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# Bushby guilty

Justice Helen Pierce upholds manslaughter charge in trailer-hitch death of Barbara Kentner /3



VINDICATED: Supporters of Barbara Kentner and her family gathered outside the Courthouse Hotel on Monday, where the verdict was delivered against Brayden Bushby.

LEITH DUNICK

## LOCAL NEWS

# It's not time to let guard down

Vaccine arrival a good sign, but not overnight cure

## HEALTH

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

**D**r. Janet DeMille says news of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine being approved by Health Canada is reason for celebration.

It's just not time for the public to let down its collective guard.

"It's really great that it has been approved, and now we can start the rollout," DeMille said. "I think we still have to take a very measured approach to this. We're going to see the vaccine come ... but it is going to take a while to roll out an immunization program and roll out the vaccine and get adequate quantities to really make a difference."

Initial talks have been held about that rollout with senior levels of government, but they haven't advanced beyond the preliminary stage.

It's just too soon, DeMille said.

However, it appears front-line workers and long-term care residents will be first in the queue, followed by those in hot zones and then the general public, according to Mayor Bill Mauro, who spoke with the province's vaccine rollout chief, retired Gen. Rick Hillier.

DeMille said it won't be easily accomplished and certainly won't happen overnight.

"The delivery of the vaccine across the country is a really complicated, complex process," DeMille said. "The different types of vaccines, the size of the country, the different areas and the allotment the different provinces are going to get – and then there's the rollout of the vaccines within each province."

DeMille said there are still plenty of questions that need answers.

### Keeping it cool

The Pfizer vaccine, for example, will require special storage capabilities, most notably the requirement to keep it at -70 C or below. The Moderna vaccine requires a more modest -20 C temperature.

"Even the logistics of the storage of the vaccines is really important. And then transportation while maintaining that is going to be a very significant logistical issue," DeMille said.

"Certainly many people, both federally and provincially are involved in managing those logistics."

For now, caution is the best prevention method in the Thunder Bay District.

The city and region are far from being



LEITH DUNICK

**BE PATIENT:** The health unit's Dr. Janet DeMille says the COVID-19 vaccine still needs time to be delivered to anyone who wants it.

out of the danger zone, DeMille saying it's clear community spread is happening in Thunder Bay. However, she noted only 10 per cent of cases are currently being contracted through unknown sources, which is quite low, she said.

### It is a warning sign.

"This means the virus certainly can be anywhere and appear anywhere and appear very quickly. We're not seeing that exponential increase, but we are seeing an increase," DeMille said.

"That's really important. We can't let that get out of hand."

There are currently 115 active cases in Thunder Bay, after the Thunder Bay District Health Unit announced an additional nine cases on Tuesday, bringing the district's total to 448 since the pandemic began. Fourteen have now died.

"We need to control it, and that is us as individuals, our families, our workplaces and any other place we might go to," DeMille said.

"We're at a low number, but it is going up, and that's concerning," DeMille said. "So what we really need to do is stop outbreaks from happening. And that means in every workplace, in every organization, in every long-term care and in every hospital really has to pull out all the stops, put every measure in place to prevent that virus from spreading in those facilities."

**"The delivery of the vaccine across the country is a really complicated, complex process."**

**JANET DEMILLE**

## This holiday season needs to be different.

The safest way to celebrate indoors is only with the people who live in your home. People who live alone can get together only with one other home.

Gatherings with friends and extended family can carry an increased risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Consider celebrating outdoors or virtually with others that are not part of your household.

Know the gathering limits in your area before you choose to entertain with family and friends indoors. Indoor gatherings are not permitted in regions in Grey - Lockdown.

For all gatherings with anyone you do not live with:

- maintain 2 metres physical distance
- wear a face covering
- avoid potlucks or shared utensils
- ensure everyone washes hands regularly, including before and after meals

Self-isolate if you are sick, even if your symptoms are mild and ask guests to stay home if they feel unwell.

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LOCAL NEWS

# Trailer-hitch killer guilty in Barbara Kentner death

Court finds Brayden Bushby's actions led to Indigenous woman's untimely death

**COURT**  
By Karen Edwards – Local Journalism Initiative

Family and friends of Barbara Kentner hugged one another outside the Courthouse Hotel after learning the man charged in connection to her death had been convicted of manslaughter after he threw a metal trailer hitch at Kentner's abdomen and ruptured her small intestine nearly four years ago in Thunder Bay.

"It's a good outcome and it's what we wanted," Kentner's younger sister, Connie said to reporters after learning Bushby's verdict on Monday, Dec. 14.

"It would have been better if it was a murder (charge)," she said.

Kentner's older sister, Melissa, who was with Barbara when she was struck by the trailer hitch on the night of Jan. 29, 2017, said she is relieved Bushby, now 22, was found guilty but said she is angry Bushby will remain out of custody on bail conditions awaiting sentencing.

"He gets to go spend holidays with his family," she said. "He still able to walk the streets until his sentence date."

Melissa explained how Kentner's only daughter, Serena, is fighting cancer and is currently in southern Ontario.

"It aggravates me because right now I can't be with her. I have to be here," she said.

Defence counsel George Joseph said his client was disappointed with the verdict.

"We argued for something other than what was resulted, but that is part of the job, not getting what you want," Joseph said.

The trial focused on whether or not the injury Kentner sustained in January 2017 was a significant contributing factor in her death approximately five months later.

Bushby had previously pleaded not guilty to one count of manslaughter at the start of his trial, but pleaded guilty to aggravated assault in connection to the incident. His trial took place over four days in early November.

## Charges lowered

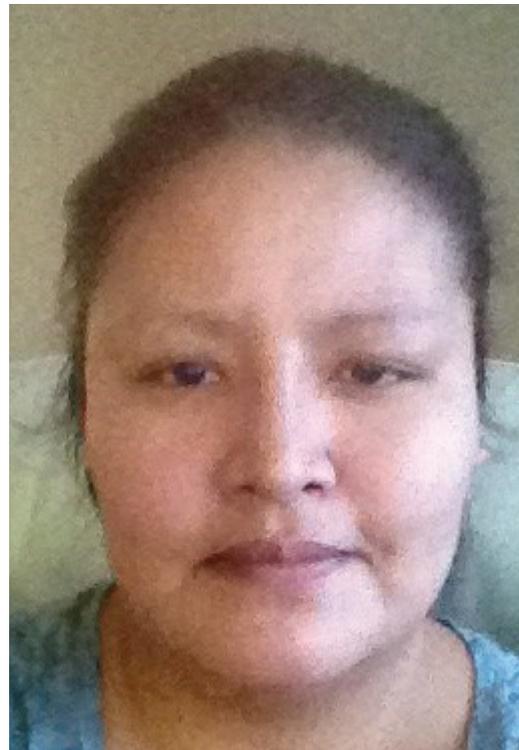
Bushby was initially charged with second-degree murder, but that charge was later withdrawn and changed to manslaughter and aggravated assault. He will only be sentenced on the manslaughter charge.

