

More dough needed for good food

Welfare increase of \$100 being proposed to help recipients

By Kristen Haveman

A proposal to increase welfare by \$100 for healthy food has found both support and caution with Belleville city council.

Coun. Garnet Thompson said that council overwhelmingly supported the proposal. The main concern is that the province pays for any inquiries or increases.

Thompson said the city of Belleville is also recommending that the province look at social services amounts in general, not just the Belleville area.

"Every municipality has people on social services and every municipality is concerned," said Thompson.

He added the basic welfare cheque for a single person is about \$583, while the average price of rent for an apartment is \$600 to \$700. He said he wants the provincial government to look at the cost of living and to be realistic about it.

As a councillor and taxpayer, Thompson said he wants to be sure that any changes don't fall onto the municipal taxpayer's backs as it would if the municipality had to pay for any increases.

Belleville resident Drew Arens said that \$100 would help but he was unsure if it would be enough.

As a single father, Arens, who is currently looking for work and waiting to be reaccepted to social assistance, said it is hard to get by on the amount given. His monthly rent is \$490 plus utilities while his assistance payments were \$550. He has mostly been relying on his grandparents and the food bank to get food and buying what he can at discount stores. Arens said that at times he has to sell personal belongings like DVDs to make ends meet.

"I have handed out probably 200 resumes over the last two weeks. I come home, make dinner and wait by the phone but no one has called back. In the meantime, you just fall further behind."

Coun. Pat Culhane, who supported the proposal, said nutritious food is just beyond the reach of most people on social services, especially in the winter. She said that there are programs like the Good Food Box but not enough people know about it.

"You see people eating high starch, high fat, high sugar, non-nutritious diets. Basically, people get whatever is cheap," said Culhane.



Photo by Kristen Haveman

Drew Arens looks into his fridge at his small Belleville apartment. Arens is a recipient of Ontario Works who says that the money is just not enough to stretch for food and shelter for him and his son.

'You see people eating high starch, high fat, high sugar, non-nutritious diets. Basically, people get whatever is cheap.'

Councillor Pat Culhane

Arens agreed that he ends up buying a lot of canned foods and TV dinner meals, but said that the hardest part is getting stuff like diapers and toiletries. He explained that diapers cost \$17.99 and that his son has sensitive skin, meaning that he has to buy special shampoos and soaps that don't irritate his son's skin.

Diana Chard, a dietitian with the Belleville health unit, said it is hard for people to afford nutritious meals. She said there has been significant increases in food costs but that there have not been increases in social assistance programs.

Chard explained that children who do not get a healthy diet have problems with growth and development. Adults have a harder time concentrating and avoiding diseases as well as recovering if they do get sick.

Chard said the findings of a report called "Can Everyone in Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Afford Healthy Food?" was discussed Wednesday morning at a health unit meeting but that any decisions have been deferred to the next meeting.

The report that can be found online states it costs \$178 a week, or \$770.74 a month, to feed a family of four (two parents and two children, a girl aged eight and a boy aged 14). A family of four with two average incomes needs to spend 16 per cent (down from 18 per cent) of their income on food, while a one-wage family will spend 29 per cent, (up from 28 per cent.)

A family of four on social service would need to spend 38 per cent (up from 37 per cent) of their income to meet the basic requirements of a healthy diet.

Funding for social services is typically shared between the province and the municipality, depending on the size of the township.

Brian Cousins, treasurer of the city of Belleville, said for 2011, the city spent \$5,137,000 for social services and \$3,154,000 on social housing, making up approximately 11.8 per cent of the city's budget.

Student stress a common concern

By Rhea Munroe

It's two in the morning on a Tuesday and your brain feels like shutting down for the night, but closing your eyes is the easy part.

Getting to sleep is a whole other story.

There could be many reasons for your inability to sleep. Perhaps you have more homework to do. Maybe you're worrying about finishing school, or your financial situation isn't exactly what you had hoped.

All of these fall under the category of stress. Stress is felt by people of all ages, but is often a big problem with students. The uncertainty of the future and what your life will end up like can be both worrying and stressful. Stress can make college feel like a two-year course in sleep deprivation.

Scott Tinsley, a first-year police foundations student at Loyalist College, said people are by no means guaranteed jobs when they finish school. This is a contributor to the stress around graduation time.

Kelly McGuire-Smith, a student success mentor at Loyalist said, "Stress is a common concern. Managing stress is an important piece to success."

One of the things McGuire-

'The brain needs oxygen, sun, and water to work well. When you don't sleep, you don't breathe deeply enough and lessen the amount of oxygen your brain receives.'

Kelly McGuire Smith, student success mentor

Smith tells students to help them limit their stress is something that she calls mental hygiene. She described it as a habit you do every day, like brushing your teeth, but for your mind.

"The brain needs oxygen, sun, and water to work well. When you don't sleep, you don't breathe deeply enough and lessen the amount of oxygen your brain receives," explained McGuire-Smith.

"You can feel stress both physically and emotionally," said Lauren Deans, the college's nurse. She

added stress can cause a decrease in the immune system, leaving you more susceptible to illness. It can lead to such things as stomach problems, high blood pressure, sleep deprivation, fatigue, headaches, and depression.

Statistics Canada 2009 stress statistics state 21.1 per cent of women ages 15 to 19 feel stress on a daily basis and only 11.7 per cent of men in the same age group feel stress. A 2007 Statistics Canada survey also found students who work while they attend school are more likely to feel stress than those who just focus solely on their schooling. It also states that the hours people spend on homework and how often they procrastinate can also be a contribution.

There are no de-stressors that are guaranteed to work for everyone, but McGuire-Smith said generally deep breathing and meditation are good starting points.

Tinsley said, "I find running and reading relaxing. But I also make sure to take the time to talk to my family as well."

If you're struggling from stress you can call Open Line, Open Mind at 310-OPEN for support and advice, or visit the college's guidance counsellors in the student hub.



Photo by Tristan Kong

Fire fighters clean up after a fire broke out on the third story of a Trenton home on Feb. 1. at 79 Ontario Street. A witness said black smoke started pouring out of the attic window and was then followed by huge flames. According Gregg King, the senior fire prevention officer, there was \$60,000 in damage but no one was injured during the fire. They would not release any further details at this time.

Keeping safe on the toboggan hills

By Marina Sanford

There have been some reports of tobogganing accidents this winter in Belleville.

Although not yet officially confirmed, someone was reportedly taken to hospital last Sunday afternoon from North Park Street hill with undetermined injuries.

North Park Street hill and Zwick's Park hill have been very popular sledding destinations for kids this winter, despite the strange weather conditions. And this year, like many others, wipeouts have

been common. Sometimes, those tumbles can result in something serious.

Last winter, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, there were 171 hospitalizations from tobogganing accidents in Canada.

Some are from adults going sledding, and sometimes it's parents going down the hill with their children. However, a large number of these accidents happen to children aged 10 to 19.

Larry Glover, the parks manager for the City of Belleville said he

and his staff do their best to keep the coasting hills in Belleville safe, but can't do everything.

"We fill in holes during the summer, and let Mother Nature provide during the winter. Beyond that, we pick up debris but can't have someone out there to supervise."

The North Park Street hill, as well as the hill in Zwick's Park, are both maintained by the city, but are used by the public at their own risk. Glover said it's important for parents to supervise their children when they go sledding.

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Photo by Tristan Kong

Lisa and her husband, Corey Watson put their house on the market in mid-December after their tenants moved out after a year and a half. Lis said she does not think that the 'danger statistic' is the main reason it hasn't sold.

'Most dangerous city' moniker doesn't worry real estate board

Belleville's status in recent magazine article isn't hurting housing market, says real estate president
By Tristan Kong

Is Belleville the most dangerous city in Ontario? The real estate board doesn't think so.

In the wake of recent news stories, some people might be thinking twice about moving to Belleville but the new president of Quinte & District Real Estate Board is confident it is safe.

A recent Maclean's magazine survey has stated Belleville is the "most dangerous" city in Ontario. Maclean's used annual crime data from Statistics Canada for municipal police serving the nation's 100 large

est populations, each encompassing a city or town of at least 10,000 people.

Sharon Shortt, the Quinte & District Real Estate Board president, said she does not think the Maclean's survey affects the housing market in Belleville.

