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NAN mourns family tragedy

THUNDER BAY By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Residents of Nibinamik First Nation are in mourning after the tragic deaths of two of its residents.

Aboriginal artist Moses Amik Beaver died Monday while incarcerated at the Thunder Bay District Jail. Three days later his sister, Mary Wabasse, was killed in a collision on Highway 102 on her way to Thunder Bay for her brother's funeral.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said the two deaths have devastated the community and left plenty of questions in their wake.

"For Moses to die under these circumstances is troubling on so many levels, especially as his death has not been officially acknowledged by those responsible for his care," Fiddler said in a release issued on Thursday.

"We are doing everything possible to support chief and council and the family of Moses Beaver, and we will demand an investigation into the circumstances around his passing."

The grand chief said police have not officially confirmed Beaver was in custody, nor have local corrections officials.

The crash involving a transport that killed Wabasse also injured several

members of her family.

Nibinamik First Nation Chief Johnny Yellowhead said Beaver had struggled with mental health issues for a number of years and struggled to get the treatment he needed.

"It is clear that Moses needed professional help and a psychiatric assessment and we demand to know why this didn't happen," Yellowhead said in a statement.

"It is disturbing that there has been no formal statement in acknowledging his death and that we are left to grieve two deaths with more question than answers."

Yellowhead also called for a full investigation into Beaver's untimely death behind bars.

Fiddler also accused the OPP of issuing a traffic citation to a family member involved in the collision in front of a room full of grieving relatives, which he called callous and offensive.

"Members of the police, correctional services and ministry officials have spoken at length about fostering better, more culturally appropriate relations with First Nations, but their actions and a lack of accountability in the days following the death of Moses Beaver leaves us to question their commitment," Fiddler said.

The driver of the SUV faces a charge



TWO DEAD: Moses (Amik) Beaver died in the Thunder Bay District Jail. His sister Mary Wabasse was killed in a motor vehicle crash.



High Street wall fix now set in stone

City agrees to include \$2.3M in this year's budget to cover cost to fix crumbling wall

CITY HALL By Jon Thompson - TB Source

he city has made a rock-solid pledge to rebuild the High Street retaining wall in 2017.

Although no decisions have been made regarding the wall's face, council agreed last Wednesday to include \$2.3 million in the city's 2017 budget to tear out the High Street retaining wall and rebuild it.

Worst of them all

During last Wednesday's budget deliberations, city engineering director Kayla Dixon told council the wall has been assessed as the worst structure among all municipal assets.

"Engineering is recommending --

and really, not just recommending. We need to fix this structure this year," Dixon said.

Engineering reports show the wall leaning toward High Street. It details loose, cracked and missing stone and mortar joints in several areas. Exposed joints and gaps are allowing water to flow through the structure, engineers claim, accelerating the wall's deterioration as water freezes and thaws.

"We've been advised from several different professional engineers that the structure has failed," Dixon said.

"We've been

advised from

several

different

professional

engineers

that the

failed."

KAYLA DIXON

"Just so people are aware of what that means, the structure itself is a six-footthick structure so what you see on the face where the stones have cracked -- the mortar has disappeared and disintegrated -- that has happened throughout the structure."

The city will cover structure has \$550,000 of the \$2.3-million cost. The rest will be covered through the federal gas tax.

Questions remain over the wall's surface once its reconstruction is complete.

A Feb. 3 memorandum to council lists no facing, precast concrete panels, public art, or re-facing the wall with existing stone among options.

Resurfacing the wall with stone, as some residents have proposed would cost \$600,000 more than the \$2.03million cost of precast facing. Both would be expected to last a century.

Expensive fix

Finishing it with no facing at all would cost \$1.7 million and could last 50 years.

After meeting with local engineers and the city's engineering department, Red River Coun. Brian McKinnon has expressed he will introduce a motion to task administration with direction at council's Mar. 6 meeting.

City manager Norm Gale said administration is willing to clarify positions expressed in the Feb. 3 memo, but he's confident in its recommendations.

"We will not provide you with more options for the wall. We will provide you with what we've done to get here, the specific details of why engineering is making their recommendation,' Gale said.





REPLACEMENT NEEDED: A falling apart High Street retaining wall needs to be rebuilt.





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The healing continues

Lead plaintiff in Sixties Scoop lawsuit struck with 'happy silence'

THUNDER BAY By Doug Diaczuk - TB Source

For eight years, Marcia Brown Martel has been the voice for so many others who were not able to speak. Now after a landmark court ruling in favour of plaintiffs in the Sixties Scoop lawsuit, Brown Martel said she was struck with happy silence.

"I sat for a moment and read the email and nodded my head and put my head down," she said. "After such a long time with so many people who have come to help, come to say yes, this is a good thing to do, this is a good way for our people's across this country to heal.

When you finally see that day when a law in Canada will protect, not just our children, but all children within our Canadian borders.'

Brown Martel, chief of the Beaverhouse First Nation, addressed Nishnawbe Aski Nation chiefs during the opening session of a Children and Youth Forum in Thunder Bay. She was honoured by NAN chiefs for being the lead plaintiff in a \$1.3-billion lawsuit against the government of Canada for its role in what has become known as the Sixties Scoop.

The lawsuit, which has been in the courts since February 2009,

came to an end on Feb. 14, 2017 when an Ontario Superior Court judge ruled in favour of the plaintiffs.

"When Canada's judicial system can stand up and say: we need to protect the children within Canadian borders and throughout the world, there are just some things you do because they are good and right, and this is one of them," Brown Martel said.

From the early 1960s to the mid-1980s, First Nations children were taken from their families and placed in non-Indigenous care. A class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of survivors citing years of psychological damage suffered as a result of being removed from their families and culture, with Brown Martel serving as the lead plaintiff. "I said way back in 2005, yes it will be my face, yes

it will be my voice, but that is because there are others who cannot speak, who cannot be here," Brown Martel said. "It is an honour to be able to stand and say, this face, this voice is going to speak for those who cannot.'

