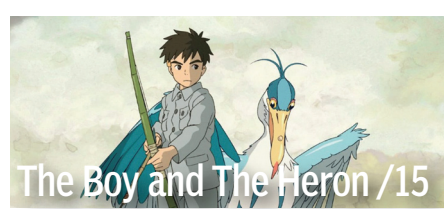


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Christmas and brie /13



The Boy and The Heron /15



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Thursday, December 14, 2023

MORE CASH FOR ARTS

Council tentatively approves \$3.1 million for cultural organizations in the city /3

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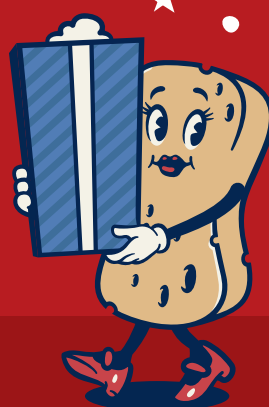
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Funding upped

By Ian Kaufman - TB Source

The city is planning to support the Thunder Bay Art Gallery's move to a new location with a nearly \$100,000 increase to the institution's annual operating funding.

That would bring the city's yearly operating grant to the art gallery to \$405,300 in 2024, and comes on top of a nearly \$40,000 increase the gallery received this year.

City council tentatively approved funding for 18 local non-profit organizations in 2024 through the city's Community, Youth & Cultural Funding Program on Monday.

The fund, created in 2007, exists to support important cultural and community groups, with large sustaining grants for a handful of institutions considered integral to the city's identity.

The program has a total recommended budget of \$3.1 million in 2024, up by about \$200,000 from this year.

The largest recipients of the CYC fund in 2024 are:

- Thunder Bay Community Auditorium (\$836,900)
- Thunder Bay Museum (\$482,100)
- Thunder Bay Art Gallery (\$405,300)
- Shelter House (\$330,800)
- Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra (\$244,700)
- Regional Food Distribution Association (\$200,000)
- Magnus Theatre (\$144,400)
- Thunder Bay Boys & Girls Club (\$123,400)

Coun. Mark Bentz questioned why the lion's share of the funding goes toward cultural institutions, not youth and anti-poverty programs.

"When I look at it, I see 80 per cent of the funding going to cultural... and my way of thinking is that's a little skewed," he said. "We're funding two museums, two art galleries, an auditorium, an orchestra that plays exclusively at the auditorium, and a professional theater company for close to \$2.3 million; Whereas we're only putting \$600,000 or so into the youth programs."

Coordinator Callie Hemsworth responded that has more to do with the typical funding model for cultural institutions than anything else.

"Community safety and wellbeing organizations are typically funded at a much higher level by the province and to some degree, the federal government, whereas culture across Canada... is typically funded at a much higher percentage by the municipality," she said.

"In other cities, some of these cultural organizations are actually part of a city department, some of the museums [for example]."

Applications to the program are reviewed by



The Thunder Bay Museum may get \$482,100 next year.

teams made up of city staff and citizen representatives, and can be appealed to a committee made up of city councillors.

The gallery was one of two organizations recommended for a large bump in 2024, along with the Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA).

The gallery increase was recommended to support the institution's move to a new \$57-million-plus waterfront building that will offer around three times the display space of its current site at Confederation College.

Gallery leaders had previously signaled they'd seek increases to the operating grant. It's not clear if the gallery plans to seek further increases in 2025, when it's set to move into the new building.

An increase of \$94,500 recommended for the RFDA, meanwhile, recognizes "significant increased operating expenses, demand for services, and decrease in donations," staff reported.

That would bring annual city funding of the RFDA to a total of \$200,000, still well short of the organization's request for \$350,000 for next year.

Funding for the Shelter House is set to rise only slightly to \$330,800, falling short of its request for \$500,000.

The CYC program also includes \$47,600 for smaller project grants to be allocated in 2024, with the first intake in March 2024.

More information about the fund and how to apply is available at the city's website.

The decision to award those dollars won't be final until council approves the 2024 city budget in February.

WEATHER FORECAST

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
Precipitation: 40% HIGH 7 LOW 2	Precipitation: 40% HIGH 4 LOW -2	Precipitation: 30% HIGH 2 LOW 0	Precipitation: 30% HIGH 1 LOW -6

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House prices expected to rise

Buying a home may cost 2% more in '24

By Gary Rinne - TB Source

Home buyers can expect to pay just slightly more for a single detached house in the Thunder Bay market next year, while total sales are likely to increase.

That's according to a new report on the housing market outlook for cities across the country, produced by RE/MAX Canada,

It forecasts that local prices will increase by two per cent in 2024, and total unit sales will go up by five per cent after a year in which unit sales fell.

According to Thunder Bay Real Estate Board data, the median price for single-family detached homes sold in the city between Jan. 1 and Nov. 30 was \$330,000.

This means half the houses sold so far this year cost more than \$330,000, and half cost less than that amount.

Board chair Wes Case said the median

selling price was 3.0 per cent higher than last year in the same period.

At the same time, the number of single-family detached homes sold in the city dropped to 828 units up to Nov. 30 this year, down from 983 units last year at the same time.

Case said Thunder Bay is still considered a seller's market, as defined by the ratio of sales to listings.

"The range has been about 63 to 73 over the past six months or so. If you're over 60 or over 70, it's a seller's market. Anything under 40 is more of a buyer's market.. Thunder Bay has been a seller's market for a few years, during the pandemic and everything."

As of this week, there were 109 active listings in the city.

The RE/MAX report anticipates that average residential sale prices in 61 per cent of the markets it analyzed will rise between 2.0 and 7.5 per cent next year, while most of the remaining markets will experience either no change or a decline in prices of 2.0 to 5.0 per cent.



Total unit sales are expected to go up by five per cent in 2024, with prices rising slightly next year.

Advertorial




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"My bills are much better. I notice a big difference in the comfort."

