project and goes through those pieces as one thing rather than you keep going back to the beginning and starting again,” said Robinson.

The chamber would also like to see federal candidates commit to updating the federal tax framework on businesses.





“Our tax system is not necessarily as it could be. We think that there could be a review of taxes to make sure that we’re positioning ourselves to attract investment, to make it easier for businesses to invest,” said Robinson.

“Also, we want the next government to look at a spending review. How are we using those tax dollars in the most efficient way to drive productivity and drive our economy?”

Lastly, Robinson spoke about the need for changes to immigration that are impacting colleges and universities.

“It’s impacting our ability to attract people from other countries. We want to make sure that immigration is aligned to local labour needs, and that would be different here in Thunder Bay than it might be in the GTA,” said Robinson.

## WEATHER FORECAST

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			
<b>Partly Cloudy</b>	<b>Partly Cloudy</b>	<b>Mostly Cloudy</b>	<b>Rain</b>
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# Drone shows coming to city

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Keep your eyes on the sky.

With fireworks shows a thing of the past in Thunder Bay, city officials on Monday announced it is planning a two-night Summer Sendoff spectacular, complete with different drone shows on both nights, to cap off their annual Live on the Waterfront concert series this summer on Aug. 27 and Aug. 28.

It's something Northwestern Ontario has never seen the likes of before, at least not locally, said Karen Kadolph, director of events for the City of Thunder Bay.

"This is a really unique opportunity that the airport brought to us and an opportunity to partner on it," Kadolph said. "We've been looking at drone shows the past couple of years, looking for an alternative to fireworks, so when the opportunity presented itself, it's something you go with."

The city last held fireworks in August 2023, but prior to that they hadn't held a summertime show since 2019, before COVID-19, later announcing they would no longer do fireworks on Canada Day, a move several communities across the country adopted, at least temporarily, in recognition of the country's poor treatment of Indigenous peoples.

"This is a really unique event," Kadolph said at the event's launch, held at the Thunder Bay Airport, who are sponsoring the event.

"I'm an events nerd, so the logistics of this are really exciting for me. It's a ton of planning. But when you're planning events, you know this is something that huge crowds are going to come out to. People are going to want to come and see this."

## Not the same old, same old

The goal is to bring something really different to Northwestern Ontario.

"We haven't had anything like this in our area and we hope that everyone will come out and watch," said Kadolph, adding there is the potential to draw people from throughout not only the region, but also northern Minnesota.

"That's the goal. We would love to have as many tourists come as possible," she said. "We will be promoting this as far and wide as we can. We do want people to come. First and foremost, we want the community to come out to come and see this, but we do want the tourists to come."



Airport president and CEO Graham Ingham. (Leith Dunick)

The show will be tailored to a Thunder Bay audience. Kadolph and her team have already sent local images to Drone Show Canada, who will design the show, with input and approval from city officials.

About 400 drones are expected to be utilized during the show, lit up with different colours to form images in the night sky.

## Waterfront viewing party

Kadolph said the best viewing will be from Marina Park, and said further details about parking and possibly a shuttle service, as well as the musical entertainment for both nights, will be unveiled closer to the date.

Thunder Bay Airport president and CEO Graham Ingham said it felt like an exciting way to get involved with the community and region at large.

A drone show was the perfect way to make a splash.

"We wanted to do something different. Everybody does fireworks shows. They're getting a little old and tired now. They're a little noisy. You can do far more exciting things with drones than you can with fireworks," Ingham said.

Thunder Bay Mayor Ken Boshcoff wants the city to embrace the city of festivals label it once had, and run with it.

"This show is truly inspirational," he said. "It'll help the tourists come back. The community itself can always use these events."



Mayor Ken Boshcoff helps unveil a drone light show coming to Thunder Bay at the end of August. (Leith Dunick)

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# Council chooses shelter site

By Matt Prokopchuk – TB Source

A wooded lot on Cumberland Street North, next to the Salvation Army Journey to Life Centre, will likely be the location of the city's temporary shelter village.

Council has told administration to pursue the site on the city's north side for the development of a planned facility to help address the city's homelessness crisis.

That flew in the face of city staff's recommended site – a triangular piece of land that is bordered by Fort William Road to the southwest, the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway to the north and the Neebing River to the southeast in the Intercity area. Part of that site is owned by the city, with the other segment owned by the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority.

At its Monday meeting, council was being asked to approve that site so administration could enter into a lease agreement with the LRCA, pending approval from the authority's board. Instead, Coun. Mark Bentz proposed focusing on another property that city staff also valued highly in

its screening of dozens of potential sites across the city for the village.

"At least on the Cumberland site, the investment we make into that property stays with the taxpayer," Bentz said, referring to the fact that his proposal is using land that is fully city-owned. "It's an investment, it's not a cost, because that property will be improved."

A lot of opposition to the Intercity site by some members of council was due to concerns they were hearing from businesses and residents nearby.

"I spoke to various large box store owners today, managers and store owners, and (they) said in the summer, when the encampments are larger, their thefts are triple and it's not coming out of a corporate bank account," said Coun. Rajni Agarwal, adding she's aware that not all thefts are committed by those who are unhoused. "It's coming out of each owner's bank account — the corporations are not taking the losses."

City staff said the village is a structured environment that provides basic necessities

for survival — unlike an encampment.

"There is no evidence that crime will increase, none — there is no factual evidence to suggest that," said city manager John Collin.

"In fact, a number of people who are experts in the field would suggest that the likelihood of crime may very well decrease because those who are being supported are being supported properly and are not starving."

Some on council also expressed concern about the recommended site being so close to waterways, given the city's history with drownings and other associated tragedies. However, city staff said many existing encampments are located near water, and have been for several years with no water-related injuries or deaths. Rilee Willianen, the city's encampment response plan lead, added the village will have measures like gated fencing, on-site supervision and security.

Monday's debate was the latest step in council trying to secure a location for the temporary village initiative. In October

2024, city council voted unanimously to approve a 10-part human rights-based plan for responding to homeless encampments; the temporary village was one of those points.

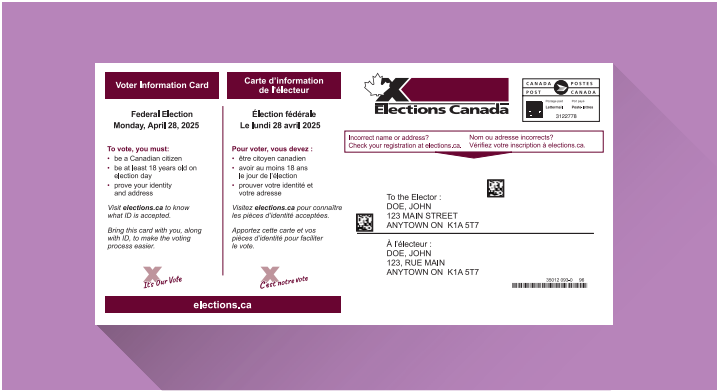
Two sites were then identified, with a vacant lot on Miles Street East being recommended, but ultimately voted down after public backlash. Council then asked administration to bring them an extensive list of all potential sites across the city, with the Fort William Road site being recommended after an extensive analysis using nine criteria, including proximity to support services, readiness for construction and how close they are to existing or known encampment areas.

