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Thursday, December 9, 2021

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LIGHTS, SANTA, ACTION

Parade of Lights returns after a one-year hiatus because of COVID-19 restrictions /5

Santa Claus is always the star of the show each year at the Parade of Lights, which this year drew out more than 130 participants. The parade took last year off. (Leith Dunick)

Hospital mandating vaccines

Non-compliant staff will face resignation or termination

By Leith Dunick -TB Source

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is mandating full vaccination for all staff by Feb. 11 or they'll face the option of being fired.

In a memo to staff obtained by TBNewswatch, the hospital says individuals not yet vaccinated must have their first dose no later than Dec. 17 in order to meet the deadline with and recommended eight-week interval between

doses.

By Jan. 14 staff and volunteers must have had at least one dose. Those who have yet to get their first shot, or do not provide proof, will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence for up to two weeks, or until proof of their first dose is received.

By Jan. 28 those who have not received a first dose will be terminated for non-compliance with hospital policy, or be given the choice to resign.

Second doses must have been administered by Feb. 11.

The hospital memo says they've collaborated with 12 regional hospitals across Ontario's North-west to formulate the policy.

The policy applies to new hires and current staff, and covers all employees, credentialed and professional staff, active volunteers and board members.

The hospital acknowledged it will be a challenging decision for the small number of people affected who have yet to be vaccinated, but the need to protect patients, many of whom are high risk, is paramount.

"With the pandemic still having devastating impacts in our province and country, and with the surge in the new Omicron variant, this is a decision that had to be made," the memo reads.

About 96.3 per cent of hospital staff are fully vaccinated.



About 96.3 per cent of staff at Thunder Bay Regional are considered fully vaccinated.

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More people are travelling south of the border now, with restrictions eased. (Leith Dunick)

Stay out of US: DeMille

By Doug Diaczuk – TB Source

With the state of Minnesota having one of the highest rates of new COVID-19 cases in the United States, along with fewer public health measures, local health officials are advising people rethink a trip across the border.

The Thunder District Health Unit is advising people to avoid non-essential travel to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, which all have high rates of COVID-19. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, there were 5,313 new cases reported in the state on Dec. 2, with 72 deaths.

“The biggest one that concerns me is Minnesota. I think it’s common for people to want to travel down there for the weekend or a short trip and we do see border restrictions relaxing, allowing people to be able to do that,” said Thunder Bay District Health Unit medical officer of health Dr. Janet DeMille.

“However, at the same time, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan have the highest rates of COVID-19 in the United States at the present time and the CDC has ranked them as high

community transmission, literally in all the counties in those three states and that includes the counties along the border next to us.”

DeMille said the rates of transmission in those states is significantly higher than the Thunder Bay District and there are concerns about more people contracting COVID-19 in the United States and bringing the virus back across the border.

“We’ve also had some recent cases in our area that acquired the virus in those states and brought it back here and we saw a little bit of spread from them when they are back,” DeMille said.

Public health measures also tend to be less comprehensive in the United States, including the use of masks in public spaces, which can make exposure to the virus more likely for visitors who then bring it back to the district.

Earlier this week, the Northwestern Health Unit issued a similar warning against travel to Minnesota citing the high COVID-19 infection rates in the state.

It was also confirmed on Thursday that the omicron variant has been detected in Minnesota.

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Novemburger a sizzling success

By Leith Dunick - TB Source

The United Way of Thunder Bay, with the help of 17 restaurants around the region, sold a record 10,119 burgers during the recent Novemburger campaign, raising \$25,472 to support the charity. That's 3,749 more than last year.

For the second straight year, Beefcake's Burger Factory was named the best burger in the popular competition, which saw \$2 from each burger sold donated to the cause.

Their Smash Burger featured house-smoked back bacon, a pickled poblano pepper, grating bourbon honey mustard, muenster and extra old cheddar cheese, lettuce, tomato, a thick-sliced pickle, ketchup and mayo on a roasted garlic potato bun.

The Prospector Burger Barn sold the most burgers, dishing up 2,546.



Derek Lankinen, owner of Beefcake's Burger Factory, and chef Tony Biloski with a Smash Burger.

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Parade of Lights returns

By Leith Dunick - TB Source

The Parade of Lights came back in a big way.

Organizers of the always popular holiday event said about 130 vehicles were entered into the parade, which took last year off because of COVID-19 gathering restrictions.

Greg Stephenson said it felt great being able to stage the parade for the first time in two years.

It's phenomenal and the support that we've had - I've been driving around just seeing all the people that are out ready to watch and just looking at the trucks that are parked here - we never missed a beat. It's wonderful and I'm glad we were able to do it," Stephenson said.

Crowds lined the entire parade route, which began at Manitoulin Transport on Main Street, worked its way along Memorial Avenue and then wrapped up with a sensory-free zone on Fort William Road.

It's an event that brings the community together, Stephenson said.

"People were ecstatic when we said they were disappointed when we couldn't have the Santa Claus parade, but one out of two's not bad and hopefully we'll be full bore next year with them," he said.

"It's a beautiful night. It's nice to get out and enjoy what you feel like is



More than 130 vehicles took part in last Saturday's Parade of Lights. (Leith Dunick)

Christmas and forget about all the other troubles that have happened the past 18 months."

The parade was also a fundraiser for several local charities, including the

Thunder Bay Therapeutic Riding Association, Autism Ontario-Thunder Bay, Special Olympics Ontario-Thunder Bay and the George Jeffrey Children's Centre.

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THIS WEEK'S WEATHER FORECAST

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Snow	A mix of sun and clouds	Mainly sunny	Mainly Sunny	A mix of sun and clouds
Precipitation: 90% HIGH 0 LOW -8	Precipitation: 30% HIGH -1 LOW -8	Precipitation: 30% HIGH -3 LOW -10	Precipitation: 20% HIGH 4 LOW -4	Precipitation: 20% HIGH 2 LOW -3

EDITORIAL

Shots mandated

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre has finally decided to make vaccination mandatory for all staff and volunteers.

It's about time.