A local report from Belleville's Deputy Chief Paul Vandegraaf stated there is a 47 per cent decrease in reported break and enters from 2010 to 2011.

Lisa and her husband, Corey Watson, bought a house in Belleville in Feb. 2008 because they were moving to the area for work.

"At that time, Belleville didn't have the same crime stigma as it does today. I always thought of it as the friendly, small city," said Watson. "The past couple of years, it has gotten a bad reputation because of the numerous crimes and kills that happened a couple of years ago."

However, Shortt said she has not heard

yet of a case when a buyer questioned the area because of the Maclean's magazine article. She still believes that Belleville is very safe.

"Belleville has a stable economy, good job growth. It's a nice area for retirement with lots of amenities," said Shortt. "We have maintained steady house prices while other areas have been more volatile."

The Watsons put their house on the market in mid-December because she has been renting it out after she and her husband moved to Toronto for work. Their tenants are now moving out after a year and a half so the Watsons feel it is time to sell their house, as they do not come into Belleville much anymore.

Watson said she does not think that the 'danger statistic' is the main reason it is not selling.

"It was a bad time due to Christmas

and New Year's and not a lot of people were looking during the holidays," Watson said. "Many people can't afford a down payment on a house due to the economy and lack of job opportunities in Belleville."

Shortt said there is a balanced market in Belleville. "I would say we are having a typical January, perhaps slightly busier than usual," she said. "I believe we are lucky to live in the Quinte area. We have great local government and are supported by job growth in Belleville, military in Trenton and tourism in Prince Edward County."

Shortt said no one can determine exactly whether the future of the housing market will be increasing or decreasing. It depends on the global economy, interest rates, and government policies, but she points out that Belleville offers a lot of good opportunities.

Immigrant Services tries to help new Canadians

Potential conflicts and misunderstandings issues for organization

By Mark Tarnovsky

Although the majority of cultural problems never reach the magnitude of the Shafia killings, Quinte United Immigrant Services has strived to avoid such catastrophes.

"There are always potential conflicts and misunderstandings among different cultures," says Orlando Ferro, executive director of Quinte United Immigrant Services.

QUIS strives to ease the transition of a new immigrant in the region. Ferro mentioned the importance of the host program, in which a new immigrant would be put in contact with a student or professional volunteer.

The host program was developed over 25 years ago to promote communication between new immigrants and local Canadians. Last spring the program was discontinued.

"We are trying now to recreate that program. We are trying fundraising for that, to get back the volunteering force that we used to have last year."

Recently Ferro did a presentation at Loyalist College about the loss of the program.

"We are trying to get students to recreate that program. It's going to be on a volunteer base."

QUIS receives no funding from the government. The service relies solely on donations from the community.

Director of Student Success Catherine O'Rourke has been working with international students since the mid 90s, and formally with the International Student Services at Loyalist College six years ago. International Student Services offers a range of resources based on the personal needs of individual students.

"Because it's student driven, we don't try to fit a square peg into a round hole, we really want to seek out what each individual requires and provide it for them."

International issues can include language barriers, banking, housing as well as other cultural and social gaps.

O'Rourke said that she does not fully understand the circumstances of the Shafia killings, but she does "know that domestic violence for women in some cultures is more prevalent than in other cultures."

O'Rourke said the problem does not lie squarely with a lack of resources, but a problem with societal influences in general.

"I think that access to services is always an issue, and if you look at some of the research that's done on partner abuse it's not that there aren't resources, it's that women for a host of reasons don't access the resources."

O'Rourke said that proper education for young girls and women is the answer.

"It's not just about resources, it's really about society and how we raise our children."

O'Rourke is not familiar with the host program that was discontinued last year, but she is feels that student volunteers recreating the program is a great idea.

"Anytime the community can come together to support diversity I think that's a good thing to do."

Canadians nationwide are still reacting to the verdict of the Shafia trial, in which a couple, Mohammad Shafia and Tooba Mohammad Yahya, as well as their son Hamed, were found guilty of the first-degree murder of four of their family members. Shafia sisters Zainab, 19, Sahar Shafia, 17, and Geeti Shafia, 13, as well as Mohammad's first wife Rona Amir Mohammed, were found deceased inside a submerged car in Kingston Mills lock of the Rideau Canal.

Ontario currently has a population of approximately 3.4 million immigrants, with 7,880 settled in Belleville and 3,160 in the region of Quinte West.

Sledding...

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Supervision is also one of the important pieces of advice Safe Kids Canada offers on its website about winter sledding safety.

The organization also recommends choosing a hill away from roads, rivers or railroads with plenty of room to stop at the bottom of the hill, using a toboggan that is in good working condition, tobogganing while kneeling to avoid head and spine injuries, not tobogganing at night unless the hill is well lit, and most importantly, wearing a helmet.

While it isn't a legal requirement to wear a helmet while going downhill, according to Safe Kids, a properly fitted ski or hockey helmet can greatly reduce the risk of injury, as they are designed to work in cold temperatures while bicycle helmets are not.

For more information about sledding safety, as well as other safety tips for winter activities, visit www.safekidscanada.ca.

Video on bullying inspiring others

Painful experience of student's friend gains momentum online
By Tristan Kong

It's been two months since 23-year-old Casey Telford released her inspirational video, and with 1,000 views so far, the video is starting to gain momentum.

Telford, a post-graduation public relations student from Loyalist College, whose video shares a painful experience at the hands of bullies. Her project, *The Kris Snary Project*, was created in the loving memory of Christopher "Kristofur" Edward Snary, which reached the community of Loyalist College and Quinte area.

The Kris Snary Project was founded in May 2011 by Telford after her friend, Christopher Snary aka Kris, committed suicide at his house. Telford said no one knows the exact reason why it happened, but suspects that he was probably bullied over his sexuality.

"Most of us here couldn't make it to the memorial, because of transportation, money or time," Telford said. "We just kind of put something together where everybody here could be in the same room together and be there for each other...we wanted it to be more of a positive event than a sad, mourning event because Kris was such a happy person."

Some bands had volunteered to play a show for *The Kris Snary Project* last summer because Kris was very musical. The money from the concert was used by Telford to start a bursary in Kris's name for Loyalist College.

It took a long time for Telford to share her own experience and it created a connection with him. It showed that although their issues were similar, it produced different outcomes.

She made the video in her class last December.

"I literally just set up my MacBook, wrote out everything it was I wanted to say. Everything was basically on impulse," Telford said. "Whatever I wrote down I said and I just did it right there in one take."

Telford released it on YouTube within a couple of minutes. The video can be seen on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4e-06L5ecI>

That night, Telford was overwhelmed when she got text messages from people



Photo by Tristan Kong

Casey Telford, post graduate public relations student from Loyalist College in Belleville, bravely delivers her inspirational message about the painful experience at the hands of bullies and her project, *The Kris Snary Project*, in the loving memory of Christopher Edward Snary. Telford tells her story using paper notes in a video.

saying they watched it and had been affected by it. They even shared it with other people.

"I had people approaching me in the hallway, telling me 'I saw your video, that it was so touching...I cried...I knew Chris...I know you through somebody else.' People somehow found a way to connect with it," Telford said. "I was not expecting and it to be shared so many times on Facebook; it was unbelievable."

Chris Barnim, president of student government for Loyalist College, said that he has known Telford for almost a year, and that she is a very kind hearted person, inspirational and a great friend.

"It was very emotional. She has sent a great message in the video," Barnim said. "It made me want to look into the anti-bullying cause even further."

Loyalist College's respect committee messaged Telford for her permission to put her video because they thought it was a good fit for the project that they had been working on.

Dave Templar, who works as a residence coordinator at Loyalist College and one of the respect committee members, is impressed with Telford's courage to speak out about her experience.

"She seems like a fairly mature, well-rounded person who has had some challenges herself," Templar said. "She's been

here for a few years and clearly has had some success and enjoys it here."

After receiving many positive responses, more people joined *The Kris Snary Project's* Facebook page and her video on YouTube has reached over 1,000 viewers after less than a month.

Telford was invited by the community to spotlight her video, showing it at a film event called "Reelout" in Kingston last weekend. She spoke for two or three minutes about her own story.

Telford said there are people in the community who are very open to working together and collaborating. "It's actually shocking the response our efforts get," Telford said.