Rosemary, program participant



Thunder Bay Police Service Staff Sgt. Mike Dimini faces criminal charges after a years-long investigation by the OPP.

Officer charged

Obstruction of justice, assault charges laid

By TB Source staff

A senior officer with the Thunder Bay Police Service is facing criminal charges after an investigation by the Ontario Provincial Police.

The OPP laid charges of obstruction of justice, two counts of assault, and breach of trust by a public officer against Staff Sgt. Michael Dimini on Wednesday, the force confirmed in a release.

The charges followed a years-long investigation launched in late 2021, after Ontario's Attorney General requested the OPP investigate allegations of misconduct by members of the Thunder Bay Police Service.

The investigation focused on incidents that took place in August 2014, October 2016, and November 2020, the OPP said.

The force added its investigation is ongoing.

The Thunder Bay Police Service appeared to suspend Dimini in October, according to internal communications reviewed by TBnewswatch, but never publicly confirmed his suspension.

In a statement issued Wednesday, the TBPS said Dimini is now on leave per the Police

Services Act.

"While the charges announced today are deeply concerning, the matter is now before the courts," the force wrote in an unattributed statement.

"Since the investigation was first announced by the OPP, the Thunder Bay Police Service has fully cooperated with investigators. For us to move forward as an organization, any allegations of misconduct must be thoroughly investigated, and we strongly support these efforts."

The statement called "maintaining public confidence and transforming the culture within the service" its top priority, after years of scandal.

Dimini had been named as a respondent in several human rights complaints filed on behalf of TBPS staff.

He was also at the centre of internal disputes over the police force's promotions procedures.

Dimini was released from custody after being charged Wednesday, and is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Thunder Bay in January.

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The United Way of Thunder Bay earned more than \$44,000 through the sale of Novemburger entries. (Katie Nicholls)

Novemburger a huge success

More than 22,400 burgers sold for United Way

By Katie Nicholls - TB Source

It was a big day for burger enthusiasts as the winners of Novemburger were announced.

The fundraising campaign took on its fifth year to help raise money for United Way Thunder Bay to support local food programs within the community.

This year, 27 restaurants took on the challenge to have the best Novemburger, with two dollars from each sale going to the United Way.

Erika Mikkola, Novemburger creator and organizer for United Way Thunder Bay, called 2023 a record-breaking year when it comes to burgers sold and funds raised,

"Collectively, they were able to sell 22,415 Novemburgers, which is absolutely outstanding, and we couldn't have done this campaign without them."

With donations pouring in from the burger sales, some restaurants topped up their contributions and a grand total of more than \$64,000 was raised for the charity.

Evergreen A United Neighbourhood supports children, youth, and their families who reside in the Simpson Ogden community and is one of the recipients of funds raised.

Executive director Linda Bruins said those

funds make a huge impact.

"This is great because then I could tell the kids, we're going to eat well again next year," she said.

She noted the organization provides an after-school program and hot meals four days a week.

"We do crowd-friendly, kid-friendly food, but we're doing 200 meals a week," she said.

This year featured a new award of People's Choice which went to Beefcakes Burger Factory, with Dawson General Store and The Sal, second and third respectively.

For chosen ambassadors who were tasked with meticulously rating each burger, Dawson General Store came out on top and takes both the trophy and bragging rights until next year's launch, which is expected to be even bigger than this year.

With next year being the 60th anniversary for United Way Thunder Bay, Mikkola said to expect bigger and better for Novemburger 2025, "we have some really big goals for the November Burger campaign. We are going even bigger, better and bolder than this year."

"I'm not going to say too much because we're going to keep it under wraps, but we're really working on a few special partnerships for next year," said Mikkola.

EDITORIAL

Profit game

The opposition loves to blame the government for rising costs.

They point to the carbon tax and say it's had the biggest impact on higher prices at the pump and at the grocery-store checkout.

Hogwash.

Yes, the carbon tax has an impact on rising costs. According to Canada's National Observer, it's about 0.15 percentage points.

Meanwhile, corporations are given a pass.

Grocery stores in Canada are expected to bring in \$6 billion in profits this year.

According to Environmental Defence, Canada's five biggest oil and gas companies are expected to make \$38.3 billion in profits.

That's a combined \$1,159 in profits off of every single Canadian, young and old alike. In Ontario, it's estimated the carbon tax adds \$488 in expenses per year, but about 80 per cent of households get back more in rebates than they pay.

Capitalism is a great system, but when companies and corporations become too big, and prioritize profits and shareholders over the public, your bottom line will decrease.

Fallacy of engagement To the editor:

For years I have had a concern about our city corporation's view on public engagement. This view always hinges on the appearance that citizens of Thunder Bay are reducing their involvement with simple things such as public meeting attendance and even voting. We have made some strides in correcting this but there have been some painful missteps.

On Nov. 16, I attended the Community Communications Committee meeting at our citizens-owned City Hall, and I think I found some symptoms of our troubles. We have made a course change, a course correction if you prefer.

Of course, this change involved an expenditure that has not yet been disclosed nor explained to the community that must pay the bill. It may be acceptable that some want to right the wrongs and correct the failures of the past to reengage with a more involved, more cohesive community. Then there are those simply engaged in smoke and mirrors, with little interest in the common good.

I draw your attention to the

recent Citizens Satisfaction survey. This survey is not new, but its current methodology is.

Our civic Corporation, in what appears to be an effort to improve continuous engagement, has hired a relatively obscure U.S.-based company that promotes its methods to increase engagement and trust.

On their own website they present case studies which seem completely irrelevant to the type of public engagement a Citizens Satisfaction Survey is intended for.

I have learned that this contract was a single-source purchase made after seeing only one presentation!

This denies any opportunity for comparative analysis for a better, more competitive deal, but maybe it just took less work to arrange.

Further, this company lists only two Canadian cities on their promotional website, which seems a very small Canadian sample.

If it is a promotional website, why are they not identifying a relationship with our corporation?