Before Superior Court Justice Helen M. Pierce announced her verdict, she gave a summary of the fatal trailer-hitch assault, the extensive and complicated medical history of Kentner and the reasons behind her decision.

Kentner suffered a perforated bowel as a result of being hit by a trailer hitch Bushby threw in the early morning hours of Jan. 29, 2017. Kentner required an emergency high-risk operation several hours after the assault in order to repair the internal injury.

A post-mortem examination completed three days after Kentner died determined her death was caused by complications arising from the blunt force injury to her abdomen and liver failure was a contributing factor.

Court heard Bushby had been ice-fishing and drinking earlier in the day before the assault took place. One witness who was in the car with Bushby prior to the assault taking place described him as "getting rowdy". He



TRAGIC VICTIM: Barbara Kentner died in July 2017.

had even jumped out of the vehicle to retrieve the heavy metal trailer hitch from the road.

Kentner was walking with her sister, Melissa, along the side of the road when she was struck.

## Made the case

By pleading guilty to the aggravated assault charge, the Crown proved beyond a reasonable doubt Bushby committed an unlawful and dangerous act by hurling the hitch at Kentner.

"He knew it was heavy enough to cause damage," Pierce said.

Bushby's lawyer argued Bushby was not responsible for Kentner's death stating there were several intervening acts which made it impossible to say for certain the injury Kentner sustained significantly contributed to her death.

"Specifically the defence identifies the delay in Ms. Kentner's accessing medical treatment following her injury," Pierce said.

Kentner was injured shortly after 1 a.m. and was admitted into hospital approximately 13 hours after she was injured. Melissa Kentner testified her sister didn't want to go to the hospital that night and wished to sleep and see how she felt later on. Pierce rejected the defence's argument on this submission.

"In my view it is not necessary to reconcile contradictions in evidence between Barbara Kentner and her sister Melissa,"

Crown counsel argued Bushby's moral culpability was still intact even if a healthier person may have recovered from the same injury.

"I agree with Crown's submission that Mr. Bushby must take his victim as he finds them: in declining health and sometimes non-compliant with medical care," Pierce said.

A contested sentencing hearing for Bushby is scheduled for early February where Kentner's family is expected to give victim impact statements to the court.



BRAYDEN BUSHBY

# Weather Forecast

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
 <p><b>Scattered flurries</b> Probability of Precipitation: 40% HIGH -3 LOW -9</p>	 <p><b>A mix of sun and clouds</b> Probability of Precipitation: 30% HIGH -1 LOW -6</p>	 <p><b>Scattered flurries</b> Probability of Precipitation: 60% HIGH 0 LOW -8</p>
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
 <p><b>Mainly sunny</b> Probability of Precipitation: 20% HIGH -6 LOW -8</p>	 <p><b>Cloudy with sunny breaks</b> Probability of Precipitation: 30% HIGH -1 LOW -3</p>	 <p><b>Scattered flurries</b> Probability of Precipitation: 40% HIGH 1 LOW -7</p>



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LOCAL NEWS

# Fire plan welcomed by city councillors

**CITY HALL**  
By Ian Kaufman - TB Source

Thunder Bay's fire department expects changes to how it deploys staff will bring over one million dollars in yearly savings, eventually eliminating nine staff positions by attrition.

Newly appointed fire chief Greg Hankkio called the changes a win-win while presenting a proposed implementation plan for the department's new strategic master fire plan to city council Monday.

"What we're presenting to you tonight is some long-term savings without a reduction in the level of service," he said.

**All-in**

The plan won councillors' unanimous approval, drawing praise for finding savings without compromising the department's key mandate.

"Typically people get angry with us because we spend money," said Coun. Andrew Foulds. "Tonight, we're looking

at a report that [will maintain] the health and safety of our workers [and] the service to our citizens, and we're looking at a \$1.1 million reduction in costs."

The savings would come by eliminating a dedicated "entry control and accountability" position, which tracks the location and tasks of firefighters, monitors time spent on breathing apparatuses, and crew on scene.

Instead, TBFR will assign the role to a responding firefighter on each shift. The resulting efficiencies will allow the department to eliminate nine positions through attrition by 2024.

The changes will in fact put more firefighters on the ground responding to emergencies like structure fires, Hankkio has told *Thunder Bay Source*.

Thunder Bay pays more per capita for its fire services than the provincial average, Hankkio acknowledged Monday, and has more firefighters per capita.

"We do recognize that the number of firefighters we have compared to other

municipalities is higher in some respects," he said. "Quite frankly, this report is an effort to find efficiencies and reduce that per capita cost."

General manager of emergency services Mark Smith said the department's relatively higher costs reflected more on the city it serves than its own performance, however.

"This is a good example of one of the many costs of urban sprawl," he said. "Thunder Bay is a very low density city, and that's one of the reasons the cost [per capita] is higher than many. I think what should be noted, however, is on a cost per unit of service, we actually compare very favourably."

Larger questions about the number and location of fire stations raised in the fire master plan likely won't be settled until at least 2022, according to the implementation plan.

The implementation plan puts off a decision on that question until 2022, with administration set to report back with a comprehensive recommendation

on fire station location in the second quarter of that year.

Options set out in the master plan range from a "status quo" plan to replace the Vickers fire hall with a new, smaller building to a "realignment option" consolidating the Vickers and Water Street stations into one. Another option proposes converting the Churchill Drive station to an EMS station.

**Not entirely happy**

The city's firefighters association has raised the alarm over some of those possibilities, arguing reductions could cause longer response times and put firefighters in danger.

Hankkio has said he'd like to see a full risk assessment completed before any decisions are made on station realignment, and hopes council will choose to keep the status quo, with the alternative recommendation to eliminate nine positions through attrition making up enough cost savings.



**EFFICIENCIES SOUGHT: A Thunder Bay Fire Rescue firefighter in action.**

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## LOCAL NEWS

## IN BRIEF

# Man, cat safe following kitchen fire

A fire that extensively damaged a south-side Thunder Bay home on Saturday night has been traced to a pan of cooking oil that was left unattended on a stove.

Captain Kevin Anderson of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue says a male occupant of the residence, located on Almira Avenue off Rosslyn Road, "went to the living room to wait for it to warm up, and he fell asleep."

"He was very lucky to get out alive, because he had a smoke alarm but hadn't installed it yet. So he didn't have a smoke alarm to alert him to the fire," Anderson said Monday.

The man woke up in time to escape to safety, but required treatment by paramedics at the scene, and was taken to hospital for further assessment.

Anderson said the house is uninhabitable as a result of the fire, as there is



**KITCHEN FIRE:** A Thunder Bay Fire Rescue firefighter investigates an Almira Avenue fire.

significant fire, smoke and water damage.

