

# WEEKENDER

THE  
SPEAKER'S  
WEEKEND  
EDITION



Vol. 19 – No. 2

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2019

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## Fraud charges laid relating to solar farm construction

TEMISKAMING SHORES (Staff) - A topic of much local concern five years ago is now going before the courts.

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged four individuals following a lengthy investigation into allegations of construction fraud, they state in a press release issued Tuesday, December 10.

The charge dates back to July 25, 2014, when the Temiskaming OPP detachment received a fraud complaint related to the construction of solar projects in three jurisdictions in Ontario.

The matter under investigation occurred in the Temiskaming Shores area when a major solar panel farm was being constructed to the west of the city.

In 2014, Timiskaming-Cochrane MPP John Vanthof outlined the matter in the Ontario Legislative Assembly. At that time he stated: "In 2012, construction began on one of three ten-megawatt solar farms in the City of Temiskaming Shores.

"Local contractors were eager to begin on the project.

"The project was subcontracted, and then subcontracted, and some of the players along the line did not pay their bills.

Continued on 3a



## THE KEYS TO NEW SKILLS

Grade 4 students Teagan Richer, at back, and Emlyn Teskey picked up computer coding skills at English Catholic Central School December 10. It's the third year that the school has taken part in the Hour of Code, an international movement encouraging students of all ages to get some hands-on computer science skills. More than 119,000 events in more than 180 countries, including almost 3,000 in Canada, have registered to take part this year. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

# DID YOU GET The Speaker THIS WEEK?

Here are some of the stories in our December 11 edition...

- A new grocery store is set to open in Earlington and people can have a say in naming the store.
- They're a finely-tuned fundraising machine. In just one hour, over 100 Women Who Care raised \$11,000 which went toward new chairs for the Northdale Manor.
- Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Anthony Rota has been elected as Speaker of the House of Commons.
- Buying a 2020 Wild Temiskaming Calendar will indirectly help to put meals on the table for children, adults and seniors accessing the Cobalt Coleman Latchford and Area Food Bank.
- The Temiskaming Shores council approved a memorandum of understanding with Northern College Haileybury campus to provide city library resources.
- Plenty of physical activity was the focus of the fifth annual New Liskeard Public School Invitational Indoor Soccer Tournament.
- The Cubs will be looking to get back into the win column when they resume play in the Great North Midget League.
- The Englehart Curling Club is a busy, happening place these days as people hurry hard to the various activities held at the club.
- KidSport Temiskaming is no longer operational.
- Our C Front this week features a jolly story on the Temagami Country Christmas held last weekend.



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### ELDERS' COMPLEX UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Work is continuing on a two-storey 10-unit elders' apartment building on Bear Island. Each storey will be able to be accessed at ground level, eliminating the need for an elevator. The new waterfront seniors' housing is expected to be ready for occupancy in September. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

## Fraud charges laid relating to solar farm construction

Continued from A Front

"Other project managers arrived, only to claim that they were not responsible for unpaid bills. Local contractors are in danger of losing their hard-earned family business."

He stated at the time that the estimated loss to area businesses was over \$21 million.

Owners of one of the contracting companies and one of its employees are now going before the court to hear the charges against them.

As a result of the investigation by members of the Temiskam-

ing Detachment-Crime Unit, the Anti-Rackets Branch-Ottawa Unit, with the assistance of the Forensic Accounting Management Group (FAMG), the OPP has charged four men each with: two counts of fraud over \$5,000 contrary to section 380 (1) of the Criminal Code of Canada; and false pretence/statement contrary to section 362 (1) (c) of the Criminal Code of Canada.

The accused persons are all scheduled to appear in the Ontario Court of Justice in Milton

on January 27, 2020.

The OPP have declined to comment further in order to protect the integrity of the investigation and any ensuing court processes.

The matters of guilt or innocence have yet to be determined through the judicial process which is now beginning.

Anyone with information should contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

After 62 years in Health Care Dr. Cliff & Louise Feddes of Haileybury Family Chiropractic wish to Announce their Retirement Dec. 31st. Thank you to our patients for their support over the years Happy Holidays!



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We would also like to thank all who attended our recent Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser.

**The support of our club is greatly appreciated!**

**Whitney Virginia Naismith**  
 August 18, 2014 - October 10, 2019



Words can not express our gratitude to the Emergency Dept. at Temiskaming Hospital. A special thank you to Dr. Sayer, Dr. Dubois, Dr. Logan, Dr. Elgadi, and Sheldon West as well as the emergency room team of nurses, lab techs, x-ray techs, and ambulance attendants (Wanda & Kyle).