Where are the competitive and competent Ontario and Canadian companies which offer this service and are compliant with our laws and economy?

Have we examined what other

Ontario or Canadian communities have done that have seen a rise in voter engagement and turnout?

Further to my point, at this meeting I found out that our Corporation is using two different surveys.

One on the corporate "Get Involved" page, now closed, where every resident of the city could comment on their level of satisfaction with the performance of the Corporation.

I firmly believe this iteration was flawed in its roll-out, possibly intentionally.

The second survey, run by this obscure non-Canadian company, has selected a target group of respondents from around the community to ensure statistical relevance.

Let us examine the use of the concept of a target group.

It could indicate a selection made to ensure a true representative sample of the socio-economic demographics of the community. Could it not also involve a select/targeted group believed to offer less resistance to a false narrative someone wants to share and promote?

Either way it's still statistically relevant, just not relevant to this

community. This could be seen as of little value, a lot like the political party polls that are built around a desired result and then skew the statistics to fit their narrative by selective omission.

Finally, we will have two sets of surveyed data.

One, non-competitive, from a contractor which is claimed to be statistically relevant.

The other coming through a community portal available to every citizen who wants to "Get Involved", and you will ultimately be ignored in favour of this third-party, obscure organization.

We all lose because so little effort and attention is given to your comments and ideas by those who fear they might not fit their desired, contrived outcomes.

In the end we incurred two expenses. One for contrived results and the other deemed irrelevant.

In spite of these wrongs, I remain a strong supporter of the "Get Involved" site on our citizen owned corporate website.

We have some serious potential, but public trust has been shaken by these missteps.

Vern Seymour,
Thunder Bay

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Final Cut completes House of Cards trilogy

The Final Cut by Michael Dobbs is the last novel in the House of Cards trilogy which is an object lesson in politics, intrigue and passion in the corridors of power. In a few months Francis Urquhart (F.U.) will make history as he becomes the longest-serving Prime Minister this century.

Yet it seems the country is tiring of him at last, and the movement to force him from power is growing. But Urquhart is not yet ready to be driven from office. If the public demands new blood, that is precisely what he will give them.

The action is unflagging and transports us back in place and time to Cyprus in 1956 when Urquhart was an officer in the British army. His

characterization is razor sharp. Geoffrey Booza-Pit is 'a young man constantly on the move' who operates without principles and is focused purely on gaining power: 'But in that he was not unique and his effervescent energy is the hallmark of some slightly undersized men'.

The Napoleon complex, known informally as small man syndrome, is normally attributed to men of short stature. It is characterized by overly aggressive or domineering behaviour, and carries the implica-

tion that such behaviour compensates for the short man's physical shortcomings.

Urquhart is constantly on the look out for undersized men like Booza-Pit because he fears that they will stab him in the back at any opportunity and seize his position of power.

F.U. has been in the top spot for ten years but he knows that the biggest threat to his position comes from the enemy within. There will be someone out there who joins the organization with the

sole purpose of gaining power. He has seen it happen before:

'Almost all of them are hacked from office by their colleagues. Like Caesar, taken from behind by events they hadn't foresaw. Ambition makes leaders blind and lesser men bloody.'

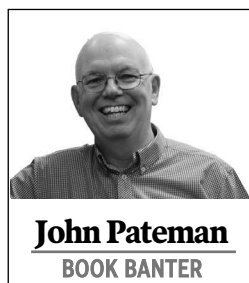
It was the lesser men that he had to watch out for. While he was busy doing great things, his enemy was plotting to bring him down. His wife tells him: 'They've grown idle and fat these last months, your success has made things too easy for them. They've found time to dream of mutiny.'

In fact, his enemy has turned his successes against him and created

doubt in the minds of those who had previously been his supporters. One by one his enemy wins them over to his point of view until 'Even a King cannot be safe on his throne'.

Urquhart was mortally wounded by these sneaky attacks on his character and achievements. It would hurt, being forced from his place at the top. He'd had a long and distinguished career. But office politics are more dangerous than war: 'in battle they could only kill you once'.

It is a familiar drama. Anger, heartache, betrayal. An assassination by 'those jealous and petty men around him. The way to finish great lives'. The satirical barbs are unfailingly accurate.



John Pateman
BOOK BANTER

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Humanity searches for habitats

By JR Shermack – For TB Source

A defining characteristic of human behavior is our devastating effect on the natural environment to the extent that vast areas of the planet become uninhabitable.

As we continue to pollute on a planetary scale and our supply of clean air and water dwindles, we may soon be forced to relocate yet again.

But where on Earth can we go that isn't too hot or too cold, too dry or too wet, too prone to natural disaster or too soon to be submerged by rising sea levels.

Human folklore contains stories of forced evacuation either in search of a better life elsewhere or to escape the horrible circumstances of the life left behind.

Some were driven by the basic need for food and shelter, some were lured by the prospect of untold riches and some were driven away by persecution and aggression.

It was a daring venture to set out across an unexplored wilderness – ancient mariners crossed uncharted oceans risking death at the hands of monster sea serpents and angry gods.

For those who managed to evade these hazards there was a pretty good chance



An outpost on Mars is a possibility in the future.

they would eventually sail off the edge of the Earth into oblivion.

Nevertheless, human migration eventually filled every inhabitable nook and cranny on the planet, adversely affecting every one.

All things considered and given the current state of our planet, where on Earth will we be living a hundred years from now or a thousand or even a million if we last that long.

The science community has taken the long view that the future of humanity will be extra-terrestrial and is searching for a new home among the stars.

Other Earth-like planets have been discovered in distant galaxies but since we have no way to get there, that remains a part of the million year scenario

A little closer to home there are plans under way to colonize the Moon and Mars and develop space stations in low Earth orbit for human habitation.

We have had a continuous human presence in space for over two decades now but alas, our future might be in the cosmos but right now our feet are firmly stuck on the ground.