Councillors who supported Bentz's site selection pointed to benefits to the Cumberland Street site, including that it's still on a main transit route and it's close to relevant services at Salvation Army (although the Journey to Life Centre doesn't allow substance use, whereas the shelter village, as a low barrier space, would).

FEDERAL ELECTION / MONDAY, APRIL 28

  
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# Women offered free training

By Gary Rinne - TB Source

"It's going to be a home run," predicted Andy Nieweglowski, director of training for local 607 of the Labourers International Union of North America.

He was speaking Monday about the anticipated outcome of a residential construction worker training program for women.

The nine-week, women-only course is being offered for the first time in Thunder Bay this summer.

It's fully-funded by the Ontario government, so there's no charge to participate, and a subsidy is available for those requiring child care.

Nieweglowski said the program will help fill the need for construction workers in the city while providing an opportunity for women to gain experience that could lead to a satisfying career.

"This is a good start, and they'll come out with a lot more experience with what happens on the job site. Maybe they've had children early in life, and they are ready to look at, you know, 'what do I do now?'...They'll get a lot of skills, and



A 9-week course in residential construction is being offered to female applicants, starting Apr. 21 (LiUNA photo)

perhaps get into an apprenticeship as a general carpenter, which we sponsor also."

He said women are underutilized in the construction industry, perhaps in part

because they're reluctant to work in an environment that's been so male-dominated.

"We want them to come in here and participate. We need people. We're always recruiting here at the local, and so are the other unions. This just opens the door so you take a closer look at what might interest you, but more importantly so you can work on a job site with confidence."

Training for the first group of two cohorts of a dozen women each is set to begin on July 21 at the LiUNA training centre on Balmoral Street.

Skills that will be taught over the two-month program include the installation of

flooring systems, wall-framing, roof-framing, exterior finishing, and how to install windows, doors, and vapour barriers.

Nieweglowski has worked in the construction industry for 40 years.

Both he and the other instructor in the program are registered journeymen carpenters.

He said there's a "terrible" shortage of trained residential construction workers in the Thunder Bay area.

"We just can't send people out there who have no construction experience. We'd get calls back from the employer saying 'These people aren't working safe. They don't know what to do.' Now everybody that's going to get on a job site has to take one of our programs here so that they feel more confident on the job. With us at LiUNA, if you have no experience, you need to take one of our programs."

Nieweglowski said a lot of unions and employers don't want to take on brand new people or trainees because it's not only a health and safety risk, but it also cuts down on productivity.

He said participants in the upcoming training course will each receive a power toolkit and personal protective equipment such as work boots and goggles.

"We put in our proposal (to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development) to make this as easy as possible for people to get into the program without any barriers."

Women interested in applying for the program are invited to drop into the LiUNA office at 730 Balmoral St. to get more information and tour the training facility.

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## Students become FAST heroes

By Olivia Browning - TB Source

In Canada, a stroke occurs every five minutes, which is why it's important for young student to recognize stroke symptoms.

In late March, Grade 1, 2 and 3 students from St. Martin Elementary School celebrated the school's largest graduating class from the FAST Heroes program.

"FAST Heroes is an international health children's education program that really helps to guide people and children to understand stroke through a fun, animated adventure," said Keli Cristofaro, Fast Heroes coordinator.

The program is five-weeks long, taught in

the school system. The goal is for students to recognize stroke symptoms, especially in their grandparents, she said.

"We call them grandheroes, and we know children are spending time with their grandheroes and we want to make sure that if a stroke happens, they recognize the stroke and they can do life saving measures, call 911," Cristofaro said.

Stroke is not taught in a scary way, she said.

"They fall in love with the characters right away, and from the animations to the materials that they learn about. It's actually done in a very fun way, and the whole theme is for them to become heroes, which we call fast heroes.

EDITORIAL

## Composition committee derailed

The more things change in Thunder Bay, the more they stay the same.

On Monday, city council voted to reject the council composition committee's recommendation to redraw ward boundaries, drop the number of wards from seven to four, and the number of councillors from 12 to 10.

It was a flawed process from the start. The committee asked city administration to report back on 10 different options, but instead, administration floated its own proposal and essentially told the committee to move forward with it or forget the entire process.

Faced with a deadline in order to implement the plan for the 2026 municipal election, the committee was left with little choice – accept administration's plan or scuttle the whole thing.

It turns out, council did it for them.

Realistically, it was a lot of work for nothing.

Asking an ad hoc committee of citizens to revamp council might have been asking a little too much. There are professional organizations out there that do this for a living, that have far more experience, especially when it comes to redrawing ward boundaries.

First and foremost, why was the rush on to have something in place for 2026?

Wouldn't it have made more sense for the committee to be working toward changing things up for 2030, when proper thought could have been put into the planning process?

Rushed decisions are rarely the right ones and this one was turbo-charged.

Now, instead of a reasoned approach to council composition, residents get the status quo – a bulky 13-member council with five at-large members and seven ward councillors, along with the mayor.

Does a city the size of Thunder Bay need 13 people sitting at the council table?

Sault Ste. Marie, Cornwall, Windsor and Kitchener have fewer, with 11. Belleville makes due with nine.

It appears neither council nor administration were at all interested in formenting change to the city's municipal election process.

The status quo is just fine for them. In a city where name recognition is often key to being re-elected, perhaps the thought of a couple of their colleagues losing their jobs was too much for council to bear.

Council should have insisted on a report on the 10 options and if it meant delaying the process four years, so be it.

Now both council and administration can shrug their shoulders and simply say they tried. But did they? Not our view.



# Inequality leads to cultural impoverishment

*The Inner Level* by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett is an exploration of how more equal societies reduce stress, restore sanity and improve everyone's well being. This is a groundbreaking investigation of how inequality gets into our minds and under our skin.

Why is mental illness three times more common in the U.S. than in Germany? Why is the American dream more of a reality in Denmark than in the U.S.? Why are people more relaxed and at ease with each other in some countries than in others? Why do we worry so much about what others think of us and often feel social life is a stressful performance?

As *The Inner Level* demonstrates, the answer to all of these questions is inequality and the way it impacts our relationships and self worth.

In *The Spirit Level*, Wilkinson and Pickett put inequality at the centre of public debate by conclusively showing that less equal societies fare worse than more equal ones across everything from education to life expectancy.

*The Inner Level* now explains how inequality affects us individually, altering how we think, feel and behave. It sets out the overwhelming evidence that

material inequalities have powerful psychological effects: when the gap between rich and poor increases, so does the tendency to define and

value ourselves and others in terms of superiority and inferiority.

A deep well of data and analysis is drawn upon to show how bigger status differences lead to fragile egos, insecurity, increasing anxiety, elevated stress hormone levels, depression and addiction.

Wilkinson and Pickett describe how our responses to hierarchies evolved, and why the impacts of

inequality on us are so severe. In doing so, they challenge the conception that humans are inescapably competitive and self interested.

This book draws together many of the most urgent problems facing our society today, but it is not just an index of our ills.

