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Removed from board

Provincial appointment revoked after 2017 letter surfaces POLICE

By Leith Dunick - TB Source

The provincial government has acted swiftly to remove John Cyr from the Thunder Bay Police Services Board.

Cyr, who was sworn in last Tuesday as the board's provincial appointee, came under fire later in the week after a 2017 letter to the editor emerged supporting embattled Sen. Lynn Beyak's controversial speech that same year pointing out the positive aspects of residential schools.

Cyr's letter suggested there must have been some good people who worked at residential schools, calling her comments "balanced and thoughtful."

In an email response on Friday to tbnewswatch.com, Marion Ringuette, press secretary in the Office of the Solicitor General, said the government views its relationship with Ontario's Indigenous people are committed to making it a meaningful partnership.

"John Cyr's views do not align with those of our government's. That's why as soon as we became aware of Mr. Cyr's past views, the government acted to remove Mr. Cyr from the Thunder Bay Police Services Board," Ringuette said.

"Our government expects the Thunder Bay Police,

"John Cyr's views do not align with those of our government's." MARION RINGUETTE

tion."

the Police Services board and local stakeholders to work together to address systemic racism and the recommendations made by the Ontario Civilian Police Commission in December of 2018."

Accepts his fate

Reached over the phone last Friday, Cyr said "I was certainly pleased to be selected, but I respect that the appointment was entirely in the minister's discre-

"To the broader issue, I think it's important to appreciate that there is a huge amount of goodwill in the non-Indigenous community. But does simply shouting down an idea serve to enhance or diminish that

goodwill?" Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who on Thursday called for Cyr to be removed from the board, applauded the province for moving so quickly.

"I just want to commend Minister (Svlvia) Jones and the province for their swift action to address the situa-

QUICK EXIT: John Cyr was appointed to the Thunder Bay Police Services Board last Tuesday morning.

tion and realize that he wasn't obviously the right person to serve on the board. When they realized that, they took action by removing him," Fiddler said.

Fiddler added he's hopeful the province will consult with First Nations groups in the area when searching for Cyr's replacement.

Controversial board

Members of the Police Services Board just recently had their voting rights restored, after being mandated to undergo sensitivity training following an extensive review by Sen. Murray Sinclair and the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, which found the board repeatedly failed to address concerns of the Indigenous community.

Two arrested in 2014 homicide

CRIME By TB Source staff

Police have identified two people arrested in connection with the murder of William Darryl Wapoose. Jonathon Edward Massicotte, 23, and a 22-year-old male, who was a youth at the time of the offence and cannot be named under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, have been charged with first-degree murder.

Wapoose, 32 years of age at the time of the homicide, was located at approximately 7:30 a.m. on Sept. 3, 2014 by a citizen walking on the bike path at the south end of

Chapples Drive. At the time it was apparent that foul play was

involved Over the years, numerous people were interviewed and attempts to obtain information on those responsible

for Wapoose's death were made, according to a police release. In 2016, police offered a \$50,000 reward for any infor-

mation into the death. As recently as 2018, police urged the public for more information.

One of the accused males is also charged with uttering threats to kill in relation to this incident.





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REVEALED: Education Minister Lisa Thompson unveils the First Nations, Metis and Inuit studies curriculum at Westgate.

NAN pans curriculum

Grand chief says Indigenous learning should be mandatory

"We have

taken the

best of the

best."

LISA THOMPSON

EDUCATION By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler says the Conservative government had no consultation with Nishnawbe Aski Nation officials before arbitrarily rolling out Ontario's First Nations, Metis and Inuit Studies curriculum at Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute.

Education Minister Lisa Thompson, on hand for the announcement, confirmed that the consultation process ended with last June's election, when the Conservatives stormed into power after 15 years of Liberal rule.

"I was perplexed during the whole announcement because there are a lot of points that she raised that didn't register with me," Fiddler said. "Including at the end when she said she's had a meeting with me. That meeting has never happened.

"But even her assertions about consultations and working, at least with NAN, we've never had any meetings with her – and of our officials. And we were heavily involved with the (Truth and Reconciliation) team that started this work a few years back. They were abruptly halted last June."

Fiddler added he was hopeful Tuesday's news conference was going to restart the consultation process.

In part it did, though a ministry spokeswoman confirmed the changes won't be put in place by this fall, when the new curriculum takes effect, despite a promised meeting next month.

Fiddler also wasn't happy the curriculum is no longer mandatory, as it was when the Liberals first introduced it. Instead it will be an elective for students in grades 9 to 12, which the province says will provide up-to-date learning about First Nations, Inuit and Metis perspectives, cultures, contributions and contemporary realities in variety of areas, including art, law, politics and history.

His fear is they've lost a year in the process.

"We just saw the document which was introduced today. We haven't read it. We haven't gone through it with our educators, with our school boards, with our education authorities, to see if the content of the document reflects the work that's been done," Fiddler said. "That's my fear, that there was good work that has been done in the past with the TRC curriculum-writing team and they were just halted, for whatever reason, last May or June."

The 298-page document is available online and acknowledges the separate standing enjoyed by Inuit, First Nations and Metis peoples.

Grade 9 students can learn about Indigenous art, while in Grade 10 they can explore the histories of First Nations and Inuit, starting with the pre-contact era, and Metis from the European arrival in North America.

In grades 11 and 12 courses examine cultural expressions, histories, world views and the current realities of the country's Indigenous population. A Grade 11 course focuses on Indigenous writing, while three courses focus on social science aspects. Graduating students can study Indigenous governance and the global context of compulsory issues concerning Indigenous people.