Following the ruling, Brown Martel said a weight has been lifted from her shoulders, but she said it was never something she carried alone.

"There was leadership across this country, within the NAN territory, that helped carry that load," she said.

'It isn't something I carried alone. It is something I carried by name, but

somebody had to put their name there." Moving forward and determining the details of the settlement. Brown Martel said there are five avenues that need to be addressed, with inclusion being at the top of the list.

"I see that no matter what we go through in the law system, particularly when one is walking in an area that no one has walked before, all the lessons of our history, if they apply, we should have a look at and see what would be actually useful, helpful, and effective," she said.

Brown Martel's message to the Indigenous youth today is to be strong and to know what is right. And to hold those in leadership accountable for protecting children and youth.

For Brown Martel, and those without a voice whom she spoke on behalf of, the journey towards healing has been long, and now it can continue.

"The very first step on February 2009 was one of those healing steps," she said. "This whole journey through these eight years have been part of that healing journey. We have just reached a plateau where we can gather things together and say: this healing can continue."

When it comes to mental health, it's not all in your head

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CHIEF MARCIA BROWN MARTEL

Editorial

EDITORIAL

M-103 isn't bad motion

he outcry against MP Irqa Khalid's Motion M-103 in the House of Commons is misguided at best.

And the reaction is downright frightening.

Canada, you're better than this. Conservatives - particularly those who subscribe to the Canadian version of the so-called alt-right-inspired message of hatred and intolerance - have gone so far as to say the motion is the crack in the country's foundation that will eventually lead to Sharia law being implemented. Hogwash, we say.

It is the start of a badly needed conversation Canadians need to have. In the wake of the attacks on the mosque in Quebec City, it's clear Islamaphobia is becoming a greater and greater problem.

The motion creates no new law. It simply acknowledges the issue of racial discrimination and encourages the government to seek solutions to put it in our past.

It addresses systemic racism and religious discrimination and will collect data on hate-crime reports.

Given the issues facing not only Canada's Muslim population, but also its Indigenous people, it's information that's long since past due.

Canada is a welcoming nation, one where we don't tolerate hateful things being said about people or actions against them because of their skin colour or religion.

Let's keep it this way.

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M-103 has merit: MP

To the editor: Motion M-103 has started an important and courageous conversation focused on standing up against racism and religious discrimination in all of its forms.

I am proud of my colleagues and the prime minister for their leadership on this issue.

Words matter, and we must all remain vigilant when it comes to the use of racist or discriminatory language, as well as when it comes to protecting our rights and freedoms as Canadians.

I recognize that Islamophobia is not the only form of religious intolerance facing Canadians - many marginalized and minority communities continue to face discrimination, and I strongly believe we all have a responsibility to confront this wherever and whenever it occurs.

There is some misinformation circulating about this motion, and I want to respond directly to some of these inaccuracies:

M-103 will not stifle free speech. Canadians will continue to be free to discuss, question and critique all religions, including Islam.

M-103 is not a bill - it is a motion meaning it is not legally binding. Therefore, it will not create any new laws, nor will it expand or change the criminal code in any way.

M-103 is not unique in seeking to address systemic racism and religious discrimination.

At previous points in history, the House of Commons has adopted similar motions regarding discrimination against other groups, including another motion addressing Islamophobia, which was unanimously supported by all parties in November 2016.

M-103 was not created in response to the tragic killings in Quebec Citythough that incident provides evidence of the need for such a motion. M-103 was tabled in Dec. 1, 2016 after E-petition 411 was given all-party support.

It also asks the House of Commons to study how the government could reduce or eliminate systemic racism and religious discrimination; and collect data to contextualize hate crime reports and to conduct needs assessments for impacted communities

Racism and religious discrimination in all of its forms has no place in Canadian society. We still have much work to do to further strengthen our communities and our nation, and supporting motion M-103 is a part of that work.

The people of Thunder Bay continue to be supportive, compassionate and welcoming to people seeking refuge, and I will keep working to ensure that

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Canada is safe and accepting for all who live here.

Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Thunder Bay

Fix wall inexpensively

To the editor:

What ado about nothing. I've had a lot of friends over the years come to town and I've driven them around the city to see the various sites including Hillcrest Park.

And many of them have been taking pictures of many sites in our city.

And you know how many of them took a picture of that wall?

Zero. Do you know how many of them even noticed that wall? Zero. Do you know why? Because it's a wall.

I'd say 99.999 per cent of the people in the city 99.999 per cent of the time never even notice that wall because it's simply a wall.

Choose the least expensive and longest lasting option and put it in place. And if that's not repairing the existing brick and mortar so be it.

Because five minutes after it is changed no one is going to give a damn and no one's going to miss it. Just because something is old doesn't mean it's significant.

And it sure isn't worth wasting money on because it really doesn't add any value.

In the city has a laundry list a mile long of other things that need money more so than a simple wall.

No one is travelling here to look at a wall.

> Rob Cella, Thunder Bay Via Facebook

Simple is best

To the editor:

Remove the wall, form and pour a new solid concrete wall. No need to go with some expensive option or make it a piece of art.

> Mike Paulke, Thunder Bay

Perspective

Truth is under fire Media and government mistrust is at an all-time high

OPINION By J.R. Shermack **Special to TB Source**

d you ever feel like somebody was lying to you?

I'm not talking about those little white lies somebody tells to spare your feelings or shield loved ones from bad news.

I'm talking about the big ones, lies so blatant and enormous that they have been studied by historians and collectively labelled "The Big Lie."

This technique has been used as an effective propaganda tool by totalitarian leaders through history, including Adolph Hitler and manyfollowing him.

Hitler once said, "If you tell a lie big enough and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed."

A "colossal" lie so outrageous, nobody would imagine that anyone "could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously."

The world is now witnessing firsthand how The Big Lie is being used to undermine and corrupt the most powerful democracy in the world.

"The Big Truth" is trying to fight back against lies and deception but the future of American democracy is uncertain.