Photo by Linda Horn

Alex Hunter, vineyard manager for Huff Estates, and his assistant Doug Gyde pose in the wineries crop of Frontenac Gris grapes. The grape is used to make a dessert wine called Zero De Gris. The process of making a dessert wine is the same as making an ice wine but cannot be classified as one because VQA's rules of what grapes can be used.

Ice wine a chilly delight

Prince Edward County wineries needed creative ways to overcome Mother Nature

By Linda Horn

Prince Edward County wineries use creative ways to overcome VQA Ice Wine rules and Mother Nature to produce quality dessert and late harvest wines. The VQA is Ontario's wine regulatory agency which has very strict rules about what can be called Ice Wine, including the temperature the grapes must be picked and processed at, and what variety of that grape

can be used. Because of the winter conditions in Prince Edward County, producing Ice Wine can be a challenge. "If temperatures drop below -25, we are danger of damaging all of our crops. So for the majority of Prince Edward County grape growers, they take an extra step of burying the vines in the winter to protect them from the cold. This is not done in Niagara," said Lynn Sullivan Chairperson for the Prince Edward County Winegrowers Association. Sandbanks Winery in Wellington usually buries their vines, but one year made an Ice Wine using VQA rules. According to winery employee John Squair, the extra weight of the frozen grapes "stressed" the vines, which resulted in a lower yield in

crops the next year. Sandbanks decided to try another approach by picking the grapes before they were frozen. "We use a Vidal grape which is an ice wine grape but it has not been frozen yet. It has been kissed by frost a couple times and the flavour is more intense," said Squair. By doing this it is no longer considered an Ice Wine the winery calls it a late harvest wine. Huff Estates in Bloomfield also puts their own spin on the sweet wine by using a grape that is not VQA Ice Wine grape. The winery calls it a dessert wine. Alex Hunter vineyard manager, said, "It is the same process as Ice Wine but we use

a grape called Frontenac Gris." But even with using a different grape the weather can still cause problems, especially with this year's milder weather. "What we want is a nice quick freeze because the longer the grapes hang they can become slightly more oxidized and can affect the flavour but that is something the winemaker can tweak," said Hunter. Sullivan said another option for Prince Edward County wineries is to buy Niagara ice wine juice. A winery then produces and bottles the wine here in Prince Edward County. "While our focus is Pinot Noir, chardonnay, and sparkling wine, there are some wineries with excellent dessert and late harvest wines," said Sullivan.

Wiarton Willie makes his prediction: an early spring it is!

By Rhea Munroe

Here's a little bit of trivia for you. Why are groundhogs the poster animal for an early or late spring? According to a 2010 article in the Huffington Post, the tradition of Groundhog Day can be traced back thousands of years when people in ancient Europe used badgers or sacred bears to help them figure out how long winter would last. In 1887, the tradition came here to North America, mainly in the Pennsylvania area. With the transition it made overseas, the animal transformed into the groundhog. And by the time it came up to Canada in 1956 it was known as Groundhog Day.

Sue Meech, director of Sandy Pines Wildlife centre in Napanee, said, "Groundhogs generally hibernate from November until April when the weather gets warmer." For Wiarton Willie, or any other famous groundhog, Feb. 2 marks the end of their hibernation, unless they see their shadow, of course. Even though groundhogs are hibernators, they do have times when they wake during their five-month sleep, which is usually for procreation and food. "They have to pack on the pounds for winter because of hibernation," said Meech. By the time they are done hibernating, groundhogs emerge much thinner than they were before, but just as strong. They

have to eat a lot of food before hibernating so that they lose the fat while they hibernate and not their muscle mass. Groundhogs are also well known as pests to farmers or gardeners who have to deal with them. "They are vegetarians," said Meech, "They eat clover, dandelion, grass, and grains" which, along with their love of digging, is one of the reasons farmers and gardeners do their best to keep them away. But Meech has a different standing on groundhogs than most people, "I consider humans to be pests, there are too many of us," she said, referring to the idea that humans will settle on or steal land that may already be property to other animals.

It's widely known that groundhogs burrow for hibernation in the winter, but they also burrow during the warmer months as well. "They burrow for a home to live in. For safety from foxes, coyotes, and birds of prey. They're on the menu so they need a hiding spot," said Meech. The burrows of groundhogs have plenty of entrances and exits to allow them a safe and sneaky escape from predators. Now that you know a little bit about the animal, let's get back to Groundhog Day. In the last 20 years, Wiarton Willie has been estimated to be correct about 55% of the time. This morning, Wiarton Willie predicted an early spring. Let's see if he's right this year.

Being a witch doesn't come easy

By Thomas Lee

When you first step into the Trenton home of Dominique Preston, it looks like a standard home. But upon closer inspection, you see a cabinet, and in that cabinet there sits crystals, candles and a small statue of a man and woman kissing. Across the room, there is a small broom with a sign that reads "Broom rides 5 cents." This is the home of a witch. Preston moved to Trenton from Texas over 10 years ago to meet her current husband, Edward, whom she met over the Internet. As a child, Preston was in and out of a lot of different churches, studying a lot of different religions. "One week we would be Christian, the next we would be Catholic and the next something else," said Preston. Eventually Preston got tired of the ways some of the churches viewed women. "I found that as a young girl, when men talked about God that men were created in his image and that women were just useless slaves and that we had no place in the world," said Preston. Preston never dealt with the other churches well. She would ask questions about certain things. She would ask them about where the donations from the donation plate would go. And ask why God needed money. "I was labeled the trouble-maker in young adult Bible school," she said. During high school, Preston met a young woman named Kathy. It was during that friendship that Preston was introduced to and started her life as a witch. "I knew I was different and she helped me discover that difference. She was the one that introduced me to the path I now follow," she said. However, being a witch does not come

easy. Over the years, Preston has endured a lot of hate and ignorance for her beliefs. Both friends and family have cut off relationships to both she and her husband over the past years. "Later on down the road, a lot of Edward's close family cut ties with him because they were all Catholic and had found out my faith. They tried to bring me back over to God but I did not need saving and some to this day, think I brainwashed him into marriage," Preston said. "It makes me sad on holidays because they condemned us," she said. The family has also cut off a lot of ties to Preston's father-in-law who supports them and their choices but is also looked after by Preston full-time in their home. "His dad supports our choices and us and for that he is punished with no holiday cards or visits from family." When Preston works with people by giving them tarot card readings, and other services, she does not exactly charge them. Instead she only asks for a donation. "There can be made massive amounts of cash doing what I do. Sure, I could charge \$25.95 to make healing salt bath mix with candles and a love spell to make someone fall in love against their will but that is wrong," said Preston. "I get so much more back from what I do than just taking in money." Preston also teaches witchcraft to people if they decide to learn it. "I am currently teaching a lady here in Trenton about the craft. She's decided to take me on as a teacher," Preston said. She also teaches a woman living in Alaska over video call on the Internet. "This is what I do, I am a spiritual person trying to help others find out who they are and where they fit in."



Photo by Thomas Lee

Dominique Preston holds up a book with a drawn picture of a fairy and a photo of herself as a child. Both the pictures show what seem to be very similar faces. As a practicing witch Preston believes that she is part of the fairy clan.

Rebates yours for the taking

Post-secondary students could benefit from tuition reduction

By Manuela Garay-Giraldo

Over 300,000 post-secondary students across Ontario could benefit from the government's new 30 per cent tuition rebate, but only 70,500 have submitted an application or started filling out an application as of last Friday. Students are eligible if they met the following criteria: they are a full-time student at a public college or university in Ontario; it has been less than four years since they left high school, they are in a program applied to directly from high school; their parents' gross income is \$160,000 or less; they are a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident or a protected person and they are an Ontario resident. Students who are receiving OSAP are automatically submitted to receive the rebate, which can be up to \$365 for college students or \$800 for university students. As of Friday, Jan. 27, over 840 Loyalist College students had either submitted an application or had started filling out their application already, according to Tanya Blazina, spokesperson for the ministry of training, colleges and universities.

The government is funding the tuition grant by "redirecting funding from efficiencies as well as from an existing scholarship program and a few grant programs," said Blazina. "We found efficiencies and savings that will fully offset the costs of the new tuition grant." Many students on campus were surprised when they received their money. "I was grocery shopping, and I checked my account and had \$300 dollars more," said Steph Benard, first-year community and justice services worker. Others who have applied, but not yet received the rebate are already planning on how they will spend their money. Tawni Rowe, first-year accounting student said, "I'll use my money to pay for my textbooks and it's good for gas money, too." While some are happily receiving a bit of extra money, some mature students are left feeling a little bitter.