"As we roll this out, I want to get feedback," said Thompson, whose government is providing \$3.25 million to school boards across Ontario to help with implementation.

"I represent a different type of minister who says, 'Let's see how these elective courses work,' because I know in the schools in my riding, they want to take these

> courses as well. Let's get good, constructive feedback on the curriculum and then see where we can go from there."

Thompson said the formation of the process has been in the works for about nine years. "We have taken the best of the best," she said.

"There has been so much input and so much collaboration and consultation, leading up to when we hit the pause button. And then we just put the finishing touches on it and I am very proud of the end result."

Tyrell Tibishkogijic, an 18-year-old Indigenous student at Westgate, applauded the introduction of the curriculum, saying it's about time Ontario's youth learned more about where they come from and understand more about who they are.

He is concerned it's no longer mandatory.

"There are a lot of people who don't really understand and I feel like if there was more of an understanding, there would just be a brighter future for everyone in general."

Ford gov't rescinds municipal cuts

Move only temporary, says Ontario premier

CITY HALL By Matt Vis – TB Source

Ontario municipalities will be a given a brief reprieve from anticipated added costs that had been set to take effect this year as a result of provincial cuts and funding formula changes.

Premier Doug Ford on Monday announced that the Progressive Conservative government was backtracking on previously announced reductions to provincial payments for land ambulance, public health and child care services for the current fiscal year, those adjustments are expected to begin next year.

In a letter to heads of council, Ford said with municipal budgets already set, municipal leaders needed to have flexibility to achieve those savings.



ROLLBACKS: Ontario Premier Doug Ford backtracked on funding formula changes.

"Getting Ontario back on a path to balance is essential for protecting important government services, long-term

prosperity, attracting investment and creating good-paying jobs," Ford said. "And we also believe that every government needs to step up and do its part; there is only one taxpayer, and the job of finding savings while protecting core services rests with every elected official in Ontario."

Ford, who made the announcement in Queen's Park alongside Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Steve Clark, said the government's approach to delay the adjustments is meant for municipalities to use the additional time to work with the government to "transform critical shared public services and find the efficiencies that will ensure their sustainability.

In a report to Thunder Bay city council earlier this month, city administration estimated a cost ranging between \$330,000 and \$515,000 if the land ambulance services grant was frozen to 2018 levels.

The Ford government's plan to overhaul the province's public health system not only includes consolidating the province's 35 public health units to 10 regional entities, but also decreasing its portion of the cost sharing agreement, which would result in the current 75-25 ratio becoming a 70-30 split with Thunder Bay.

The cost sharing agreement for child care expansion plan funding and early years and child care administration are also set to shift.

Thunder Bay city treasurer Linda Evans said the government's announcement is welcomed news.

"Throughout the year we would have had to try to continually assess our service levels and the impact on future budgets as well," Evans said in an interview with CKPR Radio.

"Certainly, we're all continually trying to identify savings given the environment we're in. When we're developing the 2020 budget, council will be responsible for identifying areas where potential cuts might be needed given our reduced funding from the province."



Editorial

EDITORIAL Curriculum screw-up

ntroducing a new First Nation, Metis and Innuit curriculum in Ontario high schools was a great step forward – if it was done the right way.

Unfortunately the Doug Ford-led Conservative government made major missteps when it rolled it out at Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute last week.

For starters, the curriculum will no longer be mandatory, but instead will be an elective that students can choose or not to take.

Knowing is half the battle.

By making it mandatory, the curriculum would go a long way toward reconciliation and create a better understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students that would likely last a lifetime.

Almost as bad was the province's decision to stop the consultation process after the Ontario election last June.

Any changes that were made to the largely Liberal plan were done with no input from Nishnawbe Aski Nation leadership.

While the province has promised to sit down with Indigenous leaders in June, it's too late to make any changes to the newly implemented curriculum, which will be offered for the first time in the fall.

And there's no guarantee Indigenous leaders will be listened to during the process. There's a right way to do things, and this wasn't it.

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Teachers wants cuts reversed

LABOUR By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Union leaders representing teachers in Thunder Bay want Ontario's Conservative government to take a long, hard look at proposed cuts to the province's education system.

About a dozen flag-carrying labour leaders marched outside Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute last Tuesday, while Education Minister Lisa Thompson held a news conference inside the Walsh Street high school.

Rich Seeley, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 6 A, said he wanted to make sure Thompson saw the solidarity that's formed against education budget slashing.

"We wanted to make sure she saw that we're out here so that she knows there are people who are not supportive of this government's approach to education, namely, all the education unions." Seeley said.

"So far, it's the fact they're cutting everything. They're looking at taking out eventually one-infour teachers out of the classroom and an untold number of support staff. Our problem with this is the fact this is just going to annihilate services for students."

Seeley said by taking that many teachers out of the system, the number of courses that will be able to be offered by local school boards will also have to decrease.

The Toronto District School Board recently announced it was losing up to \$28.7 million in funding from the province and suggested it could mean the loss of 300 courses.

Local board officials say it's too soon to tell what provincial cuts to education could mean for students and staff at Thunder Bay schools, but expect to have a better idea next week, as planning for the 2019-20 school year ramps up.

Seeley said it's pretty obvious how things will develop.