There are still many areas on the planet that can support human activity but the future is uncertain – we need to explore other living arrangements.

Consider this – manufacturing is under way to produce a 'subsea habitat' for humans to live at depths up to 200 metres for a month at a time.

It will initially be a research facility but as humans become more 'aquatic' we may eventually adapt to living in the depths.

Much like our presence in space, the intention is to establish a permanent presence under the waves, an International Undersea Station.

Another way to escape the overheating atmosphere is living underground - masses of rock and soil provide protection from harsh surface conditions.

Right now in the town of Coober Pedy, South Africa, residents dig deep to escape the summer heating in 'dug-outs' carved out of local hillsides.

About 60 per cent of the 2,500 residents now live underground, enjoying year-round temperatures of 23 to 25 degrees Celsius without heating or air conditioning.

Some of these earthen hideaways are quite large and luxurious although living underground like a mole is not for everybody.

Neither is hanging out in a pressurized chamber under the sea but living on Earth's surface may not always be an option.

Prime real estate will consist of accommodations on Mars, the Moon, in outer space, under the sea or underground.

Where in the world will we live then?

*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

December 15-16

SIJHL Hockey

The rivalry returns on Friday at Saturday night, as the Kam River Fighting Walleye and the Thunder Bay North Stars play a home-and-home series before the SIJHL shuts down for the Christmas break.

The Stars travel to the Norwest Arena on Friday night, for a 7:45 p.m. start, and the Fighting Walleye hop on Highway 11/17 on Saturday for a 7:30 puck drop at Fort William Gardens.

Tickets are available online and at the box office.

December 15-17

Finding Nemo Kids

Disney's Finding Nemo Kids is a musical adaptation of the beloved 2003 Pixar movie Finding Nemo, with new music by award-winning song-writing team Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez.

Marlin, an anxious and over-protective clown fish, lives in the Great

Barrier Reef with his kid Nemo, who longs to explore the world beyond their anemone home.

But when Nemo is captured and taken to Sydney, Marlin faces his fears and sets off on an epic adventure across the ocean.

With the help of lovable characters such as optimistic Dory, laid-back sea turtle Crush, and the supportive Tank Gang, Marlin and Nemo both overcome challenges on their journey to find each other and themselves.

Shows are Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Paramount Theatre.

The curtain rises at 7 p.m.

December 15-16

A Night in Bethlehem

Come and step back 2,000 years where you walk the streets of Bethlehem.

A 30-minute journey, designed for the whole family, where you will visit the marketplace, hillside and stable. Guests will end their journey back in

2023 where they can enjoy a Christmas cookie and warm drink. The adventure takes place on Friday, and Saturday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Evangel Church, located at 1260 Balmoral St.

December 16

Christmas Craft Market

Shop for everything you need for Christmas in one spot! There will be over 100 tables at this year's End of the Year Craft Market.

The event takes place on Saturday from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the CLE Coliseum building. Admission is free.

December 18

Big Wreck Concert

Join one of Canada's favourite rock bands as they hit the stage at NV Music Hall on Monday night. Famous for songs like *The Oaf* and *Albatross*, they'll be playing songs old and new during their latest Thunder Bay stop. Showtime is 8 p.m.



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“You can’t train love and compassion. The people here truly care.”

Robbie Family of Past Client

Growing up, Robbie Brescia wondered, as most people do, what would happen to his parents when they got older and were no longer able to care for themselves at home.

“They’re your parents and you love them, but one day you know they may not be able to care for themselves, this happened to my parents. You always have that fear that I’m going to leave my parents with someone else and they won’t be able to care for them like family can. But it’s being truthful to yourself that you can’t do it all, and you may need specialized help.”

Robbie’s fears were put at ease when his Dad moved into long-term care at Hogarth Riverview Manor and later, when his mother entered the Geriatric Assessment and Rehabilitative Care (GARC) program at St. Joseph’s Hospital.

“When my father went to Hogarth (I knew) it was the right thing because the minute you walked in, you saw the care and your fears subsided.”

“With the GARC program, I can’t say enough because they’ve been that extended support to take care of my mother.” The GARC program provides a ‘tune up’ for seniors who can still remain in their home independently but need some support to regain confidence in their ability to remain independent.

“And then knowing that you have the team of the Care Group that can help you, support you and lift you up along the journey. I can’t say enough because it’s given me

the ability to continue to function and live knowing that we have this support for them. They not only gave the support to my family, but did amazing work with my Mum. She even enjoyed riding the bike, something she had never done before.”

“And they all did it... there was no other motive except for care and compassion and seeing her regain some of her mobility.”

Robbie recalls an incident that illustrated the easy nature of life at Hogarth Riverview Manor.

“They had bingo and the staff called me and said, ‘Where would you like us to put your father’s winnings? My Dad had never played bingo in his life, and I’m thinking, what winnings? What did he do? Dad later told me, ‘Yeah, I won a \$1.75.’ Those little activities, the social activity meant the world to him and to our family. There is always the care, but it’s also about the social aspect for many people who are lonely and isolated.”

Robbie said that when his mom began needing geriatric support she said, ‘I didn’t picture this for myself. But the staff at St. Joseph’s Hospital created another picture that said, ‘here’s how we’re going to help you and here’s how we’re going to take care of you.

So we’re going to get you to where you need to be.” Her demeanor soon became much more upbeat.

“It always feels that you have that warm comforter around you.”

He says that the attitudes he encountered aren’t part in a job description, you can’t write “care” into a job description, a person has to have that as part of their being. There has to be a passion for the work.

“You see the care and the love. They make it the best that they can make it. It’s comfortable and that’s important.”

Robbie recalls seeing a sign posted in the dining room at St. Joseph’s Heritage that sums up the staff attitude: “We don’t work where they live. We work in their home.”

Robbie expressed thanks to the Care Group for giving more care than they have to, “for being that family member and for giving that virtual hug because I think sometimes when we’re going through these journeys, that’s what we need the most.”