This is not just an American phenomenon - that same distrust and cynicism is clearly evident in other democracies around the world.

The 2017 Edelman Survey revealed the largest ever drop in confidence in government, business, media and non-governmental organizations

over by the builders

of the CNoR.

None of our well-established institutions are trustworthy any more according to more than half of the people surveyed worldwide.

It is recognized as a global crisis in trust and according to Richard Edelman, "the implications...are deep and wide-ranging'

In a recent Edelman poll, Canada has broken new ground when measured against the survey's annual "Trust Barometer".

Only 43 per cent of Canadians say they trust their government, down 10 points from a year ago - faith in the media has also dropped 10 per cent.

"...More than Most Canadians feel half of the system is not working for them and public trust Canadians is eroding all across the believe that country. newcomers But here is the most

disturbing news - more to our than half of Canadians country believe that newcomers threaten our to our country threaten economy and our economy and way of way of life. "

We are a country of immigrants blaming other immigrants and refugees for our troubles.

life.

As a result, for the first time ever, Canada is listed among the "distruster nations" of the world, a sad and disturbing accomplishment. We are now living in a world where

you can't believe anything you hear and only half of what you see. It reminds me of an old B. B. King

song -"Nobody loves me but my mother, and she could be jivin' too.' Even our own charming and diplomatic PM has been rolling his eyes lately.

Justin Trudeau notwithstanding, more than half of Canadians distrust their government - a cycle of mistrust echoes around the world.

This erosion of public trust begins at the community level according to Winnipeg Deputy Mayor, Jenny Gerbasi.

In their last election, half of city council was voted out in reaction to conflict-of-interest municipal charges, lawsuits and police investigations.

The new council appointed an integrity commissioner, launched inquiries into past councils and encouraged open, honest public consultation.

Ms Gerbasi believes the public needs to see city council solving actual, real problems and meeting the real needs of its citizens.

Even on a personal level, everything we do either builds trust or destroys trust truth, just like charity, begins

at home.

America remains a very powerful nation but it is surprising how easily that country can be conquered from within.

In a battle between The Big Lie and the American people, the future of democracy weighs in the balance.

The lines have been drawn and opening shots are being fired through the media.

As always, the first casualty is the truth.



SAYING FAREWELL: Long-time Police Board member Allan Laakkonen (left) attends his final meeting on Tuesday, honoured with a going-away gift presented by board chair Jackie Dojack.

HOW TO WRITE US:

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

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LOCALNEWS

Virtual adoption fair gets results

THUNDER BAY By Doug Diaczuk – TB Source

The first virtual adoption fair was not without bumps and obstacles, but staff with the Thunder Bay and District Humane Society are calling it a huge success because it helped find new homes for animals in need.

"On Friday, we had two adoptions and yesterday 10 adoptions," said Cassandra Nordal, fundraising coordinator with the Thunder Bay and District Humane Society. "It is a huge success in my opinion. It was very busy here for the staff."

From Friday to Sunday, the Humane Society partnered with Petsmart to host a virtual adoption fair. Nordal said there were some technical issues with the streaming video and internet connection, and the fair was switched to a Facebook Live stream.

"Going forward, would we change a couple things, absolutely, it's a learning

experience," she said. "We had to do what we had to do."

The Humane Society hosts four adoption fairs a year and they are usually done on site and in person. However, following a recent rescue of more than 30 dogs from the region, staff decided to move the fair into the virtual sphere, with videos of the animals at the Humane Society streamed online and at Petsmart.

"This was a specific and special situation," Nordal said. "With the massive rescue that we had the following week and it was just too high stress for the animals and we always put our animals' health first so that is why we chose to do our first every virtual adoption fair."

All of the 12 adoptions that took place this weekend were of dogs recently rescued from communities throughout the region, including Kenora, Shoal Lake, and Whitefish Bay. Of the 30 dogs rescued, 12 brought in from Longlac were in extreme distress and severely malnourished. Those 12 dogs were not up for adoption because they are still part of an ongoing OSPCA and OPP investigation.

Nordal said the 12 dogs from the Longlac area are doing very well, especially considering the condition they were in when they were first brought into the Humane Society.

"They are getting fed every hour on the hour, a quarter cup of food," she said. "Their health, their mood, their overall appearance, it has all gone a long way from where they were when they came in to us."

The Thunder Bay and District Humane Society has been overwhelmed by the amount of support it has received from the community following the most recent rescue. But Nordal said with such a large influx of dogs at one time, they still need help from the community.

"We still need a lot of help," she said. "We are just at the beginning of all this. We are still asking for your monetary donations."



SMILE: This little puppy makes his online debut with Thunder Bay and District Humane Society fundraising Coordinator, Cassandra Nordal during the virtual adoption fair.



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Tax levy grows 3.55% in 2017

CITY HALL By Jon Thompson - TB Source

he 3.55 per cent levy increase in the 2017 budget city council passed by a 7-4 vote on Wednesday was practically unaltered through the three-week budget deliberation process.

If the \$406-million budget is ratified on

Feb. 21, the city will spend 3.55 per cent more in 2017 than it did in 2016. When accounting for 0.46 per cent growth over last year, city operations will cost taxpayers 3.09 per cent more, collectively.

Council has not yet set the tax rates and ratio to determine tax increases for homeowners.

The budget that city adminis-IAIN ANGUS tration proposed on Jan. 24 began with a 3.53 per cent levy

of \$5.5 million. The only additions to the levy were a \$4,000 increase to the Official Recognition Committee's budget, a motion by Current River Coun. Andrew Foulds to add \$16,000 to continue the Muskeg Express train rides at Centennial Park and a move by Neebing Coun. Linda Rydholm to commit



Budget chairman Frank Pullia voted against the budget. He called for a complete review of consulting work, a municipal overtime work review, and to evaluate

\$20,000 more for culverts.

savings that could come from insourcing union jobs that have been outsourced. "We keep hearing, 'either we cut services

or we have to increase your taxes.' I just identified three key areas where we don't need to do that. Find savings internally. You have now the collaboration of the unions to do that, the Chamber of Commerce has been asking for that, the LEAN program has been successful in other jurisdictions where they've saved millions of dollars."