"The kids of Thunder Bay are not going to have the same pathway that they've had forever, because this government is looking to save money, when really there are other ways they can get around their money problems," Seeley said. Asked what assurances she had for the teachers, Thompson said the reality is the province needs to work with all of its education partners to find a solution that works.

"I've invited collaboration as well as input and constructive feedback through to the end of this month from all of our education partners. We're chunking things down and making sure that our education partners know how important they are, that we want to hear from them and that everything is not set in stone, like some people would have people to believe," Thompson said.

Thompson, who some labour leaders believe is trying to take away teachers' leverage at the bargaining table by moving up the end of future contracts from Aug. 31, just before the start of the school year, added the province has not cut the Local Priorities Fund.

"To eliminate anxiety and the chaos and the confusion that some people would like to perpetuate out there, I've invited our labour partners to the table early. I'm very pleased that OSSTF and CUPE have taken us up," Thompson said.

Perspective

Milkshake mayhem

Activists in Europe using the tasty treats as weapons

OPINION By J.R. Shermack Special to TB Source

Milkshakes are more than just tasty ice cream treats to sip through a straw.

Normally mild-mannered activists in Europe have taken to throwing sticky, messy milkshakes all over their far-right political opponents.

Expensive suits are being ruined and dry cleaning is now an increasingly annoying campaign expense for abrasive, controversial candidates.

Politically motivated fast food lovers are using their smooth, creamy milkshakes to express growing frustration with the direction of government.

And they really love their milkshakes so there must be a compelling reason to make such a drastic, high calorie sacrifice.

World politics is currently being dominated by a grey gaggle of rich, old, white men and at times it seems like resistance is futile.

It is pointless to try beating someone at their own game when they hold all the cards and make the rules.

However, there is one timetested form of protest that is inexpensive, relatively harmless and virtually impossible to defend against.

As long as there have been politicians there have been protests with fruits and vegetables (mostly rotten) and other spoiled foods. Throwing food or drink that is freshly made is a recent development and hurling fast food is quite affordable even for less affluent activists.

And given the nutritional content of most fast food, flinging it in protest might be one of the better options.

Even if we can't beat politicians at their own game, we can make the game messier and a lot more inconvenient for those who play.

Players like Tommy Robinson who was the first attributed victim of a political "milkshaking" when he was creamed twice in two days.

Mr. Robinson, a controversial right wing extremist, was viewed five million times on social media dripping with a recently thrown strawberry shake.

The candidate was outraged, but millions were delighted to share his distress and the "shakedown" became a popular social trend.

Nigel Farage, another candidate for European parliament, was the latest victim at a rally in Newcastle, England.

He was milkshaken (or should I say milkshook?) by an angry, Paul Crowther to protest Mr. Farage's "bile and racism".

Mr. Crowther threw a banana and salted caramel milkshake – he had been looking forward to it all day but the shake was called to a higher purpose.

The protestor was charged with assault and criminal damages but

he made his point, he has no regrets and no real harm was done. However, the fear of milk-

shaking has everybody rattled. The police told MacDonald's to stop selling potential milkshake missiles during a rally in

Edinburgh, Scotland. Burger King responded with, "Dear people of Scotland. We're selling milkshakes all weekend. Have fun."

It is fun to watch, but how vexing it must be for a self-righteous politician to be slimed with a milkshake, regardless of flavor.

By the same token, how will fast food activists wash down their burgers and fries now – this protest is inconvenient for both sides.

Canadians are no strangers to food-based activism – many can remember when a custard pie in the face was a popular Canadian protest.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien took one in the face and so did Alberta Premier Ralph Klein – it was also fun to watch although neither man enjoyed the pie.

Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come and we are now witnessing the power of an airborne banana and salted caramel milkshake.

That is currently the flavor of the week and the beverage of choice for frustrated protestors who want to launch a personal campaign.

European politicians are nervous – in Canada it remains to be seen if anybody gets the shakes.



GENEROUS DONATION

LARGEST GIFT YET: Alexandra Caldron, executive director of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, with a \$1.26-million donation from a local family, who wishes to remain anonymous.

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

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Achneepineskum grabs NDP's banner

By DOUG DIACZUK - TB Source

The federal race in the Thunder Bay-Superior North riding is taking shape and members of the New Democratic Party are hopeful their can-

didate, who the riding party president describes as a fierce advocate for the north, will help colour the region orange again.

In two nomination meetings held on Saturday in Nipigon and Sunday in Thunder Bay, Anna Betty Achneepineskum was declared as the NDP candidate for Thunder Bay-Superior North.

"When we were doing our candidate search and we were talking about the qualities we wanted in a candidate that we would like and somebody who cared about the north, Anna Betty's name came up and she is a fierce advocate for the north," said Thunder Bay-Superior North NDP president, Janet Wright.

Jay Stapleton, who sough the NDP candidacy in the 2011 provincial election that was ultimately won by Steve Mantis, put his name forward last

month to run as a federal candidate for the party, but withdrew shortly after. Stapleton said he would be supporting Achneepineskum going to work and no other candidates really hard to stepped forward.

Achneepineskum served as deputy grand chief with Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Wright said even before her role with NAN, she was a strong advocate for people and the north.

"She's a woman with vast experience, dedication to people, and to making things right and looking for justice," Wright said. "Even prior to her being



RUNNING: Anna Betty Achneepineskum takes her first shot at provincial politics.

deputy grand chief of NAN, she was involved in child advocacy and the missing and murdered Indigenous women's movement.'