Tangye Seymour, first-year accounting, who has been out of high school since 2005, said "the specifications to qualify are brutal. That four-year limit makes it really hard for mature students. We could use the extra cash, too. Especially once you consider that we have more bills to pay than kids who just left high school and live with their parents." Blazina said, "the government's commitment is to provide this grant to all eligible and qualifying students. If a student applies and qualifies, they will receive the grant." To apply for the tuition rebate visit <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/> and apply

Few students come to protest high tuition fees and student debt

By Topher Seguin

If three's company, then four's a crowd. The national student day of Action started slowly at Loyalist College on Wednesday with no more than five people sitting in throughout the day. Organized by the Canadian Federation of Students, the day was held on campuses across Canada to raise awareness of high tuition fees and to protest student debt. According to the Federation's website, as a result of cuts to federal funding for post-secondary education over the last 25 years, provincial governments and individual post-secondary educational institutions have replaced lost funds by increasing fees. The share of university operating budgets funded by tuition fees more than doubled between 1985 and 2005, rising from 14 per cent to 30 per cent. Unprecedented levels of student debt have accompanied the rise in tuition fees. "We want to prove that a free school is completely possible, and not only possible but the best way to go about education," said Tyson Leonard, first year journalism online print and broadcasting student at Loyalist, who participated in the protest. In Toronto, thousands of students from multiple campuses converged at the University of Toronto, marched through downtown and rallied at Queen's Park. Loyalist currently doesn't have a large active student resistance against tuition increase. Michael Oosting, a student at Athabasca University, was one of the few at the Loyalist event. "I live in Belleville and am a Belleville resident, so I want to get involved and help students here," he said.

Eliminate those doggone cavities

Veterinary clinics raising awareness of good dental health

By Samantha Cantelon

February is finally here and that means it is National Pet Dental Health Month.

This gives veterinary clinics an opportunity to help raise awareness for pet owners about dental hygiene and a chance to learn about some easy tips to keep their pet's teeth under control.

Although it may not seem like a top priority to brush your pet's teeth daily "If you really stop and think about it, their teeth are a lot like ours," said Amy Hill, a registered veterinary technician at the Loyalist Veterinary Hospital in Belleville. "For us to maintain our dental health, we brush everyday, go to the dentist and pets need the same thing in order to keep their teeth healthy as well."

Dental Health Month gives pet owners an opportunity to encourage people to think about their pet's teeth and what they are doing to maintain that health.

"And if they aren't doing enough this time of year, we can sort of offer discounted dental food or discounted dentistry procedures, that sort of thing," said Hill.

If a pet's dental disease gets out of control, it can lead to many more problems with the pet's health. The bacteria in the pet's mouth can go into the bloodstream and in turn cause heart problems and organ failures.

"Any pet over two years old often has some sort of dental disease. Either it's just basic gingivitis or something more serious, and it's one of those problems that will progressively get worse if you don't do something about it," said Hill.

Halitosis, most commonly known as "bad breath" is one of the tell-tale signs that your pet needs medical attention for their teeth. It sometimes can be hard for pets to let their owners know there is something wrong, or that they are in pain. For most pet owners, the cost of main-



Photo by Samantha Cantelon

Amy Hill, a registered veterinary technician at Loyalist Veterinary Hospital, looks at Daisy May's teeth, a 10-year-old golden Retriever on Feb. 1. This is the first day of a month long awareness for pets' dental health.

taining their pet's dental hygiene can seem very expensive.

"Unfortunately dental procedures for pets are quite expensive, because of the anesthetic given to the animal for a proper cleaning," said Hill.

Fortunately, a pet's dental health can be maintained with a few simple daily routines starting from when you first get your pet, such as daily teeth brushing as well as certain kinds of foods and treats that prevent plaque build-up.

If you have any thoughts or concerns about your pet's dental health or, maintaining that health, this month is a great time to approach your local veterinary clinics for information to keep your pet living a healthy life.

Kids have no fear when it comes to competition

Library hosts different events each month for pre-teens

By Amielle Christopherson

That rush of adrenaline that comes from doing an activity out of your comfort zone is something we're always looking for.

It's also something that kids are more receptive to and willing to try. Especially when it comes to see who can do it faster.

The Belleville Public Library hosted a Fear Factor event on Saturday, Jan. 28, with eight children attending, and all of them raced each other to see who could eat odd combinations of food the fastest.

From Smarties drenched in ketchup to marshmallows dipped in mustard, they all stared at their plate for a moment before, "Go!" was yelled and then did their best to eat everything on their plate before the kids on either side of them did it first.

"It's actually the most kids we've had to an event," said Jane Van Mann, a library assistant in the children and youth section.

The library hosts different activities once a month. However, attendance hasn't been very good.

"There was actually one activity we had to cancel because no kids signed up," Van Mann said.

Trevor Pross, the library CEO, said it's not out of the ordinary. "That age group has been traditionally difficult for libraries to attract," he said. "There are less kids that show up than the younger age groups, so eight kids for the 12 to 15-year-old age is actually pretty good."

He also said that library staff is doing



Photo by Amielle Christopherson

Cassandra C. (right) makes a face as Faith Semak inspects the marshmallows she's supposed to be eating covered in mustard at a Fear Factor hosted by the Belleville Public Library. The library has activities once months for kids aged 12-15

their best to get to know the kids, something that will encourage them to attend more often, and maybe bring in a friend as well.

"There's a saying at the library that if you don't know 12 kids personally, you won't have a good teen program," Pross said.

The fact that the library does have a good collection and does buy a lot of books for that age group is also some-

thing that should help draw in more kids.

As well, a change in time might help improve attendance. While activities have been held Thursday evenings in the past, this was the first time they tried it on a Saturday afternoon.

Soyoung Lee, the coordinator of children's and youth services, hopes that the change will help encourage children to attend. As well, when they do come, the staff

does do their best to encourage the kids to read and stay longer, as well as to come back.

Events the library does have planned will also bring in more kids. With a showing of the first part of *Twilight: Breaking Dawn* (popcorn and drinks included) next month, followed by a photography session, a cooking class in March, Van Mann hopes that they'll help draw kids in.

Junior Iron Chef competition preparations finalized

By Stephanie James

With the Junior Iron Chef Competition only a few weeks away, Loyalist College's culinary management students have been hard at work preparing and finalizing details for the event.

Being held at Loyalist College for the 11th year in a row, culinary management students are required to organize and host the event as a part of their event management class.

"I am so happy we got this opportunity to see how a real event is run and the challenges it includes. We can take this experience and utilize it later on down the road," said Amy Arthur, a second year culinary management student at Loyalist College.

On the day of the competition, three high schools will compete against each other in preparing an appetizer, an entree and a dessert that will be later judged by four judges who are either working in the culinary industry or pursuing a career in it.

The judges include Chef John Schneeberger, Loyalist Colleges Culinary program coordinator, Chef Jay McCool, a former Loyalist culinary student, Chef Christopher Ennew, St. Anne's Spa Expectative Chef, and a second year culinary management student from Loyalist College who has yet to be announced.

The schools that will be competing in the finals are Loyalist Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Prince Edward Collegiate Institute and Ernestown Secondary School. Each school is allowed four students per team to compete.

The finalists were chosen out of eight schools that wanted to compete in the semi-finals, which started in November 2011.

During the competition, contestants will have two hours to complete their three recipes. They have the choice of creating their own recipes or using existing ones. This competition, like most, has stipulations that must be followed. Teams must produce three plates for each course of the three-course meal required. There are no pre-prepared items permitted in the competition. Contestants' appetizers must contain but are not limited to leeks, garlic, carrots and turnip, and for the entrée, contestants must include a six-ounce portion of pork tenderloin.

For this year's competition, the Ontario Pork Producers have donated approximately 55 pork tenderloin to Loyalist College for the final event.

Along with the Junior Iron Chef Competition, Loyalist will be hosting the food and beverage show on the same day. It gives local chefs the chance to give demonstrations to the public to promote business while contestants are preparing their meals.