“I know with the Care Group, it always feels that you have that warm comforter around you. Without the the Care Group, where would we be? We’d be maybe having different stories.”

“Now that I do know (I think), wow, it’s a they do a lot.” Because of this caring attitude and the compassion for their clients my mom has become a donor to the Foundation. She wants to give back to those that helped her regain some of her independence.”

St. Joseph’s Foundation is honoured to share the “Caring Moments” stories from our clients and their families. Each story tells their personal experience with the care and compassion provided by the staff of St. Joseph’s Care Group. Become a part of the Caring Moments program and share your gift of gratitude through your personal story or by making a donation in appreciation of the care your family received.

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ST. JOSEPH'S FOUNDATION
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Canada

Guilty plea for sexual assault

By Doug Diaczuk – TB Source

A Thunder Bay man who was called a serial sexual predator by a judge during a previous sentencing hearing has once again pleaded guilty to charges of sexual assault.

Gary Lamont, 61, appeared before Justice Salvatore Merenda in a Thunder Bay courtroom on Friday, where he pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual assault.

The charges relate to incidents that occurred in 2021 and 2022 while Lamont was a landlord of a north side property.

The three male complainants, who were either tenants or prospective tenants, told investigators that Lamont engaged in unwanted sexual advances and touching without consent on numerous occasions.

Crown attorney, Jane-Anne McGill, said two of the complainants are considered vulnerable members of the community.

A publication ban is in place protecting the identities of the complainants.

A victim impact statement was shared with the court by one of the complainants, who said he continues to have nightmares of the assaults and feels his freedom has been stolen.



Gary Lamont pleaded guilty in court last week for sexual assault incidents that took place in 2021 and 2022.

"I feel used, I feel enraged and angry that it happened again," the statement reads. "The touching and harassment every day. I am feeling angry and enraged that he didn't listen. He invaded my privacy and space. His behaviours are nightmares for me."

A joint submission by the Crown and

defence counsel, Gil Labine, was presented to Merenda calling for a custodial sentence of two years less a day on top of enhanced presentence custody of 15 months and 23 days.

Lamont has a previous criminal record, which includes convictions on five counts of sexual assault from incidents between 1993

and 2007. Following his conviction in 2017, Lamont was sentenced to five years in custody.

"You have a criminal record, the latest convictions convinced me that you have engaged in a pattern of sexual conduct that is reprehensible. Your actions had a great affect on at least one of the individuals who saw fit to provide a victim impact statement," Merenda said.

"I don't know what's wrong with you. You are 61 and have these ailments, but if you are back before me or another judge, you may spend the rest of your life in jail."

Merenda agreed with the joint submission. Lamont will spend another two years in custody going forward. He is also required to submit a DNA sample, will be required to register with the Sex Offender Information Registry Act for life, and is subject to a lifetime weapons prohibition.

Lamont is also awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty earlier this week to charges of forgery and defrauding the public over \$5,000 for his role in the Norval Morrisseau art fraud ring.

A sentencing hearing on those charges will take place later in the month.

Kettle campaign nears 50%

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

The Salvation Army's kettle is half full. But there's still a long way to go to fill it up the rest of the way, says Gary Ferguson, executive director at the organization's Journey to Life Centre.

With about two weeks left in the \$260,000 campaign, the Salvation Army has collected \$122,400, about 43 per cent of its target.

Ferguson said the money goes a long way to helping the less fortunate throughout the year.

"The escalating costs are making it increasingly difficult for people with limited means to cover all their expenses," Ferguson said in a release issued Thursday. "The support we receive from kettles means we will be able to make Christmas a happier time for them and we will be able to assist them through the year. Thank you to everyone for your caring gifts."

There are plenty of ways for the public to give to help the organization collect the remaining amount of \$137,600, he added.

Kettles are located at Superstore, Intercity Shopping Centre, Grandview Mall, Walmart's three Thunder Bay locations, as well as the LCBOs on Arthur



The Salvation Army is trying to raise \$260,000 this year.

Street, Dawson Road and at the Thunder Centre. All kettle locations also have tap-to-give donation options.

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Nearly 1.5 million tons of potash has been handled at the Port of Thunder Bay this year, through the end of November.

Port sets new potash record

By Kevin Jeffrey - Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Officials are ready for the busiest month of the year at the Port of Thunder Bay.

CEO Chris Heikkinen says the agency is anticipating increased activity compared to the 2022 season.

"You will see a larger number of vessels in the harbour," Heikkinen said. "We're hoping that Mother Nature continues to work on our side, and give us fair weather so that the ice doesn't get too thick before the closing of the season."

Heikkinen mentioned that the port has handled a new modern record of approximately 1.5 million tons of potash as of the end of November.

He attributes that in part to global forces that have spiked demand for Canadian potash.

"The global potash industry has changed a little bit in the last couple of years," Heikkinen said. "Of course, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has tightened supply. In Canada, we're producing more potash

every year. We're the world's number one potash producer, and our exports are growing and so the port and the seaway are doing our part to participate in that."

He added the port is also looking at near-record numbers of "salty" and laker traffic. "Salty" traffic refers to visiting ocean-going vessels, while the largest lakers are confined to the upper lakes because they are too big to use the Seaway locks.

Larger salties cannot travel farther inland than Montreal, Quebec.

There were slowdowns in October as a result of a St. Lawrence Seaway strike that began on Oct. 22.

A tentative agreement ended the strike a week later, which, according to Heikkinen, was fortunate for them because "the seaway [was able to get] their operations together very quickly."

Heikkinen also noted that there is an ongoing experiment to extend lock closures by a week, which will give officials an idea as to how much can be gained from the extra week on the tail end of the shipping season.

Holiday entertaining

Baked brie is a big hit and very tasty

In an effort not to repeat myself, I went back to long ago (Holiday 2022) and re-read some of my columns from that time.

