

News Media Canada  
Médias d'Info Canad

**THE TEMISKAMING SPEAKER**  
ESTABLISHED 1906  
Published every Wednesday  
at New Liskeard, Ontario, by the  
**TEMISKAMING PRINTING COMPANY LIMITED**  
18 Wellington St., S. Box 580 P.O. 1P0  
PH. 705-647-6791 • FAX 705-647-9669  
Email: lois@northernontario.ca  
General Manager - Lois Perry  
Editor - Steven Larocque

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CCNA BLUE RIBBON AWARD 1990

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Subscription Rates:  
40 mile radius of New Liskeard \$78.00  
includes H.S.T. (pre-paid).  
1 year mail in province: \$92.00 HST  
included. 1 year mail in Canada:  
\$98.00 HST included. Single copy \$1.75  
Terms - Cash in Advance

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## EDITORIAL

# In praise of firefighters

The Temiskaming Shores business community suffered a loss on the weekend when the Temiskaming Power Sports building at the intersection of Highways 11 and 65 was destroyed by fire.

The cause of the fire on February 4 is undetermined as of now, but the result was obvious as the building gushed flames and huge amounts of smoke and steam as volunteer firefighters kept the fire contained to the main building. Boats and trailers parked around the building for winter storage could have been damaged or consumed as well, but the hard work of the men and women on duty that day made sure that didn't happen.

We often hear of the efforts by local volunteer departments on important issues of safety like having smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in our homes, but it's another thing to see these men and women in action at an actual fire. In fact, there were many people watching the event from parking lots above the scene and from surrounding roadsides.

Sunday's fire in Temiskaming Shores brought about 40 members from the Dymond, New Liskeard and Haileybury stations to the scene and their response was admirable.

Not just in terms of their attack on the fire and the techniques they used, but there was never any panic, shouting or running around.

They were all well trained and very professional, performing their tasks with focus and speed.

We've seen the same response in other departments around Temiskaming when called upon to fight a fire.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs says there are 437 fire departments in the province, including 195 volunteer/part-time departments. The association says there are 18,281 volunteer firefighters in Ontario.

It's unlikely any are better trained or more capable than your neighbours here in Temiskaming who give up their time and risk their safety for their community.

## The tail, the dog, and the whimper

I think it's true that the thing I enjoy most about this job is the opportunity to meet and talk to people who are truly passionate and far-seeing.

Such people have observed problems, studied, invested their time and resources to dig down and come up with potential solutions, and then taken that energy and turned it outward, distributing what they have learned so that the lives of others can be improved.

My career has primarily been to listen to area leaders as they address needs, challenges and also accomplishments.

I think that far less is in the hands of our political leaders than we would like to believe, and rather, we should picture

them as the captains of a ship of people who have elected them to be at the wheel while the ship is steered on a course through very choppy waters, and someone is taking shots at them.

The external factors that are being negotiated are multi-pronged and very challenging.

There are so many expectations of our governments that the dollars they have extracted from the mainly unwilling taxpayers do not stretch far enough. The higher levels of government, from whom they should expect support, have their own dilemmas of too much to do and not enough to do it with.

Of course, like many other fine Canadians, I think many of

our tax dollars are directed to ensuring some people with fine tastes get the frills they expect. Hopefully, those frills are at least purchased from Canadians, helping someone pay their bills.

The struggles to respond to those who are vulnerable or have viable progressive needs are far too many, and too often for those with power and influence what is out of sight is also out of mind, in my opinion.

I believe a re-examination of our priorities could redirect our funds to places where ordinary Canadians can get the help they need and move forward.

Yet the loudest voices, the ones who lobby hard (which is only possible with money) get the funds, and not always for



**Darlene Wroe**

the benefit of those who most need them.

Governments should work from the bottom up.

Our municipal leaders should be bringing community concerns to the provincial level, and the provincial leaders should be bringing provincial concerns to the federal level. And in that system, favourable and immediate responses should be expected, balanced only by considerations of what taxpayers can bear, and what needs to be done to protect our country overall.

# WEB POLL

Visit our website at [speaker.northernontario.ca](http://speaker.northernontario.ca) to vote.