Whitney's passing has been a loss felt by our entire community and we will be forever grateful for the communities love and support during this extremely difficult time in our lives.

*Sincerely*  
 Travis & Crystal Naismith

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## Mom's pantry

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

December is here and it is the busiest time of the year.

I was in my favourite grocery store last week marvelling at all the baked goods.

I think of my mother at this time of year and all the wonderful baking she made at Christmas.

She loved Christmas, it lifted her spirits and created such a wonderful holiday buzz in our Cobalt home.

Mom loved to write Christmas cards and send them off to relatives and friends. She made a point of sending a card to her friend Bron Scully in Toronto each year.

And she loved receiving cards as well.

But most of all, Lena loved to bake Christmas cookies.

I can still taste her mouth-watering shortbread cookies cut with old-fashioned metal cookie cutters in the shape of Santa, stars and bells.

As kids, we loved to place the sprinkles on them as they popped out of the oven.

She made her own fruit cake and Christmas pudding from scratch also.

She said pie making wasn't her forte but we never complained.

I can still taste my favourite - lemon pie with a huge helping of meringue icing on top.

She baked our birthday cakes, usually banana cakes and wrapped money in waxed paper for us to find inside the cakes.

Is there an app for that nowadays?

Did I mention Lena's mashed potatoes and gravy were the absolute best?



Sue Nielsen

solute best?

I miss my parents the most at Christmas.

Just recently my daughter asked for my mother's recipe book and some of Lena's cherished recipes including her cabbage roll, baked beans and cake recipes.

Whitney has turned in to quite a baker and while I was in Scotland she baked an almond cake for a special dinner we were having and it was delicious.

I was proud of her.

There is nothing more precious than a recipe book with grease stains and hand written notes filling the pages in my mother's distinct handwriting.

There are many of us who can't be with our loved ones at this time of year.

Careers, financial restrictions and health problems can keep people apart over the holidays.

As we celebrate Christmas this year, we know our world is troubled and our country divided and perhaps we are challenged in our personal lives, but the truth is, memories can last forever in our hearts and minds.

There is plenty of opportunity to find joy over the holidays in the eyes of a child, a Christmas card received from a friend or a cookie or two shared between family and friends.

Have a wonderful week everyone!



## WINTER'S WATCHERS

A stone-cold December. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

# EDITORIAL

## Shop local

Instead of giving your hard earned money to a global behemoth, why not browse the local stores in the South Temiskaming region?

You know, the ones that support children and adult hockey, baseball, soccer, curling and swim teams.

Shopping locally is more sustainable, bolsters community spirit and most importantly, it boosts the local economy.

The local economy that employs

people and sends back ripples of financial benefits around our communities.

Yet statistics show that more than half of holiday shoppers choose to buy from large corporations in far off cities and countries.

Shop local, give our hard working, dedicated retailers in our region a chance to earn a decent living and keep their doors open.

## Get rid of the scammers

Rarely a day goes by that we don't hear about some well-meaning parent or grandparent being taken advantage of by scam artists.

The grandparent scam is a particularly repulsive scheme that has seniors being fleeced out of their savings by con artists preying on their concerns about children or grandchildren who may be in trouble.

It is long past the time for governments to act to rid us of the perils of telephone and online scammers.

Governments have the tools to combat terrorism and espionage that could be used to thwart telephone and internet scam artists.

The technology is available now to

reduce the threat of the telephone scams primarily directed at vulnerable seniors, so let's use it.

We don't know the full extent of these scams because of shame - people are reluctant to admit they have been taken by scammers.

Many of use are fearful of answering our telephones because of the sophisticated scams using the name of the Canada Revenue Agency or other well-known institutions to commit fraud.

Let the provincial and federal governments create task forces to rid us of these organized crime gangs who prey on honest, hardworking citizens.

Enough is enough.

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**IN FASHION**

'Tis the season for red and green and to be seen in Latchford. Visitors to the tree-lighting festivities December 6 included Scott Green, Shelly Borgford, 10-year-old Gavin Borgford and three-year-old Lukas Borgford. The evening was organized by the Latchford recreation committee, and included s'mores at the bonfire, cookie decorating and a special appearance by Santa. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

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# Vanthof v

**Sue Nielsen**  
Speaker Reporter

HAILEYBURY — They say you can't know about another person or empathize with them unless you step inside their shoes.

Timiskaming-Cochrane MPP John Vanthof did just that when he recently worked alongside personal support workers (PSWs) as they performed their dayshift duties at Tri-Town Extencicare.