The competition and show will be held on February 18. In the cafeteria at Loyalist College. Booths will be set up for the show and contestants from the competition will be preparing their summations in the culinary kitchen and in Club 213. The competition and show starts at 10 a.m. and is scheduled to go until 3 p.m.

Psychic fair this weekend

By Melissa Di Nardo

Gypsy Genevieve, a medium-clairvoyant, is coming to Belleville with five other psychics for a psychic fair.

Gypsy Genevieve can answer your questions with the use of palmistry, crystal balls and Tarot card readings. All readings are offered on a CD to take home to review later.

Laura Lloyd the organizer of this psychic fair, states that a clean aura, free of imperfections, may allow good things to enter your life.

The fair runs February 10 to 12, at the Holiday Inn Express on North Front Street, with an entrance fee of \$6.

The fair is open Friday from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, please contact the organizer Laura Lloyd at www.lauralloydenterprise.com.

Program helps students deal with tough times

Missing school a natural part of healing process

By Tiffany McEwen

Losing someone is never easy, but Loyalist College has programs in place to help its students through tough times.

Missing school is a natural part of dealing with a grief situation, Jane Harrison, dean of media studies at Loyalist College, helps students stay on track.

"As a rule of thumb, we use what human resources would use if it was to happen to one of us, which is normally you are given up to five days leave for bereavement," said Harrison.

While five days is a normal amount of time to miss, Harrison said there are circumstances in which a student may miss more school than that.

"Some people sublimate things, they keep it to themselves, so that they may not be ready to come back, but then come back anyway and then they spin out of control because they tried to come back too quickly. Other people just have

such a hard time with something that they find overwhelming that they need longer."

Loyalist offers its students several options to keep up their studies.

"In some courses we put remedials in place, which means that after the semester is over, we go back to the significant outcomes," said Harrison. "As long as you're in good standing everywhere else, we go back to those outcomes that were missed. We make sure you get them to try to move on to a career, or to second or third year."

"Normally we try to put in an individualized learning plan together with the student so that both parties understand what they need to do to be successful," said Harrison.

She said speaking to faculty is the best course of action for a student who has missed a period of school.

"Listen first and then act appropriately and give all the supports possible to the students who are in need."

Adam Gosney, a counsellor from Loyalist College, said that cooperation and a well-developed understanding between the faculty and departments

'Listen first and then act appropriately and give all the supports possible to the students who are in need.'

dean of media studies Jane Harrison

ensures that students get the help they need.

"Often what will happen is that a student will either self-identify, and come up to the student success HUB, and say 'I would like to meet with a counsellor' or they will reach out to their faculty," said Gosney.

"Some students are very self aware, very assertive and very quick to come and say this is what's happened to me and I'd like some additional support."

Gosney said that while some students are quick to see a counsellor, others are not due to a variety of reasons, which can include gender, family origins or personal beliefs. He said it is usually on the sug-

gestion of a friend or faculty member that they eventually see someone.

"As with any other issue, there can be people who wait longer than they probably should to see a counsellor."

Some students do not seek a counsellor, said Gosney, because they have a preconceived notion about counselling as a psycho-therapeutic session in which a person sits on a couch and talks about their problems, a method which he said is "old-school and antiquated."

"Counselling is what the student wants it to be. We start where the student wants to start, and we practise from a solution-focused model, which is the current best practice in college counselling, which suggests that students have internal strengths and skills that they are able to utilize that they are just not recognizing because of the emotional pain or the weight of whatever mental health difficulty they are going through at this time."

Along with free counselling services and academic recourse, the school offers financial assistance to its students.

"Usually it's just transportation to get home because they don't have the train ticket or flight, depending on where

home is, or help them fill up their gas tank, because they're going back and forth because someone is sick in another city, Kingston, Toronto, wherever, and the gas is really eating up their pocket-book. That is usually the kind of help," said Pearl Vani-Hill, the financial aid officer at Loyalist College.

"We do have some what I call quick cash money. Somebody comes in and they need \$20, or the hydro is going to be shut off and maybe they only need \$100. We do have some quick cash money for dire emergencies."

While a small amount of money is available for emergencies, Vani-Hill suggests applying for a financial need bursary, which is usually between \$500 and \$1,000 and is made available to students through a portion of tuition.

Vani-Hill said that while there is some money available, they do run out, and so suggests budgeting for emergencies.

"Budget before you come to school. If you realize you're running out, put the brakes on. Or come see me before you run out," said Vani-hill. "I tell all students if they don't ask they'll never know."

No wolf will blow down this straw house

By Rachel Psutka

Prince Edward County has long been a Mecca to emerging artists and artisans, but few come prepared to build their own sustainable-living studios out of straw bales.

That's just what owners of Owl Farm Studios, Janna Burford and Jon Hiscock, did in 2009, creating an artist's paradise using straw bales as insulation in a brand new structure on Victoria Road.

The straw bales, purchased from a farmer near Big Island, are just one part of the locally produced property that the artists have created near Carrying Place.

"The straw bale thing happened because we wanted to do something eco-friendly, and while new buildings never are completely eco-friendly, we still wanted to do this," explained Burford.

The young couple, who have been together since high school, started off by building a straw bale studio, which housed them for the first winter in the county. They then moved on to building a straw bale house the following summer, with timber structural support.

"This building took two years to put together, but we weren't working on it full-time," said Burford. "You can only really build with these materials in the spring. The plaster needs to dry, and if you do it in the in winter, it freezes. You have to do it in warm weather."

The straw, while being local and eco-friendly, is also a heat efficient way of insulating a house.

"The walls are 18 inches thick," said Hiscock. "They retain a lot of thermal mass. It's cool in the summer and warm in the winter. There's the esthetic reason too."

"I think it's beautiful," said Burford.

The straw is not structural to the artists' home, serving mostly an esthetic and insulating purpose.

"If the walls got knocked out, this place isn't going to fall down. It's supported by wood. If it's not done properly, the bales will rot, just like wood. So we have a really large overhang, and that helps protect the wall against rain," said Burford.

Burford, a potter, and Hiscock, an acrylic painter and framer, started the plans for the structure while living in Toronto. Burford had long been coming to Prince Edward County with her fam-



Photo by Rachel Psutka

Janna Burford and Jon Hiscock are the owners of Owl Farm Studios near Carrying Place, Ont. Seen here on Thursday, Feb. 2, Hiscock and Burford built their studio and home using straw bale walls to create an eco-friendly, local-product building.

ily to stay at a cottage in Wellington, and the draw was natural when the couple decided to set up their studios.

"We were familiar with the area," said Hiscock. "We would come up here on weekends with friends."

"There's a good artist community up here," said Burford. "We were both comfortable with being here. We wanted to leave the city."

This year, the artists are continuing their straw bale enterprise with the completion of a guest suite, aptly named the Owl's Nest, which they hope to open this summer. The suite will allow guests to take in the county from an eco-friendly view, according to Burford, as well as hopefully bringing business to their studio.

"We wanted to share what we've built

with other people. We enjoy it so much that it's nice to enjoy it with others as well. A lot of people don't have the opportunity to live or stay in a straw bale place," said Burford.

"It's good to expose people to the natural building, and everyone is always blown away by it," said Hiscock.

The couple has already started plans to have an organic garden and is hoping to

have chickens on the property in the future, all part of their plan to draw tourists to the property.

"We're not in the main area down in the county, so it's harder to get people to come up here to the studio. We've been on the Arts Trail and the Studio Tour. I know it takes a while to build business. People don't really know about us yet, it'll just take time," said Burford.

Performers at National Circus School undergo intense training and challenges

School celebrates 30th anniversary at Montreal location

By Melissa Di Nardo

Cirque du Soleil is what motivated Calin Stevenson to run away and join the circus – more specifically, the National Circus School (NCS).

This year the school is celebrating its 30th anniversary. It was founded in 1982 and since then it has changed locations three times. Cirque du Soleil was founded in 1985, three years after NCS was opened.

Aerial silk artist, Stevenson, 21, moved from Pickering to Montreal to attend NCS and is currently trying to join Cirque du Soleil.

"It's everyone's dream to be in Cirque du Soleil. It is what's most known here in Canada," said Stevenson.

Aerial silk performers climb a special suspended fabric which is suspended from the ceiling and rely solely on skill as there are no safety lines.