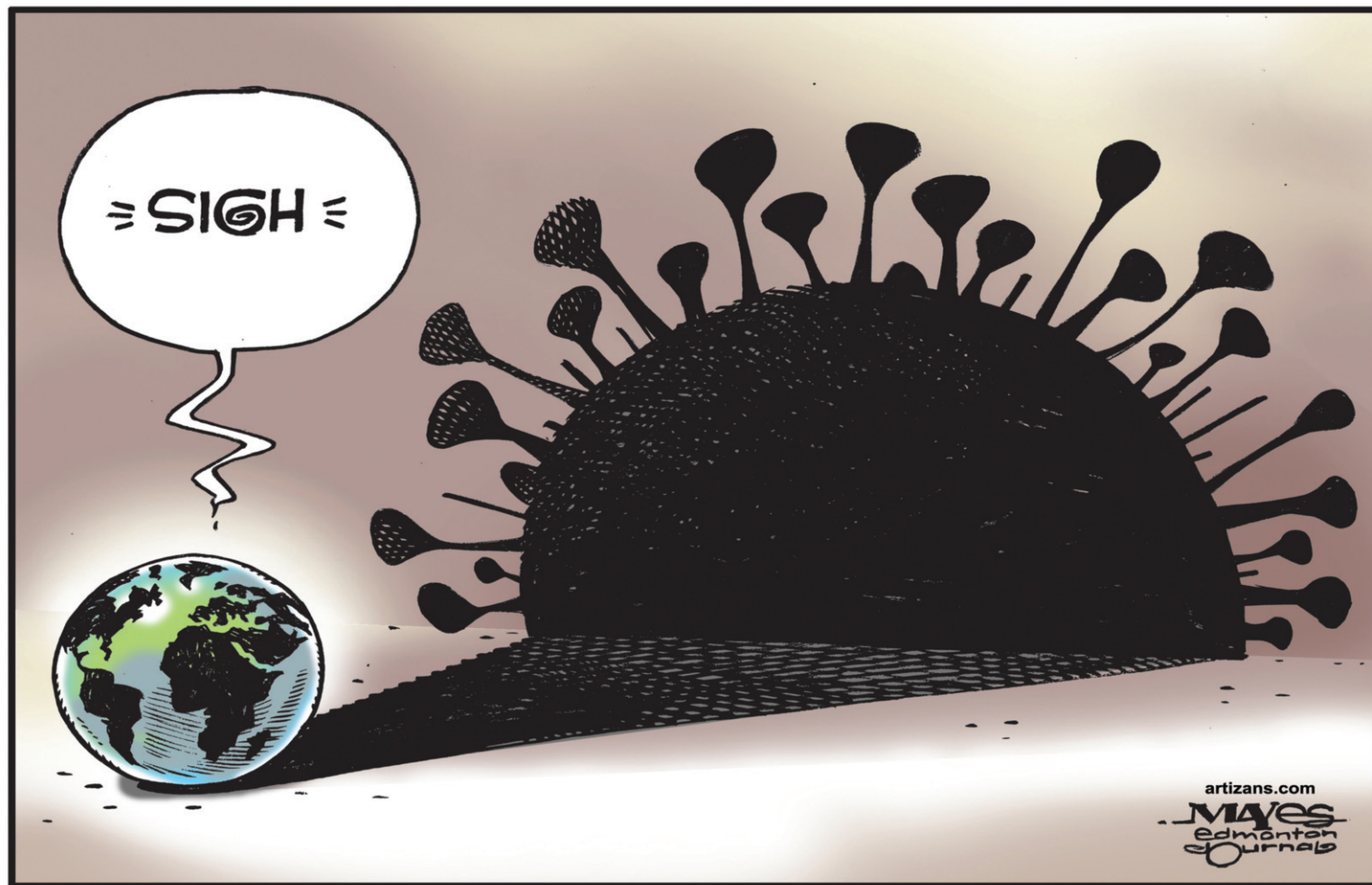
The hospital is supposed to be leading the way in health care in Northwestern Ontario, yet still 3.7 per cent of its staff have held out and not gotten the full vaccine.

If they continue to refuse their jabs, by late January they'll be out of work, forced to resign or they'll be terminated.

These are good paying jobs, but by no means are they a right. They're a privilege, and part of that privilege means doing whatever can be reasonably expected to keep those seeking medical services, not to mention one's colleagues, safe.

A vaccination easily meets that level of expectation.

Anti-vaxxers who claim their rights are being trampled can put a sock in it. The vaccines aren't evil, or part of some global conspiracy or whatever foolishness they've allowed themselves to believe. They're a tool, one that can seriously reduce the spread of COVID and the chances of serious complications should a vaccinated person get COVID. That's smart.



Two novels examine global refugee crisis

What Strange Paradise by Omar El Akkad was the deserved winner of the 2021 Scotiabank Giller prize for fiction. It tells the story of an ongoing humanitarian tragedy with insight and humanity. Omar, the author of *American War*, knows his people and their tribulations.

This powerful novel looks at the global refugee crisis through the eyes of a child. In doing so it reveals the hypocrisy of adults who have created this crisis in the first place through their crude nationalist policies and sentiments. The Earth belongs to everyone who lives on it, regardless of where they were born.

More bodies have washed up on the shores of a Greek island. Another

over filled, ill equipped, dilapidated ship has sunk under the weight of too many passengers: Syrians, Ethiopians, Lebanese, Palestinians, all of them desperate to escape untenable lives back in their homelands.

They see the West as some kind of sanctuary. But what are the running towards? Racism, hatred, prejudice, bigotry, nationalism, wage slavery.

Out of the frying pan and into the fire. The men who charge them thousands of dollars to risk their lives on rickety rafts are merely obeying the laws of the free market.

Capitalism is the real villain here.

We all remember the media photos of a young boy laying face down, dead, in the sand of a Greek island.

That boy could have been Amir, the protagonist of this astounding novel. If you read it and it makes you angry then that is good. But don't just agonize - organize to change the system and replace it with another worldview that recognizes the dignity in every human being.

A Passage North by Anuk Arudpragasam was shortlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize. It pursues a

similar theme to *What Strange Paradise* - the displacement of refugees due to civil war and how these innocent victims are turned away by those who they turn to for help. In this case it is the Tamil refugees of Sri Lanka who sought sanctuary in Australia.

This story is told through two parallel relationships and narratives. One is the past love affair between the protagonist, Krishan, and his activist partner, Anjum. The other is the friendship between Krishnan's grandmother and her care giver, Rani. These two relationships overlap when Krishnan receives a phone call telling him that Rani has unexpectedly died after falling

down a well. He also gets an email from Anjum, stirring up old memories and desires from a world he left behind.

Arudpragasam ties these narratives together by comparing the train journey that Krishnan takes from Colombo to northern Sri Lanka to attend Rani's funeral, with a similar journey that Krishnan took with Anjum from Delhi to Calcutta. Both journeys are powerful meditations on absence and longing.

Beautifully written with precision and grace this novel is an unsparing account of the legacy of Sri Lanka's 30-year civil war and a poignant memorial for those lost and those still living.



John Pateman
BOOK BANTER

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COVID can't stop Christmas

By JR Shermack

In my opinion there is no place like home for the holidays, especially if you can enjoy the company of family and friends.

We are celebrating Christmas at home again this year and even though our dinner guests will be restricted to a chosen few we have added a couple names to the list.

This time last year I was lamenting the fact that our Christmas celebration would be restricted to within the confines of our small family bubble.

Still happened

Fortunately, as the Grinch taught us, even COVID can't stop Christmas from coming and our small but enthusiastic group was happy to be celebrating together.

It was a modest gathering although we still enjoyed a turkey dinner with all the trimmings and on a positive note there was no waiting in line at the buffet table.

We all felt a little lonely and nostalgic but took comfort and felt

hopeful as we reminisced and shared fond memories of important people, places and events in our lives.