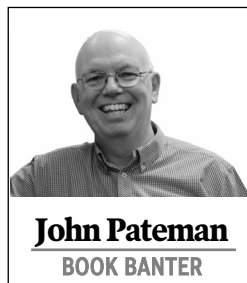
It confirms societies based on fundamental equalities, sharing and reciprocity generate much higher levels of well being, and it lays a path towards them.

Research has shown the popularity of, and participation in arts and culture – including public libraries – is substantially reduced in societies with bigger income differences. The frequency with which people visited

museums, galleries and libraries, read books or went to the theatre was two or three times higher in the countries with smaller income differences.

There are several possible causal processes that might account for this finding. Perhaps, in more unequal societies, the arts are more likely to be regarded as the exclusive domain of the better off; or maybe encouraging broader access to the arts is regarded as less important in more equal societies.

Because inequality makes status differences more important, people will more often feel out of place and want to avoid more socially exclusive contexts.



John Pateman  
BOOK BANTER

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# Adjusting to the new normal

By JR Shermack - TB Source

I don't normally worry about Covid anymore.

I may be living in a fool's paradise but after a couple years living with the 'new normal' I rarely even think about the pandemic or any long term effects.

I was expecting normal to change and I think it has but I'm not sure exactly how.

It seems to me that there are still just as many bacteria and viruses floating around as there were before covid - that's nothing new.

The change is that after surviving a pandemic we know how to protect ourselves and most of us are less fearful of the endemic viruses we come in contact with.

Now, when a family member gets sick with a cold or the flu we don't panic if it spreads to the rest of us, affecting some more severely than others and some not at all.

Healthy people can easily recover especially with the development of effective vaccines to boost our immunity and protect our loved ones

However, living through a pandemic also forced us to take public health more seri-

ously.

The only change is now that everything is getting back to normal, it is easy to become complacent about the things that got us here.

Most Canadians have shunned the mask although I optimistically believe that hand-washing is still alive and well in normal Canadian society.

Anyway now that I am freely making the rounds again I have to admit that the new normal reminds me a lot of the old one, you know pre-Covid.

Whether shopping or socializing or just hanging out, it sure is nice to get together with people without having to worry - I enjoy situations again that I used to be wary of not that long ago.

As I said, I seldom worry about infectious disease these days (thank you vaccines) and I am embracing the new normal but am I living with a false sense of security?

It would be foolhardy to think that we have escaped the pandemic unscathed.

It was traumatic, devastating, earth-shattering and life-changing and it was not benign.

Most healthy people survived but there were seven million deaths worldwide, devastating families and leaving grieving



Covid isn't top of mind for most people anymore. (File) relatives behind to carry on.

For hundreds of millions worldwide the pandemic was the most stressful event they will ever experience in their life - for some it will haunt them for the rest of their days.

The entire planet suffers from post-traumatic stress and this has already been reflected in mental health statistics, including here in Canada - some families will never recover.

This is one effect of the pandemic and part of the new normal nobody bargained for.

Happily most Canadians were fortunate enough to avoid the worst effects of the pandemic but even those thankfully returning to pre-Covid activities will notice changes in what's normal.

School closures and online classes during covid did not provide an effective learning environment - many teachers and their students are struggling to make up for lost time.

Some communities are still trying to recover from government and business closures, extensive layoffs, and an exhausted health-care system, all symptoms of a devastating pandemic.

As for the Covid virus, if you believe in the miracles of modern medicine and have faith in genetically engineered vaccines, the new normal has changed for the better, forever.

So I'm not going to worry about that and I will continue to enjoy the best of the new normal and deal with changes as they occur.

The changes may be subtle but one thing is certain, the new normal will never be the same.

what's happening  
in and around...

## The Bay

To submit an event, email [ldunick@dougallmedia.com](mailto:ldunick@dougallmedia.com).  
Please include details about the event, including any cost

### April 12 Easter Bunny visit

The Easter Bunny is on its way to Goods and Co. Market.

Families, come visit our fluffy friend for a professional photo taken by In Bloom Photos and join us for an Easter egg hunt in the market halls.

Don't miss out on the fun on April 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hop on over and make it an egg-citing day.

Photos are by a suggested \$5-10 donation.

### April 12 Carroll Baker

The Thunder Bay Community Auditorium has three days of concerts set, starting on Saturday with Carroll Baker, Canada's First Lady of Country Music, in her final cross-Canada tour on Saturday at 2 p.m.

Baker has been a powerhouse in the industry for more than 55 years captivating millions with her soulful voice and commanding stage presence. Her

remarkable legacy includes more than 20 No. 1 hits, 14 albums, four compilation albums, and an astounding 55 singles, solidifying her place as one of the most celebrated figures in Canadian music.

Fans will have the chance to experience the magic of her greatest hits and timeless classics in what will be an unforgettable performance. Carroll and Bakerstreet will celebrate her musical legacy.

### April 13 Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan

The country continues at the Auditorium on Sunday at 7:30 p.m. with Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan, who are stopping in Thunder Bay as part of their Grits and Glamour Tour.

From the road to the red carpet, on centre stage in the theatre or under the spotlight in a honkytonk, these two women are as comfortable in their high heels as they are in their jeans. Veteran recording artists and performers, they

grace the country format with style, flair, and undeniable talent that is captivating and timeless. Combined, they have recorded 28 top 10 hits, more than 18 million records sold, and 12 No. 1 songs. There have been Grammys, CMA Awards, movie credits, TV appearances, and Broadway performances.

### April 14 Glass Tiger

The music at the Auditorium turns to rock on Sunday with Canadian rockers Glass Tiger at 7:30 p.m. If you were a music fan in the '80s you would have had to have been living on another planet in order to have missed the band's launch on MuchMusic. People all around the world joined in the frenzy that was; Don't Forget Me, Someday, My Town, and Diamond Sun to name but a few.

Join Glass Tiger for this one-of-a-kind retrospective of the music that travelled the globe.

#### HOW TO WRITE TO US:

Letters to the editor are most welcome. Those kept to 350 words or less have priority.

The Thunder Bay Source reserves the right to edit submissions for content and clarity. All attempts will be made to preserve the core argument of the author.

Address them to: **THUNDER BAY SOURCE**  
87 North Hill Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7A 5V6

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AND VIEWS ABOUT OUR  
WEEKLY POLL QUESTION.

#### THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

*Do Canadians get enough vacation time?*

TOTAL VOTES: 1,972

☒ **YES**  
32.91%

☐ **NO**  
67.09%

# Lottery house worth \$816K

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

For the 39th time, the Fort William Rotary Club is going to put someone in a brand-new home.

The service club on Wednesday launched ticket sales for their annual House Lottery draw, unveiling a 1,360 square foot home at 138 Bruin Crescent, this year's top prize valued at \$816,000.

Last year's draw raised nearly \$700,000 for local organizations, said Cindy Levanto, chair of the House Lottery committee, and the charitable aspect of the draw is almost as enticing to ticket buyers as the house itself.

"First of all, it's a chance for someone to win a beautiful dream home for the cost of a \$100 ticket, or three for \$250. There are 20,000 tickets available and the importance of the draw is that it's been huge for our community, with almost \$8 million going back to local charities over the last 39 years," Levanto said.

The house itself is an ideal family home, she added.