However, he believes it is repairable. Most of the fire damage is in the

kitchen area, with some in the attic as well.

Firefighters were able to rescue the owner's cat.

## Grinch steals kettle

The local Salvation Army is focusing on the positive after one of its Christmas kettles was stolen, along with hundreds of dollars in donations.

The incident occurred last Friday, when an individual removed most of a kettle stand containing between \$300 and \$500 toward the organization's Christmas campaign.

Executive director Gary Ferguson said theft of the relatively heavy kettles was unfortunate, though not unheard of, despite precautions taken by the group.

He emphasized the incident has been outshone by the community's generosity, with the fundraising campaign already more than halfway to its \$220,000 goal.

"Although we're saddened by the theft, we are thankful that no one was

hurt," Ferguson said Monday. "As a Christian organization, we don't hold ill feelings towards the person responsible for this crime, but we do hope that he changes from this path of self-destruction."

Ferguson was pleased with the Christmas campaign's financial progress in an uncertain year, noting rising uptake on the new "Tiptap machines" that allow tap donations in \$5 increments using debit and credit cards.

Donations to the Kettle campaign will be accepted until 1 p.m. on Dec. 24 at the following locations: Superstore, Intercity Shopping Centre, Grandview Mall, Walmart County Fair, Walmart Memorial Avenue, Walmart Arthur Street Marketplace, and the LCBO's at Arthur Street, Thunder Centre, and Dawson Road.

Volunteers are still needed.

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# Editorial

## EDITORIAL

### Verdict the right one

The Brayden Bushby verdict was a small victory for Indigenous women everywhere.

Bushby on Monday was convicted of manslaughter, nearly four years after he callously tossed a trailer hitch out of a moving vehicle, striking Barbara Kentner in the stomach.

Five months later, she was dead, and Justice Helen Pierce ruled, in handing down her decision, that the injuries Kentner suffered that night were at least partially responsible for her death.

It wasn't the second-degree murder charge many of her friends and family were hoping for. But it was the Ontario justice system standing up for a victim who was ruthlessly attacked while minding her own business.

Bushby, testimony recorded, was heard to say he'd 'got one.'

Whether he meant an Indigenous person, or if he thought he was throwing a heavy metal object at someone he thought was a prostitute - she wasn't - makes no difference. As we've seen too often in Thunder Bay, Indigenous victims are too often ignored, the injustices committed against them relegated to the 'they probably deserved it' pile.

This time the law worked in the victim's favour. Unfortunately, it doesn't bring Barbara Kentner back. But maybe it makes the next Brayden Bushby think first before doing something stupid.

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### Vaccine questionable?

To the editor:

I am responding to your plea for people to get vaccinated in an editorial published on Dec. 10.

Recovery from actual COVID-19 is already 98.5 per cent to 99.5 per cent effective depending on the population grouping. Why take the chance on a rushed vaccine that is less effective than this?

Taking the vaccine with the camera rolling is in itself questionable given there is a false syringe available which while looking impressive in reality presses the liquid into the handle of the syringe instead of into the individual.

Herd immunity as any competent scientist is aware, is a natural result of a virus going through a population as evidenced in Sweden and South Dakota.

Jason and Aina Gathercole

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



# Should I declare bankruptcy?

**I** need to get my finances in order, but I have a lot of credit card debt and I don't know what to do to get it under control. This has been a hard year and it will be a lean Christmas. Should I declare bankruptcy? I am worried this will make things even worse, any ideas?

Sincerely, Ken

**D**ear Ken: Don't beat yourself up about your debt, it can be fixed. There are many Canadians that are experiencing dire financial problems due to COVID and you are not alone. Review all your options and really open your mind to all possibilities.

Do you need to downsize your home to reduce your debt?

Should you change your career and get a different job? Don't be afraid to get out of your comfort zone to fix your finances.

Declaring bankruptcy should be

viewed as a last resort and you should exhaust all other solutions before contemplating this option. Yes, the bankruptcy will ruin your credit, however it is recoverable if you had to choose this option.

Once the bankruptcy has been settled and cleared, it is important to re-establish good credit right away. This could take up to three years to do so, but remember you must do the incremental steps over time to get back in the game.

Be honest with yourself and be committed to change.

Let go of any past indiscretions or setbacks and start again in 2021. It is a new decade, and a new start to clear your mind towards financial freedom.

If you are like most, ending the year with considerable debt, there are a few other ways to fix this. The easiest method is to consolidate high interest loans into a new mortgage, line of credit or consolidation loan, to

capture a lower rate and increase monthly cash flow. This consolidation should be viewed as a one-time transaction to put you on the right road to a debt free lifestyle and should never be used as a continuous solution to get you out of future debts. If this is not an option, make a list of all your debts and begin to tackle one liability at a time.

Pick the one you are going to concentrate on and put as much as you can down on this debt every month, whilst only paying the minimum payments on the other loans.

Once this debt is paid, then move to the next one, repeating the process of paying down one and maintaining the others with only minimum payments. Once all the credit is paid, you can use these newfound funds to start a savings program toward investing. This is when you will stop feeling helpless.

Be sure to avoid the trend to sugarcoat your finances or make excuses to flee from finally resolving your debt this year.

It is necessary for you to take action

and get out of the victim mentality, finally creating certainty and options for your future.

If this means finding ways to make more income, getting a new job, or cutting back on spending - then do it! It is in the reach of every person to become financially comfortable.

Let go of your old habits and create new ones for 2021.

Let's make this new decade your time to succeed.

Believe in yourself and most of all, believe you are worth it. You've got this!

Good luck and best wishes,  
Money Lady

**Written by Christine Ibbotson, Author of the best-selling book "How to Retire Debt Free & Wealthy" and a new book Don't Panic - How to Manage your Finances and Financial Anxieties During and After the Coronavirus" available at all bookstores across Canada. If you have a money question, please email on website: [www.askthemoneylady.ca](http://www.askthemoneylady.ca)**



**CHRISTINE  
IBBOTSON  
MONEY LADY**

# Perspective

## Holidays home alone

Now is not the time to let down our COVID-19 guard

### OPINION

By J.R. Shermack  
Special to TB Source

Other than one or two occasions over the years I have always spent Christmas right here at home and in that sense nothing has changed for 2020.

For many years we've been lucky enough to host Christmas dinner for family and friends around our own table and that is one of the highlights of the season for us.

Now more than ever there is no place like home (alone) for the holidays.

This year just like many Canadian families across the country our celebration will be low key, our table will be sparsely peopled and the roast turkey will be more modestly presented.

We shall remain hunkered down in our selective holiday bubble but even though our guest list can be counted on the fingers of one hand we still feel fortunate.

#### Bubble intact

Our reward for months of masking and social distancing is that even though we will be staying home for Christmas we won't be there alone.