Besides, we were anticipating that by next year the pandemic would be over and it would be Christmas as usual with many more familiar faces joining us.

But now, a year later, if you ask Canadians what they are planning for Christmas, 2021 the answer you get will depend on a lot of things, including personal choices.

It depends on where you choose to live because each province decides for itself how to keep citizens safe and healthy - guidelines may differ between municipalities.

In addition, individual families can choose for themselves the size and extent of their holiday merriment and what safety measures are necessary to keep everybody safe.

This inconsistent approach to a global challenge is causing confusion and setbacks among the public and creating more opportu-



Christmas is always a family affair.

nities for the virus to mutate and spread.

In British Columbia guidelines vary from extreme to non-existent, from no restrictions on indoor or outdoor gatherings to mandatory masks and distancing

for everyone, everywhere.

The fully vaccinated have no limitations on get-togethers in some regions - the unvaccinated may be limited to immediate family plus five visitors.

A severe third wave forced Alberta to implement more restrictive measures - the unvaccinated are limited to a one household Christmas, two for vaccinated families.

There are no restrictions for kids under 12, the largest remaining group of unvaccinated Canadians, currently having the highest number of new infections.

Saskatchewan residents are advised to, "Share seasonal greetings and not COVID-19."

Quebec allows residents to choose a maximum of 10 people for their indoor gatherings - the unvaccinated are advised to wear masks and keep their distance.

Christmas crowds in New Brunswick may be a little bigger and can include one household plus 20 "consistent" contacts - the inconsistent need not apply.

The Province of Ontario website features a comprehensive section regarding safe holiday celebrations including guidelines for visiting with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Keep track

Some provinces suggest keeping a Christmas guest log to aid in contact tracing in case an outbreak occurs among friends and family at social get-togethers.

But regardless of where you live, personal choices made this year could easily affect what happens a year from now as Christmas 2022 approaches.

As for me, I won't be getting all I want for Christmas 2021 and not because I've been a naughty boy, at least no naughtier than usual.

We will all have to wait at least one more year for another chance to share our cherished family traditions openly with our sadly missed loved ones.

In the meantime I have nothing to complain about because there is still no place like home for the holidays.

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 10

The Roosters

If you're hunting for live music, look no further than the Port Arthur Branch No. 5 Legion on Friday night. The Roosters will take to the stage for some post-COVID blues-rock. Tickets are \$10 at the door and the show starts at 8 p.m. Full vaccination is required.

December 10-11

Prelude to Christmas

The always popular Fort William Male Choir will perform their Prelude to Christmas at the Hilldale Lutheran Church.

The concert features the music of Sir Elton John. Shows take place on Friday and Saturday, with Friday's show going at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday's an afternoon affair, kicking off at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are available by calling 767-3612 or you can email requests to tickets@fwmc.ca.

December 11

NWO Aviation Heritage Centre

The Northwestern Ontario Aviation Heritage Centre, located at 905 E. Victoria Ave. will be open to the public on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. to sell aviation themed merchandise such as T-shirts, caps, mugs, books, sweat-shirts, etc.

These make excellent Christmas gifts for the aviation enthusiast in your family.

They would be available on our regular Sundays as well. Check us out on Facebook.

All COVID protocols including proof of vaccination are in place. Come check us out.

December 11

Ugly Sweater Dance Party

Hosted by the Foundry and featuring DJ Big D, the fun starts at 10 p.m. Dance to Soca, Dancehall and Regaetron Club Hits. Cost is \$10,

proof of vaccination will be required for entry.

December 9-11

Suessical for Kids

Oh the thinks you can think! Check out Dr. Seuss's most beloved characters who will come to life at the Paramount Theatre. See Horton the Elephant, the Cat in the Hat and whole bunch of others.

The narrator tells the tale of Horton, an elephant who finds a speck of dust containing tiny people known as the Whos, including JoJo, who gets in trouble for having too many 'thinks.' Horton must protect the Whos from naysayers and dangers, but also guard an abandoned egg left in his care.

Directed by Kaityn Rut, the shows start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$13.75 per person and can be purchased at www.eventbrite.ca.

Everyone 12 and older must show their QR code with proof of full vaccination.

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.

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Goyce Kakagemic was a leader, an artist and an educator. (FILE)

Kakagemic true leader

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation are mourning the loss of artist, educator and former deputy grand chief Goyce Kakegamic.

Kakagemic, who served as deputy grand chief from 1997 to 2006 and from 2012 to 2015, was instrumental in helping to establish the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and also helped launch the Embrace Life program to help youth develop the life skills they need and strategies for healing.

Kakagemic also helped develop Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute and an Aboriginal trades school at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School.

Born in 1948 in Sandy Lake First Nation, he was the brother-in-law of famed Indigenous artist Norval Morrisseau, who along with Cree artist Carl Ray, influenced his artistic side.

Kakagemic and his brother founded the Triple K Co-operative to allow First Nations Artists to represent themselves instead of having to meet the expectations of non-Indigenous publishers.

“I had the pleasure of working under Goyce for many years and was moved by his determination to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our members, especially our youth. Powered by conviction and grounded by faith, Goyce was not shy about expressing his feelings and never wavered from his convictions, no matter how great the challenge,” said NAN deputy chief Bobby Narcisse, speaking on behalf of the executive council.

“Goyce was passionate about education and the well-being of youth and their families. He was determined to close the significant gap experienced by students in our communities compared with those in urban centres. He led tremendous work to ensure that our youth received quality education opportunities and took every opportunity to encourage and support them throughout their academic careers.”

Kakagemic was also a school counsellor in Red Lake.

Toys for the North takes off

By Leith Dunick - TB Source

Santa Claus is getting a little military help to deliver toys to Ontario's far north.

On Tuesday, an C-17 Globemaster cargo plane rumbled into Thunder Bay to drop off a load of presents destined for North Caribou First Nation and Keewaywin First Nation.

From Thunder Bay the toys will be delivered to North Star Air's hangar in Sioux Lookout, with the help of the Gardewine Group and the RCMP, where they will be sorted and shipped out to the two communities.

Jeff Stout, president and chief operating officer at North Star Air, said it's a campaign all of his employees get behind each year.

It's especially important now, as the pandemic continues nearly two years in.

"It's huge and we can't understate how important this program is, especially in a year like COVID. A lot of these community members have not



Several pallets of toys and gifts were flown into Thunder Bay last week, headed to North Caribou and Keewaywin First Nations. (Leith Dunick)

been able to travel out. Typically they come out to Sioux Lookout or Thunder Bay to do Christmas shopping, but it's hard in years like

this," Stout said.

"The ability to bring the toys to them really ensures that a lot of the youth have a good Christmas."

It's also a partnership that can't work without the RCMP and Canadian military lending the power of their organizations.

"They collect the toys and fly them up to us, and without that piece, this doesn't happen ... It's an amazing supply chain that these toys go through to get them to the communities. It's really a testament to the partnership."