"I didn't know what I was getting myself into. It really is challenging in a much different way than gymnastics," said Stevenson.

All artists at NCS undergo a daily intense upper core exercise routine, before attending a specific two-hour discipline training geared towards each artist's major.

"You need to be able to put a story together technically and have a movement that is all your own. No two artists look the same," said Stevenson.

Originally, Stevenson was accepted into NCS for acrobatics. However, Stevenson realized early on that it was not for him, he went through a discovery journey and fell in love with aerial silk.

"I didn't know I had this dream when I started, but I look back at what I have accomplished and what I have done and I really couldn't picture myself doing anything else," said Stevenson after a session of aerial silk training with his artistic counselor.

"I have always been told that when I do things there is a gracefulness to it. So I really feel that tissue (aerial silk) incorporates all that. It gives me a really good way to show it, so that's why I choose it."

The NCS's PR representative Laurence Cardin says the area where the school is located in Montreal is known as "city du cirque" because many circus companies

are in close proximity.

NCS has four programs starting from elementary school all the way to college.

"The school's final program teaches circus arts. Students can become trained to become instructors for higher educa-

tion programs or to start a recreational program in their neighborhoods," said Cardin.

"The programs offered here are for kids who don't see themselves in a regular high school, sitting on a chair for eight



Photo by Melissa Di Nardo

Calin Stevenson is a graduating student from the Nation Circus School in Montreal. He is practicing his major Aerial Silk for his 7 minute graduating performance piece. The National Circus School success rate is 95% graduate with graduates receiving a placement with in three months.

'A lot of people don't know that going into the circus consists of acrobatics and all of hard training that goes behind the scenes. Most people relate the circus to clowns, animals and that kind of thing.'

gymnastics coach Karla Sage

hours," said Cardin.

"The high school program is designed for hyperactive children, and prepares them for the college program."

Cardin said the school isn't known outside of Quebec because circus is new to Canada.

"It is a little bit different in Quebec because we have the circus companies, but then in the rest of Canada they don't have a lot of companies. Well actually there are almost none," said Cardin. Students in the school's college program work with coaches and artistic counselors for three years. Which can explain why the placement rate is very high after graduating from NCS.

"We are talking about more than 95 per cent (of the students get a job) within a couple of months. It is really an art that is in high demand," explained Cardin.

"Cirque du Soleil employs about 1,500 artists; and then we have Cirque Éloize's and The Seven Fingers (Les 7 Doigts de la Main), they recruit a lot of our graduating students," said Cardin.

iKarla Sage, Quinte's Regional power tumbling coach, said "There needs to be more promotion in cities that these are high level athletes."

Sage is the only coach in the Quinte region for tumbling and has been coaching for ten years. Currently she is training an athlete who is applying to get an audition for Cirque du Soleil.

"The circus is a great opportunity for athletes to travel and see the world and to try different things before they settle down," said Sage.

"A lot of people don't know that going into the circus consists of acrobatics and all of hard training that goes behind the scenes. Most people relate the circus to clowns, animals and that kind of thing," said Sage.

Music Festival deadline approaches for interested students

By Manuela Garay-Giraldo

The Quinte Rotary Music Festival has celebrated musical talent for 44 years.

The deadline to apply for this year's festival is quickly approaching. Feb. 13 is the final day for interested students to apply.

This year, adjudicators will be doing workshops with students in their different categories.

"The workshops are really good for students," said John Chisholm, chair of the festival. "They have the opportunity to get really constructive feedback and our adjudicators are really good. They make the students feel inspired and motivated."

The festival, which was started 44 years ago by the Belleville Rotary Club, is now a collaboration between the three Rotary clubs in the Quinte region.

"To have the Trenton and the Quinte Sunrise Rotaries involved in this project is very special," said Chisholm. "The whole point of having a Rotary is to help others, and here we are helping each other in order to celebrate the amazing talent we have in this region."

The festival is open to all music students and this year applications can be done online.

"Technology has helped a lot," said Chisholm. "It just makes things easier to keep organized. And it's very user-friendly. Teachers can log on and check if any of their students have applied and students can apply directly online."

The prizes that are up for grabs include several \$500 cash prizes as well as a \$2,500 scholarship award.

"It is important for us to nourish talent because, historically speaking, it's the people who got this kind of experience who go on and become the leaders of our community," said Chisholm.

"We have amazing talent in this region, and we need to celebrate it and continue to encourage young people to hone their skills, to get the training they need to get to great places."

The festival will take place from April 16 to 20, with the award ceremony on May 2. The registration fees are \$20 for individuals and \$35 for groups, except for the "piano master class" category, which is \$45. To view the festival's syllabus, which includes all rules and regulations, categories as well as the application, see website www.quinterotarymusicfestival.com.

Lady Lancers guaranteed playoff spot while men lose close game to Fleming

Women's team expected to finish in fourth place

By Amielle Christopherson & Melchizedek Maquiso

Several easy offensive getaways by the Loyalist Lady Lancers contributed to the downfall of the Fleming Knights in Tuesday's game at Loyalist College.

The first half appeared to be a close battle when Lancers guard Jenni Thompson made a buzzer beater that ended the first half with a 38-37 score in favour of

the Lancers.

The third quarter started with a three-pointer from Knights guard Kelly Kiloran. However, this did not provide any needed momentum for the Peterborough-based Knights. Halfway through the quarter, the Lancers capitalized on several steals and ended the third quarter with a 64-49 score. In total, the Lady Lancers had 21 steals as opposed to the Knights' seven.

In the fourth quarter, the fate of the Knights appeared to have been sealed after only scoring eight points in the quarter compared to Loyalist's 18. The Knights never recovered ending the game with an 82-57 loss. The win brings the Lady Lancers to fourth place in the

OCAA East Region and a guaranteed playoffs spot.

Jim Buck, Loyalist College athletic director, says: "With last night's win, they were assured themselves of a playoff spot. They'll probably finish fourth in our conference, which would get them a crossover playoff game here at Loyalist as opposed to going on the road."

"In the last couple of years, the team hasn't been very strong. They haven't been qualified for playoffs for probably for four years so it's exciting that they're right there on the hunt," added Buck, who was at Tuesday's game.

Despite the win by the Lady Lancers, the opposite happened for the men's team.

What started out as a promising game for the Loyalist Lancers, who were up by six in the first quarter, ended with a seven point loss to the Fleming Knights Tuesday evening.

The first quarter started slowly for the Knights. The Lancers used this to their advantage and led by the end of 10 minutes. However, the Knights gained momentum in the second quarter and outscored the Lancers 13-4.

The beginning of the second half didn't see too many more points going up on the scoreboard for either team, with the Knights ending the quarter leading 26-19. The final 10 minutes saw the Lancers trying to get back on top.

With less than two minutes left in the game, the Lancers only trailed by six points, but a combination of a Fleming foul shot and three pointer put them up. Within the last minute of the game, Lancers' No. 14 Matt Miller sunk a three pointer, but Fleming won 79-72.

Assistant Coach Mike Latchford said it's the story of the season.

"We'll have a decent first, a better second, and then go down in the second half. We don't have that killer attitude to start out strong and keep teams out from the beginning."

As well, keeping tempers in check when things get hot on the court is something he said they also need to work on, "My coach would tell me that cool heads win hot games, and we don't have that

cool head yet."

This season as a whole hasn't been the best for the Lancers, who have a 5-11 record.

Latchford thinks the team has the talent and the ability to turn to do better. "There's a lot of individual play resulting in losses."

"We're also hoping that people will start being more dedicated to the team and buying into what the coaches are saying." He complimented players such as Cal-

vin Chevannes for stepping up as a leader among his teammates, as well as Patrick Kalala and Damone Donaldson. Robert Hanson does a good job assisting the other players on his team and being a motivator, he said.

"Some of them have taken advice from Rich [Whitfield, coach] and I. Between the two of us, we have a lot of basketball experience and some of the guys have learned and helped the team grow."



Photo by Melchizedek Maquiso.

Calvin Chevannes and Matt Miller of the Loyalist Lancers attempt to block the shot of Kameron Cyril of the Fleming Knights during Tuesday's basketball game held at Loyalist College. The Knights won 79-72.



Photo by Amielle Christopherson

The Fleming Knight's Taylor Robinson jumps to block a shot by Loyalist Lancer's Amber Burton. The Lady Lancers won 82-57 and are ranked seventh in the province, one down from last week, and fourth in the eastern region.