Our small bubble will continue over Christmas – it keeps us safe and our diligence enables us to at least get together, rejoice and reminisce with a modicum of loved

ones.

Everyone else on our list will have to be content with Zoom meetings, emails, Christmas photo cards and socially distant season's greetings outdoors.

Now is not the time to let down our guard and recklessly waste these past months of isolation, sanitation and looking out for each other.

Hopefully when we get together, all together again, next Christmas and look back at 2020 we will feel joyful and encouraged that the burden has been lifted.

**“Almost 20 per cent of Canadians aren't worried about friends or family becoming sick...”**

Hold on until then because if we are willing to do the hard work now there is indeed a light at the end of this tunnel.

Many families are experiencing high anxiety as they consider the heart-wrenching choices about visiting (or not) family members.

We are being urged to strictly limit our social contacts and if enough of us accept and follow that advice, next year will be a very Merry Christmas.

But old habits die hard and while most Canadians intend to have a safe and solitary Christmas a significant number will continue and even extend their dangerous behavior.

The key findings of an Angus Reid poll have revealed that three out of every ten Canadians will be visiting family and friends outside

their local household.

For this group the lure of Christmas as usual overrides public health concerns, even though ignoring the dire warnings puts them and others at increased risk.

Even more troubling is the fact that one in ten are planning to travel outside their communities or out of province for the holidays.

Almost 20 per cent of Canadians aren't worried about friends or family becoming sick and intend to Christmas like it was 2019 with no regard for the pandemic.

#### Troubles ahead

And after they have spread enough holiday cheer (and COVID 19) and return from their ill-advised holiday travel we will all have more post-holiday health challenges to face.

For conscientious Canadians who continue to do the work, make personal sacrifices and stay home rather than risk spreading the virus, this behavior is a slap in the face.

Everybody understands the strength of family ties but at the same time it is difficult to rationalize this disregard for public safety.

Everyone will benefit from the recent months of masking, social distancing and isolation, even those who are behaving badly, because we are all in this together.

Many will stay at home for Christmas this year and some will not – I wish good health and happiness for all my fellow Canadians wherever they may be.

### FREE RIDE



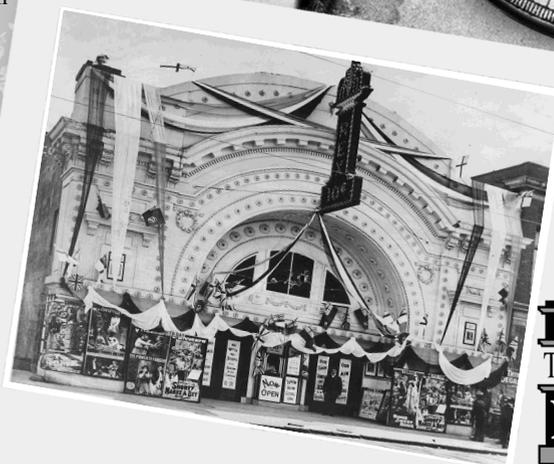
**AFFORDABLE TRANSIT:** Tracey MacKinnon last Friday participates in Poverty Free Thunder Bay's proportional fare bus ride. The group is aiming to have free bus rides for all by 2023.

JAY KAUFMAN

## A look back in history:

### Rex Theatre

The Rex Theatre on Simpson Street was one of our city's most decorative theatres. Built in 1909 as the Palace Theatre it was one of two theatres in Fort William that specialized in silent films. The Rex (as it was named in 1911) seated 500 to 600 and was usually packed for such films as *Shorty Makes a Bet* or *Home Sweet Home*. Shows ran continuously for 12 hours every day.



### HOW TO WRITE US:

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

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

#### Address them to:

Thunder Bay Source  
87 North Hill Street,  
Thunder Bay, ON P7A 5V6

Email: [ldunick@dougallmedia.com](mailto:ldunick@dougallmedia.com)

Visit our website: [www.tbnewswatch.com](http://www.tbnewswatch.com)

### THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

**your VOICE**

VOICE YOUR OPINION ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER MOST.

Visit [www.tbnewswatch.com](http://www.tbnewswatch.com) TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND VIEWS ABOUT OUR WEEKLY POLL QUESTION.

Should Thunder Bay move into the Red-Control Zone?

**TOTAL VOTES: 813**

YES 49.32%  NO 45.51%  DON'T KNOW 5.17%

# TB Life

people | health | home | food | leisure

## Unifor donates \$14K to RFDA

**THUNDER BAY**  
By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Volker Kromm says as Christmas nears, the Regional Food Distribution Association is scrambling to meet everyone's needs.

It's exponentially more difficult in the midst of a pandemic.

On Wednesday the organization, which supplies food to food banks throughout the city and into the region, got a bit of a financial boost, thanks to a donation of \$14,500 from Unifor, money collected from the seven local chapters and the national office.

Gary Bragnalo, Unifor's national representative in Thunder Bay said it's been a tough year for everyone, many of his membership included, but it says a lot about the importance of the RFDA, especially as the holidays approach about the willingness of workers to give so much.

This year's donation was nearly \$4,000 more than last year's, Bragnalo said, calling it the union's number one donation target.

"We picked this one years ago. We figured we had the downsizing in forestry and stuff like that before. And



**GIFT OF FOOD:** Unifor's Gary Bragnalo (left) presents a cheque for \$14,550 to the Regional Food Distribution Association's Volker Kromm.

now you're seeing Bombardier going down. Probably some of our members are in hard times and they may have to

use this," Bragnalo said. "Plus, it's for the whole community and this is our way of giving back to the

community and probably, we figured, the best place to do it." Kromm, the RFDA's executive

director, said he and his staff are busy preparing Christmas hampers and said as a result they do have a lot of extra food costs and other expenses to make the holidays a happy time for as many people as possible.

The money from Unifor, which has donated more than \$90,000 over the past six years, is crucial at this time of year.

"We count on their support and we appreciate their philosophy of giving back to the community. They've had some tough times, so for them to be so generous and so steady in their support, gives us a lot of comfort and we're very grateful for it," Kromm said.

There's extra need this year, he added.

"The food requirement is there and we get people coming from various places, some bulk, some locally donated, but the issue is there are always lots of food expenses, such as various proteins, and I always mention peanut butter," Kromm said.

"Those kinds of things that we all rely on, they don't always come in the volumes we need. So we're going to be spending a lot of extra money to make sure our hampers have things like protein ... This donation from Unifor comes at a good time for that."

### Holiday schedule changes for all areas and zones

Check your **2020 WASTE/RECYCLING COLLECTION SCHEDULE** and note changes for the week of December 21 & December 28.