The split-level house features four bedrooms, three bathrooms, including an

ensuite in the primary bedroom, custom kitchen cabinetry, a gas fireplace, paved driveway and four appliances. There's also an attached garage.

The reaction to each house never gets old, Levanto said.

"I love it when people come to the open houses and families are envisioning their space. They bring their children in and they're saying, 'This is going to be my bedroom.' It's really wonderful to see community members coming in and already living the dream and hoping they'll win," Levanto said.

"When you tell people how much money goes back to the community, that's very meaningful."

While there can only be one grand-prize winner in the July 1 draw, there are \$50,000 worth of early-bird draws that will begin with \$10,000 and \$5000 prizes on May 2, and continue through June 25, when another \$10,000 prize will be awarded.

Glenn Craig, president of the Fort William Rotary Club, said it's hard to believe the House Lottery has been in place for 39 years, noting the ticket prices haven't changed much since that first draw decades

ago.

The impact of the fundraising total has been staggering.

"That's a huge amount of money and that goes to everything from small organizations to some larger organizations that really make an impact on our community, on people dealing with food insecurity, youth programs, health care, arts and culture – all for programs we support," Craig said.

Craig said the thought of putting down a \$100 bill for the chance at a life-changing prize is a pretty big enticement to anyone thinking about buying a ticket.

"That's a pretty nice daydream for people to have. Besides winning the prize, knowing the money is going back to the community for programs that maybe you use, or maybe your kids or your grandkids use, feels really good. Everybody wants to win, but if you can't win, at least you know you're doing some good," Craig said.

Tickets are available at the Thunder Bay 50/50 store at Intercity Shopping Centre, online at [www.fwrotaryhouselottery.ca](http://www.fwrotaryhouselottery.ca), or at coming open houses, which are expected to be offered starting sometime in May, when the weather clears up.



This year's house is located on Bruin Crescent.

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# Taking the icy plunge

## Fifty-nine teams took part in the Polar Plunge on Sunday at Prince Arthur's Landing

By Nicky Shaw - TB Source

The PDR Polar Bear Plunge had raised more than \$155,000 as of 4:30 p.m. on Sunday.

More than 1,000 residents watched the 400 plus plungers and 59 teams dive from Port Arthur's Landing for local charities into the icy waters of Lake Superior.

Kiri Butter represented the CNIB and was on the event's organizing committee. She said it's always a great atmosphere.

"We're in the pre-plunging, so everybody's excited and nervous and lots of questions about 'what is it like, how do I jump in, what should I take,' but yeah, definitely, we have more plungers this year than we did last year," said Butter, shortly before noon.

Butter said donations online also looked fantastic and they know they'll get more and more donations throughout the event.

"We raised just over \$150,000 last year. Our goal was \$75,000. So we beat our goal, which is always a happy moment, but, yeah, definitely the more money that comes in," said Butter.

### Big goal

She added well over \$150,000 was their goal by the end of the day.

"The best thing about this event (is) it's for charities working together and we divide... the profits from it amongst the four organizations, so we're able to reach almost everybody in Thunder Bay in some ways with Special Olympics, CNIB, Roots Community Foods and Pro Kids," said Butter.

Butter said they also have some amazing sponsors like PDR Contracting that are always willing to top it up, as well as a barbecue on-site for the first time this year.

"Halfway Motors is hosting a barbecue for us, so we'll have the profits coming in from that as well," said Butter.

For those coming out or who cannot come out today, she added they can still make donations online.

The event also featured a live feed on the Thunder Bay PDR Polar Bear Plunge Facebook page for onlookers to watch their friends and family plunge from several different views, including up in a cherry picker.

Peter Kibzey, Domtar Ontario

Woodlands's general manager, joined his team for its second year at the PDR's plunge. He said it's great to see the number of people coming out and the donations coming in.

"There are four great charities that we just love to support and (are) really pleased with the number of people that are coming," said Kibzey.

By noon, Kibzey explained Domtar had raised just over \$15,000 for the plunge — the highest of all teams.

"I think it was about \$15,000 last year. And we challenged Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper, our Ontario sawmills and the Ministry of Natural Resources and we got two out of the three," said Kibzey.

### Challenge issued

"So the sawmill group has raised over \$18,000 this year and the MNR has raised over \$6000, so a really good challenge that came through."

He encourages those not signed up this year to sign up next year.

"We need more people that want to help the charities and really, it's like a one-minute of pain for a whole year of positive outlook for the four charities, so it's well worth it," said Kibzey.

Kibzey said it is not normal for 400 people to jump in Lake Superior in early April, but it's a lot of fun.

Tony Muia joined his team, the Serenity Salon Jersey Shores from Thunder Bay, for their first time out. He said they came out because his team members were talking about how it was a great and cool thing to do to support the city and good causes.

"We thought we'd be the first shop, I guess, to do it in Thunder Bay," said Muia.

"So we're challenging all the other salons. Come on, next year. Come and do it."

Muia explained they started fundraising in the last few days because they had just entered their team.

"In a few days, we're close to \$1000. I think people were awesome with donating," said Muia.

He said he was definitely not really sure what to expect since he had never jumped in the water this cold before.

However, Muia added it looked like it was a lot of fun and encouraged people to come out and have fun.



Some teams dressed in costumes when making the Polar Plunge on Sunday at Prince Arthur's Landing. (Nicky Shaw)



Hannah Breiland, Jessica Casmey, Ariane Biering, Tony Muia, and Riccardo Muia of the Serenity Salon Jersey Shores from Thunder Bay took part in the plunge for their first time on Sunday. (Nicky Shaw)

# Food programs cut

As I'm sure a lot of us are sick of the news coming out of the USA, unfortunately some of it is so newsworthy in the food space we can't possibly ignore it. Late last month, The U.S. Agriculture Department has cut two federal programs that spent over \$1 billion annually to help schools and food banks buy food from local farms and ranches. The School Nutrition Association, which represents cafeteria workers and directors nationwide, said in a press release that the USDA cut the \$660 million Local Food for Schools program for 2025.

"With research showing school meals are the healthiest meals Americans eat, Congress needs to invest in underfunded school meal programs rather than cut services critical to student achievement and health," said School Nutrition Association president Shannon Gleave. "These proposals would cause millions of children to lose access to free school meals at a time when working families are struggling with rising food costs. Meanwhile, short-staffed school nutrition teams, striving to improve menus and expand scratch-cooking, would be saddled with time-



**Derek Lankinen**  
Here's Cooking at You Kid

consuming and costly paperwork created by new government inefficiencies." The Local Food for Schools program allocated federal funding to states, tribes and territories so that they could purchase healthy, unprocessed foods from farmers and suppliers within their own communities to serve at schools and childcare centers. The program was expanded to include child care centers in addition to schools, the USDA announced only this past December, now it's been scrapped altogether.

"This program will strengthen the food system for schools and childcare institutions by helping to build a fair, competitive, and resilient local food chain, and expand local and regional markets with an emphasis on purchasing from historically underserved producers and processors," the USDA website says on the program's page which hasn't been taken down yet at the time of this writing.