Stout, who had employees volunteering Thursday on their off-day, said the goal is to hit all 23 communities the airline serves, a goal they're getting closer to, taking part in the program for seven of the past 11 years.

There's a lot of work left to go.

"We're talking about thousands of toys that need to be sorted so that the next phase can continue as planned," said Cpl. Stacy Morton of the RCMP, in a release.

"We've targeted four recipient communities this year.

Toys for the North also serves northern communities in other provinces, including Newfoundland and Labrador.

Toys are expected to arrive at their final destinations by mid-month.

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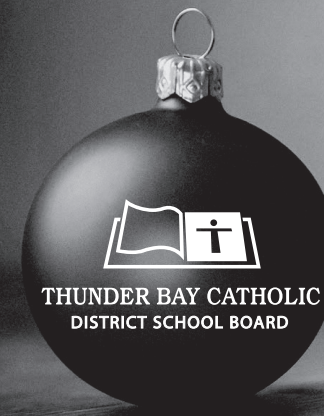
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Omicron detected

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

The Omicron variant has arrived in Thunder Bay. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit on Sunday said four cases have been confirmed and four more are expected to be confirmed when test results are verified.

All eight individuals live in the same household and all have been isolating. There is a tie to southern Africa, where the variant is believed to have originated.

"Quick action on the part of these individuals led to very early notification of an individual with COVID-19 where omicron was a possibility due to the travel connection. Initial screening results were consistent with the delta variant, however, the confirmatory result received this weekend indicated omicron," said Dr. Janet DeMille medical officer of health.

"We have been working with these individuals and adopted enhanced case and contact measures right from the start with the goal of containing any ongoing spread. At this time, there is no evidence of spread outside the household."

The health unit strongly advises all individuals seek testing immediately, if they have any COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have returned from Botswana, Egypt, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe within 14 days.

Asymptomatic family members are also eligible for testing.

COVID concerns

By Gary Rinne – TB Source

A leading Ontario epidemiologist believes the Thunder Bay District Health Unit should take measures immediately to mitigate the further spread of COVID-19.

"The trajectory is in the wrong direction. At this rate, they will start to be challenged" with managing the situation, says Dr. Peter Juni.

Juni is the scientific director of the province's COVID-19 science advisory table.

The COVID-19 caseload has been rising steadily in the Thunder Bay area since mid-November, including cases at numerous schools.

The 54 new cases reported on Monday was the largest number of new cases reported since March 17,

"If I were in the shoes of the local public health unit, and the medical officer of health, I would really follow the same sort of decision-making that Windsor-Essex has just had," he said.

Restrictions in Windsor-Essex will include:

- Social gatherings limited to 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors
- Added measures for wedding receptions and for social events tied to funerals and religious services
- Limiting indoor capacity for bars and restaurants to 50 per cent of their usual occupancy limit.

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Serious snowfall finally arrives

So, snow. Serious snow. At least two feet! I wanted snow for Christmas and I got it. So did you.

Sunday afternoon my wife Laura and I drove to town to do some shopping.

Much to Laura's displeasure, I had ripped the outside Christmas lights off of the eavestrough since several of the bulbs had faded and the clips with which they were attached would not stay attached.

Light it up

"Bah! Humbug!" I fumed. I have seen icicle lights with a certain array of colours very appealing to my eyes and I wanted to see if we could purchase same and then get them up in time for The Big Day.

Wasn't to be. We searched four stores and only the same kind of lights were available or, in the case of one well-known hardware emporium, not at all.

All sold out. Bother! Laura did buy

a string of miniatures that she could wrap around the posts that support the roof of our front stoop so at least we'd have some seasonal colour display.

We knew the snow was coming. We were told that up to 25 or even 30 centimetres were possible. It began to snow when we were leaving town but the highways were clear and we didn't experience a real blow with snow until we reached home.

At about 4:30 Laura announced that we should really bring the horses into their stalls since the snow was blowing more thickly and probably they were already covered.

So, I trudged across the yard to the barn, put feed into their stalls, and then brought them inside. They were eager. Instead of their usual amble, they raced to the barn door.

Once inside and happily munching on their grain, I took a scraper and

scraped the snow off of their backs just to give them a head start on getting warm and dry. We'd head back out later at night to throw late night hay and check their water pails.

Earlier in the day I had moved the motorboat outside so as to fetch the farm snow blower. Then I backed the boat inside the shelter at the back and in turn the tractor with the blower semi-attached.

The light was rapidly fading but I thought it best to hook up the attachments.

Regular readers may cast their memories back to recall how many times I have written about blue or purple air above the blower as I attempted to affix to the rear of Big Red, my ancient tractor.

I usually blame anything that goes wrong on Murphy (of Murphy's Law). Not this time. This time the procedure went smoothly. I usually holler for help in performing the task but not this time. Murphy must have been off somewhere else harassing some other hapless soul.

There was no point in blowing snow while the storm was peaking. It wasn't until I arose at 6 Monday morning that I saw that the snow had ceased to fall. I knew that we had at least two feet on the ground since daughter Beth had kindly gone over to the barn Sunday night to do the late-night feed.

I was ensconced in my library when she entered and announced that the snow was up to her knees which measured two feet and was still coming down.

Even the dogs weren't keen on going outside.

Lily did go out at 6:30 Monday morning and barked like crazy. Her bladder demanded that she actually leap off of the stoop which she did and almost disappeared. She did not stay out long. Baxter, the older pooch, has an amazing bladder.

No way he was ploughing through the snow, at least not until I had shoveled the stoop, the steps, and a bit down in front.

Eventually I had to haul out my winter pants and dress for the snow-

blowing occasion at least for starters to make a path from Casa Jones to the barn. Fortunately, the snow was light and fluffy that made blowing easy.

Had to remember to check the direction of the wind so that I didn't become Frosty The Snow Fred.

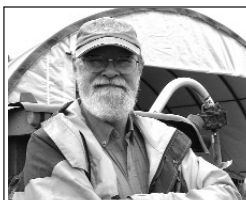
Unfortunately, the wind was quixotic and Farmer Fred did get covered. Perhaps Murphy wasn't on hand, but Jack Frost sure was.

I would stop so that I could see the direction in which I was traveling but I cleared enough for vehicles to get out.

Out came the sun

As I was clearing the sun came out. When I considered that I'd cleared enough, I went back into the house and while enjoying another cup of coffee, watched the wind whip up swirling snow devils across the field and even in the bush.

So, I asked Ol' man Winter for snow and Ol' Man winter delivered. No question: we have snow for Christmas.



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Safety is essential when walking on early ice each fall. Be sure it's safe to walk upon.

Testing out ice

Last weekend I kicked off the ice fishing season with a quick trip to one of my favourite inland lakes in the Thunder Bay area.

Small lakes, especially those further north or a bit higher in elevation, are consistently the first to freeze over and offer safe ice conditions.