AREA	NEW DATES	
Area 1 – <b>BLUE</b> Cards	Monday, December 21	Monday, December 28
Area 2 – <b>ORANGE</b> Cards	Tuesday, December 22	Tuesday, December 29
Area 3 – <b>GREEN</b> Cards	Wednesday, December 23	Wednesday, December 30
Area 4 – <b>PINK</b> Cards	Thursday, December 24	Thursday, December 31

Check your Waste/Recycling Collection Schedule for your recycling day.

Garbage must be out for collection by 7 am.

Questions? Call Infrastructure & Operations at **625-2195**



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JARRON CHILDS

PICTURE PERFECT: Keith Ailey helps photographer Jarron Childs demonstrate how to set up a fantastic action shot.

# Positioning photo subjects properly

In last week's column I shared some photography tips regarding composition and light from Jarron Childs of Superior Images.

A few weeks back, I had the opportunity to get out with Childs one evening after work for a mountain bike ride and Jarron brought his camera gear.

Of course, at this time of year there is only a small window of suitable light conditions after work hours, so I was able to see how Jarron used a remote flash to control the light in his shots.

Even more interesting to me was the way he set himself up to capture some really cool angles.

As he set up the shots, I worried about spraying his camera with the mud and ice flung up by my tires. In the end, the shots turned out great and Jarron was happy to articulate how he uses light and point of view to make great images:

"Understand that the human eye is better at "seeing" light than any camera sensor out there in terms of the range of brightness to darkness you can render with detail simultaneously. Take a photo of someone with a big bright sky behind them and you will normally get either a perfect sky and silhouette person (dark) or you will get a recognizable person and a blown out white sky.

This isn't your fault, it's the limits of the technology. What is your fault is how you set up the image. If you can minimize the separation between the brightest part of the image and the darkest part of the image, you will create

more appealing images that don't have lost detail due to underexposure or blown out whites.

Position your subject appropriately, and you can make better images, with better backgrounds.

I shoot a lot of sports images, the most interesting ones are the images that make you feel like you are on the court, in the action.

Getting close to the players, shooting up from the floor, etc. anything that gives me an image that the person in the stands can't see every night, creates a stronger impact. The same is true of nature photography.

If you only shoot while standing up, you capture what everyone sees, every day, and you will not have any impact in your images. If you crawl on the ground, use zoom or wide angles in different ways, climb a tree or a ladder, etc. you will start to create interesting viewpoints that will draw in your audience because they haven't seen your subject from that angle before."

When it comes to photographing the landscape we live in and the people who chase adventure here, the list of subjects we can focus on is endless.

We can aim our cameras at a mountain biker in Shuniah Mines, an ice climber at Orient Bay or an angler wading across some swirling river as it carves a steep path to Lake Superior.

Regardless of the subject in our viewfinder, applying some of Childs' tips will help us all capture the essence of the good life we are living in Thunder Bay.



**KEITH AILEY**  
THE GOOD LIFE

## Support Local.

Here are ways you can help.

- 1 **Buy Gift Certificates** to all your favourite restaurants, salons & shops to use in the future.
- 2 **Support Local Shops** that offer delivery or curbside pick up services.
- 3 **Order Pick Up or Delivery** from your favourite local Thunder Bay restaurants.
- 4 **Buy Branded Merchandise** (a mug, cozy hoodie, etc.) from your favourite local businesses.
- 5 **Shop at Neighbourhood Stores** instead of ordering from large online retailers.

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# Getting the tree an annual tradition



**FRED JONES**

RURAL ROOTS

tion of one year, we have made the trek back to the back-40 to locate a candidate to be cut, hauled back to the house, set up, and decorated as the central symbol of this festive season.

My wife, Laura, and I go for walks along our trails that eventually wind up in the back of the property where all these trees have taken over what was ploughed land.

Most of the time especially when actually in the bush, we timber-cruise looking for standing dead trees that I can cut, buck, and haul back to where I split and stack the wood.

As I have mentioned, this wood is for the fireplace, nice and dry with plenty of "crackle, crackle" when lit.

We often pass through the 'back 40' where the likely Christmas tree possibilities reside. And each year we inspect the available ones and select the best.

This year, however, I wasn't on the Christmas tree selection committee. My son, Doug, his girlfriend, Ivy, and Laura were the ones that tromped with pooches to that back field and chose this year's

tree.

The next day Laura and I took doggies for another walk that they love (Baxter goes 'nuts' when I say the word "walk" – all excited to be out of the house and going somewhere where there are an infinite number of smells.) and when we wound up in the back field, she took me to the location of this year's candidate. Very nice.

Actually, perfect: perhaps a bit tall but evenly shaped all around.

And so it came to pass this past Saturday, we trudged along the trail with Baxter and Lily to where the tree grew. I insist that I cut the tree by hand with a crosscut saw which I did.

Then we returned to Casa Jones and I fetched the quad and cart to return and retrieve the felled tree also which I did although being an aging weakling, it took a while to get the thing onto the cart. I marvelled at how much muscle I've lost. Must do something about that.

Tree and me returned and I got out the measuring tape. Argh! Thirteen feet, three inches! Too tall to be manageable.

So I hauled out the chain saw and removed two and a half feet from the bottom of the tree.

Meanwhile, Laura and Daughter Beth had prepared the site laying down plastic garbage bags on the floor and then over top of that a red cloth.

I dragged in the still-heavy tree to which Laura affixed the stand. Then I stood it upright.

It took a couple of tries to get it straight and vertical. Then it was going down to the basement storage room and carrying up the tupperware bins full of decorations. We decorated after supper with appropriate festive music playing. Both of us being tired, we left the tree to be further decorated in the morning.

The first Christmas Laura and I lived together we had a couple of horses living with us too.

We didn't own the property across the road which we now do. But Laura got permission from the guy living there to string up electric fencing and allow our horses to graze.

We had walked the property and saw

in the back field all these wonderful potential Christmas trees. We selected on and while I cut it, Laura returned to fetch 'Stranger' perhaps the best horse we've ever owned.

## Hauled home

Next thing I saw was Laura and Stranger hauling the tree behind them across the field and up the log driveway to the small cabin in which we lived. Very old fashioned and certainly better than trying to drag the tree by hand over a half mile across a field. That was the only time Laura did that.

Since then we haven't taken the time to train a horse to calmly pull anything. The riding business took up too much time. Now, of course, the quad and the cart (or the bucket of Big Red, my ancient tractor) do the job.

Sunday morning I arose and headed to the living room. First thing I did was turn on the Christmas tree lights and stand back to admire the brilliant display; and then I headed into the kitchen to make coffee.

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# IN THE bay

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## Sound of metal an intriguing watch



**MARTY  
MASCARINI**  
MOVIE TALK

In *Sound of Metal*, (Shaw PPV) Riz Ahmed faces a sensory nightmare: severe hearing loss.

Ahmed (*The Sisters Brothers*, HBO's *The Night Of...*) plays Ruben, a driven, heavily-tattooed, bleached-haired drummer in a punk band, along with his singer/guitarist girlfriend, Lou (Olivia Cooke). Ruben's life is thrown into turmoil when one day most of his hearing suddenly goes AWOL, reduced to an indistinct muffle--and it's terrifying, especially for a musician.