He arrived for his shift in Haileybury at 7 a.m., put on a uniform and was eager to understand the workings of one of the most important and undervalued jobs in health care.

He started off November 13 in an awkward way when he was given a uniform to put on and went into a bathroom to change.

The bathroom was right across from the nurse's station where the PSWs were having a meeting.

He threw his coat over the faucet and changed into the uniform, not knowing the tap was motion sensor equipped. The tap kept on running as he left the room and



Extencicare Haileybury welcomed MPP John Vanthof. In the photo, Carol Johnson, PSWs Alice Lauzon, B..., middle row are Serena Peltier, Cheryl..., row are Emilie Woods, Francine Rice...

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# walks in the shoes of PSWs

There was water all over the floor. “I was supposed to be helping out I just created more work,” he said.

His mother is a resident at the facility so he has a personal interest in the care being provided to the residents.

But he also wished to understand the complexities of the job.

“Carol Johnson asked if I would like to do a shift with the PSWs. She felt it would boost the spirits of the workers and add some profile to their profession. There is a shortage of PSWs now and unless something changes there is a looming crisis,” said Vanthof in an email interview.

## SHORTAGE OF WORKERS

One of the biggest challenges for assisted living facilities like Extendicare is being able to recruit enough qualified personal support workers, said Registered Nurse/Administrator Carol Johnson.

Extendicare currently employs 14 full-time and 14 part-time PSWs.

“At this time we are recruiting and hiring PSWs. We are work-

ing in collaboration with Northern College to provide work placements and hiring bonuses to graduates of the PSW program. Our PSWs are the backbone of our home, and the entire health care industry,” said Johnson in an email interview.

“We appreciate their dedication and hard work in the service of others.”

Vanthof mentioned turnover is high for the profession as the pay is often low which contributes to a shortage of PSW workers.

“There are cases in the riding where people cannot get home-care services simply because there is no PSW to provide it. The burnout rate is high and the number of people dropping out of the program is high,” said the MPP.

“The one thing that struck me is the PSWs in long-term care are closer to the residents than their family because they deal with the most intimate needs at one of the most vulnerable times of a person’s life. This can be very emotionally draining. At the same time demands on their time are

daunting.”

He said time spent by PSWs with a resident is regulated by industry standards but it is often not practical.

## DEMANDS

The demands of the job require a worker to perform a number of tasks in a single shift.

“I heard a few times from the workers that the people who are making the rules should spend some time on the floor. Just because a form says a task can be completed in seven minutes does not make it so. My mom has always been very well treated and after having seen things behind the scenes, I feel even more secure with her there.”

He came away with some definite thoughts on the work that PSWs perform for family members and friends.

He feels they are underpaid and overworked and with the aging of the baby boomer generation, there is a need for many more PSWs.

“It is a very noble profession that doesn’t get the credit it deserves.”

# Ontario Northland and United Steelworkers reach agreement

NORTH BAY (Staff/Special) - Ontario Northland and United Steelworkers Local 1976 have reached a five-year labour agreement.

Over 90 employees working in the areas of rail traffic control, customer services and sales and train operations (locomotive engineers and conductors) are represented by United Steelworkers Local 1976.

“This agreement balances the interests of employees with Ontario Northland’s operational requirements,” said Ontario Northland director of human resources Danielle Baker in a press release Wednesday, December 11.

“This five-year agreement will provide stability and we look forward to building on this foundation to improve transportation services together.”

United Steelworkers Local 1976 chief steward Brandon Gowlett said the agreement is “a positive step for Ontario Northland. Our bargaining team worked hard and we look forward to presenting this to our members over the next few weeks.”

Ontario Northland moves passengers and freight throughout Northeastern Ontario. Last year, Ontario Northland completed over 51,000 passenger trips on its Polar Bear Express passenger train and over 311,000 on its motor coaches. Express freight shipments between Cochrane and Moosonee amounted to over 4.8 million kilograms of goods moved, while over 33,000 carloads of freight were shipped in and out of Northeastern Ontario.