Like many hard water anglers, I had been watching my weather app over the past few weeks to determine if it might be safe enough to head out on the ice. Seeing extremely cold overnight lows and daytime highs that remained below the freezing point, I figured we might already have some strong and safe ice. I had also heard enough reports of good ice, and good fishing, that I decided to head out early Sunday morning with a friend before the incoming snowstorm made getting to the lake much more difficult.

The Canadian Red Cross says it takes 6 inches of clear solid ice to be safe for walking on.

However, we should never venture onto the ice alone, and since we will be pulling a sled weighed down with an ice auger and gear, it is advisable to wait for 8 inches of solid, clear ice. Other authorities may suggest that slightly less ice thickness will be fine, but it never hurts to follow the more conservative guidelines.

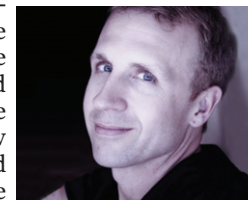
When we reached the end of the trail on Sunday, we could see other anglers were already on the lake.

With very little snow on the ice, we were able to confirm that it was appropriately thick enough for us to join

them. The colour of ice is said to be the best indication of its strength, and we could see crystal clear “blue ice” everywhere we walked on the lake.

Grey or white ice should be avoided, as should underwater springs and currents, especially where creeks or rivers enter or exit the lake.

These are the most dangerous areas as they can remain open or covered by a thin layer of brittle ice. In fact, any water on top of the ice, or open holes in the ice, are warning signs.



Keith Ailey
the GOOD LIFE

Even though we found our lake to be locked up tight with enough solid ice to safely walk out and start drilling holes, there were some essential items that I was happy to have with me. An ice spud or axe is a

great way to check the ice thickness as you move out from shore. Ice is rarely uniform in its depth, so always continue to check your path when moving from spot to spot.

Wearing a floater coat or even an inflatable PFD will provide some extra assurance, and, in the event of a break through, a pair of ice claws or safety picks will help you get back up on top of the ice.

To support a snowmobile, we will need to wait for 10 inches of good ice, and there should be at least a foot before we consider driving a vehicle out.

No matter how excited we are to start ice fishing, and no matter how great our secret winter lakes are, the risk of breaking through is definitely not worth a few fish.

Geminid Meteor shower coming

One of the most captivating celestial events is a meteor shower. Everyone from time to time has seen meteors – aka “shooting stars” while taking a stroll or walking the dog at night.

These are bits of debris from the creation of the solar system or even space junk such as nuts, bolts etc from old rockets and deployed satellites.

Although these are unpredicted sightings that can sometimes startle the observer, there are many known meteor showers throughout the year.

On the night of December 13/14, one of the best displays will play

out in the skies above. This is the annual Geminid meteor shower and is named because its radiant or origin appears to come from a

specific point in the constellation Gemini. This point is located just above the star Castor, located 51 light-years away and is the mythological mortal twin warrior of Pollux. This shower is known to produce a consistent 120 graceful meteors per hour. There will even be a few bright

fireballs. Their slow speed of 36 kilometres per second will add to the beauty of the sky show. By contrast, the Perseids meteor shower in August streak through the atmosphere at twice that

speed. Even though the moon will be about 77% lit we should still see a high number of meteors vaporize in the atmosphere.

The Geminids are not produced by a comet as in other showers but by the five-kilometre wide asteroid 3200 Phaethon. This object could be a dead comet that over time has lost its chemical and water ices. A comet loses one to two percent of its volatile surface every time it rounds the sun. Solar radiation causes the gases to glow as well as releasing sand and grit off the comet's surface. This can form the iconic dust tail. One of the best times will be after 3 a.m. EST when the moon has set and the shower is at its peak time. But if that is too late for you, anytime would be good to witness a few unforgettable bright meteors.



Gary Boyle
BACKYARD ASTRONOMER



The Geminid Meteor Shower is expected to begin on Dec. 13. (Gary Boyle photo)



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Sweet potato casserole is traditionally topped with marshmallows, but don't be afraid to get creative. (Food Network Canada)

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Sides can be tedious. For example, everyone has their own idea about what mashed potatoes should taste like, and you may not want to rock the boat.

Although, maybe, just maybe, you do. Why should your uncles' controversial political beliefs be the center of the family Christmas drama every year?

We are going to focus this week on the potatoes, the carb king of all holidays. When you combine turkey, potatoes and bread based stuffing, you get ... to go to sleep early.

Mashed Potatoes. The classic side, you may not want to screw with this one too badly, but again, if you do, here's a few ideas.

Pesto mashed: Omit (or lessen) your butter or oil content and replace with a couple spoonfuls of traditional basil pesto, and finish with some fresh grated parmesan or asiago cheese.

Caesar mashed. Omit all your liquids and replace with some garlic, a little bit of ceasar dressing, parmesan, and a splash of lemon juice.

Aligot mashed. I know I don't typically use the "real" terminology but this one fit. To make them, boil a few whole cloves of garlic with your potatoes and mash as usual, then add shredded gruyere cheese to finish.

Sweet Potatoes. In Canada we mostly use the

large beaugard sweet yam with the deeper orange flesh, partially because it is the most readily available. You can also opt for the lighter apache or brown horse sweet potatoes. In certain times of year, you can find many other varieties as there are 30+ varieties of sweet potatoes commonly farmed in north America.

We all know the drill, sweet potato casserole is typically peeled sliced potatoes with melted butter, salt and pepper and some kind of sugar component.

Let's look at your sugars, brown or yellow sugar is commonly used, however, for some intense (and local) flavour try using Canwest Maple Sugar, available at many local Thunder Bay retailers.

You can also supplement these tastes by opting for a more holiday themed spice profile with a tiny bit of cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.

Many people opt to have their sweet potato casserole without a topping, I am not one of those people.

Commonly you will find many people go with the marshmallow topping. However, for a slightly different mouthfeel and consistency, try making a less sweet crumble topping with oats, butter, sugar and flour.

Mix until crumbly and top your potatoes with that. You can also carry your seasoning choices from your potatoes into the crumble as well.

Derek Lankinen is an award-winning chef, author, and restaurateur. He is the Owner/Operator of Beefcake's Burger Factory and Co-Owner of Elite Beef, Eat Loco Tacos and Brick and Mortar Food Co.



Derek Lankinen

Here's Cooking at You Kid

A supernatural spellbinder

By Linda Maehans - For TB Source

Do you believe in ghosts? If not, you will.

You'll also start believing in the netherworld; won't have a choice about that. No, unfortunately not. After all, Ebenezer Scrooge's deceased and initially bewildered business partner Jacob Marley doesn't. Take heart. You're in good company.

With *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*, Magnus Theatre presents one riveting spellbinder of a show.

A one-man masterpiece of time-travel back to Dickens' timeless tale of redemption over human avarice gone astray.