Going into the federal election this fall, Achneepineskum said she wants to focus on economic sustainability and health care.

"I want us to support local businesses and local entrepreneurs and ensure we have the skills and trades people here to be employed in their own communities," she said.

"The other item I want to focus on is expanding and getting more involved in health care. We have a crisis when it comes to drug addiction, not only in Thunder Bay and within our riding, but all across the country. I believe the federal government needs to be in partnerships with the provinces."

Achneepineskum added she would like to ensure all communities, not just larger urban centres, have more resources to deal with the issue of drug addiction, as well as more prevention and awareness programs and stronger support for police.

NDP members are hopeful with Achneepineskum as the candidate they will turn the riding orange again and return it to the party.

Bruce Hyer held the Thunder Bay-Superior North seat for the NDP from 2008 until 2012 when he left the party to sit as an independent before joining the Green Party in 2013. Patty Hajdu would go on to win the 2015 federal election for the LIberal Party.

"We are going to work really hard to win this election," Achneepineskum said. "I believe that we do have an opportunity. So we are going to work hard to ensure we get the seat."

"We have a strong candidate and I think it will be a very interesting and competitive campaign," Wright added.

Hajdu will be seeking reelection for the Liberal Party and former Thunder Bay city councilor and five-time mayoral candidate, Frank Pullia, was acclaimed as the candidate for the Conservative Party.

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RETURN TAXES: At-large Coun. Trevor Giertuga wants to give some of the surplus back to taxpayers.

City hall surplus

Municipality has combined \$12.7-million extra this yearCITY HALLsupported reserve funds.By Matt Vis - TB SourceCity officials had been concerned that

"The money

or some of

the money

should be

going back to

the residents

in the form of

a tax

reduction."

TREVOR

GIERTUGA

The city is banking surplus dollars from last year in anticipation of leveraging provincial and federal infrastructure funding, though some councillors are concerned about the continually increasing residential property tax burden.

Thunder Bay city council on Monday night signed off on directing the \$3.4 million 2018 positive budget variance into reserve funds, while also approving the 2019 tax strategy that sets out how much each property class contributes to the overall municipal tax levy.

Most of the surplus funds - \$2.5 million - will be allocated to the Renew Thunder Bay reserve fund to potentially tap into

the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, which will have funding streams available for public transit, green infrastructure, community, culture and recreation infrastructure. The remaining amount includes \$800,000 to the insurance reserve fund and \$100,000 to the Pioneer Ridge structural reserve fund.

That marked the fourth straight year the city ended with a favourable variance, prompting Coun. Trevor Giertuga (At-Large) to suggest giving it back to the tax base.

"The money or some of the money should be going back to the residents in the form of a tax reduction," Giertuga said. "At some point we should be anticipating the surplus and having a lower tax rate. We could have taken \$2 million of this and had a one per cent tax increase, rather than two."

The four consecutive surpluses, which totalled a combined \$12.7 million, came immediately after three straight years from 2012 to 2014 when the city was hit with three consecutive deficits to the tune of \$11 million. Rate-supported operations ended up with a \$3.5 million surplus, which will go into rate

City officials had been concerned that provincial decisions made at Queen's Park would likely send the city's books into the red, the government earlier Monday reversed course on in-year cost sharing adjustments for land ambulance, public health and child care services that would have affected 2019 municipal budgets. PAPER

NEWS

Although he alluded to challenges that might be looming on the road ahead, Coun. Cody Fraser (Neebing) said residential taxpayers have felt the brunt of the city's economic climate.

"We may have hard times ahead for the city and we're bracing for that, but I think people in Thunder Bay have had hard times for a long time," Fraser said.

"Our residential tax rate continuously increases. We have industry leaving town. It's more difficult all the time to start new business."

The residential property class, which in 2018 accounted for 63 per cent of the municipal levy, will face a 2.45 per cent increase. The median residential single family detached home, with an assessed value of about \$210,000, would pay about \$85 more than last year.

Since 1999, the city's tax levy has nearly doubled from \$95.9 million to

\$194.1 million this year. Over the course of those two decades, the large industrial's share of the levy has dramatically dipped from nearly 12 per cent in 1999 to 1.75 per cent in 2018.

There will be a further shift onto residential, as the approved strategy is expected to lower the multi-residential ratio to the provincial threshold within the next two years. The 2019 strategy, which drops the ratio, is anticipated to result in a rent reduction for 43 multi-residential properties, which contain 17 per cent of the city's nearly 7,000 units.

Giertuga, Fraser and Coun. Andrew Foulds (Current River) were the three dissenting votes against the approved tax strategy.

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LOCALNEWS

Alzheimer's walk raises about \$70K

THUNDER BAY By Michael Charlebols – TB Source

Saturday marked a special day for the Paajanen family.

Not only were they named the honorary family to be at the front of the line in this year's Alzheimer's Walk, but it was the parents – Bob and Bonnie's – 56th wedding anniversary.

The "public school sweethearts," as Bonnie called it in an emotional speech, have had their share of adversity. Bonnie overcame her cancer diagnosis 13 years ago, and her husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's six years ago.

"The progression has increased in severity over the last six months," said daughter, Debbie Prete.

Last Saturday at the Marina Park, Bob and Bonnie were joined by their children, Debbie, Billy, and Bob Jr., and other family members to lead the 25th annual Alzheimer's walk.

"The community is very supportive," Debbie said. "It's always nice to see there's all these resources they can go to and have outlets for having fun."