Pullia was among four dissenting councilors, the same four who voted to support a last-minute, failed motion by Coun. Rebecca Johnson that would have reduced the levy to 2.96 per cent (2.5 per cent including growth).

Claiming the proposed increase would be prohibitive to seniors living on fixed incomes, Johnson proposed transferring \$1,470,900 from the \$7,520,000 rainy day

operating budget.

"No matter how I look at it, whether it's three per cent (increase) in the water or three per cent on the wastewater or hydro," Johnson said.

"I had two calls this week -- because we just had an age friendly meeting -- of people who can't pay for their prescriptions. They're seniors and they're saying, 'I can't afford to buy my drugs I need to exist on.""

The motion lost despite support from Pullia, Johnson, Rydholm and Coun. Larry Hebert, the latter of which has yet to support a budget in his 11 years on council.

Coun. Iain Angus pointed out the city has tax relief programs aimed at those who truly can't afford tax increases, including homeowners who own low-value properties. He said the city is now reaping the cost of insufficient tax increases in prior budgets.

"We'd all love to be heroes and bring in the lowest tax rate possible but I remember when I got on this council, we were suffering through those zeroes for many years and we're seeing the benefit of that now, in terms of the infrastructure deficit we have because we kept short-changing what we were spending on our infrastructure,"



Thursday, February 23, 2017



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Families upset over coming zoo closure

THUNDER BAY By Doug Diaczuk - TB Source

Arguerite Lehtinen and her threeyear-old grandson, Bentley, have made coming to the Chippewa Wildlife Exhibit part of their weekly routine, visiting almost every Wednesday during the season.

"We walk around and try to find the animals," Lehtinen said. "Every Wednesday is something new. Sometimes we see the animals, sometimes we don't. Then we have a picnic and play on the playground. It's the best all-day spot."

On Sunday morning, Lehtinen and Bentley were two of more than 120 people visiting the Chippewa Wildlife Exhibit for the Family Day weekend, and she, like many others walking through the gate, is upset that it may be their last time.

On Feb. 9, as part of 2017 budget deliberations, Thunder Bay city council voted in favour of permanently closing the Chippewa Wildlife Exhibit, saving

the city \$83,000 from this year's budget. Council is set to vote on the final budget on Tuesday, and if the wildlife exhibit remains on the chopping block, it will close May 1.

Lorraine Lortie-Krawczuk, president of the Friends of Chippewa Park, said a petition to save the wildlife exhibit has collected more than 1,000 signatures online and more people were signing petitions available at the park on Sunday.

"We've only been here for less than half an hour and we've already probably got 30 or 40 signatures, so we are really excited that there are a lot of people coming out this weekend," she said. "Everyone that I talked to this morning is very upset that city council has decided to do this."

When Lisa Rioux first heard of city council's decision to close the zoo, she said she was upset, very upset.

"I understand they want to close it because of money and cost, but at the same time, sometimes education is worth the extra cost and the money involved to keep it open," she said. "I would love to



CLOSING DOWN: Patrons enter the Chippewa Park Wildlife Exhibit.

see this expanded."

Rioux came to the zoo on Sunday because she wanted to see the animals with her daughter before it closes.

"I am hoping that city council changes

their mind because this is a wonderful spot to come and see these animals in the wild," she said. "It's good for the children to look at them and learn about these animals."

For others walking the boardwalk at the wildlife exhibit, hoisting their kids up and pointing out the animals in the enclosures reminds them of when they were kids and used to visit the zoo, making the trip a family tradition.

"It's something we like to do every year with our daughter," said Shannon Spoljarich. "She's three and a half years old and it's something different that we can do in Thunder Bay."

Spoljarich said the first thing that came to her mind when she learned the zoo was slated for closure was how another thing for kids in the city will soon be gone.

"It seems like they have things that come in to Thunder Bay and close pretty quickly," she said. "Chippewa Zoo has been here for so long. It hits home a little bit that it's something our kids won't be able to do as they're growing up."

Rioux and Spoljarich both signed the Friends of Chippewa Park petition to save the wildlife exhibit that will be presented to city council. But Lortie-Krawczuk said calling or emailing councilors to express support for the zoo will have an even greater impact.

Lisa Ryder has been coming to the Chippewa zoo for more than 30 years and she said bringing her kids out to the zoo was a perfect way to do something local in the fresh air.

While she hasn't called any member of city council to express her support, she said that might change now.

"Now I think I should," she said. "It was very emotional today signing the petition and I'm sad I won't be able to come back."

For Lehtinen and Bentley, visiting the Chippewa Wildlife Exhibit is not just a tradition, it's part of a routine.

"We do this almost every Wednesday," she said. "So I was thinking, what am I going to do Wednesdays now? There's not really much in this city to do for small children."



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Teen passionate about political world

Hammarskjold's Jaimi Plater off to model Parliament

EDUCATION By Leith Dunick - TB Source

Jaimi Plater takes her politics seri-ously.

That's a rarity in a 15-year-old these days.

A Grade 10 student at Hammarskjold High School, the youngster is busy prepping for this week's Legislative Assembly of Ontario's Model Parliament session, being held at Queen's Park on Wednesday and Thursday.

Jaimi, who will represent Thunder Bay-Superior North, will join the Liberal party for the two-day event, arguing in favour of a bill that would provide free insurance for all prescription medication.

Loves politics

"I'm excited to go because I'm extremely passionate about politics. We got the chance to write some legislation on a provincial issue that's important to us. And then we get to debate with people from all across Ontario and hear different perspectives on various political issues that should be discussed among youth," she said.