Say "one-man masterpiece", but the true description is of a full and masterfully delineated cast of characters including a narrator who, from the very first instant, book in hand, lights a flickering candle in the darkened space around us and pulls us into his orbit as moths to the flame. Such is the presence, the



Jacob James stars in *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol* at Magnus Theatre. (Matthew Goertz)

mesmerizing skill and charisma of actor Jacob James.

We cannot look away. We cannot fail to follow his every nuanced movement, turn of foot, twist of shoulders, clutching of hands. His mouth: grimace, smile, sneer. His

eyes. From one heartbeat to the next, with nary a pause for breath, we witness James morph, unmistakably, from one character to another and back, like a fluid chameleon in his finest element and pinnacle of craft. His voice undergoes subtle, split-

second alterations, again leaving us with no doubt as to who is speaking. Oh look!

It's a new character we weren't expecting to meet; and how would we, given the netherworld we've so willingly entered without a backward glance.

Well, I take that back. It isn't willingly at all. James, with his superb abilities, doesn't give us a choice. Audiences may recall this Stratford-based actor from Magnus' 2019 sparkler production *BOEING BOEING*; yet that memory won't prepare you for him this time.

What's that expression: the cream always rises to the top? More accurately here, it might be the audience doing the rising. Perhaps even up to the heavens if, as they say, the Fates allow.

Before that can happen though, all manner of imagination-thrilling and soul-chilling events must take place. Before our very eyes and ears, and the rest of our human sensibilities. Special effects and sound by Joe

Pagnan (lighting & projection design); set design by Warden Bemont; costume design by Lisa Macchione; directed by Thom Currie.

The tale, not as originally penned by Charles Dickens but now as told from the dark and beautifully grim perspective of a dead man via playwright Tom Mula, is not for the faint of heart or mind.

This isn't a production for children. And not merely because I'm guessing most kids nowadays have encountered scarier aspects in movies and on television. No. Mula's version of *A Christmas Carol* has a sophisticated depth of message, not intended for kids.

Yet don't be afraid of ghosts. Especially as our Yuletide of 2021 draws nigh. Forget Christmas-Past; leave Christmas-Future where it belongs; and instead allow the Spirit of Christmas-Present to find you. It is alive and well at Magnus Theatre until December 18. Beyond? You decide.

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Actors have long sought political office

Politics has always been a strange animal. But lately, it's turned into *The Gong Show*. You remember that old gem. People of often questionable and weird talent performed on television for a panel of "judges" who could applaud or hit a giant gong to send them away. It was a modern day gladiator games without the lions but almost as much bloodshed. Yet we all laughed because of the ridiculousness of every Tom, Dick and Harry showing off their so-called "talents."

However, today the Toms, Dicks, and Harrys aren't tap dancing, singing or telling jokes. They're running for office. And too often, getting in.

The most obvious example is the

former president, a Hollywood celebrity who had no experience or expertise to bring to the stage. And proved it during his chaotic four years in office. But he's hardly the first.

Ronald Reagan was an actor before he served two terms as Commander-in-Chief.

But he was also a union president and the governor of California. So he actually had some background before taking the Oval Office.

Other entertainers have also successfully moved into politics after years in Hollywood. Shirley Temple Black went from child star to a career in the Foreign Service. Fred Thompson was still a senator when he first appeared on *Law & Order* as the District

Attorney. Then there's Al Franken, George Murphy, and Helen Gahagan Douglas just to name a few more.

But most entertainers-turned-political candidates have left voters scratching their heads. Melissa Gilbert attempted to run in 2016. Mr. Smith [went] to Washington. So Laura Ingles goes to Congress?

Miranda Hobbes, a.k.a. *Sex in the City* star Cynthia Nixon, ran for the nomination against incumbent governor Andrew Cuomo. (Bet a lot of Democrats are wishing they'd rethought that vote.)

Love Boat's "Gopher" Fred Grandy, *Dukes of Hazzard's* "Cooter" Ben Jones, and wrestler Jesse Ventura all got elected to their various political offices - thankfully, only briefly - before moving on to their next projects. Apparently, politics was just another "role" to try.



Dr. Mehmet Oz is running for the Senate.

And now, the newest personality to throw his hat into the political ring is TV's Dr. Oz, himself. He's a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon (who hasn't cut in well over a decade) and a professor at Columbia University (although a group of physicians, surgeons, and

professors asked the university to remove him from its faculty). He doesn't exactly scream, "Vote for me!"

But since Anthony Fauci has become a trusted face for many voters, why not Mehmet Oz? So he's running for the Senate in Pennsylvania.

Who cares that he doesn't live there? After all, he's got the support of Donald Trump. Who needs experience in politics, social science, or law? He's famous. So what if he's been investigated for promoting junk science on his show? He's rich. Let's put him in office!

Twenty years ago, I would have applauded that so many from all walks of life are willing to wade into politics to lead change and make their country a better place. Today, I'm just horrified. And waiting for someone to hit that big gong.



Fiona Gardiner
FI TV

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Film's doggone great

It's been more than 10 years since Oscar winning director Jane Campion (*The Piano*) made her last movie. She returns to cinema without missing a beat, directing and writing *The Power of the Dog*, (Netflix) a gripping character study.

Based on Thomas Savage's 1967 novel, *Dog* is a Western set in early 1920s Montana (breathtaking New Zealand fills in). Phil Burbank (Benedict Cumberbatch) runs a massive ranch with his brother George (Jesse Plemons.) George handles the business; Phil rides herd on cows and cowpokes alike.

Trouble brews when George introduces his new bride Rose (Kirsten Dunst) to their home and later her young adult son, Peter (Kodi Smit-McPhee). Both have previously endured Phil's taunts at Rose's restaurant, much to George's chagrin.

Ornery Phil sees Rose's presence as an intrusion, upsetting balance in a household which has long been a male enclave. Phil dismisses Rose as "a cheap schemer." Gawkly Peter, a med student, is a "Nancy boy."

Rose is still haunted by the loss by suicide of her first husband, a doctor. Phil disdains and exploits her vulnerability. He gaslights Rose and belittles Peter, whom he intends to turn into a man. In Phil's mocking hands, even strumming a banjo can be weaponized.

Phil's viper-like tongue also lashes at George, calling him, "Fatso."

Oddly, Phil is Yale educated and well versed in the classics, a past he curiously sidelines. His masculinity is realized through hard-bitten ranching. He idolizes his mentor and friend, Bronco Henry, an unseen figure, long since passed, his saddle sitting enshrined in the barn. Phil credits Henry with saving his life, subtly insinuating a closer connection, undefined. Phil has dark secrets of his own, Peter discovers.



Benedict Cumberbatch plays a ranch owner in Jane Campion's *The Power of the Dog*.

Then Phil seemingly has a change of heart, acting more conciliatory towards Peter, offering to make him a rope, teaching him to ride. He takes Peter on a two-day ride in the nearby mountains to do work and re-trace an old explorers' trail. What are Phil's intentions?

Then Campion throws a stunning, though credible, curve ball.