The Alzheimer's Society's raised more than \$70,000 on Saturday, exceeding their goal by over \$10,000.

All money raised on Saturday's walk stays within the community, and helps fund programs such as individual and family counselling, discussion groups, art programs, and education for the public, students, and front-line workers.

"All of our fundraising dollars stay here in our community," said Jaclyn Woods, marketing and events coordinator for Alzheimer's Thunder Bay. "About 60 per cent of our funding comes from these events." Bob Paajanen Jr., who now lives in Toronto, commented on the community support which is unique to Thunder Bay.

"It's great to come back to the city and see what this city is really all about. The community spirit is second-to-none to anywhere in Canada."

Billy, who lives in Winnipeg, says the local support makes things easier.

"It kind of sucks that we're far away, but knowing that we have my sister and her family. And having the Alzheimer's Society as a whole really synergizes the help (my father) needs."

As Bonnie said in her speech, Saturday was just one more day with her husband and family that she was grateful for.

"In his Finnish accent (Bob) always says, 'Ta-geter forever,'" Bonnie said.



TA-GETER FOREVER: Bob and Bonnie Paajanen at the 25th annual Alzheimer's walk





people health home food leisure



INFLUENTIAL: Award winners Melissa Hargy-Giles (from left), Ashlyn Ransome, Raquel Glavish, Patricia Forrest, Madge Richardson and Marlene Davidson.

Women of influence feted

THUNDER BAY By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Marlene Davidson says she wasn't sure she would be able to spare the time to attend Monday's Woman of Influence luncheon in Thunder Bay.

As president of the Atikokan Metis Council, which she founded a decade ago, Davidson routinely puts in dozens of hours of overtime each week, adding to her workload by chairing the local family health team and library board, also volunteering on the local hospital board.

But, Davidson said, after a short thought, she realized it was important to accept the award in person, recognizing her local career in both public and humanitarian service.

"I'm used to giving, and not taking," Davidson said following the ceremony, held at the Victoria Inn.

"It was really a good experience for me to maybe recognize that what I'm doing is kind of important."

Inspiring

It's equally important for women to be honoured for the work they're doing throughout Northwestern Ontario.

It provides plenty of inspiration for the younger generation, showing them the oppor-

tunities that might be out there.

"I've got a daughter and five granddaughters, so I think it's important because leadership is not just standing up for what you believe in and it's not for being elected. It's for the next generation," said Davidson, who took home the Aboriginal Leadership trophy.

Madge Richardson, the executive director of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board, was honoured as executive of the year.

She said it was an overwhelming ceremony. "It does take you some time to process it and actually grasp the reality, but it's such an honour, especially when I've had the opportunity to meet so many women and men who are just so influential and such strong leaders," Richardson said.

"It's a privilege to be acknowledged within their ranks. It's really exciting."

Richardson agreed it's important to take note of women who succeed, because as much progress has been made over the decades, there's still plenty of work to be done and there's a danger that things could start to slide the other direction, given the political climate.

It may have already started, she added.

"To be an inspiration or to show younger people that it truly does pay off when you're doing things you love and when you're doing things with people that you respect, that you really can accomplish a great deal."

Melissa Hardy-Giles, owner of Origin Recruitment and Hardy Giles Consulting, took home the entrepreneur of the year award, while the Pasta Shoppe's owner, Ashlyn Ransome, was named young entrepreneur of the year.

Other winners

Raquel Glavish, the civil engineering coordinator at Confederation College, earned the tradeswoman of the year trophy, while Patricia Forrest, the senior co-ordinator of partnerships and initiatives at Destination Northern Ontario, was given the influential community trailblazer award.

Abbas Homayed, publisher of Northern Ontario Business, which has handed out the awards for the past 22 years, said these are women who go above and beyond to make the world a better place.

"Basically they empower our community. They go beyond the call of duty in their respective businesses in their area of expertise and they empower others to do the same," Homayed said.

It's not easy picking the winners, he added. "We never promise the judges an easy job and they tell us that at the end," he said. "To narrow it down to 12 winners in two regions is really difficult."





Hatch of ravens, free firewood and dark dirt



When I saw the tree containing the raven's nest violently swinging back and forth, I freaked "Not our ravens!" I yelled.

A hydro crew had been cutting down trees along our road that were too close to the hydro and telephone lines. I had driven to get our mail at the mailbox in our village and observed several spruce, balsam, poplar, and even a birch tree newly felled along the route. The intrusive sound of chainsaws had drowned out the collective chorus of red-wing blackbirds, blue jays, and sparrows, all flying to and from the bird feeder.

I had been working outside in the

garden with my wife, Laura, weeding the raised beds prior to planting. We had heard the cracking sound of trees falling, not thinking much about

it. That is, until I happened to be returning from casa Jones with a fresh mug of coffee, herd the 'cra-a-ck," looked up, and saw the tree with the nest suddenly swing back and forth.

Hurried hard

I raced (as best my aged and out-ofshape legs would let me) up to the road where the crew was cutting, praying that the giant poplar in which the ravens had built their nest, was not on the list of trees to be felled.

I arrived to greet the foreman and urgently expressed the wish that the tree would be spared. I need not have panicked.

That particular tree was well back from the road.

"What happened," the foreman told me, "was the branches of the poplar we took down brushed against the tree with the nest."

Whew!

I explained that we've had this one family of ravens residing on our property for years and that we love them. Last year was disastrous for the ravens: none of their chicks survived. A freak storm with bitterly cold temperatures and freezing rain (we think) did them in.