Jaimi said her interest in the political game began in Grade 7, when she watched Al Gore's climate-change



POLITICALLY MOTIVATED: Hammarskjold's Jaimi Plater (left), discusses her trip to Queen's Park with teacher Alex Kraft-Wilson.

documentary An Inconvenient Truth. "For some reason it sparked an interest in environmental issues for

myself. And then after watching it a couple of times I started thinking, if he's doing all this and he's in a

position of power, then he actually had the opportunity to make a change," said Jaimi, who last month took part in the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement in Ottawa alongside students and educational leaders from 50 countries.

It was one quote in particular from Gore's film, "Be the change you wish to see in the world," that inspired her to get more involved and convinced her that someday she'd like to become a politician herself after going to law school first.

"I thought getting a start now would allow me to help do that and to make some changes for the better, not only in our own city, but possibly in our own country one day.'

Ridings represented

A total of 107 Ontario students will take part in the Model Parliament sessions, one for each riding in the province.

Her English teacher, Alex Kraft-Wilson, said Jaimi is wise beyond her years, one of those students that comes along with great insight and a vision of the importance of students having their collective voice heard. And it's all self-driven.

Given the political turmoil in the world today, the more people like Jaimi, the better, her teacher said.

"Students need to know the facts to be able to proceed and present their information in a respectful, yet assertive way," Kraft-Wilson said.

"People need to know what Jaimi is doing and how it all came about. And it really came about from her own initiative. It's not a school initiative."



тв**Life**

Spring has sprung itself



So it got warm. For how long we didn't know. But it felt good and with the warm had come some melt.

Snow banks have been drastically reduced; bare ground (can you believe it?) has been revealed in the yard in front of Casa Jones. The snow that would require someone to climb up a ladder with a long scraper to scrape off the solar panels on our barn roof, miraculously slid off of the panels all by itself. I no longer needed a winter jacket to do chores outside; and Big Red started up without having been plugged in. All good things.

Of course with the melt-cum-evaporation of the snow, we now see where the dogs over the winter did their 'business'. And we discover where some missing tools were hiding.

Sunday morning was gorgeous. I came into the house after feeding the equines their grain.

I actually had to summon them from where they were chowing down on the round, hay bale in the winter paddock. Two of the horses were actually flaked out, having made a nest of some of the old, loose hay from previous bales.

In very cold weather the horses are right at the gate waiting to get in. When one opens the gate, one better stand back as the horses tend to rush to get into their stalls. Not Sunday morning. I called and they lazily looked up as if to question "Huh? What?" Then they began to slowly amble towards the barn almost with an attitude of "Okay, if we have to."

Saturday was warm as well although there was a stiff breeze swirling around the 'hoosie'.

But, looking out the kitchen window, I saw a pair of blue jays and a couple of chickadees flitting around the wood pile looking for bird seed.

The snow had melted enough that a flat container that we'd put on top of the wood pile way-back-when, was now visible and still had some seed in it.

We had not been feeding the birds this winter and actually missed the skirmishes that took place when different feathered 'friends' converged on the provender.

The previous day I had strapped on the snow shoes and started off on a trek following our old pathway that my wife, Laura, and I had made throughout the winter.

The idea was to give our two pooches some exercise...and me, of course. Well the going was tough. The above-zero temperatures had softened the snow and made it heavy and wet. With each step my feet sank about three inches and as I lift my feet snow had grabbed onto the snow shoes.

The dogs were sinking much further lacking the spread of a snowshoe. But they were delighted with being out and heading off into the back field and bush to explore.

Dogs and I did a circle route although a bit shorter than usual as I was getting tired and my Achilles tendon that I'd strained a month ago was now getting quite painful.

But we were half way along the route and I'd just have to tough it out.

"Toughing" it out required stopping every ten or twenty feet to give my 'footsies' a rest.

It did give me time to look around although the pooches kept wondering why I had ceased walking.

They would stand fifty feet or so ahead looking back and no doubt asking "What doing?" So off I would trudge and off they would go sniffing all the way. Such fun.

The ravens should have laid their eggs by now.

Certainly I'm hearing more squawking from the bush. They rebuilt the nest in the lone jack pine tree near the western horse paddocks that I can see clearly from atop Mount Crumpet, our manure pile.

But I've had to dump the manure elsewhere for a couple of weeks since the snow is too heavy and wet for the quad and manure cart to make it up the Crumpet hill; so I haven't inspected the raven's nest. Wonder if they will re-establish their home there.

Sunday morning Laura went into her office which is located in our basement (as is my library) and called me in. "Look Fred, bare ground," she exclaimed. I looked and sure enough there was a small patch right against the wall of the house that was snow-free. "What's next?" I queried, "Crocuses? Can spring be far behind?"

Unfortunately Laura had looked at the forecast for the week ahead and saw that we'd be back in colder temperatures and possibly more snow. Ah well.

One can only wish.



Opportunities and challenges for business, education, and trade with the US under its new President, and what it means for Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario.

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Cosmic shoutout

ASTRONOMY By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Thunder Bay is officially an asteroid. Members of the Thunder Bay chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada on Friday announced the International Astronomical Union has accepted its proposal to name a minor planet after Northwestern Ontario's largest city.

Formerly known as 1942 TB, it's now referred to as 11780 Thunder Bay.

The organization's Maureen Nadin said the IAU two years ago opened up the opportunity to name a series of 30 recently discovered exoplanets, planets which orbit a star other than the sun.

About a year ago the Thunder Bay chapter was successful in naming a star and planet in the Andromeda system.

Their latest success story is a direct result of that, Nadin said.

"What the IAU did, as a bonus to all the winning teams, they gave us the opportunity to name a minor planet, more commonly known as asteroids," Nadin said, reached by CKPR Radio.

"That's how this came about."

Both occasions were pretty cool, she added.

"When our submission was selected for the planet and star we were extremely excited – now we have a poster and it's all official," Nadin said.

"When this opportunity came up to name a minor planet, we had expended a lot of time and creativity on naming the star and planet – which are Veritate and Spe, which is Latin for Truth and Hope. So we decided why not give a cosmic shout-out to our home town?"