We discussed the big holiday dinners, the whole turkeys, or the big bone in ham with all the fixings. We never really discussed what to do about a smaller holiday gathering.

If you just wanted a couple small apps to entertain a few friends with? Here's a few that you can do quickly and easily.

Baked brie for some people can be a tough sell.

However, its freaking delicious even its in most basic form. Brie cheese is an off white, cows milk cheese named after the region in France in which it was created. It is soft and covered with a hardened rind of white mould.

The rind is typically eaten with the cheese when it is cool but can be trimmed for a baked version as sometimes it will become tough to chew when heated. Baked brie can be executed in a multiple of ways.

Whether wrapped in pastry, and served in croute, or just placed in a dish with a garnish with crackers, chips or breads.

If you're making baked brie en croute for a group of friends on a random Friday in December, you're typically not reading this for instruction, so we are going to bypass that.

For a typical application, brie is placed in some kind of Corningware or oven safe dish.

As far as toppings go, brie is highly flexible, there really aren't a lot of rules just some guidelines.



Turkey, brie and cranberry on a cracker can make a wonderful Christmas appetizer. (iStock)

When choosing your toppings, its obviously important to go with things you like, but if you like to live on the wild side, a few suggestions can be dried cranberries with maple syrup and pecans; mushrooms and caramelized onions; peaches, honey and balsamic reduction. The most important thing, is to remember your mouthfeel, have something crunchy or chewy involved to counteract the goosiness of the warm brie.

While brie is milder and more subtle in flavour than its sister camembert, some lower quality bries can taste slightly ammoniated and unfortunately the top kinds can be cost prohibitive for typical baked brie applications.

That's why some sweetness and acidity with your toppings, can be crucial to an effectively executed baked brie.

Let's be honest, we are talking about a dish of melted cheese, where for most people, a little goes a long way.

Brie can also be very rich, that's where acidity can be helpful, however another option could be a liqueur or alcohol component when you look at building your flavours.

Cointreau, amaretto or frangelico can all add another dynamic to your flavours while adding a much-needed element that can cut all that richness from a beautiful baked cheese.

I totally meant to talk about other types of appetizers but I'm a fat kid and I like cheese, so I guess that will be next week.

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
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"XSY WNA AGHGE DGJ GASYZDZ SU CZNJ XSY PSA'J AGGP, TGWNYQG CZNJ XSY PSA'J AGGP CSA'J QNJRQUX XSY."

— PNVVRA Z. SNOQ

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ACROSS

- Couch
- Sheep's cry
- Semitic deity
- Winglike
- Yelp
- Prayer book
- Iodine (pref.)
- Sleep
- Volcano crater
- Wife of Aeneas
- Venice bridge
- Ultimate degree
- Rower
- Silly
- Alligator pear
- Equal opportunity employer (abbr.)
- Exclamation
- Failure
- Rom. purification
- Duck
- Pronoun
- Recommended daily allowance

(abbr.)

- Fungus
- Become solid
- Air (pref.)
- Mother of Hezekia
- Venezuelan copper center
- 7th incarnation of Vishnu
- Field deity
- Time period
- Former
- Vanity
- Recess

DOWN

- Levantine ketch
- Whistling swan
- Vanish
- Back
- Talking bird
- Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
- Okay

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

NIE ABEL SADO
ARN DEKA AGAL
BCE MAGICWORD
RAID RAGE
RAVEN ONAN
ABAS WHIN STA
BIT SHAKE EEN
IRE PARE ATLI
CITE SEPAL
IRAE PARR
CHARLATANIAL
ARAB DANG CAP
PEDO MEGA EAN

- Coagulate
- I owe you (abbr.)
- Some (Fr.)
- Goal
- Stir
- Driving under the influence (abbr.)
- Unusual
- Palatine (2 words)
- Gorge
- Portuguese coin
- Amer. Dental Assn. (abbr.)
- 3rd incarnation of Vishnu
- Nose (pref.)
- Berne's river
- Toothed wheel
- Weapons
- Forfeit
- Adjective-forming (suf.)
- Son of Loki
- Capture

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Jackets to head north

By Katie Nicholls – TB Source

In the spirit of Giving Tuesday, Mikinakoos Children's Fund is looking to raise \$15,000 by the end of the year.

Partnering with Keewaytinook Okimakanak First Nations, Keewaytinook Internet Highschools, and Fort Hope First Nation, Emily Shandruk, the executive director of the fund, aims to use the funds to purchase thousands of winter jackets for children in those areas.

"This year, we're partnering with three different groups in communities, which is resulting in close to 15,000 jackets," Shandruk said.

"That \$15,000 that we're hoping to raise by the end of December will be coupled as well with a donation that we received from the TD Community Grants"

TD Bank donated \$50,000 over two years to Mikinakoos Children's Fund in early November through its Ready Commitment Funding, giving the children's fund a \$40,000 purse to buy much-needed winter items for kids in these remote communities.

With the help of the Knights of Columbus, Shandruk has been able to secure hundreds of new winter jackets,

"[They] let us know that they have this



Mikinakoos Children's Fund is trying to raise \$15,000.

buying power and that they receive really excellent winter coats at a very discounted rate. So we've been able to purchase 1,200 coats directly from them."

Shandruk expects the coats to arrive next week but says they are still accepting donations.

Where's the snow?

Winter weather taking it's time to get here

By the middle of December, we are usually knee-deep in snow and taking full advantage of all the fun activities that winter brings.

Skating outside, snowshoeing, ice fishing, snowmobiling, snowboarding, fatbiking and skiing are just some of the winter favourites that so many people in Northwestern Ontario look forward to at this time of year. The start-up of this winter season has been different though.

We have received little snow and the small amount that has hit the ground melted away rather quickly. Even up in Lappe, where November skiing is the norm, the ground is almost bare.

Though some people are likely enjoying the exceptionally late arrival of winter this year, you can rest assured that it is indeed coming, sooner or later.