School food programs and nutrition has been a popular subject on HCAYK over the years as food and labour costs inflate and need increases. There isn't a quick fix to making

sure all kids have a nutritious start to the day. These are complex issues that change seemingly weekly lately. However, as billionaires score record profits it seems that this shouldn't be a place to be looking.

It was also reported that the department also cut the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program, which would have funded about \$500 million this year to support food banks.

Ending the programs is part of an aggressive effort by the current administration to sharply shrink the federal government and how much money it spends. It's being reported that existing LFPA agreements would continue but that there would not be another round of funding this year. It's also been widely reported that farmers and food organizations across the U.S. are cutting staff and halting investments as the USDA freezes other grants and programs. Watching what's happening in the USA is important to us as Canadians to ensure we don't fall into similar traps because ... damn.

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

# Flag raised for Autism Day

By Olivia Browning – TB Source

Autism can affect anybody and the city of Thunder Bay joined in the Celebrate the Spectrum events organized locally.

The Autism Ontario flag was raised at city hall last Wednesday, World Autism Day.

"Our hope with Celebrate the Spectrum and with this flag raising, is that we reaffirm our commitments to autistic people, and their families to building a more inclusive Ontario," said Kadesha Graham, events and outreach specialist for Autism Ontario.

The flag raising was only one of a number of events held in the city. Graham said some of the events Autism Ontario put on in Thunder Bay were full for registration.

"People want to be able to experience things like going to the movies and bowling and they want to do that in a safe environment for their families.

"By celebrating Celebrate the Spectrum and World Autism Day, our hope is that more organizations will partner with us so that we can continue offering events and expanding what we can offer so that families and individuals have that opportunity," Graham said.

# Measles misses city

## Outbreaks have been discovered in several North American cities

By Gary Rinne – TB Source

Even though it's been 28 years since the last reported case of measles in the Thunder Bay region, health officials say it's important for local residents to ensure their vaccinations are up to date.

Ontario's current measles outbreak is projected to continue into the summer.

The disease can lead to pneumonia, inflammation of the brain, and death.

As of last Wednesday, there have been 661 cases in the province since the outbreak started in October 2024, including 52 requiring hospitalization.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory infection that can be spread by coughing or sneezing into the air.

The virus can also be picked up by touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth after making contact with an infected surface.

Symptoms include fever, a cough, red

watery eyes, a runny noses and a red blotchy rash that starts on the face and spreads to the body and limbs.

The last known case in the Thunder Bay area involved a young male in 1997.

"I don't have any clear indication as to why we haven't been affected by the outbreak yet, considering that people travel just as much from Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario as other parts of the province," said Karen Battigelli, manager of the infectious disease program at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

"There's an outbreak heavily affecting areas of southwestern Ontario. Perhaps, with more travel between communities there, they're seeing more cases, whereas we travel long distances to get to other health unit jurisdictions."

Battigelli also noted this part of the province has "fairly decent" immunization rates in young children.

But she said younger children who either haven't been immunized yet or are not due yet to be immunized, and immunocompromised individuals, are at risk of developing more severe disease if they are exposed.



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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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# Driving tough after storm

So, yeah, we got snow – lots of it. My wife, Laura and I figured over 30 centimetres of snow, or about a foot plus.

It was not the light, fluffy stuff; it was heavy and wet. It made for some interesting “getting around”.

I feed the ‘tweety’ birds at our feeder every morning during the winter. I have created a path from the driveway across the oval to the two crab apple trees where I have hung two bird feeders.

Until this latest “gift” from Ol’ Man Winter, walking on the snow was easy since I had worn down a solid path.

Post-storm walking became very difficult. Not only was there now a new foot of snow but it was heavy and wet such that each step involved breaking a crust that formed during the night when the temperature dropped.

I grouched to the waiting “flitties” that getting to the feeders was now a slog; hoped that they were grateful.

Along with the slog to the bird feeders, I also had to crunch my way to both the eastern and western paddocks to deliver evicted equines (to the east) and then carry feed dishes with supplements to the two borders in the west, in what we call “Winter Paddock” because usually we send our horses there for the day during the winter.

But since these two strangers showed up, we put them in the Winter paddock to keep them separate from the others.

One of the owners of the two boarders in the west paddock – a neighbour and an experienced horse woman – visiting for supper said that we were now in “sprinter” i.e. spring mixed with winter. Good one!

Of course, the day after the storm I had a lot of snow clearing to do with my tractor “ancien”.

I did it in two shifts: first thing Thursday morning I suited up and got out to clear from house to barn, then in front of the east barn door to allow easy passage of humans leading out east paddock horses, then the driveway to the road.

While I was thus engaged, Laura and our son, Doug, came to the barn to feed and turf horses and then clean stalls.

Then I had some breakfast and resumed clearing, this time the main barn door, the

lane to the western paddock, and finally the long lane to Mt. Crumpet where we empty the cart containing the manure from the horse stalls.

But while the forest looked lovely with all this new snow, the roads were treacherous. Driving through the snow not yet ploughed by our township snow plough wasn’t difficult since I was driving the truck that is high off the ground and has four-wheel drive if necessary (it wasn’t).

But after the road was ploughed and the warmth of the day set in, the slush on the road became very difficult and dangerous to negotiate.

Twice along our road on Friday (after the road had been ploughed), the front wheels on our car that I was driving were grabbed by the slush and I darn near went into the ditch. Coming up the long hill we call “Mile Hill” returning from doing some grocery shopping in Kakabeka, the car started to go sideways, and I was only doing forty kms. Scary!

But I managed to stay the course without further incident.

En route to the store in Kakabeka, I saw a truck with a long flatbed hauling a pickup out of the ditch that obviously slid off the highway and smashed into a tree.

The front end was completely stove in. Hope the driver was okay.

However, on the drive to Kakabeka and just before the

farm where we buy the horses’ hay, I saw a dead deer in the ditch and feasting on this late Bambi were three bald eagles!

I wanted to stop and take a picture but there were vehicles coming up behind and I thought that on the way back I could stop and take a few snaps of the feasting raptors. Well, there was one eagle that took off towards the trees in which I counted four more lurking in the branches.

Wow, quite the cleanup crew!

And then, guess what?

More snow!

Beginning late Sunday afternoon and continuing most of the night.

I figure we received 5 or 6 inches but not the heavy wet stuff this time.

Nope, it was white, light, and fluffy – much easier with which to deal.

Yup, “Sprinter”.



**Fred Jones**

RURAL ROOTS



Changes in weather can wreak havoc on fishing opportunities, especially if a cold-front happens to be coming in. (Supplied photo)

# Rolling to the deep

Have you ever been enjoying a day of phenomenal fishing when the fish seem to suddenly disappear?

When we experience a hot bite followed by a sudden drop off in the action, it usually centers around an incoming cold front. Just before this major change in weather, fish will often feed ravenously before the bite unexpectedly dies off.

As the temperature drops, and the barometric pressure falls with it, the result can be that fish either move to deeper water or simply shut down their feeding and sulk on the lake bottom. While dropping air temperatures take time to affect the water temperature, it is the change in barometric pressure accompanying the incoming cold front that will have an immediate negative impact on the fish.