PMP John Vanthof recently to experience a day as a PSW. In back from the left are nursing administrator Brenda Steep Loach, Vanthof, Melissa Banks, Brandy Saylor, Maranda Burns and Denise Roberts. In the front row, Ashley Bird, Cathy Belanger and Diane Denis. (Staff photo by Sue Nielsen)



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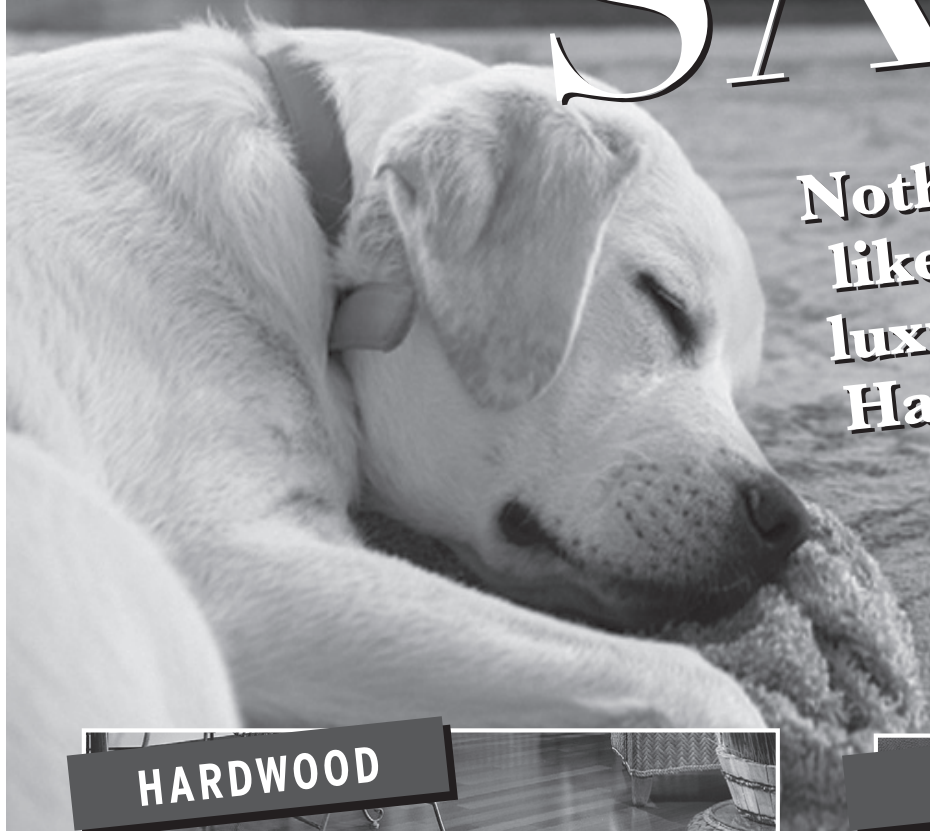
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**(1) Sawzall Blade (1) Side Handle**

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Please contact Breault's Discount Warehouse for tool availability and order timelines.

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Sawzall Reciprocating Saw, LED Work Light, (2) Belt clip (2) Bit Holder (1) Contractor Bag (1) Sawzall Blade (1) Side Handle



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## THE WARMTH OF CHRISTMAS

The ladies of the St. James' and St. Paul's Anglican Church were on hand at the Golden Age Club to provide hot chocolate to the approximately 100 people who visited to say hello to Santa Claus and listen to live Christmas carols December 2. From the left are Marg Fidelak, Valerie Paterson and Evelyn Pickard. (Staff photo by Darlene Wroe)

## Board ONE returns chair, vice-chair

TIMMINS (Staff) – The region's English-language public school board has elected to keep the status quo at the top.

Timmins trustee Bob Brush has been acclaimed to a third consecutive term as chair of District School Board Ontario North East.

Joining him as vice-chair is long-time Cochrane

trustee Dennis Draves, also acclaimed to a third one-year term.

"We are entering another exciting year and will continue to focus on student achievement and well-being," said Brush in a statement following the board's annual organizational meeting December 3.

## Temagami Family Health Team

Submitted by Ellen Ibey

If you Wish to STOP Smoking...

We Can Help!

The STOP with Family Health Teams (FHTs) Program has two goals:

1. To improve access to nicotine replacement therapy for FHT patients across the province of Ontario who wish to quit smoking; and
2. To increase capacity of health care practitioners in FHTs to provide comprehensive smoking cessation treatment to their patients.

Since the Temagami FHT started participating in this program it has supported many patients in their attempts to quit smoking by providing free nicotine replacement therapy and ongoing one-on-one support as needed.

Each participant enrolled in the STOP with FHTs Program is contacted via email and/or telephone survey for follow up at 3, 6 & 12 months post enrolment.

If you are a patient of the Temagami FHT and are a smoker who would like to quit, please contact Chantal at (705) 569-3244 to enrol in our STOP Program.



Temagami

Family Health Team

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