So, we had our fingers crossed that this year they'd succeed in having a batch of young and eventually we'd hear the familiar squawking of the raven-lings.

This spring has been cold and very, very wet. A day of sunshine let alone warmth is rare so far. In addition to feeding the song birds, we've been putting out food for the ravens in the hopes that they and their brood will survive.

We think that at least one squawker hatched as we can hear its plaintive squawk for mum or dad to feed it. We regularly see both parents flying up into the nest followed by the squawk. Good. I have only discerned one such demand for food (but then my hearing ain't what it used to be) and perhaps one of the newly-hatched, if there are more than one, can out-squawk its siblings. We will just have to wait and see.

Extra wood

The trees brought down by the Hydro crew are a bonus for us. Sure, the wood will be green; the felled trees will require me and my trusty saw to de-limb, buck, haul back, fire up the gas splitter, and proceed to split, and then stack.

The balsam and spruce will be future fireplace wood that spits and crackles giving off that wonderful aroma.

The black ash, poplar, and birch (if there is any) will be designated for the

boiler in the basement. All for next year, of course.

I have to say that the Hydro crew

were very skilled at felling those trees. I watched them at it and was impressed at the care they took.

The delay in warm, dry weather has had one plus: so far (as of time of writing), few biting bugs. That means preparing the garden for planting has not been horrible and that the horses can still be outside during the day. But not for long. When the black flies truly lay siege, then we switch to summer hours with the horses spending their days in stalls away from the torture of biting insects.

And gardening?

Insect repellent, long-sleeved shirts, bug hats or bug jackets with netting. Awkward, though, as seeing is more difficult. But it is worth it.

Right now, the garden is in rows of dark earth. Laura has been planting. Trays of plants begun indoors are being ferried outside. Once all the planting is done, the dark earth colour will be replaced with a rich variety of green. Again, well worth it.











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TB Life



SHARING CIRCLE: Yamandeep Maihi of the Thunder Bay Sikh Society visits with students last week at Superior Collegiate.

Cultures showcased during Human Library

"It definitely

helps people

because once

they learn

this, it

usually sticks

with them for

life.."

JASMINE KLASSEN

THUNDER BAY By Leith Dunick – TB Source

Second-year high-school students got a taste of different cultures and backgrounds during the second annual Human Library event.

The teens, who hailed from all three public board high schools, spent up to half-an-hour with a variety of different people at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute, including a Muslim imam, a group of local Sikhs,

someone who escape the Pinochet regime in Chile and a municipal employee who has overcome a disability to take part in a variety of different sporting activities.

It was a fantastic learning experience, said 15year-old Pippa Dunn, a Grade 10 student at the host school.

"I thought it was really nice to be able to see different points of view, many of them from minorities and people who have first-hand experienced it, and how they feel people in our society can relate to them better and how they can help them out in different ways," Dunn said.

The youngster said its far too easy for people to maintain a close-minded view of those who might be a little different from them.

Hosting the Human Library, whose origins arose last year at the now-closed Sir Winston Churchill High School, said the more one knows, the more accepting one is

"Especially being in high school, I think it's good that we have a good range of the different type of people in our community," Dunn said.

Classmate Jasmine Klassen called it an awesome oppor-

tunity to learn what it's like to come from a different background, especially in a country like Canada.

"Canada is a very diverse area and knowing about different types of cultures helps everyone understand each other better," Klassen said. "It makes it a much better community."

Hopefully, she added, the lesson won't be lost in adult-hood.

"It definitely helps people, because once they learn this, it usually sticks with them for life," she said.

Presenter Yamandeep Malhi of the Thunder Bay Sikh Society, said he was thrilled to be able to share his background and religion with Grade 10 students, who might not have been exposed to it otherwise.

"It's always good to give people perspective on how life works according to other religions," Malhi said. "We are always surrounded with our friends, with one culture sometimes, and we don't get that exposure to meet people from other religions and cultures."

ASSEN Noel Jones, the leader of experiential learning at Lakehead Public Schools, said the concept is international and offers the opportunity to meet with someone in the community they might see on a regular basis, but never share a conversation.

"Around the schools we've got nine different presenters, a very broad range from our community, who are telling stories, in particular about civic action, social activism and volunteerism," Jones said.

This year's focus is to let the students see what's happening in Thunder Bay and that anyone and everyone can still contribute to their community, no matter what they have to overcome.





DRESSED TO KILL: Amber Ail (from left), Onya Boyszdii and Fantasia La Premier last Thursday at the unveiling of the Thunder Pride lineup.

Thunder Pride growing

THUNDER BAY By Leith Dunick - TB Source

hunder Pride has outgrown its origins. So now organizers plan to double the fun, while shifting events and activities to the heart of the Bay and Algoma District.

Jason Veltri, chair of the Thunder Pride Association, says the ninth annual celebration of all things LGBTIQS+ will now be a twoday affair.

As an added bonus, pride flags will also fly outside of all three local school board offices, a first for the festival.

"It's become a staple in the June calendar in the city," Veltri said last Wednesday, launching this year's slate of activities at the Finlandia Club, this year's Pride headquarters.

"I think it's really important that we have these events. Our city has come a long way. We have a long way to go yet. But these events will help foster that inclusion that's needed in this city."

From a new parade route, that will see participants march from Waverly Park to Bay Street along Algoma Street, to a Drag Show Extravaganza featuring four performers from the hit television show RuPaul's Drag Race, to the two-day block party and the Colours of The Rainbow Gala Dinner, there's a little something for everyone, Veltri said of June 15 and June 16 event.