View a photo gallery of Loyalist Lancers basketball action.

www.qnetnews.ca

Mild weather doesn't put the brakes on devoted local backyard ice rink fan

Arena-like boards with local advertising and rink-side seating add to the atmosphere

By Michelle Cochrane

This year's warmer winter weather offered new challenges for one local backyard ice rink enthusiast.

Twenty-eight-year-old Belleville resident Jeremiah Meyers struggled this winter to build his family's outdoor ice rink and continues to fight a battle against Mother Nature to maintain the ice surface.

The Meyers family built their first outdoor rink three years ago and have invested approximately \$1,000 in it. It features arena-like boards with local advertisements, a miniature fan stand for rink-side seating and outdoor lighting for late night games.

"This year was a big struggle, there were a couple times I wanted to give up just because the weather wasn't promising," explained Meyers.

Meyers started building his outdoor 50 by 50 foot ice rink this year over the Thanksgiving weekend but his family was not able to enjoy their first skate on the ice until the beginning of January.

"Last year, I had it from November until March break. If I get three more weeks out of it this year, I'll be happy," said Meyers.

Meyers described having a backyard rink as similar to having a second job with the demanding hours.

"I'll come out every hour and a half in the middle of the night just to water it because it's been such a struggle. Every time it was cold, you had to be out here or you're not going to have a rink," said Meyers.

The family entered their rink in the Belleville Home Depot backyard rink contest last year, placing third overall.

According to Home Depot backyard rink contest organizer, Dianne De-Jong, this year is remarkably lower in entry numbers than the previous three years and said she believes the warmer winter climate is to blame.

"Last year, it really took off, it just blew out of proportion. It went national, which is really cool for Belleville," said De-Jong. The contest had a total of 13 entries from the Quinte area last year. This year was up to 17 entries at the beginning of December but due to the poor weather, there are only four confirmed entries that have submitted pictures of their backyard rinks after last Sunday's final deadline.

"Everyone has been so upset because they had their layouts, their boards and ideas of what they wanted to do but in December they couldn't even get rinks flooded because it wouldn't freeze part of January," explained De-Jong. "In this area, hockey is Belleville and these families take their hockey and their rinks very seriously."

Despite all the setbacks, the Meyers' family is hoping their hard work and persistence will have paid off and is aiming



Photo by Devaan Ingraham

Kayleb Meyers, 5, takes a shot on net while skating on his family's backyard ice rink built by his father, Jeremiah Meyers. Their rink has been entered in this year's Home Depot's backyard ice rink contest.

for first place in the Home Depot backyard rink contest this year.

Winners of the contest will be announced Feb. 17 at the Home Depot night

at the Belleville Bulls home game at the Yardmen Arena.

On the street

We asked people at Loyalist College the following question:

The Ontario Court of Appeal has removed part of the publication ban on the divorce records of convicted killer Russell Williams. His wife had 14 days to appeal. Do you think the ruling should be upheld?



Jack Carver, journalism, print and broadcast, “If it is the norm for divorce records to be open, you can’t just really change it for one person. If you do it for one person, you have to do it for everybody.”



Cynthia Frongia, developmental service worker, “Yes, the ruling should stay. I think it needs to be known, for the victims.”



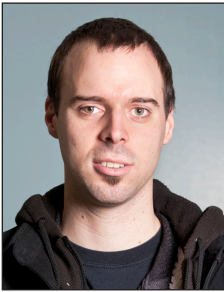
Steve Glover, facilities services, “No, I think the wife needs some privacy. It’s a fine line what the public needs to know.”



Aaron McCrae, manufacturing engineering technician, “I don’t think there should be any special circumstances because of what her husband did. The records should be open.”



Ronni Martin, child and youth worker, “I think it should be. It affects people’s rights, the rights of the victims. It could help the case.”



Eric Hartke, automotive service technician, “I don’t see why they should be treated like everyone else. I don’t know if personal matters should be made public.”

Editorial

Fans losing interest in all-star hockey

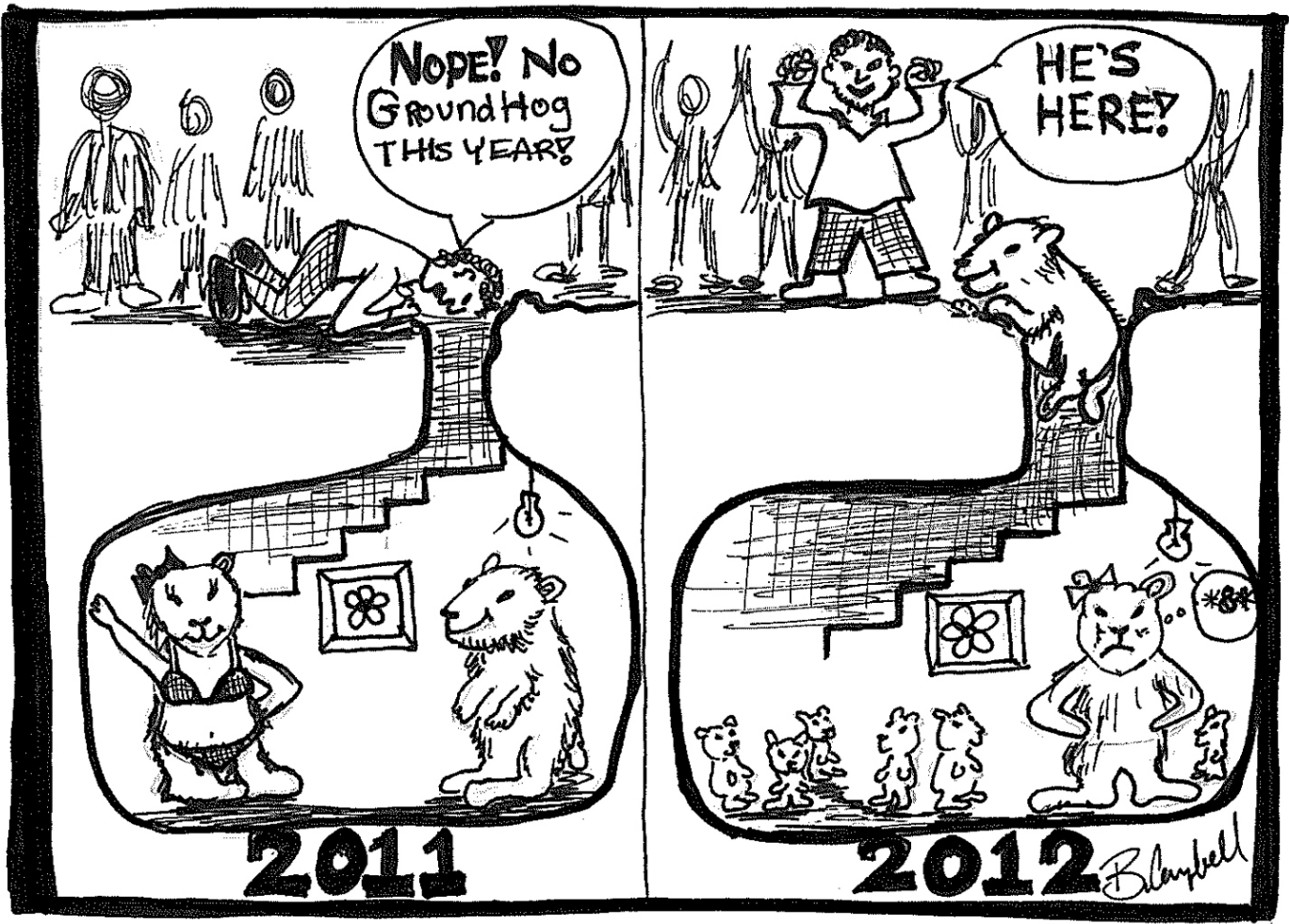
What is an NHL All-Star?
In the world of sports, an all-star is someone who exemplifies the attitude and the skill level to perform at the top of his or her sport.
What is an all-star game?
According to the NHL, it’s getting a bunch of guys who are paid enormous amounts of money to play a non-competitive game of shinny hockey.
Year after year, the all-star games become less interesting for fans. It might be because we’re getting older, but it’s probably because the non-competitive game itself is getting old.
The NHL does deserve some credit. They’ve been trying to improve the game for years. Most changes have been unsuccessful minor tweaks, but it’s the major changes that have hit the nail on the head.
For instance, back in 1990, they introduced the SuperSkills competition. Today, the competition proves to be far more fascinating than the game it precedes.
More recently, the NHL has changed the format on how the two teams are formed. Teams are no longer formed by the conference they represent, but rather chosen by a fantasy draft involving two captains, much like a game of shinny hockey on the pond.
The only downfall to the draft is that for a lot of fans, waiting to see who was picked last has probably become the most nail-biting part of the entire weekend, making the rest of the week less interesting.
It’s no secret something needs to change. It’s no wonder the Winter Classic, a regular-season game played outdoors, has surpassed the all-star game in popularity and it’s only been around for five years.
In fact, according to an ESPN article, ticket sales for the recent all-star game are about 50 per cent cheaper than tickets to the Winter Classic, which was held on Jan. 2.
There have been a few suggestions surrounding the all-star game. Don Cherry gave his two cents during Coach’s Corner on CBC’s *Hockey Night in Canada*, suggesting the game be played outdoors and teams be chosen by the classic “stick toss.”
It’s true, combining the two events could prove interesting, but it won’t change the tempo of the game, and it won’t be long before the novelty runs out.
The bottom line is that the NHL needs to make the game more competitive. Sure, it’s nice to watch a player deke his way through a defenceman who’s not really trying and score a highlight-reel goal on a goalie who’s not really trying. But fans want to see competition.
The NHL should take a page from Major League Baseball. The MLB All-Star Game pits the American League against the National League with the winner getting home field advantage for the World Series.
The format gives players something to play for and makes the game competitive, which is exactly what fans want to see.
If these players are considered all-stars, then the league should let them play the game like all-stars. There’s enough shinny hockey being played at any local arena.