The effect is immediate. Their tour gets sidelined. Ruben's emergency consult with a specialist cautions Ruben about his perceived quick fix: implant surgery. It's costly, not covered by insurance, and may not exactly restore one's hearing completely.

### Fight not over

Ruben's also a recovering drug addict, four years clean. But his edgy demeanor suggests that not all of his demons have been put to rest.

Ruben lands in a camp for the deaf, run by no-nonsense Joe (Paul Raci, in real-life a child of deaf parents), who lost his hearing in the war. Joe's program follows the axiom that being deaf is not



**METAL MADNESS:** Riz Ahmed plays Ruben, a drummer who one day wakes up to find his hearing has all but disappeared.

a handicap, 'not something to fix.' Rather, participants learn to function without aides.

Hence, Lou cannot be part of Ruben's life while he's in the camp. A recovering self-cutter herself, Lou has her own path

of self-healing to follow.

We see the anxiety in Ruben's eyes at being the 'new guy' in an alien fraternity that he does not want to be part of. He bristles when Joe assigns him to a bare bones room "to be still," with just a

writing pad for an outlet. Ruben balks at imposed introspection.

But upon learning sign language, Ruben slowly finds some acceptance in the camp to the point that Joe offers him a job. More's the pity when Ruben seeks

out his "quick fix" on the sly, resulting in his having to find his own way.

*Sound of Metal* is intriguing in that it goes beyond just the protagonist-handicap-crisis theme. Though he doesn't realize it initially, the situation is forcing Ruben to examine his life and addictions. Ahmed is superb, his anxious, deep-set eyes and scratchy attitude suggests a tetchy, restless soul.

Director Darius Marder, who co-wrote the script with his brother Abraham, refrains from easy epiphanies. The film's mood is hushed, minus music that could otherwise force a moment.

### Same, but different

After Ruben re-unites with Lou at her father's home in Paris, there's a beautifully rendered pause between the two, suggesting an unspoken realization that things aren't the same. Commendably, the script gives Lou her own back story, despite being largely absent until the last act.

The film's truly distinctive achievement here is the effective sound design. Throughout the movie, we get Ruben's isolated point of view hearing-wise, with an influx of sounds running from droning murmurs to tinny bleats to wincing, fuzzy distortions.

It's a convincing, seemingly credible rendering of the auditory challenges confronting the hearing impaired.

But come the ending, as Ruben removes his external hearing devices to gaze into a soundless sky, he may have finally found a way to "be still" after all.

## Christmas wishes fulfilled

**THUNDER BAY**  
By Doug Diaczuk - TB Source

The many hardships facing families this year were not enough to stop the giving spirit, as people across the city and district once again stepped up to ensure all children will have a gift to open this holiday season.

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care celebrated another successful Christmas Wish Campaign, bringing in enough toys to fill 700 gift bags and raising more than \$40,000.

"I believe what Thunder Bay has done has really provided some hope," said Darcia Borg, executive director of Dilico Anishinabek Family Care.

"Through all this pandemic and everything that has been impacting our community, they still saw the importance of receiving a gift on Christmas morning and for some children this will be the only gift they receive."

The Christmas Wish Campaign has been ongoing since 2008 and aims to collect gifts for children and youth living in the 13 communities Dilico serves.

"Amazingly we saw our biggest year. We raised more than \$40,000 this year. Thunder Bay has always been a part of the Dilico family and the district as well."

There were concerns the campaign wouldn't be able to move forward this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

but alternative ways were offered to donate, including online, which really saw a lot of support.

"Because of COVID-19, we wanted to make it safer for people to be able to donate so they had different options," Borg said. "Rather than picking up the red bag they could do donations online as well."

And given that so many people are struggling due to the pandemic, the outpouring of support is so meaningful.

"We know right now everyone is struggling due to COVID-19 and the financial difficulties all families might be experiencing right now," Borg said. The Christmas Wish bags will be delivered to the 13 communities this week.



**BAGS OF FUN:** Dilico's Darcia Borg with a gymnasium filled with Christmas Wish bags.

# Christmas classics all over the map

At this time of year, the networks are filling up with holiday specials and movies to help us get in the mood to overspend on items nobody needs but everyone just has to have.

There are two types to choose from. The first have Christmas as a sub-title, the not-so-Christmas classics.

For example, *Die Hard* is a holiday hostage situation and *While you Were Sleeping* has a woman pretending to be engaged to a guy in a coma. And who could forget *Lethal Weapon* in which a hooker is killed to the tune of *Jingle Bell Rock*.

Then there are the movies that are all about the holidays. And despite a multitude of Christmas classics to choose from, there's always new fare on the menu.

Candace Cameron Bure took time off from the now cancelled *Fuller House* to star in *Switched at Christmas* as a set of



estranged twins. Meanwhile, *Glee's* Amber Riley stars as a college student who tries to hire a family for the holidays in *My One Christmas Wish*.

These are nice little films. Yet, they don't quite meet the standards that were set by my juvenile heart so many Christmases ago with films like *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Miracle on 34th*



FATHER GRISWOLD: Chevy Chase stars in the hilarious *Christmas Vacation*.

*Street*. Those were magic. Or were they? My ultimate Christmas classics include a suicide attempt and

locking up Santa in a psychiatric ward. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Even the true "children's classics" are rife with questionable content. *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* was ostracized by his peers and only accepted after he could prove his value.

*Charlie Brown's Christmas* focuses on a neurotic kid and his pathetic little tree. And *Frosty the Snowman* involves theft and a murdered snowman.

In *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, Santa holds a grudge against an entire town for the comments of one loud-mouth idiot. (Hopefully Kim Jong-un isn't watching.) And don't get me started on *The Grinch*.

Of course, in the last few decades, some new classics have popped up. Everyone loves *The Santa Clause*.

A guy steals a dead man's red suit and as a result, is blackmailed into giving up his life for this new job. It was followed

by *The Santa Clause 2* in which the same guy is now forced to find a wife who is then emotionally blackmailed into giving up her life too.

In *Home Alone*, Macauley Culkin is "accidentally" left behind when the family leaves town for the holidays. But don't be afraid children. That sound you heard downstairs was actually someone breaking in while the cops ignored your pleas for help.

*Elf* wears green tights. Should be fun, right? Except he's sent away from everything he knows by his adoptive family. Then his biological father shuns him too. (Can anyone say DACA?)

And what's the holiday without *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* and an electrocuted cat?