"This is our biggest festival yet," he said. Ellen Chambers, one of the founders of Thunder Pride and chair of Lakehead Public Schools board of trustees, said getting all three boards to participate is indicative of how far acceptance has come, while acknowledging there is still work to be done.

"I know that Lakehead Public Schools have

2019 THUNDER PRIDE SCHEDULE

- June 1: Youth Drag Workshop and Show (St. Ignatius High School)
- June 2: Pride Pool Party (Canada Games Complex)
- June 5: City Hall flag raising and media launch (City Hall)
 June 5: Pride Night at the Park: Border Cats baseball game. (P.A. Stadium)
- June 7: Coffeehouse Night and Varity Show (Red Lion Smokehouse)
- June 8: Smudge and drum ceremony (Mount McKay)
 June 8: Drag Show Spectacular, featuring stars from RuPaul's Drag Race (Victoria Inn)
- June 9: Drag Brunch and Mimosas (Red Lion Smokehouse)
- June 10: Film night (Vox Popular)
- June 10: Awareness Breakfast (Prince Arthur Waterfont Hotel
- June 11: Literary Night (Mariner's Hall)
- June 12: LGBTQ2S+ Trivia Night (The Foundry)
- June 13: Night of Tribute and Healing Sober Event (Marina Park)
 June 14: Colours of the Rainbow Gala Dinner and Dance (Prince Arthur Waterfront Hotel)
- June 15: Thunder Pride Block Party (Bay and Algoma District)
 June 16: Church Service (St. Paul's United Church)
 June 16: 2019 Pride Parade (Algoma Street to Bay Street)

- June 16: Thunder Pride Block Party (Bay and Algoma District)

made huge strides and is more than dedicated to being open. We have become very accepting and celebratory of LGBTQ+ students and staff," she said.

"I know the struggles that many have gone through and I know how difficult that's been. I know that this is more than a parade and more than a ceremony. It's representative of a lot of struggles and a lot of difficulties and a lot of heartbreak and hardship. It's happened to people and is unnecessary and not right.'

Education is key to changing attitudes, she added.

"This is about education and our flag represents that," Chambers said.

Veltri praised the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board for not hesitating to show support, given how divisive the issue

has become in some religious circles.

"I couldn't be more proud that the Catholic board is on board with us and they have been a leader in this community," he said.

Director of education Pino Tassone, who taught Veltri, said it's humbling to be part of a movement that honours and celebrates the LGBTQ+ community.

"We proudly embrace our diversity and strive to better our school communities and face inclusivity and positive learning environments," Tassone said. "As an educator, I truly believe education is the most powerful tool we can use to change the world and today is a perfect example."

While the main events take place over a two-day period, there will be activities throughout the first 16 days of June.

Thursday, May 30, 2019 15

Do you have an opinion to share? E-mail the editor at ldunick@dougallmedia.com



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IN THE **bay**

Game of Thrones's emotional finale

So *Game of Thrones* finally ended its reign at HBO and it only took 73 episodes to send its fans into therapy. Ironically, some actors, including Kit Harington (a.k.a. Jon Snow), had already sought mental help when their characters initially blew up into a global passion.

But apparently, many fans of the series were not so enamoured with its finale. They took to social media, the streets, and even to therapy to vent their feelings.

It's no surprise that some shows develop an unhealthy following. The characters and their stories come into the privacy of our homes on a regular basis for years and we're not supposed to develop some kind of attachment?

We laugh with them. We cry with them. And when they die and are later resurrected from the grave, you're darn tootin' we'll follow them into the next battle.



Game of Thrones was an emotional rollercoaster designed to test our blood pressure. Nearly every conversation revolved around preparing for war or death. There was little down time – for the characters or the audience – to process what had just happened and manage their feelings. That is, except during the extended downtime between seasons in which anticipation built to a frenzied season premiere.



SHOW FINALE: Peter Dinklage played Tyrion Lannister in Game of Thrones.

I found it odd to hear fans describe GoT as authentic to the period. Because yes, of course, there were dragons flying around between the 12th and 15th centuries – along with the odd Starbucks cup. But that leads to a small issue with the excessively personal connections viewers have been building up in their minds over the past eight seasons. It's a fantasy. There should be no confusing reality and the stories of the *Game of Thrones*.

And yet, one cannot deny the way some viewers internalized the characters and related to them. They named their newborn children after the *GoT* heroes. Too bad if said characters later turned into the greatest villains.

Meanwhile, anyone who survived abuse or trauma in life likely gravitated toward Daenerys.

She was the ultimate survivor, an inspiration. But her unfortunate endstory likely impacted how her fans' saw their own.

Then there's the simple absence of the show. When you've invested so much time, energy, and even your identity with something that is suddenly gone, a huge, gaping void is left.

Consequently, an estimated 10 million fans planned to take skip work after watching. Employers were told to allow staff who did show up to discuss it as a team-building exercise.

And others sought professional help. In fact, a specialized *GoT* counseling service was launched to that end. Psychiatric professionals with intimate knowledge of the show helped fans deal with their feelings online or in person.

I'm a strong advocate for therapy. There's no shame in asking for help. But perhaps, instead, they should have had a psychiatric evaluation before they were allowed to watch. It's a TV show, people.

Although, now that I think of it, most of *GoT*'s characters probably would have benefited from a 50-minute session once a week, too.