Barometric pressure is the weight of the atmosphere that surrounds us, and fish can feel even small changes in it because of the lateral line running the length of their body. The lateral line in

fish is a sensory system that detects water movement, vibrations, and these pressure changes. It allows them to locate prey and to be alerted to the presence of predators, but it is also the reason they can be so sensitive to changes in atmospheric pressure. The dropping pressure that accompanies an incoming weather system can cause big variations in the activity and behavior of fish.

Anglers in the right place at the right time can cash in on aggressively feeding fish for a brief period, but as the barometer continues falling and the cold front moves in, the action often comes to a dead stop. Anglers can switch to finesse techniques and try to slow their presentation down to coax a few more hits, but often it just takes time for the weather to stabilize before the fish start to feed again.

Conversely, a rising barometer or stable weather often coincide with good fishing. Unfortunately, you can have too much of a good thing and prolonged hot weather can also be chal-

lenging for anglers. On a hot day, the bright sun can turn off an active bite and send the fish in search of cover. This is why most anglers prefer to fish at dawn and dusk, when the sun is low in the sky.

Ideally, an angler will have the opportunity to plan their fishing trip during a time when conditions are stable. Typically, this means a prolonged period of moderate temperatures combined with overcast skies and a light breeze that ripples the surface of the water, diffusing light penetration. However, the reality is that we usually go fishing when time allows, regardless of the current conditions.

Acknowledging that changing weather can affect the behaviour of the fish we are targeting will help us understand why they are being so fickle at times. Planning to fish in optimal conditions is preferable, but not always essential. Knowing that the fish may still bite in cold front conditions if we downsize our baits and slow the presentation of our lures can be the key to salvaging a day on the water during the wild swings in weather we have each spring in Northwestern Ontario.



**Keith Ailey**  
the GOOD LIFE

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

"JCXXTZOQ ZM VZGU DKTZOQ CO K LUIS  
SAKS EKT OUBUX YCEU LWU."  
— JZVV XCQUXM

	5	4		1	8	3		
3		6						
7	1							2
	3			5		2	7	
8							5	6
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ACROSS

1 Ruler of Tunis  
4 Today (Ital.)  
8 Part of QED  
12 Soft drink  
13 Stir up  
14 Geophagy  
15 Nat'l  
16 Togs  
17 Org. or  
18 Net  
20 Genetic letters  
21 Like (suf.)  
22 Turk. inn  
25 Friend of  
28 Hebrew letter  
29 I (Ger.)  
30 Frenzied  
31 Wolframite  
32 Jackfruit  
33 Illness

34 Grab  
35 Germanic gods  
36 Goal  
38 Old-Eng.  
39 Beak  
40 Ram  
44 Cushitic lang.  
46 Breathe rapidly  
47 Proportional  
48 Danube  
49 Pueblo Indian  
50 Possessed  
51 Dutch painter  
52 Afghan title  
53 Environmental  
Agency (abbr.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

LOG WAAC APOD  
ABA HEMA NERA  
III ITEA KNOB  
CATAN MALE  
FETE BELLE  
MOHR URAL OEC  
ALI TRACE PAH  
HOT ANSI PEDO  
ARHAT EDEL  
ECUA LYDIA  
BARE MADE ARN  
ASTR ODIN RAG  
SNOB NAGA TEL

DOWN

1 Nemesis  
2 Earthly paradise  
3 Votes  
4 Decree

5 Squash  
6 Fr. author  
7 Fr. pronoun  
8 Goddess of  
horses  
9 Growing by a  
riverbank  
10 Unit  
11 Tactical Air  
Command (abbr.)  
19 Cozy retreat  
20 Dept. of Motor  
Vehicles  
(abbr.)  
22 Adjective-  
forming (suf.)  
23 Geological  
epoch  
24 Asian desert  
25 Foolish  
26 E. Indian  
tanning tree  
27 Sad  
28 Flap  
31 Grimalkin  
32 Male person  
34 Pen point  
35 Physician  
37 Scand. people  
38 Branch of  
Muslim  
40 Heddies of a  
loom  
41 US dam  
42 Eucalyptus  
secretion  
43 French art  
group  
44 Kilometers per  
hour (abbr.)  
45 Military macaw  
46 School  
organization  
(abbr.)

# Empty nest sales tactics to avoid

If your kids have grown up and moved out, chances are you're sitting in a home that feels a little too big—and maybe a little too quiet. Selling the family home can be a smart move, both emotionally and financially, but many homeowners make avoidable mistakes that cost them time, money, and peace of mind.

Here are five of the biggest missteps I see empty nesters make—and how you can avoid them:

## 1. Getting Too Sentimental

It's completely normal to feel emotional about selling your home. After all, it's where you've built memories, hosted birthdays, and maybe even

measured your kids' height on the kitchen wall. But emotional pricing doesn't work in the market. Buyers are looking at comparable homes and cold hard numbers—not your nostalgia. To get the best return, it's important to price strategically from day one.

## 2. Delaying Maintenance and Repairs



Neat and tidy is the way to go when thinking about selling your empty nest home. (iStock)

When you've lived in a home for decades, it's easy to overlook little quirks. But buyers will spot them right away—and those "quirks" can quickly become red flags. Fix the leaky faucet, freshen up the paint, and have your furnace serviced. A well-maintained home reassures buyers and boosts your

listing price.

## 3. Not Decluttering

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## 4. Trying to Do It All Alone

It's tempting to think you can save a few bucks by listing privately or using a discount service. But real estate isn't a DIY project—especially when downsizing. A knowledgeable Realtor brings pricing expertise, staging advice, marketing tools, negotiation skills, and a network of buyers and agents to your doorstep. That often translates to a quicker sale and more money in your pocket.

## 5. Overlooking Power of Presentation

Today's buyers often fall in love with a home online before they ever step through the front door. That means staging, professional photos, and strong marketing aren't optional—they're essential. When your home looks its best, it attracts serious interest and competitive offers.

Here's the good news: with the right approach, downsizing doesn't have to be stressful. In fact, it can improve your financial health and simplify your life. Whether you're dreaming of a low-maintenance condo, a cozy bungalow, or even a vacation home, selling your family house smartly is the first step.



**Frank Zanatta**

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## IN BRIEF

# Local wins Dryden 50/50

Raymond Johnson's numbers came up in the grand prize draw for March, giving him a windfall of \$113,445.

After he drove from Thunder Bay to pick up his winnings last week, he told Brad Coles – chair of the foundation's board of directors – he felt "pretty awesome right now."

But Johnson admitted to being very skeptical when he first took a phone call from Coles telling him he had won.

"I'm glad you convinced me," he quipped when he picked up his cheque.

Johnson said he supports multiple hospital fundraisers in Northwestern Ontario, and added "You guys are doing a wonderful job in a small town. Keep up the good work."

Tickets for the Dryden 50/50 can be purchased online.

## Tbaytel gives back

A Tbaytel program that's supported 107 different projects with contributions totalling over \$365,000 since its inception is back for 2025.

Applications opened Monday for a new

round of funding from the Tbaytel For Good Community Fund.

The fund supports a wide variety of initiatives aimed at improving community spaces, services or programs.

A full list of eligibility criteria and details on the submission process can be found online.

"This initiative is a wonderful way to give back to the communities Tbaytel serves," said Agnes Notarbartolo, manager of communications and brand for the company.