Consensus on the name was reached very quickly. The main belt asteroid, approximately five kilometers in diameter, resides between Mars and Jupiter. It was first discovered on Oct. 3, 1942 by Finland's first female PhD astronomer Liisi Oterman.

"The process took a long time. We didn't hear back and then we did hear back from them and they said they were



DEEP SPACE: A possible diagram of the formation of an asteroid belt between Jupiter and Mars.

hoping for a submission that was one word only," Nadin said.

"Of course, as you know, Thunder Bay is two words." Determined to stick with their original choice, they didn't hear back from the IAU for months until two days ago, when they were notified their name had been given the green light.

Seeing it from the shores of Lake Superior, isn't easy.

"You need a really, really big telescope because it's located in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.

Nadin said having an asteroid named is a rarity. Most are just numbered, although this may be changing.

"The IAU, it seems, is doing a lot more outreach to the public in terms of opening up opportunities to name celestial bodies. We're now on the celestial map," Nadin said. "People seem to be enjoying this little tidbit of good news in this crazy world that we live in."



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City has a blue angel

THUNDER BAY By Doug Diaczuk - TB Source

was a sea of blue at two Thunder Bay public schools, as students were angels for a day in support of a fellow classmate.

As part of International Angelman's Awareness Day, students at Kingsway Public School and Hyde Park Public School wore blue and were treated to persians with blue icing to support their fellow student, Zoey.

"It is amazing," said Amanda MacDonald, Zoey's mother. "The whole thing with the persians, the staff, and the kids and the way they treat Zoey is absolutely amazing. It's heartwarming."

Zoey, now six-years-old and in grade 1 at Hyde Park, was born with Angelman's Syndrome, a neuro-genetic

disorder that causes developmental delay, lack of speech, seizures, and walking and balance issues. It affects one in every 15,000 live births and requires life-long care.

"The average six year old will be running, laughing, having conversations, where Zoey is just a little bit more behind with that," MacDonald said. "Some of them walk, some of them don't. Zoey is doing extremely well with walking. She is now walking holding one hand."

MacDonald added that kids with Angelman's Syndrome have a very happy demeanor, which was clearly evidenced by the big smile on Zoey's face.

And she had a lot to smile about, as her fellow classmates sold more than 700 persians with special blue icing this year in support of the Canadian Association for Angelman's Awareness "Every year it has increased greatly," MacDonald said. "There is more support out there and more people are wanting to help by purchasing and out of town families are purchasing."

The fundraiser is in its third year and last year it sold 200 persians. MacDonld, who also sold more than 350 herself, kept wanting to raise her goal.

"I originally set a goal to sell 150 persians," she said. "Once I hit the 150, I said let's see if I can do 200. I hit that goal, and I went up to 250. By the time I woke up Tuesday morning, I was at 350 persians, so it had doubled over night."

"Each year is just seems to keep growing and growing," MacDonald continued. "The support is over-

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ANGELMAN'S DAY: Zoey and her mother Amanda MacDonald.

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Last fall Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Renu Mandhane toured the Thunder Bay jail and found a young man who had been held in solitary confinement for 4 years.

The United Nations considers 15 days or more in solitary to be a form of torture.







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BIG IN THE UK: Jesse Thom's solo album, Snowdragons, was named one of the best albums of 2016 by Folk Radio UK.

Making waves in UK

Former Tbay musician gaining widespread recognition in UK folk scene

By Doug Diaczuk - TB Source

Musician Jesse Thom spent more than 10 years growing up in Thunder Bay. Through the long cold winters he spent much of his time inside writing and creating music. Those winter days and nights still inspire his music today and his most recent release, filled with memories of growing up in Thunder Bay, is being recognized as far away as the United Kingdom. Folk Radio UK has listed Thom's solo album, Snowdragons, as one of the 10 best albums of 2016, an honour he says is very humbling.

"When I went and read the article, the other musicians on the list were musicians that I really looked up to," Thom said. "I felt really honoured to be on the list, and excited, and also proud because I've been working really hard on that album to get it out there."

There were a number of factors that lead to the success of Snowdragons across the ocean. According to Thom, a fan of one of his former bands is a sort of go-between between the Canadian folk music scene and Folk Radio UK, which may have introduced his work to folk music lovers there.

Last spring and summer, he also toured the UK to sold-out shows, bringing his music to even more listeners. And finally, he worked at a meditation retreat in Southern England with more than 200 participants, including an English television star who mentioned the album on social media.

"It's weird how all these seemingly separate incidents pointed to the UK and just kind of landed in the right way at the right time," Thom said.

Thom, who now lives on the West Coast, was born in Hinton, AB, but spent his most impressionable years in Thunder Bay. He arrived in the city in the early 90s and graduated from Westgate C.V.I. During his time in the city, he played drums with the punk band Strychnine. His time spent in Thunder Bay during those long winters played a significant role in his creativity, which is reflected in his work today, particularly on the album, Snowdragons.

"Most of my creativity is happening in the winter so I'm surrounded by snow typically," he said. "So out here on the West Coast, I really missed the snow. There isn't as much out here. So I often find that I'm drawing on memory and experience."

"There are so many references to snow and winter throughout the album," Thom continued. "Thunder Bay has been my snow town."

While the album draws on other experiences and places, Thom calls Thunder Bay a sort of a feeling zone for him.

"It's just so full of life," he said. "When I bring the experience of Thunder Bay into my body, it was such a crazy time. Anytime I'm singing about snow and winter, there is some vestige of Thunder Bay in there and to that extent it's an homage to Thunder Bay as a town."

And while the snow and long nights may have served as inspiration for his music, Thom said growing up in the city has helped shape who he is as a person by the challenges and obstacles he faced, and being part of what he calls a pretty rough punk scene.

"After you get out of that and you see how much you've grown through those challenges, it brings a weird kind of sweetness and a weird sort of nostalgia," he said.

After receiving such widespread recognition, Thom said there is some added pressure, but he only looks up when he has to and he will keep pushing on with several new projects.