Andre Lodder

Fresh view needed to tackle homelessness

Homelessness is an age-old problem in Canada. It may be one that requires a fresh solution. The issue hasn’t improved and can’t be expected to until the government takes more action.
This homelessness issue has always been in the media in bigger cities like Toronto and Montreal. What are often put on the back-burner are smaller communities.
Last Friday downtown Belleville held an event to raise awareness and funding for the homeless called ‘Sleep Out..So Others Can Sleep In’. The efforts made on the part of the organizers, volunteers and participants are something to be commended. They are the people in the community who are taking the time and care to address and improve the lives affected by this issue.
But as a community we have to ask if this is enough? Are the right issues being addressed in the first place?
The government has to take a more active and assertive role if things are going to change. The government of Canada currently has a program called The Homelessness Partnering Strategy, which is focused on 61 communities struggling with homelessness. An enormous amount of money— currently \$134.8 million currently per year— has been committed to the program. Is the money going where it needs to go?
To truly stop homelessness, the government should be looking at what the factors are in someone’s life that led them to their situation. Stopping homelessness before it happens should be priority. We can’t attribute why someone becomes homeless to one factor alone. The more we look at our country, the more we see that the number of people living from paycheck to paycheck is increasing. The average Canadian is finding that it is harder than ever to save money. The current global economy as well as the losses in the job market has not helped at all.
Small towns are losing private, independent businesses while even larger cities like Windsor, Ont. are finding their populations dropping each year as jobs disappear.
And it’s not just middle-aged adults who are the main age group of the homeless like it was 50 years ago. The average age today of people living on the street is low to middle thirties.
While homelessness is a very real physical state, it is also a mental state. It’s not only a matter of having financial support from the government, but learning the skills to keep ahead before being found without shelter. It’s time for the Canadian government to step up to the plate and make a real difference.

Sarah Schofield



Opinion

Women athletes rarely get top billing

Equal funding and better treatment needed for promotion

By Amielle Christopherson

If you stand in front of a magazine rack in any grocery store, bookstore, airport kiosk or newspaper stand and count the number of sports magazines, you’ll come up with a number running into the hundreds. That’s not counting the magazines that aren’t being carried.
However, if you were to look over the covers of any of those magazines and count the number of female athletes taking centre stage, you’d come up with, well, most likely zero.
Not that that’s out of the ordinary. From the beginning of the Ancient Olympics in Greece, women were banned from even viewing the events. It wasn’t until 1900 that women were allowed to take part, and in considerably less sports as the men did.
Even with the Olympics, the glory of sports, and allowing women to compete, it wasn’t until the 1990s that women’s professional sports teams achieved any sort of popularity.
It’s been 20 years since then, and still women aren’t on even footing in the sports world. The Canadian Women’s Hockey League was

founded in the 1990s with the current incarnation beginning in 2007. Up until the 2010-11 season, each of the players had to pay \$1,000 to play. Everyone involved in the league, from the players to the staff, works pro bono, their love of the sport their payment, while working other jobs to make up for what they don’t make.
Taking the issue out of the professional leagues, the U-18 women’s teams also have a long way to go. Every year, there’s the World Junior Hockey Championships, held for both U-18 men and women.
The attention, however, is put almost entirely on the men’s tournament. Fans everywhere expressed rage, sadness or shame when Canada lost to Russia to play the United States for the bronze medal on Jan. 3. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr were filled with posts, tweets and tags expressing thoughts on the men losing.
Yet, four days later, barely anything was said about the fact that the Canadian women’s U-18 team won gold at their tournament in the Czech Republic 3-0 against the U.S.
This year sees the induction of a new sport in the Olympics for women: boxing. However, the Amateur International Boxing Association doesn’t seem quite as ready for women to step into the 21st century. They’ve put forward what they call ‘a suggestion’ for women to wear skirts instead of the traditional shorts.
Their reasoning is that it would help make

the boxers look more ‘elegant’ and help to ‘distinguish’ female boxers from their male counterparts. Not only can females look elegant in articles of clothing that aren’t short skirts, but the simple fact that men are, for the most part, shirtless, during their fights should help with distinguishing. If that’s not enough, there’s quite a difference between a male and a female’s physique, even if that woman is a boxer.
Not only would it undermine all the hard work these women have put into their sport, it could also have some negative influences. Fighting in a uniform that they’re not comfortable in could directly affect their performance, as well as their safety.
The examples don’t stop there. There’s women’s soccer and the struggle with the Women’s Professional Soccer Association because they don’t have enough support for more than six teams and lack of funding. Women’s basketball has a lack of viewers and supporters, despite being in operation for more than a decade with 12 teams and three TV stations that broadcast it.
Maybe fans don’t realize there are teams and associations dedicated to female athletics. Maybe if they did, there would be more of a demand for equal funding and equal treatment. But fans will never realize there are teams out there if there’s not the funding to keep up the teams and promote them.

A border fence would be a blight on landscape

By Meagan Pecjak

The United States is currently on the fence when it comes to the debate about building a barrier along the Canadian and American border. They should instead be tearing down the idea even before they start.
It’s as though they do not realize that cutting down thousands of trees to build a fence across thousands of kilometres will have an immense impact on the environment.
Currently, 50 kilometres of the border are monitored and secured by U.S. border officials. The fence is supposed to help secure the areas they cannot monitor, which consists of another roughly 6,400 kilometres.

An article from CBC News states the project has been put on hold, but officials are still not hiring more patrol officers. Officials are instead considering adding new technologies such as radar, drones and sensors.
According to CNN, the fence would blend in and “complement the natural landscape.” It seems as though they believe that a 6,400-kilometre fence will fit right in among the thousands of trees and long stretches of prairies.
CNN also stated there would be trenches dug in order to slow down those trying to “smuggle” their goods into the United States.
You would think if someone is determined enough to attempt to sneak something over the border past hundreds of patrol officers, then the same determination will be applied

to finding another way to get their smuggled goods across the border.
Several people were interviewed during a CTV report, and most of them agreed that the fence is not the best idea. In the meantime, officials should be thinking about adding more officers along the gates that we do have.
Those interviewed said that in their opinion, the fence is to keep Canadians out of the States. If we are supposed to be neighbours, and get along, why try to segregate?
If officials are going to use a fence to separate us and keep Canadians out of their country, then they had better build it with the trees they are tearing down.

The Pioneer

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The Pioneer welcomes your letters and comments. Please send material to the editor at the address below before Wednesday. We reserve the right to edit submissions for content and length. All letters must be signed and include a daytime phone number.
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