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Border Cats ready to roll

BASEBALL By Leith Dunick – TB Source

aseball is back. It's an exciting time of year to be Baballplayer in the Northwoods League, a chance to show professional scouts you have what it takes to go all the way, or an opportunity to show your college or university coach you deserve a little more playing time.

It's a grind not all newcomers are used to undertaking, 72 games in 76 days, batters given the added task of adjusting to switching from aluminum to ash at the plate.

But if Monday's first team practice was any indication, it might not be much of a problem for this year's edition of the Thunder Bay Border Cats.

While batting practice tosses aren't the same as facing a hungry college starter on the mound, Dixie State University sluggers Tyson Fisher and Jake Engel were launching balls over the fence at Port Arthur Stadium with ease, adding a little more character to an already-beaten-up scoreboard in left-field.

Engel, a Tuscon, Ariz. native expected to be inserted in the middle of the Border Cats lineup by first-year manager Eric Vasquez, after hitting 14 home runs in 53 games for the Trailblazers, a solid clip by any standards.

The 21-year-old says he's just going to play his game - which seems to have worked out fairly well through three years of college ball.

"It's not trying to change too much, not trying to put too much pressure on myself. I'm just going to go out there and play the game, play every day," he said. He's here for a reason, Engel added.

"It's pretty well known for being one of the best leagues in the country. So I think being able to come here, learn from the guys, learn from the coaches and just get back to Dixie and be a better player."

Fisher, a freshman with the Trailblazers, checks in at 6-foot-4, 220 pounds, and showed an uncanny ability to hit in his rookie season at DSU, batting .363 with eight home runs, 14 doubles 41 RBI and a healthy .415 on base percentage.

A three-time all-state player in high school, he was also a defensive player-of-the-year on the gridiron. Oh, and he can pitch pretty well to boot.

"I always wanted to come to Canada, it's a pretty nice place," said Fisher, who hails from St. George, Utah, between cuts in the batting cage.

"I've got a little bit of power, but I'm just trying to help us win some games. That's about it," he said.

Starting on a winning note is key, Fisher added.

"It's pretty important to get off to a quick start, win the first 10 games and then go from there," Fisher said.

One player who won't have much of an adjustment is Thunder Bay's own Bryce Jorgenson.

The son of the team's former owner, Jorgenson has seen limited action with the team the past three seasons.

But a solid season with the Minnesota-Crookston Golden Eagles that saw him hit .260 with 14 doubles and 13 RBI, drawing 36 walks in 49 games, has him excited to finally be able to contribute in a utility role.



FAMILIAR FACE: Bryce Jorgenson is back with his hometown Thunder OPENING

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June 2	Mankato	1:35 p.m
June 3	Rochester	7:05 p.m
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June 5	Rochester	7:05 p.m.
June 6	Rochester	11:05 a.m.
June 11	La Crosse	7:05 p.m.
June 12	La Crosse	11:05 a.m.
June 12	La Crosse	7:05 p.m.
June 13	La Crosse	7:05 p.m.
June 20	Mankato	7:05 p.m.
June 21	Mankato	7:05 p.m.
June 22	La Crosse	6:05 p.m.
June 23	La Crosse	1:35 p.m.
June 29	Waterloo	6:05 p.m.
June 30	Waterloo	1:35 p.m.
July 1	Waterloo	1:35 p.m.
July 2	Waterloo	7:05 p.m.

"It's the classic story, bat boy to player," Jorgenson said, meeting his new teammates for the first time on Monday.

"The first couple of years were like feeling it out, doing my best to keep up. Now that I've had a couple of years in college, I kind of know what to expect. I play with these guys for a little while, so it's more or less not trying to keep up, it's trying to compete," he said.

Claw marks: The Cats signed local catcher Nicholas Fazzari to a temporary contract.

nder Bay Border Cats to start the 2019 campaign.					
IING DAY ROSTER					
Pitchers					
Name	Hometown				
Mark Anderson	Berwyn, Pa.				
Tanner Bercler*	La Salle, Man.				
Austin Breazeale	Gilbert, Ariz.				
Peyton Burks	Tacoma, Wash.				
Alex Dafoe	Lake Haveau, Ariz.				
Austin Eggleton	Arlington, Texas				
Tyler Hansen	Snowflake, Ariz.				
Staley Hansgen*	Pleasant Grove, Utah				
Joey Hecht*	Centerville, Ohio				
Logan Hooley	Pleasant Grove, Utah				
Aaron Kern	Sun Tan Valley, Ariz.				
Carlos Lequerica	Miami, Fla.				
Joe Moran	Anderson, Ind.				
Lucas Reid	Olympia, Wash.				
Trent Valentine	Hopewell Junc., N.Y.				
CATCHE	RS				
Nicholas Fazzari*	Thunder Bay				
Alexander Hernandez	Mirmar, Fla.				
INFIELDERS					
Jake Engel	Tuscon, Ariz				
Tyson Fisher	St. George, Utah				
Thomas Grilli	Toronto				
Jordan Larson	Dodgeville, Wisc.				
Nate Soriano	Oro Valley, Ariz.				
Karsten Vasquez	Sacramento, Calif.				
OUTFIELDERS					
Ryne Edmondson	Chandler, Ariz.				
Anthony Galati	Sparks, Nev.				
Bryce Jorgenson	Thunder Bay				
Jakob Newton	Oakville, Ont.				

San Diego, Calif.



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