**What's your view of all the global friction at this time?**

- There is inadequate global leadership. 21%
- A new world order is trying to emerge. 43%
- It's part of a cycle and will settle down. 29%
- Other. 7%

**NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION**

*How do you feel about the way the winter is shaping up?*

- I have enjoyed the almost spring-like conditions.
- The lack of snow has been really disappointing.
- I am concerned about the environmental implications.
- I just take the days as they come, snow or shine.

The results of this poll are in no way considered to be valid or infallible.

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NEWSPAPERS  
COMPETITION

2011 CCNA  
BLUE  
RIBBON

THIS HISTORICAL ECLIPSE THAT YOU'LL SEE THIS  
COMING MONDAY

IS NOTHING TO WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SEE IN  
THE COMING FUTURE!

DICKERSON  
ILLUSTRATION

EDITORIAL

# Help hope bloom

April has arrived, bringing milder temperatures and signs of spring renewal as the snow disappears and migratory birds return for another season here in Northern Ontario.

April is also the time when the Canadian Cancer Society

kicks into another gear with Daffodil Month.

It's an annual campaign by the Society to raise awareness and funds for initiatives related to cancer.

The daffodil represents a return to spring and the emergence of new life. According

to the Society it's a symbol of strength, resiliency, courage and hope.

Proceeds from the purchase of a daffodil pin, or a bouquet of fresh-cut blooms, can help the cause.

This year's theme is "Help hope bloom."

The money raised from the campaign helps to fund research, come up with better treatments and support for patients here in Temiskaming and across the country.

In a sign of just how pernicious and common the disease is, according to the Canadian Cancer Society, every three minutes someone in Canada is told they have cancer.

Cancer has touched the lives of just about every family out there either directly or indirectly.

You can support the Society online by making a donation. You can even get a daffodil pin mailed to you.

When you see local volunteers accepting donations this month, remember to give as generously as you're able.

# A Maritime memory

As I write this, I am thinking of an aunt who recently turned 100.

Her memory is perfect. She remembers as a small child riding in a wagon piled with hay, and drawing water from a spring in a field near the rural home where she grew up in New Brunswick. Many of her friends and her own sister were also long-lived and they attribute their long lives to the water from

that sparkling spring.

This lady's mother, my grandmother, died in her mid-30s after giving birth to her seventh baby. The eldest daughter, then 16, stepped in to finish raising the six younger children.

My grandfather was a religious man and the church stepped in to help him, giving him and the children their support to help get them

through the years that followed.

"You never were allowed to do anything on Sunday," she told me, "not even knit."

The church was their rock and they listened closely to its teachings.

The children loved their father who worked as a lead in a lumber operation. He was gentle but firm, and loved them all and that was all it took to keep them under control.

When the children were growing

up, there was a country store down the road. The children often hiked, or sprinted, there for extras, and my aunt caught the eye of the owner's son.

Before he headed off to war, they married.

Life's satisfaction was in a well-kept home, a lovely flowerbed, and her faith.

I have been on a few road trips with her back to the old homestead. I could almost see that old wagon



Darlene Wroe

trundling down the road.

One time, we pulled into the driveway at the house where she raised her family with her husband.

"Just drive a little further up," she said. "No one is home."

She wanted to see if her flowerbed was still there. It was. That made her happy.

We visited old friends of the family. They all seemed to live in big, old, four-square homes perched in open fields where the land just rolls away. Every one had a great garden, with huge patches of rhubarb, tall stands of all kinds of vegetables, and rich berries.

It's funny about roots. Even if you discover them later in your life, they suddenly open up and make a space for you. "You are ours," they seem to say.

I talk to my aunt weekly. I'm grateful for that thread, like a strand of yarn, connecting me, and so very grateful for her years and her memories that she has shared with me.

**WEBPOLL** Visit our website at [speaker.northernontario.ca](http://speaker.northernontario.ca) to vote.

**What's your favourite part of Easter?**

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. The chocolates.                    | 15% |
| 2. Church service.                    | 31% |
| 3. Getting together with family.      | 38% |
| 4. Going on a long weekend road trip. | 15% |

*The results of this poll are in no way considered to be valid or infallible.*

**NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION**

**Do you have any plans for the eclipse on April 8?**

- I'll watch with approved eye protection.
- I'll watch it on TV/online.
- I'm making a trip south to see the total eclipse.