"Each year, we eagerly anticipate the inspiring submissions that give individuals and organizations in our region the chance to enhance their communities. As a judge, I'm continually inspired by the incredible work being done by people and organizations."

Teachers, students, parents, volunteers, not-for-profit organizations, coaches, associations and community members may submit applications until May 20.

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available for applicants located within Tbaytel's service area in Northern Ontario.

# Magnus tours the region

By Olivia Browning - TB Source

Many students in remote Northwestern Ontario communities have never seen live theatre before, and Magnus Theatre intends to change that.

Magnus Theatre is beginning this year's edition of its Theatre for Young Audiences Tour, which features three shows - each about 45 to 50 minutes and include actors Jack Kotanen, Emma Vickers and Ryan Horton.

The three touring shows include Head à Tête by David S Craig and Robert Morgan, for Kindergarten to Grade 3, Land of Trash by Ian Tamblyn, for Grades 4 to 8, and The Code by Rachel Aberle, for Grades 9 to 12.

"We're going farther, we're reaching more students, more remote communities, and really trying to bring the magic of live theatre to as many people as possible," said Jordan Blaxill, theatre and education director at Magnus Theatre.

Stage manager Elizabeth Schieman will be travelling with the three actors, and ensuring smooth performances at every stop.

"We're doing three shows, each for different age ranges. Three very impactful stories dealing with lots of really current issues," Blaxill said.

"The opportunity to take those out into the region, and connect with young people about these issues, I just think it's super important," he added.

Blaxill said it means a lot to be able to put the tour on.

"We're going to places where the students there will have never seen any live theatre before. We're bringing that to them and hopefully inspiring the next generation of young theatre makers, young directors, young actors, to take up theatre and try and explore a career in the arts and also just to enjoy the stories that we're telling."

There will be 47 different performances at 26 schools across five weeks, Blaxill said.

"We're also going as far west as Kenora. We're going as far east as Wawa. We're also going to the fly-in community of Marten Falls, which is the first time we've done something like that for a long time.

"We're travelling hundreds of kilometres east, west and north."

Thinking small is helpful when embarking on something like this, Blaxill said.

"We have three actors and a stage manager. The three actors perform the three shows that we're doing in what's called reps, so they each play different characters in each of the different plays.

"We're keeping it small on a cast perspective, but also making sure that everything that we have, all the set props, costumes can basically fit down and condense into the back of a van. We just load up the van, make sure everything fits in nice and smoothly, and then hit the road," he said.

Magnus Theatre will also present the shows in Thunder Bay on May 8 and 9.



The Theatre for Young Audiences Tour, features three shows - each about 45 to 50 minutes and include actors Emma Vickers, Ryan Horton and Jack Kotanen. The tour will stop at 26 schools across Northwestern Ontario.

## Animal lovers join forces

By Olivia Browning - TB Source

After fundraising for animal rescues for years, three local women came together to create change. The Fundraising Fairies is an animal fundraising group comprised of Ashley Roth, Tammy Slobodian and Teresa Ruberto.

"The three of us have been with different local animal rescues for the last 15 years. This year we decided to do something a little bit different and fundraise for a whole bunch of different rescues in Thunder Bay and surrounding area instead of just focusing our efforts on one, so we help with

seven or eight different rescues in Thunder Bay, including the Humane Society," said Ashley Roth.

The group helps Desi's Heart Rescue, Full Bowl Feeding Program, Kitty Kare, Local Dog Rescue, Northern Critters in Need, Save a Stray and Thunder Bay District Humane Society.

On Saturday, the group hosted a Spring Fling vendor market at the CLE Heritage building that will support Northern Critters in Need and Kitty Kare.

The hope was to raise between \$600 and \$800 at the groups raffle table on Saturday that will be split between rescues.



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# Muddled psychological thriller

Ducking the tsunami of youthful humanity flooding every theatre featuring *A Minecraft Movie* at SilverCity, we opted for more adult fare with *The Woman in the Yard*. This tension-filled drama is a combination of horror story and psychological thriller. This blend of genres certainly builds the tension, though ambiguity serves to muddle the last act.

The drama directed by Jaume Collet-Serra (*Carry-on, Jungle Cruise*), and scripted by Sam Stefanik, definitely has some effective moments, playing with audience perception, as we try to discern what is real and unreal.

Recently widowed Ramona (Danielle Deadwyler, *Carry-on*) and her two children, teenage son Taylor (Peyton Jackson) and little daughter Annie (Estella Kahiha) are confronted by a mysterious figure on the lawn of their farm house.

The veiled female shroud (Okwui Okpokwasili, recalling a commanding Grace Jones), warns "Today is the day," as she reveals bloodied hands. "You called for me and I came." What does she want? Who is she?

This adds to an already burdened Ramona who lost her husband David (Russell

Hornsby) in a car crash which explains her leg brace and crutches. For some mysterious reason, their wrecked car sits nearby under an orange tarp. Power has gone out in the house. Taylor's phone is broken and Ramona's phone has run down.

Taylor wants to drive the second family vehicle to get help. Still traumatized from the accident, Ramona states that Taylor is still too young to drive. They've run out of food for their dog. Bills are piling up, evidence of Ramona's depression.

Other things begin to happen. The penned chickens are dead. The family dog has gone missing. Meanwhile, the Shroud is advancing towards house with each sighting, cranking up tension and anxiety within the home.

Could Ramona's collective grief, guilt and remorse over the accident be playing into what we are seeing, real or imagined? Is the family facing supernatural horror or is Ramona grappling with her own inner demons?

A recollection of Ramona and David having dinner that fateful night reveals

Ramona's true mindset about the family's move to the country. Though she agreed to it, she's not happy. Romana's driving when the collision happens.

The cinematography, lighting, varied camera placement and soundtrack heighten the tension. There's an unsettling bit when the shadows of both Ramona and the Shroud coalesce during a struggle in the home. Another interesting sequence uses framed family pictures to foretell their future. Deadwyler and Co are riveting.

Director Collet-Serra's use of ambiguity and duality (a movie marquee is reversed) is challenging especially in the muddled last act. If much of what's happening is based on Romana's perception governed by suicidal tendencies and depression, then how much are her children actually affected?

Collet-Serra leaves it to the audience to decide whether Ramona survives or succumbs. We're left with an ambiguous ending. True art aims to provoke, not always satisfactorily. The debate rages over *The Woman in the Yard*.



**Marty Mascarín**  
MOVIE TALK



*The Woman in the Yard* is a blend of genres.

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## Mental health in focus

By Olivia Browning - TB Source

Stigma surrounding mental health at work has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, so the Superior Mental Wellness @ Work Advisory Group and Thunder Bay District Health Unit are aiming to make change.

On Friday at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, the Get Real photovoice project began its month-long display.

"We asked the community to send us their stories and their pictures that would relate to their mental health experience at work. We specifically asked how do you really feel at work and how do you take care of your mental health at work. The exhibit you see today are selected entries and the whole idea is to inspire positive change, to reduce the stigma of talking about mental health at work, and also to inspire people to be intentional about taking good care of their own mental wellbeing," said Lynda Fraser, health promotion planner at the health unit.