OK, so perhaps our Christmas classics are as twisted as our tendency to overshop and complain about it. But at least we're watching them together.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Baptist (abbr.)
  - 5 Body of water
  - 8 Heddles of a loom
  - 12 Sword
  - 13 Amazon tributary
  - 14 Boss on a shield
  - 15 Demeanor
  - 16 Exudate plant
  - 17 Number (suf.)
  - 18 Consort of Pericles
  - 20 Rockies range
  - 21 Celsius (abbr.)
  - 22 Bureau of Labor Statistics (abbr.)
  - 23 Correspond
  - 26 Eye inflammation
  - 27 Legal gambling (abbr.)
  - 30 Goddess (Lat.)
  - 31 Puzzle
  - 33 Island
- DOWN**
- 1 Pulpit
  - 2 Embodiment of Ptah
  - 3 Look narrowly
  - 4 Whist hand
  - 5 Signet

### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

L	X	X	V	A	C	E	A	R	A	D
O	E	C	A	L	A	R	N	A	R	E
A	M	I	L	L	U	N	E	T	I	C
M	A	X	I	L	L	A	K	E	N	
			S	E	A	L	A	S	C	A
S	C	A	L	E	D	E	A	O	B	E
C	O	P	E	L	A	D	P	A	B	A
O	L	E	G	A	B	D	E	T	E	R
P	A	R	D	O	N	G	A	G		
	T	A	B		P	A	R	A	S	O
S	H	U	L		C	A	L	K	A	R
D	U	R	A		O	G	E	E	I	D
O	M	E	I		L	E	A	N	D	O

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18			19			20				
			21			22				
23	24	25		26				27	28	29
30			31	32				33		
34			35			36	37			
			38			39				
40	41	42		43				44	45	46
47				48				49		
50				51				52		
53				54				55		

- 6 Ecuador (abbr.)
- 7 Air-to-air missile (abbr.)
- 8 Skin layer
- 9 Verily
- 10 Foment
- 11 Guenon monkey
- 19 Prophets
- 20 Odysseus
- 22 British thermal unit (abbr.)
- 23 Bustle
- 24 Germany (abbr.)
- 25 Mortar mixer
- 26 Compass direction
- 27 Wood sorrel
- 28 Tactical Air Command (abbr.)
- 29 Tournament walkover
- 32 Dutch commune
- 37 Firecracker
- 38 Utopian
- 39 Cloud (Fr.)
- 40 Amalekite king
- 41 Woman's work basket
- 42 Kwa language
- 43 Eucalyptus secretion
- 44 Ger. industrial valley
- 45 Fertilizer ingredient
- 46 Madam
- 48 Bachelor of Fine Arts (abbr.)

## WORD SEARCH

M	S	S	E	T	A	R	B	E	T	R	E	V	N	I
T	I	R	E	L	E	S	S	R	P	P	K	R	O	O
N	A	M	E	S	A	K	E	O	T	A	W	D	R	Y
I	U	Q	W	G	G	C	Y	D	C	A	N	O	N	E
O	H	I	U	G	A	O	O	E	A	A	B	N	S	L
J	G	I	N	I	K	R	H	S	R	O	E	L	H	L
S	Q	I	R	N	B	F	D	E	T	P	T	K	E	S
I	Y	S	E	E	D	B	P	S	G	A	Z	F	R	U
D	N	A	X	R	S	O	L	I	S	D	E	S	K	S
I	R	T	W	T	H	B	P	E	A	D	E	P	T	P
M	R	O	L	D	G	S	Y	V	S	I	A	H	W	E
L	A	U	S	U	N	L	A	B	S	E	B	E	F	C
Y	X	Q	R	S	B	E	Z	T	Y	S	A	N	N	T
E	J	H	S	O	F	D	Y	T	L	U	C	A	F	K
S	S	E	N	H	S	I	F	L	E	S	K	D	V	S

- Aback
- Adept
- Bobsled
- Desks
- Dimly
- Disjoint
- Dross
- Dying
- Endways
- Erodes
- Exults
- Faculty
- Frocks
- Hedgehogs
- Hires
- Inert
- Invertebrates
- Namesake
- Nobly
- Operand
- Paddies
- Penny
- Pigpen
- Quibbles
- Quotas
- Regards
- Robots
- Sassy
- Selfishness
- Shrug
- Silos
- Suspect
- Swigs
- Table
- Tawdry
- Tireless
- Tract
- Usual
- Yells

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

								5
	2						7	
		5			1			
1	4			2	5			
6				5				4
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DIFFICULTY: ★★★★★

## ENIGMA CRYPTOGRAM

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

"HEO JYVHHOL JMYS FCL TO OYCDOS  
- LMH DM JVHE HEO DZMAOL JMYS."  
- CNHEMY NLALMJL

PREVIOUS SOLUTION: "Never do anything in haste that can never be undone."  
- Yajnavalkya Dasa

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# Sports

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## Fanti shines in Omaha bubble

### HOCKEY

By Leith Dunick - TB Source

It's not the college hockey life Ryan Fanti imagined.

But it's better than not playing at all.

Fanti, 21, is a second-year goaltender with the third-ranked University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs, one of eight teams playing inside the National Collegiate Hockey Conference bubble in Omaha, Neb.

It's a lot of online classes, regular COVID-19 tests and too much time spent in the dorm room playing video games or studying, whiling away the time between practices and games.

The Thunder Bay native says it beats the alternative.

"At the end of the day, it's just really nice to be playing hockey again, amidst everything that's going on this year. We're just really happy to be here," said Fanti, who didn't dress last season, coming off of a pair of successful campaigns with the Minnesota Wilderness of the North American Hockey League.

#### Great start

Fanti is off to a solid start in Omaha, posting a 4-1-1 record in six starts for the Bulldogs, with a 2.30 goals against average and .917 save percentage.

"You don't really get to be a regular college student anymore, in the months we've been in the pod here.



**DOGGED DISPLAY:** Ryan Fanti has played six games this season for the UMD Bulldogs.

All our classes have been moved online and you just have to take that extra step of being responsible, with COVID guidelines and everything, socially distancing and all that kind of stuff, because we get tested three times a week at the rink. If you come back positive or infect the rest of the team, we're on a pause for two or three weeks."

Basically he goes to the rink, skates

and heads back to dorm life, hanging out with his teammates and roommates.

"That's basically all we've done since September."

Given his early season success, it appears to be working out just fine. Fanti, who graduated from the Thunder Bay Kings program, said he's just glad to be playing a part in the team's success.

"I've been playing well and seeing the puck, and stuff, but our team at the same time has done a really good job in battling back late in these three or four games I've been in. We've been in some tough situations and we've shown some resilience and finding ways to put the puck in the back of the net," Fanti said.

The rookie goaltender said the team is definitely feeling the pressure to win.

The Bulldogs took home the NCAA championship in 2018 and 2019 under coach Scott Sandelin, the school's third national title since 2011.

#### Winning ways

It's a proud hockey tradition to live up to, he said.

But it's a challenge he and his teammates are up for, Fanti added.

