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No court in Minden for a year

by CHAD INGRAM
Times Staff

"I'm constrained by the decorum of this chamber to limit myself to language that's appropriate," said Haliburton County Warden Brent Devolin during a March 22 county council meeting. Devolin was reacting to notification that provincial offences and small claims court proceedings in Minden will be suspended for a year, from July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2018, with all of those proceedings to take place in Lindsay instead.

"There is a serious shortage of justices of the peace in the Central East Region which is negatively impacting our operations," reads correspondence from Karen Dunn, manager of court operations for the City of Kawartha Lakes, to the county. "This shortage is mainly due to the fact that the Ministry [of the Attorney General] has not been replacing justices of the peace on a regular basis when they retire or are unable to work. In Central East we should have a compliment of 48 full-time presiding justices of the peace; however, at present we have 11 vacancies and three off on long-term disability. In March alone there will be 80 court closures in our jurisdiction due to this shortage, and it is expected to get worse in the upcoming year."

As a result, the regional senior justice of the peace has decided to suspend court proceedings for provincial offences in Minden for a year beginning July 1, moving all those cases to Lindsay.

The Ministry of the Attorney General had not responded to the paper's questions about why the province was not hiring more justices of the peace by press time.

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Taking a break at ASES

Archie Stouffer Elementary School Grade 6 student Damon Harriss shows his breakdancing moves to his class during a battle on Monday, March 27 at the Minden school. Led by dance instructor Jimmy Chapman of Peterborough-based NRG Breakdancing, the school's kindergarten to Grade 8 students learned a variety of breakdance moves from the moon-walk to the robot over four sessions on four separate days, totalling close to five hours of instruction through the breakdancing enrichment offering. See more on page 3. /DARREN LUM Staff

Rule changes would 'neuter opposition'

by CHAD INGRAM
Times Staff

Canada's opposition parties say the Liberal government wants a four-day work week for Parliamentarians and they're not OK with that.

The government is proposing a number of procedural alterations that would, among other things, reduce the number of days Parliament sits, the number of days the Prime Minister would be in the House of Commons

and limit filibustering.

"They're calling it a discussion paper to change the standing orders," says Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MP Jamie Schmale, who is a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. "They're basically changing how our system works."

Standing orders are the rules that govern the procedures of the House of Commons.

Among the changes the Liberals are proposing are getting rid of Friday sittings (MPs currently sit half days on Fridays); having

one day a week where the Prime Minister would answer all questions in House (opposition parties say he would not be present other days); limiting filibustering at the committee level by imposing a 10-minute maximum speaking time per member; prescribed time periods for legislation to make its way through the House, quickening the process and limiting debate; and allowing parliamentary secretaries more power on committees, something the Liberals promised they would

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