# THE TEMISKAMING SPEAKER

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CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER AWARDS 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016

**YOUR HONOUR MR. DONALD TRUMP**  
**WANTS TO KNOW IF IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE COURTS**  
**TO ALLOW HIM TO HAVE AN AI**  
**DEVICE IMPLANTED IN HIS BRAIN SO**  
**HE CAN SPEAK LIKE A GROWN UP IN THIS**  
**2024 NOVEMBER ELECTION?**

→

**THAT'S IF HE MAKES IT**  
**THROUGH HIS HUSH**  
**MONEY TRIAL RESULTS**  
**IN EARLY JUNE 2024.**

# The decline of communication



**Darlene Wroe**

From the time I began as a journalist I have been watching the steady decline of communication from the provincial and federal governments.

It is a great shame, because through the late 1980s and the 1990s, the flow of information from higher levels of government to a community newspaper was much more open, and it was possible to bring significant insight and breakthroughs on topics of local importance.

It was during the Mike Harris government that it all crashed. Suddenly, ministry employees weren't allowed to speak directly with a community newspaper reporter. Suddenly, I had to write out my questions and submit them to a communications staff person and wait days for an answer.

This steady decline in communication has absolutely nothing to do with which party is in power. It seems simply to be a growing culture of government, having more to do with the fact that people are afraid of getting sued or losing their jobs or their elected positions.

It is occurring with increasing regularity that when a municipality receives funding for a project, the federal or

provincial ministry and staff tell the municipality not to say anything about it to the media until they have a chance to come up and announce it themselves. Funding for projects is very much used by the party of the day to win accolades and voter points so that they can increase their chance of getting re-elected.

The funding announcements may be kept under wraps for over a year and then announced as a package, with the media invited to cover the "news" event. But it's not news.

And this is not the government's money. This money belongs to the taxpayer. This money absolutely should not be used to win voter support or accolades. That is just wrong.

Elected representatives are put in place to bring the needs of the community to Queen's Park or Parliament Hill. Their employees are hired to responsibly manage the movement of the funds to the appropriate destinations, and to ensure policies are followed.

This is not to say that I do not respect ministers, federal and provincial staff, or municipal staff and council members.

What I do not respect is this decline of quick and truthful information to both the people to whom the tax dollars belong, and to the media who are trying to serve people with relevant and up-to-date information.

## EDITORIAL

### Keeping and building on history

This past week saw the presentation of a documentary film on the first reeve of what was then Elk City in 1907.

Jack Munroe set out from his Cape Breton home at the age of 12 and made his way across the continent, mining, boxing and helping people he met over the years.

That story has been documented faithfully by several historians and storytellers and there are plans in place by the Jack Munroe Historical Society of Elk City as well as others to build his fame posthumously.

At the same time, the first nurse of Cobalt, Annie Saunders, was recognized and honoured posthumously with the Order of the North.

The opening reception of an exhibition featuring the life and works of artist and author the late Muriel Newton-White also took place at the Temiskaming Art Gallery.

With 23 books and paintings and sketches representing a lifetime of work, Newton-White was honoured for her recording of life growing up and living in Temiskaming.

These projects are part of an important undertaking by area historians who are working diligently to document the history of the 1900s in Temiskaming, and the amazing people who dedicated their lives to creating something that would make a difference to others.

Thanks is owed to the Jack Munroe Historical Society of Elk City, chaired by Terry Fiset, and the research efforts of area historians such as the late Dorothy Farmiloe, and others who are working to pull all information together.

Thanks as well to the Temiskaming Art Gallery, and Felicity Buckell who dove into the extensive archive of Newton-White, and presented an in-depth and true view of a lady loved and admired by many.

**WEBPOLL** Visit our website at [speaker.northernontario.ca](http://speaker.northernontario.ca) to vote.

**Do you feel safe walking on the streets of your community after dark?**

|                                     |  |     |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----|
| 1) Yes                              |  | 50% |
| 2) No                               |  | 25% |
| 3) Only when I am with someone else |  | 25% |

**NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION** **Are you disappointed there won't be any Canada Day fireworks in Temiskaming Shores this summer?**

1) Yes, they're a nice way to bring the community together.  
2) No, they're a waste of money.

The results of this poll are in no way considered to be valid or infallible.

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