When that first blizzard finally arrives, and the snow stays on the ground, the difference between simply surviving and truly thriving will all be in our mindset. What we must do is look beyond the snow that we must clear from our driveways and focus on all the opportunities for joy and adventure that winter brings us.

For my family, cross-country skiing is still the activity of choice because it is something we can all participate in. Even though we don't always ski together, we find joy in the process of meeting up after work and school, having an early dinner and then driving out to Lappe to meet up with friends and other families to ski under the lights.

This has been our routine since my daughters were only a couple years old, and it provides us with all the social and physical benefits we need to stay happy and healthy through the otherwise cold and dark winter.

Where you find your own winter passion might be very different, but the key to loving our winters is simple and universal: find some activity that excites your mind and warms your heart in the coldest months. Even though the cold months seem to be getting shorter.

The past decade has shown that rain in December might be the new normal, but things could definitely be worse.

As climate change continues, it is not hard to conclude that we seem to be well situated here, with our location on the north shore of the world's largest freshwater lake.



Skiing season has hit a bump in the road this year.

We are relatively sheltered from the staggering increase we are seeing in global disasters such as wildfires, drought, extreme heat, floods and tropical storms. In contrast to what we are seeing around the world, our shorter, warmer winters with a little less snow seem like a minor inconvenience in our quest for winter fun and adventure.

As we continue to wait for winter, consider saying a little prayer, or doing a snow dance, because many of us are anxiously awaiting the arrival of a thick blanket of the white stuff. After all, if you choose to let snow ruin your day, you will have a lot less joy in your life, but still the same amount of snow.

What does
community
mean to you?



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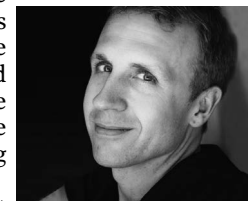
Community is at the very heart of everything we do at United Way of Thunder Bay.

As 2023 comes to a close, we ask you to think about what community means to you, and how you can help those in need right here at home.

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Keith Ailey

the GOOD LIFE

The Boy and the Heron must see

One had to do a double-take surveying the SilverCity schedule to find *The Boy and the Heron* listed for what may be a modestly extended run. Anime on the big screen here in Thunder Bay is as common as Haley's Comet. It's a must-see especially when directed by legendary animator Hayao Miyazaki.

Nicknamed Japan's Walt Disney, the 82-year-old Miyazaki is perhaps best known for "Princess Mononoke," presented by the North of Superior Film Association (1998-99) and the Oscar-winning "Spirited Away" (2001). He's won 80 other international cinema awards.

In 2014, Miyazaki received an Honorary Oscar for his contributions to animation and world cinema. His 2014 Oscar nominated "The Wind Rises" was reputed to be Miyazaki's final film. Ditto "The Boy and the Heron," a gift to his grandson. However, there are rumours he's got more films within him.

The Boy and the Heron has the distinction of being the first animated film to open the Toronto International Film Festival. The story is inspired partly by the Japanese classic novel, 'How Do You Live?' (the movie's final line) and Miyazaki's own childhood experiences during WW II.

The setting is war-time Japan. Immediately, there is an emergency where 12-year-old Mahito loses his mother in a hospital fire, a very effectively rendered sequence. Sometime later Mahito and his industrialist father relocate to the countryside. Father has married again to Natsuko who is already pregnant with his child. Despite Natsuko's gentle, well-meaning demeanor, Mahito misses his birth mother and his old home.

Mahito is soon pestered by a mischievous, talkative gray heron that leads him to an old ruin, a secluded tower, constructed by his great-uncle who disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Given its foreboding aura, locals stay away.

However, one day Natsuko disappears into the tower. Mahito and the heron, which proves to be another oddball entity, venture forth to rescue his step-mother. Immediately, they're swept up into an alternate universe populated by unusual creatures including giant, portly and



The Boy and the Heron is playing at SilverCity.

somewhat ineffectual man-eating parakeets.

Several sequences ensue where Mahito's courage and determination are tested. Some characters are helpful, others threatening. The plot is like a hall of mirrors. Miyazaki's tossing in so much that it's better to simply let the images wash over us. We can only conclude that this is Mahito's path to overcoming grief and loneliness.

The war's effect on Japan—recruits going off to war, shortages of canned food, Mahito's father's worry over a factory—are briefly glimpsed, as if from a child's perspective.

The movie features Miyazaki's trademark hand-drawn visuals, stunning stylistic flourishes, vivid colour, with symbolism and smatterings of humour. Themes from his previous movies—loss, grief, childhood giving way to uncertainties of adulthood, some environmental commentary—are interwoven into the narrative. There are vestiges of "The Wizard of Oz" and "Alice through the Looking Glass"

Though not ideal for youngsters, mature film buffs will want to catch *The Boy and the Heron*.



Marty Mascarini
MOVIE TALK

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Brar, Lopez make most of return

By Leith Dunick -TB Source

A year ago, Kirpa Brar and Paula Lopez could only watch from the sidelines, injuries curtailing their chance to contribute on court for the Lakehead Thunderwolves women's basketball team.

Fast forward 12 months and both players have become integral parts of rookie coach Hugo Boisvert's rebuild.

Brar, named the team's athlete of the month for November, has provided starter-level production — and then some — coming off the bench, averaging 11.2 points per game, 26th best in all of Ontario University Athletics. She's also dished out 34 assists in 10 appearances, the sixth-most in the league.

Lopez, who hails from Zaragoza, Spain, arrived at Lakehead in 2021, but wasn't able to contribute until this season, as she continued to work her way back from the injury list.

The 5-foot-8 scoring guard is averaging 4.5 points a night and is still a work in progress, but has the confidence of Boisvert and her teammates — not to mention a place in the T-Wolves starting five.

Outside of Ally Burke, the fourth-leading scorer in the OUA at the Christmas break, no

player has been as integral to the success of the Thunderwolves in the first half of the 2023-24 campaign, which sees the team sitting at 3-7 with the toughest part of their schedule behind them.