Campion does a masterful job of exploring machismo, power dynamics and how repressed desires and self-loathing manifests itself in naked aggression. The pace is deliberate, the atmosphere is tense. Much is left unsaid,

much is subtext.

Campion juxtaposes the characters against the beautiful, rugged landscape that dwarfs them, where the Old West is giving way to a new age.

The cast is first-rate. Gruff Cumberbatch is authentic, rough hewn, dirty, and prickly as a cactus, exuding coiled menace. His intimidating presence snakes through the story like an electrical current.

Dunst is quietly equal as a fragile woman, fighting her own demons. Clemons and Smit-McPhee are also excellent.

The movie's rewards are full, including Ari Wagner's brilliant cinematography and Jonny Greenwood's atmospheric score. *The Power of the Dog* is an absorbing drama, one of the best movies of the year.



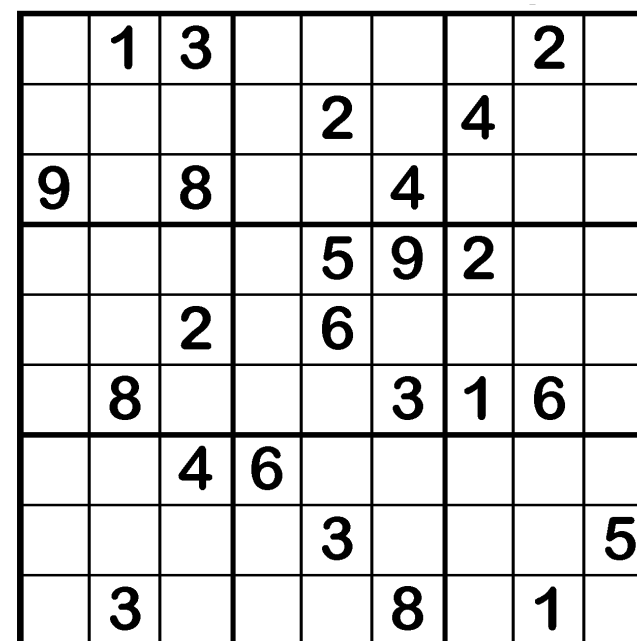
Marty Mascarini

MOVIE TALK

ENIGMA™ CRYPTOGRAM

enigma cryptograms are created from quotations and proverbs from around the world. Each letter stands for another letter. Hint: "C" = "E"

"YECS ZMC UJJ QUKRWOCMCMK YEZY
YEUDF YECMC UK DW JZDQ, XECD
YECS RZD KCC DWYEUDP THY KCZ."
— LMZDRUK TZRWD



ACROSS

- 1 Andes' cold higher region
- 5 Broad structural basin
- 9 Federal Trade Commission (abbr.)
- 12 Cork
- 13 Ass or donkey (Ger.)
- 14 Poetic contraction
- 15 Moon
- 17 Sheep's cry
- 18 Nothing (Fr.)
- 19 Musical beat
- 20 Amer. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (abbr.)
- 23 Arabic letter
- 24 Pipe (Scot.)
- 25 Image
- 30 Wing
- 31 Pole in Gaelic games
- 32 Alas
- 33 Time
- 35 Wild pig
- 36 Fr. pronoun
- 37 Doctrine
- 38 Explorer Ericson
- 40 Goodbye (Fr.)
- 43 Siamese twin
- 44 Sinuous
- 48 Amer. Dental Assn. (abbr.)
- 49 Braz. heron
- 50 Lade
- 51 River to the Sea of Azov
- 52 Shak. contraction
- 53 Quod demonstrandum

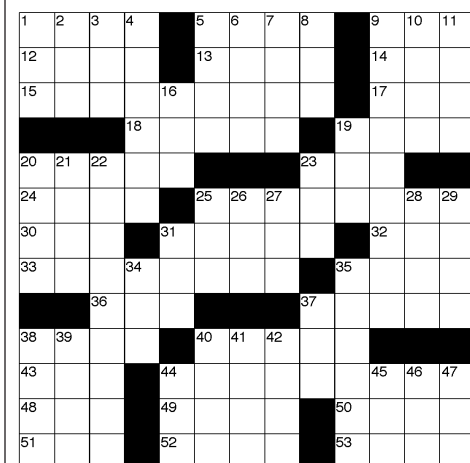
DOWN

- 1 Additional postscript (abbr.)
- 2 Diminutive (suf.)
- 3 Cola

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

TALA MALA CAY
IBID UPON OLE
AIDA SOON NSA
DWI MAISON
THE ACC TINT
REX SCAR DRAB
ABT PUPAE AAA
MERE ESPN IRK
ALA AEC NEE
EXPAND SEA
SMA EIRE RANT
CAG ACHE GATA
ASE REED O AHE

- 4 Means author
- 5 Web
- 6 Hindu month
- 7 Balto-Slav
- 8 Beer
- 9 Gilt (2 words)
- 10 Tree
- 11 Supporter (suf.)
- 16 "Brave Bulls" author
- 19 Prepare leather
- 20 Academy (abbr.)
- 21 Philippines archipelago
- 22 Grouse
- 23 The (Ger.)
- 25 Fr. medieval tale



- 26 Kwa language
- 27 Barbie's boyfriend
- 28 Visible juncture
- 29 Fermented palm juice
- 31 Cents (abbr.)
- 34 Amer. Expeditionary Forces (abbr.)
- 35 Inlaid decoration
- 37 River into the North Sea
- 38 Head
- 39 Within (pref.)
- 40 Wild ox
- 41 Carplike fish
- 42 Religious image
- 44 Fast jet
- 45 Comparative (suf.)
- 46 "The Jungle Book" python
- 47 Eastern daylight time (abbr.)



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Everest Canadian Curling Club Champions, back row from left: Nova Scotia, Nick Deagle, Jason van Vonderen, Rob Phillips, Ryan Sperry. Front row, from left: Northern Ontario Tracy Larocque, Samantha Morris, Corie Adamson, Rebecca Carr.

Larocque wins national crown

By Leith Dunick -TB Source

Tracey Larocque needed an extra end, but used it wisely and is now the 2021 Everest Canadian Curling Club champion.

The Fort William Curling Club skip scored a pair in the ninth end on Saturday to edge Newmarket's Laurie Shields 7-5 to capture the women's title in Ottawa.

It was a back-and-forth match for Larocque and her teammates, Rebecca Carr, Corie Adamson and Samantha Morris.

They jumped in front with two in the second, but gave the lead back when Shields scored a deuce of her own in the third to take a 3-2 advan-

tage.

Larocque tied it in the fourth and stole singles in the sixth and seventh to go in front 5-3. Shields tied it with hammer in the eighth to send it to an extra end.

Larocque, Adamson and Carr were part of the Northern Ontario team that competed at the event in 2019 at Leduc, Alta. The team finished with a 1-5 record.

"We shuffled things around a bit, and we just gelled. We gained so much experience the first time. We didn't know what we were getting into," Larocque said. "Now we're here, and we know we can play and not worry about all of the events and everything happening around us."