Thom plans on rereleasing Snowdragons with an accompanying illustrated book of poetry this winter, and his newest project is a picture booked entitled Some Bunny Loves You, which will be accompanied by a touring puppet show later this spring. IN THE **bay**

Stuart McLean dies, record store closes

his past week, winter got a little colder, a little sadder, as Canada said goodbye to a media icon. Stuart McLean, writer, humourist, and the creator of CBC's Vinyl Café, lost his battle with melanoma. Listening to McLean tell his stories of Dave and his second-hand record store was like curling up in

front of a fire to hear your grandfather or favourite uncle explain the secrets of the universe. Without that funny mothball smell.

He had his radio show, collections of his stories on CD, electronic media, and books, live performances, and even a television special, Stuart McLean's Vinyl Café Christmas Pageant. His audiences ranged from teens to seniors, with an emphasis on the seniors.

Yet when the news broke, I wondered with some cynicism how many Canadians still knew of this 68-year-old CBC radio man. He didn't tweet every ill-conceived thought and tantrum that came to mind. He didn't overshare his personal moments on Snapchat. His Vinyl Café does have a Facebook page in which he shared moments with his listeners. But he was hardly one for a selfie.

While other media giants are



constantly on social media desperately trying to stay relevant and top-of-mind like a bunch of Sally Fields circa 1985 crying, "You like me!", McLean just quietly went about writing, producing, touring and acquiring a devoted following. In real life.

So I was pleased to see that Twitter blew up with messages about his passing. From the prime minister to former colleagues, people mourned. Others talked about sitting in a parked car long after they'd arrived at their destination just to hear the end of one of his stories. (And I thought I was the only one.)

As I read numerous online memorials, I discovered that despite listening to McLean for so many years, I hardly knew the man. It was so easy to confuse his infamous Dave character with Stuart, himself. McLean was said to be quite frank with his opinions. He also sometimes "swore like a sailor" according to one close friend. While his stories had a sentimental sweetness, McLean, himself, had a dark sense of humour. And he had no problem laughing at himself.

Which makes him the epitome of the Canadian character, a study in contrasts: in public, seems sweet and harmless, and will go out of his way to help a stranger; in private, is painfully forthright and honest, and will face down a moose. Or Donald Trump

In true McLean fashion, when he recently decided to take a leave for further cancer treatment, he chose not to re-air old shows. He felt it cheated his loyal listeners and took time from other hard-working and creative people whose fresh new work deserved to be heard.

Obviously, Canada will survive without Stuart McLean. But it won't be the same. Thankfully, his stories will live on in recordings and books. After all, you haven't laughed till you've heard about Dave's Christmas turkey or toilettraining the cat.



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For more information please call 627-1727, visit our website www.tbmfa.com or find us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/tbmfa.knights SNOW PROBLEM: Hovercraft rides were a big hit during the Voyageur Winter Carnival at Fort William Historical Park.

Visitors warm up to Winter Carnival fun

THUNDER BAY By Doug Diaczuk – TB Source

This past weekend saw temperatures usually found in spring and summer months, but that didn't stop hundreds of people from celebrating all things winter, even if it was a little wet.

The Voyageur Winter Carnival kicked off on Saturday at Fort William Historical Park. The annual celebration, which is the largest winter carnival in Northwestern Ontario, includes classic seasonal events like sledding, tubing, skating, crafts, and a snow maze.

"So far, it's looking really good," said Emily Carr, communications officer with Fort William Historical Park. "Usually as the weekend progresses it starts to get a little busier. The weather is really great this time and more and more people will keep heading out."

Temperatures soared well above seasonal, reaching a high of plus 11 degrees on Saturday. There was some water and mud throughout the park, and though skating on the Kaministiquia River was open, it was a little slushy.

But the warm weather seemed to be enticing more people out, as opposed to minus 30 degrees, which has been seen in past years.

"In the past few years it has been the complete opposite spectrum," Carr said. "Quite a bit colder as I understand it. Right now it's a little bit warmer, so you maybe don't need as many winter clothes on to stay warm, but there's still plenty to come and do and enjoy down at the Fort."

Temperatures are expected to remain above freezing for the rest of the weekend, and Carr said all activities and events are open.

"So far everything is a go," she said. "We will just keep an eye on everything and make sure it is still safe and deal with it from there.

For Sarah MacKinnon, who was at the winter carnival with her husband Steve and six-year-old daughter, Olivia, the warm weather made the day that much better.

"The warm weather is making is so

much more enjoyable," she said. "You wear rubber boots, you're good."

A new addition to this year's carnival includes hovercraft rides, which for MacKinnon, was another reminder of warmer seasons.

"It was kind of like being on a boat, but cooler," she said after going on her first ride down the river. "The hovercraft was super cool. It was a lot of fun. I'm surprised by how fun it was actually."

For Kieran Carpenter and his sister, Carys, it's tough to pick just one thing they enjoyed most during the day.

"It's so fun," Kieran said. "We fired the musket. It was heavy and hard."

Kieran and Carys also tried the snow maze, finding a way out in five minutes. Even though it was just the start of this year's carnival, Carys said she is already looking forward to next year.

"My favourite part was painting the snow walls," she said. "And I liked to see the animals and I also enjoyed the maze. It was lots of fun. I had too much fun, I don't want to go."

Thursday, February 23, 2017 19

Do you have an opinion to share? E-mail the editor at

ldunick@dougallmedia.com

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made in the image of what you desire." - Thomas Merton

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Sports

local sports news | information | coverage

Under-16 racers hit slopes

SKIING By Doug Diaczuk – TB Source

After more than 40 years, competitive national alpine skiing returns to the city of Thunder Bay, and as organizers look forward to seeing young and talented skiers hit the local slopes, they are also crossing their fingers that the weather cooperates.

The Lake Superior Ski Division Alpine is hosting the 2017 U-16 Canadian Alpine Ski Championships at the Loch Lomond Ski Area this week. It is the first national competition held for this age division.