Four times Brar has hit double-digit points, including a pair of 19-point efforts. The Thunderwolves are 3-1 in games when she does top 10 points, and 0-6 when she doesn't.

She's a natural coming off the bench, she said.

"I've played that role since even before coming to Lakehead. I was always the person coming off the bench. If energy was needed, I gave it, so it's nothing new," Brar said.

Having a player like Brar to come off the bench is luxury, Boisvert said.

"She just takes a load off of some of our scorers' shoulders," he said. "When she's on, and she's playing confident out there — which she's starting more and more to play with confidence — she's been huge. It's good to have her off the bench right now, giving us that spark and that lift. But down the stretch, she's also there to finish off games."

Lopez, who scored a season-high nine points in the regular-season opener against Toronto Metropolitan, said it was tough not being able

to play the past two years.

"I'm really happy to be back," Lopez said. "I'm hopeful I'm going to be able to get to the level I hope to be at."

"You always want more, but I'm honestly happy with the team and how I'm doing."

Boisvert said Lopez has shown the ability to adapt in her rookie season, which is important on a team like the T-Wolves, that's not necessarily focused on results, but still in the thick of the playoff hunt in the OUA Central, tied for the 12th and final playoff spot.

"She's adapting to a new system and new roles and positions. She's being asked to play some roles now that are maybe a little bit outside of her comfort zone. That's why she's got to find her marks there," Boisvert said. "But she's been vital to us, just from a locker-room perspective."

"She's an outstanding leader, she's an outstanding teammate to be around and she's contributing on both sides."

Lakehead returns to action at home on Jan. 5 against Laurentian (3-7) and welcomes Nipissing to the Thunderdome the following night.



Kirpa Brar has been a boost off the bench for LU.

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Ohtani deal a \$700M behemoth

The Shoehei Ohtani saga has come to an end, and as most expected, the two-way star landed with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The contract is a staggering 10-year, \$700 million deal, the richest in North American team history. And it's not even close.

Canadians went from a high on Friday, when it was erroneously reported Ohtani was on his way to Toronto to sign a deal, to the baseball depths on Saturday, when he announced on his Instagram page that he'd chosen the talent-laden Dodgers.

Take that, Jeff Passan.

Blue Jays fans were crestfallen, but if you'd told them when free agency opened that it would take a \$700-million deal to get the job done, not a single one of them would have thought their team had a chance.

Ohtani, a unanimous choice for American League most valuable player for the second time in his six-year career, is a unicorn, of sorts. One of the top hitters, and when healthy, one of the top pitchers in all of baseball.

His contract, however, comes with plenty of questions.

Is he going to return to pitching form in 2025,

after recovering from Tommy John surgery?

My biggest issue with the deal is that reportedly the Dodgers are going to defer tall but \$2 million a year of the contract to help keep them out of luxury tax hell. This is a really slippery slope for the league. I'm sure it's already being done, but if Ohtani is being paid \$700 million over 10 years, all \$70 million of his annual salary should count toward their luxury tax threshold each of those 10 years. Instead, only \$46 million will.

Otherwise, it's going to price all but a few large market teams – of which the Blue Jays and their ownership – Rogers Communications – happen to be one.

My fear is when new Yankees slugger Juan Soto hits the market next year, for example, a team like the New York Mets may come

along and offer him \$600 million off the top, with \$300 million of it deferred, Bobby Bonilla style.

Teams like the Baltimore Orioles, a quality young squad that should be able to attract a star looking to win, have a total of \$42.8 million committed for 2024. Can they really add a \$50-million bat to their lineup and not cause huge

dissension in the clubhouse.

Sure, they could spend more to start, given the revenue they take in, reportedly US\$264 million in 2022, but in reality, will it get much higher than the \$71 million the Orioles spent last year? Perhaps a smidge. And only \$53 million of that money was actually for the 26-man roster. The rest was retained or buried salary, according to sportrac.com, with about \$3.1 million accounting for players on injured reserve.

As for the Blue Jays, it sounds like they've already pivoted. Star outfielder Cody Bellinger, who hit .307 with 26 home runs and 97 RBI and compiled a 4.4 WAR, is rumoured to be talking to the Jays (and plenty of other teams like the Giants and his 2023 team, the Chicago Cubs), and is the perfect fit in my mind, even with some regression.

He's a left-handed bat with Gold Glove abilities in centerfield.

Given the uncertainties surrounding the Cleveland Guardians TV deal, if I'm GM Ross Atkins, I'm also reaching out to them to inquire about switch-hitting 3B Jose Ramirez. They may not want to trade their star infielder, but if the offer is good enough, say Alek Mahoah and Ricky Tiedemann, it may tempt the Guardians into action.

Imagine a lineup that looked like this: George Springer, Jose Ramirez, Bo Bichette, Cody Bellinger, Vladimir Guerrero, Dalton Varsho, Alejandro Kirk, Davis Schneider and a designated hitter of your choice?

Not bad.

I guess the one lesson learned last week is to stop running with every social media rumour.

I do think the Jays got played by Ohtani's agents, and reporters like Jon Morosi and J.P. Hoornstra fell for it hook-line-and-sinker, racing to announce Ohtani had chosen Toronto and was likely en route for the paperwork.

The media frenzy that followed, including tracking a private flight from Anaheim to Toronto that turned out to be carrying Canadian businessman and Shark Tank star Robert Herjavec, was ridiculous.

We got caught up in the hype in our newsroom, though we didn't report anything.

Clearly, we haven't learned much.

On Monday, a cryptic photo of the top of the CN Tower was posted to the Instagram page of Bellinger's girlfriend. So, now I'm already looking for Bellinger jersey deals on the Blue Jays website.



Leith Dunick
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9	6	2	8	7	1	3	5	4
2	5	1	9	8	7	4	3	6
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