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Stars sweep Norskies

By Leith Dunick - TB Source

Being back on home ice agrees with the Thunder Bay North Stars.

The Superior International Junior Hockey League club got off to a bit of a slow start on Saturday, surrendering the game's first goal, but poured it on from there and went on to down the visiting Thief River Falls Norskies 6-2 in front of 185 fans at Fort William Gardens.

Nolan Desjardins had a goal and an assist to help pace the North Stars attack, earning the club its second straight triumph and maintaining its two-point hold on second place, albeit having played more games against the teams chasing them from behind.

"I think we played really hard. We had some really good games last weekend against Kam River, but I'm glad we got the four points this weekend. It was pretty big for us after those tight games," said the Thunder Bay Kings product, who spent last season with the Thunder Bay Falcons of the Lakehead Junior Hockey League, picking up five points in two appearances.

This season the 18-year-old has continued his scoring ways, with eight goals and 17 points in 17 appearances.

He's not willing to take too much credit.

"I think I played pretty good out there, but my teammates they helped me out a lot out there. They give the puck and I just put it away," said Desjardins, who picked up multiple points for the sixth time in his rookie season.

With the Christmas break fast approaching, not to mention a two-week break in their schedule, it's important to keep that winning mindset alive and well to ensure when they do hit the ice again, no bad habits form.

"I think we're just going to take a nice little break from that hard month we had out of town we just had and we're going to regroup and come back and I think we're going to come back better than ever," Desjardins said.

That's what coach Rob DeGagne is looking for moving forward.

His team got off to a hot start this season, but slid back some, playing



Hayden Cattani battles in front. (Leith Dunick)

10 of 11 on the road, taking a loss in eight of them.

He liked what he saw this weekend.

"I think we played a little better last night than we did tonight. Our third period tonight we played

really well. But you know what, it's a start. We've got to win some hockey games, we've got to win some hockey games at home. The guys are excited to play at home. We played one game in 40 or 50 days at home. I'm happy. We're making a few personnel changes and I think we're getting closer to where we want to be. We're not there yet," DeGagne said.

Scott Bugarin scored the lone goal of the first for Thief River Falls, the Norskies defenceman pounding home a rebound surrendered by Thunder Bay goaltender Jordan Smith.

Noah Broughton tied things up at 2:48 of the second and Desjardins put the Stars ahead for good at 13:03 of the middle stanza, the lead growing to two when Hayden Cattani stripped the puck and buried it past Matthew Loney, who made 48 saves on the night.

Alan Yu cut the North Stars lead to one on the power play, 76 seconds into the third, but William Demkiw, Hunter Foresheew and Jack Michaelis rounded out the scoring for Thunder Bay.

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HONDA

Hall of fame ballot is intriguing

Six new baseball hall of famers were announced on Sunday, all six long overdue.

Seeing Tony Oliva's reaction to getting the call from the Golden Days Era committee was priceless. At 83, he and Jim Kaat were the only two living candidates who got the call. Minnie Minosa, a Cuban pioneer, should also have been elected long ago, and likely Gil Hodges too.

Buck O'Neil is probably the guy I was rooting for the most. He did more to promote the game of baseball and preserve the history of the Negro Leagues than anyone. It's just a shame he didn't get the call in 2006, before he died. Bud Fowler, considered the first

Black player in the big leagues, was also elected, on the Early Baseball Era ballot.

The big question now is will anyone be joining these six stars at next summer's induction ceremony in Cooperstown?

I wouldn't at all be shocked if the answer is no.

Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and Curt Schilling are in their final year of eligibility. The first two have been tarnished by steroid accusations, and I can't see them turning enough

of the naysayers into yes votes. Schilling's battles with the media are legendary, and he outright told voters not to vote for him in Year 10, preferring to give his peers the

option of voting him in. My guess is he'll get his wish.

Of the realistic holdover choice, I think Scott Rolen is the likeliest to climb the hall of fame hill in 2022, but even he's a long-shot. With nine ballots publicly revealed, he's been named on seven of them (as has Schilling), but the former Blue Jays (and Cardinals and Phillies) third baseman will likely slide back below the 75 per cent threshold when the private ballots are counted.

The metrics say he's a hall of famer. His 70.1 WAR rating ranks him 10th all-time among players manning the hot corner. Only Adrian Beltre, not yet eligible, is ahead of him and not already enshrined.

Rolen just doesn't pass the eye test for me. I never went out of my way to watch him, like I did with Bonds or Clemens or Alex Rodriguez, one of two high-profile first-timers seeking the approval of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

A-Rod and David Ortiz have only earned four of the nine published ballots, tracked by Ryan Thibodeaux, well below the 75 per cent needed for enshrinement. Both have steroid questions about their past, Rodriguez having been caught and suspended twice. If Bonds doesn't get in, Rodriguez likely won't either.

Ortiz has the numbers, but his designated hitter status will cost him with some voters.

As for the rest of the ballot, there's a lot of really good, but not necessarily pantheon greats.

I'm mostly a small-hall guy, but I also don't necessarily rule a player out because of steroids. I still feel Rafael Palmeiro belongs, even though he was a one-and-done, and would give a vote to Bonds and Clemens if I had one.

The rest of my hypothetical ballot would include Todd Helton, whose 61.8 is a tad below the 66.9 hall-of-fame average at first, Rodriguez, Ortiz, Schilling (reluctantly), and Gary Sheffield.

Only three right-fielders have a better WAR than Sheffield - one is Shoeless Joe Jackson, suspended for life in the Black Sox scandal, one is the criminally underrated Reggie Smith and the other is Dwight Evans, who most certainly belongs.



Leith Dunick
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 18. Storage/Space
 19. Wanted
 20. Condos
 21. Miscellaneous

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 23. Misc.
 24. Antiques
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 41. Northward
 42. South
 43. Westfort
 44. Rural

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 45. Auctions
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 47. Travel
 48. Financial
 49. Lost & Found
 50. Personal
 51. Notices
 52. Tenders

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 55. Bus. Opportunities
 56. Training Courses

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 57. Help Wanted
 58. Careers
 59. Child
 60. Health Care
 61. Employment Wanted
 62. Students For Hire

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 63. Coming Events
 64. Craft & Flea Markets
 65. Happy Ads
 66. Cards of Thanks
 67. In Memoriam
 68. Death/Funerals

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P	L	U	G	E	S	E	L	E	E	R		
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D	U	R	A	T	I	O	N		B	O	A	R
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7	5	6	9	2	1	4	3	8
9	2	8	3	7	4	6	5	1
6	4	1	8	5	9	2	7	3
3	9	2	1	6	7	5	8	4
5	8	7	2	4	3	1	6	9
8	7	4	6	1	5	3	9	2
1	6	9	7	3	2	8	4	5
2	3	5	4	9	8	7	1	6

PREVIOUS SOLUTION:
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