More than 160 of the best skiers ages 14 and 15 from across the country are descending on Thunder Bay to compete in slalom, giant slalom, and super G events.

"Thunder Bay has bitten off a huge challenge here and we are really rising to the occasion," said Dave Bradley, event chair for U-16 Canadian National Alpine Ski Championships. "It has been a logistical nightmare so to speak over the last few days with the weather and so on making it particularly tough."

With temperatures rising well above seasonal over the weekend and rain forecasted on Monday, Bradley said the team at Loch Lomond has done incredible work keeping the runs in shape for racing.

"Right now with the warm weather the snow is kind of granular, more like spring," he said. "The good news is we have a good, hard surface underneath but some of that warmth is working its way down into the snow and it's making it a little harder for us to manage the tracks."

Skiers were able to fit in practice runs Monday morning and afternoon. Morgan Pridy, coach with the team from British Columbia, said the runs



GETTNG SET: Skiers hit the slopes Monday at Loch Lomond Ski Area for practice runs.

are actually more challenging than what he was expecting.

"The slalom hill is steep and challenging and currently really icy," he said. "It's going to push the limits of what these young athletes can do, which is not what I figured we'd get when we got here, so it's a pleasant surprise." With 28 skiers in from BC, Pridy added his team was expecting it to be a little easier, but after a few practice runs, easy isn't a word they would use. "It's good we have two days to accli-

matize because it's not the shock you want on race day," he said.

Bradley believes these athletes will be able to handle the conditions because

some of the best skiers ages 14 and 15 will be competing this week, including seven skiers from Thunder Bay.

"We're hopeful our local kids can show their stuff," Bradley said. "But the main provinces are B.C., Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario tend to have a predominance of faster skiers. It can go any way. You just never know with this age group."

Aaron Puskas of Thunder Bay is skiing with Team Ontario and will be competing this week for the first time in front of a hometown crowd. For the 15-year-old, conditions are proving to be a little challenging so far.

"We haven't had this kind of snow in a while so it's taken a lot of power to acclimatize to it, but it's been good," he said.

Puskas said he has been skiing with Team Ontario since he was first eligible in the under 14 division. But being able to compete for the first time in Thunder Bay is an awesome experience for the young competitive skier.

"I love it," he said. "It's the first time to ever really have any big races in Thunder Bay. It's really cool having the home hill advantage. Hopefully I can maximize that during the race."

Races got underway on Tuesday at Loch Lomond and will wrap up on Saturday. Bradley said hosting an event like a national championship is about more than just skiing and the week will include opening ceremonies, a parade at Prince Arthur's Landing Thursday afternoon, and closing ceremonies at Confederation College.

"We are trying to create some excitement about skiing and more fun for the kids and trying to keep kids in our sport longer," he said. "Being the first national championship at this age group ever, we are kind of setting the tone."



sports NEWS



TOUGH TO STOP: Falcons centre Austin Burchat tries to muscle past Churchill's Robinson Bates last Thursday.

Falcons champs again

BASKETBALL By Leith Dunick - TB Source

t's a three-peat for the St. Ignatius Falcons

Powered by Austin Burchat's 21point effort and 16 points by Jared Kreiner, the Falcons rolled out to a 26-point lead at halftime and coasted Thursday night to an 81-55 triumph over the Sir Winston Churchill

Trojans, capturing their third straight varsity boys' basketball championship the first to win three straight since Hammarskjold between 2005 and 2007.

The towering Burchat, just 16 and with at least one more season to go at the high school level, said it all came down to preparation. "It's because we put in

the effort in practice. Our coaches set it all up so we had all the plays to run. It was all repetition. As long as we put in the work day after day - and we got the win," Burchat said.

"It feels pretty good. It's an

amazing feeling." Burchat scored eight of the Falcons

"It feels

amazing.

Three victo-

ries in a row,

it feels

great."

JARED KREINER

points in the opening quarter, as St. Ignatius held the Trojans off the board for the first six minutes and opened a 14-2 lead.

While his scoring tapered off thanks to an extended rest, it set the tone for an equally dominant second quarter for the Falcons, who were playing with home-court advantage.

> "It gets the momentum of the other players going and it really gives us a boost."

Kreiner scored eight of his points in the second, then capped his effort with three-pointers in each of the third and fourth quarters.

It was a great team win, said Kreiner, son of Lakehead Thunderwolves women's basketball coach Jon Kreiner.

"It feels amazing. Three victories in a row, it feels great," he said. "We have a great organization, a great coaching staff and our players just work together to get it done. It's all about the team effort, everybody moving the ball and we were getting great shots."

The Trojans hung tough with their opponent in the second half, but never once got in striking distance as the Falcons opened up a lead as big as 33 points at one point in the third.

The closest they would get was 21 back on a two-point bucket late in the fourth by Robinson Bates, whose 14 points were second on the Trojans to the 20 put up by Connor Byney, 18 of which came in the second half.

St. Ignatius coach Matt Erdman called it a good finish to a Superior Secondary Schools Athletic Association campaign that saw them run the regular-season table with a 10-0 record.

"It's the first championship for this team, so it's different than all the other years," Erdman said. "These guys had a goal set out at the start of the year. They wanted to do something special, and I think they did a great job to wrap up the season here tonight at home."

The Falcons advance to the NWOSSA championship, scheduled for Friday and Saturday in Thunder Bay.



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underwolves bow out in 2 straight

UNIVERSITY HOCKEY By Leith Dunick - TB Source

t was two and out for the Lakehead Thunderwolves in their return to the OUA men's hockey playoffs.

The York Lions scored the game's first three goals on Saturday night and held on in the third for a 3-1 win to sweep their best-of-three OUA West quarterfinal series.

Dexter Bricker, Scot Feser and

Aaron Sprivak scored for the host Lions.

Departing senior Carson Dubchak had the lone goal for Lakehead, assisted by fellow fifth-year forward Kelin Ainsworth.