Fraser said people were courageous in telling their stories.

"What you'll see here, is a very eye-opening opportunity to see to see what people are feeling on the inside and how their job impacts their mental health.

"We don't want people suffering in silence,

we want people to speak up if they feel that they need support, and we want that support to be there," she said.

The Get Real project is a mobile art exhibit. It was developed in 2017 and has toured through 43 workplaces and conferences since that time. Dr. Vicki Kristman, director of EPID at work research institute and Ontario research chair in injury and disability prevention at Lakehead University, said mental health has been an issue for some time in Northwestern Ontario.

The Northwestern Ontario Workplace & Worker Health Cohort Study (NOWWHS), conducted by EPID @Work, has found some statistics around workplace mental health.

"We found that about 90 per cent of our participants are actually experiencing both depression and or anxiety, which is problematic. It's a very high amount.

Kristman said there were also some good findings through the study.

"Even though there's a substantial amount of workplace anxiety and depression and other mental health challenges, what we are finding is that people are still resilient and they are still reporting that their mental wellness is still quite high. They're able to, in spite of what they're experiencing in the workplace, still function," she said.

# Jays get Guerrero

The Toronto Blue Jays had no choice. Faced with losing Vladimir Guerrero for nothing more than a compensatory draft pick and sending a message to their fan base that the team can't really compete for the biggest names in the game, the Jays opted to give Guerrero a 14-year, \$500-million contract extension, which could keep the first baseman in Toronto for the rest of his career.

The four-time all-star and son of hall-of-famer Vladimir Guerrero Sr., has been the key to the team's future since he arrived in the organization and began his meteoric rise to stardom.

With him locked up, the question is, where does the team go from here?

The obvious answer is to pursue locking up shortstop Bo Bichette to a second long-term deal.

Both Bichette and Guerrero were potential free agents after this season, and while the latter has dominated baseball chatter this spring, the former has quietly gone about his business, coming off a terrible injury-filled 2024 campaign.

Dealing him at the deadline for a reduced prospect package is another option and will likely depend on contract talks stalling or the Jays falling out of contention by the deadline with no deal in sight.

Is Guerrero worth \$500 million?

That remains to be seen. He's already eighth on their all-time home run list, with 160 and counting and will soon crack their top 10 in RBI.

The value in the deal is in the next five to seven years.

That's the window the Blue Jays have to build a champion around him.

Their rotation is old and a little shaky. The bullpen is a question mark and they're not brimming with all-star talent up and down the roster.

The other issue is the farm system, which [mlb.com](http://mlb.com) last month ranked as No. 27.

Their top two prospects, Arjun Nimmala and Trey Yesavage, ranked 86th and 87th overall.

Can the Jays sign their way into contention? We've already seen big-name players like Shohei Ohtani and Juan Soto spurn them in free agency. If Anthony Santander is the level of signing fans can expect, it's going to be a long few years trying to build a team around Guerrero that can compete with the high-spending ways of the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox, and the sheer talent of the Baltimore Orioles.

However, give the team credit for getting Guerrero's deal done. Baseball was convinced he was heading to a big-market team like the



Robert Olenick was the ultimate Border Cats fan.

Yankees, Mets or Red Sox, and Toronto convinced their Montreal-born superstar to stay closer to home (even if that home is really the Dominican Republic).

□□□

A big shoutout to Alexander Ovechkin for breaking Wayne Gretzky's all-time scoring mark, putting the puck past Ilya Sorokin of the New York Islanders on Sunday for goal number 895. What a remarkable achievement.

Gretzky's record lasted 31 years. Ovechkin's may last an eternity.

□□□

More congratulations to Lakehead wrestler Haley Florrel, named Lakehead's female athlete of the year following a gold-medal performance at nationals, and basketball's Nathan Bilamu and wrestling's Adam LaFroy, who were named co-winners of the male athlete of the year award.

□□□

I was saddened to hear the news of the passing of long-time Border Cats season-ticket holder Robert Olenick. He was there, every game, with his tattered scorebook in hand, keeping track of every play. As I walked up the stairs past him to the press box, he'd always have a friendly smile, would nod his head or make a quick comment about how the team was doing. Win or lose, he was a fixture at the ballpark. That's passion. He'll be missed.



**Leith Dunick**  
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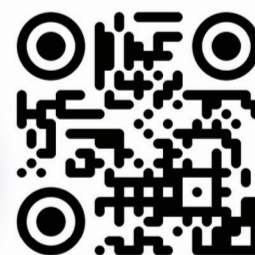
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# Lakehead hands out hardware

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Winning gold at nationals was more than enough to earn Haley Florell Lakehead University's female athlete of the year award. The men's side wasn't quite as clear.

Adam LaFroy also won wrestling gold for the university, while basketball's Nathan Bilamu was runner-up in the OUA's player-of-the-year voting and a first-team all-star and track and field's Niko Dowhos set an OUA standard in winning provincial gold earlier this year.

In the end the voting committee ranked LaFroy and Bilamu as co-winners of the award, handing out the hardware on Saturday at the school's annual athlete awards ceremony at the LU Outpost.

Florell, who battled injuries most of the season, said she was surprised to hear her name called.

"LU has a lot of strong women attending this university. So, I was surprised, yeah," she said.

"Coming here I wasn't really sure if I was going to be accepted, not being in university and then taking time off before coming back. I

really was unsure what was in store. It's just such a good start. I can't say enough about that women's team."

Florell beat Brock's Cassie Borbett in early March to land on the top of the podium in the 76-kilogram category.

That's after a fourth-place finish at the OUA championships, losing out on bronze to Corbett, Florell at the time noting that wrestling is "such a heartbreaking sport."

LaFroy, who calls Thunder Bay home, wasn't even sure if his season would continue, battling neck injuries multiple times before arriving at nationals.

The St. Ignatius High School graduate edged Guelph's Brennan Laplante-Brady to win the men's 72-kilogram title.

It's such an honour to win co-athlete of the year, he said.

I didn't expect this. I'm just so honoured to have that given to me," he said. "That's such a high achievement.

It's a good sign for the wrestling team for both top awards to go to members of the team, he said.



NATHAN BILAMU

"Wrestling isn't the biggest sport and I'm really happy as a wrestler I could show what someone from small-town Thunder Bay can do and I hope the next generation can see that too and strive for something great like that.

Bilamu was the key to Lakehead's success on the hard court this past season, leading the team into the top 10, finishing second in scoring to TMU's Aaron Rhooms, averaging 19.7 points per night. He put up 20 or more points on 12 separate occasions, averaging 4.5 boards and 3.8 eight assists a game.

"All these years at Lakehead University, it's been an incredible ride," the graduating Bilamu said, accepting his award.

"This award means a lot to me and I'm really grateful I've been part of the Lakehead organization for the last four or five years."

The female rookie athlete of the year was volleyball's Ashley Lawrene, while Nordic skiing's Nic Randall took the male freshman honours.

Hockey's Noah Massie won the Hank Akervall Award, given to the graduating athlete who excels in competition and academically, and the Argus Award, given for outstanding contributions to LU athletics, went to track and field's Amy Stieh.



Haley Florell was LU's female athlete of the year.

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