"Losing any maybe not achieving your goals or achieving the team dreams, really isn't acceptable," he said.

The one disappointment is not having friends and family from Thunder Bay in the rink cheering him on. Hopefully it's a just a one-year thing, Fanti said.

"That's definitely been tough. It's so close, but so far away with the border restrictions. That's just something I have to deal with this year and then next year and the coming years, it'll make it just that much more special when they're allowed to come."

## Blue Jays offseason could be interesting

The Toronto Blue Jays have been linked to just about every big-name free agent on the market.

Some make plenty of sense.

Trevor Bauer would be a great fit as a No. 2 starter behind Hyun-Jin Ryu, if not the No. 1 role if he can replicate his Cy Young-winning effort from this past season with the Cincinnati Reds.

There's a few pitchers who could help round out a rotation that struggled at times in 2020, with the likes of Chase Anderson and Taijuan Walker.

Jake Odorizzi is another name I wouldn't mind seeing wind up at Rogers Centre - or wherever the Jays call home in 2021. And raiding the Yankees to sign Masahiro Tanaka would be a great way to hurt a key division opponent's depth, assuming he can stay healthy.

As far as position players go, free agent George Springer would be a huge add to the outfield, a three-time all-star who brings a 35-homer bat and great

defence to centrefield. I also like the idea of bringing another Yankee, second baseman D.J. LeMahieu. He's a great fielder and a two-time batting champion, and would allow Toronto to move Cavan Biggio to the outfield. He and New York are apparently \$25 million apart, as of Monday.

Former Cleveland and Houston star Michael Brantley might be an outfield option, at a bargain basement price, and Justin Turner, late of the Los Angeles Dodgers, might be in the mix and would fill the gap at third.

One name I don't like is ex-Phillies catcher J.T. Realmuto. He's one of the best in the business, but signing him would eat a lot of capital at a position the Jays have plenty of depth, starting with Danny Jansen and Alejandro Kirk.

Realmuto would cost a fortune to sign and the Jays would still have plenty of holes to fill as they attempt to add star power around the likes of Biggio, Bo

Bichette, Lourdes Gurriel and Vladimir Guerrero Jr.

Catchers also tend to fall off pretty quickly, so a long-term deal could be an albatross around their neck, much like the massive five-year, \$82-million deal they gave Russell Martin in 2014, only to eat most of the final year of the contract after offloading him to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The other possibility is a trade with Cleveland for shortstop Francisco Lindor, who is destined for free agency after next season. I wouldn't make the deal, which would likely cost them Gurriel and one or two A-list prospects, unless Lindor was willing to sign an extension, or if the soon-to-be-renamed team from Cleveland drastically reduced their demands.

After all, Lindor can walk for nothing next fall.

Making the expanded playoffs gave us all a taste of what could be on the baseball horizon over the next several seasons for the Toronto Blue Jays. Go big or to home, I say, go aggressively after Springer and Bauer. Trade for Lindor or southpaw Blake Snell. The time to win is now.



**LEITH DUNICK**  
SPORTS SHORTS

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# NOCA cans playdowns

## CURLING

By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Trevor Bonot is ready for bubble life in Calgary. Krista McCarville is a little more hesitant.

Bonot, a former Canadian mixed champion, and his teammate Oye Sem-Won, were awarded the Northern Ontario berth at the 2021 mixed doubles championship when the Northern Ontario Curling Association decided to forgo next year's play-downs.

The duo won provincials last winter in Kenora, only to learn in the days leading up to the event it had been cancelled due to the onset of COVID-19.

McCarville, who has represented Ontario and Northern Ontario eight times at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, has been invited to do so in 2021, an event originally scheduled for Thunder Bay, but she and her teammates are unsure if they'll accept the offer due to work and family commitments. They have until Dec. 18.



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PLAY BALL?: Former Thunder Bay Border Cat Thomas Grilli tries to turn a double play during the 2019 season.

# Cats optimistic about playing ball in 2020

## BASEBALL

By Leith Dunick –TB Source

The Thunder Bay Border Cats have a 72-game schedule to work with, but the question remains will they be able to play at home in 2021?

The team's vice-president, Bryan Graham, is hopeful, citing progress on the vaccine front in the fight against COVID-19.

There are still plenty of questions that remain unanswered.

First and foremost is Canada's land border with the United States, which remains closed after nearly nine months, to all but essential travelers.

There's no indication at this time when it might reopen to the general public.

Secondly, Graham said he and the team's ownership group don't have a crystal ball and can't say whether or not public health officials will allow the team to have fans in the stands.

They've got until May 31, when the Border Cats are scheduled to open their 18th Northwoods League season, to figure out the answers.

"The season is five-and-a-half months away and I think people in general, and in life, hope that things are going to turn the corner now with the vaccine about to be rolled out," Graham said on Tuesday, after the league unveiled its full 2021 schedule.

"I think step No. 1 is to get the border opened so we can go down and play and our American-born players can come into Thunder Bay. Then we'll have to work with the health unit here in town and the City of Thunder Bay, if we're playing, to find out exactly at that point, and over the course of the summer, how many fans can actually attend the games."

Graham said the team is budgeting for about 500 fans on average, adding the ownership group believes the club

could break even at that point. Port Arthur Stadium can hold up to 3,300 fans, with the potential to add additional seating in the outfield to spread attendees out even further.

"There's no doubt. We have to have a good amount of fans at the ballpark for this to be viable, as any sports organization at any level in North America or even the world," Graham said. "Some of the bigger leagues obviously can get by without fans and live on their TV revenue. We're not fortunate enough to have that."

Another important issue to be worked out is where to house the players that come in from out of town. Most years host families take in players, in return for season tickets. Until a vaccine is proven effective, it may be more difficult to convince fans to offer their homes up should the team be crisscrossing the border.

One thing is certain, if the season does get the go-ahead, the Border Cats will be making fewer trips than they do in a typical summer, with an eight-game road trip and record-setting 10-game home-stand built into the schedule.

Graham is concerned about the need for players to quarantine, but with so much uncertainty, there is plenty of time to figure that out if a season is feasible or not.

The Border Cats spent last season as the Mandan Flickertails, playing out of a three-team hub in Bismarck, S.D.

The team opens on May 31 at home against St. Cloud, the first of two against the Rox. They hit the road for eight games before returning home on June 10 to host the Rochester Honkers for four games. The Border Cats will host a fireworks show on June 30, the midway point of their 10-game home-stand.

The Cats have a five-game ticket package for \$99 that includes an all-you-can-eat menu, a toque and a limited edition bobblehead giveaway.

**"We have to have a good amount of fans at the ballpark for this to be viable."**

**BRYAN GRAHAM**

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 DATED: December 3, 2020

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**72. PUZZLE ANSWERS**

PREVIOUS SOLUTION:  
 "Never do anything in haste that can never be undone."  
 - Yajnavalkya Dasa



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