

# SPEAKER WEEKENDER



General Manager - Lois Perry  
Editor - Gordon Brock  
In Memory of Dave Armstrong

**TEMISKAMING PRINTING COMPANY LIMITED**  
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## Powerless

Last weekend there was a power outage experienced in differing communities of South Temiskaming.

Hydro One replaced older wooden hydro poles with man-made poles on Shepherdson Road near the Temiskaming Hospital.

I drove by that morning and it looked like they had every Hydro One truck in Northern Ontario at the site.

It was a gigantic undertaking and one requiring much planning and coordination, not to mention quick, efficient work.

Thanks to all the Hydro One workers.

Popular items during the planned power outage were generators and wood stoves.

Some forward-thinking businesses in the region prepared for the outage with diesel generators on hand.

I gassed my car up and bought some water at a gas station in Haileybury which was operating by generator power.

How to cope when the power is out?

Keep calm and exercise your creativity.

Certainly, in our "wired" world, it is interesting to note how saturated our lives are from technology.

While advancements in technology have defined the current generation, what did we do before smart phones and computers?

If we want to find out what the weather is like, check a sports score or find out what time the power is coming back on, we just enter a search to the Google god.

I wasn't that upset with losing connectivity to the World Wide Web, as I try to distance myself from it as much as possible.

I don't own a cell phone and when I am out in my canoe, there is no technology present



Sue Nielsen

and that's the way I like it.

Having said that, backup food, water, gas, batteries and supplies are something every household should have on hand, regardless of power outages.

You never know when a natural disaster can happen.

If you've done a minimal amount of disaster preparation, that's a good thing.

Of course we must tip our hats to the folks who have solar-powered homes.

I took a couple of long walks around my community, read and slept.

My concern was for the temperature in the house -- it was chilly.

I was not worried as I am a camper. Within my reach I had a battery-operated lantern, head lamp, propane stove, warm sleeping bag and a heavy sweater.

Oddly enough, during the outage, I thought about my grandmother.

I wondered what she would have done without electricity.

Being a pioneer woman of Northern Ontario, she would have coped nicely with her kitchen wood cook stove, preserves in the pantry, food in the root cellar and a kerosene lantern for good measure.

Having stepped off the train in Cobalt as a young bride in the early 1900's, she was a hardy soul.

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I'd like to extend my sincerest condolences to Bill Coe and the Coe and Moore families on the loss of their beloved mother, Edith, this week. May she rest in peace.



## EDITORIAL

# Shannen Koostachin

James Bay Cree Nation Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat has been immortalized.

A bronze statue was unveiled last weekend beside the beautiful shores of Lake Temiskaming, honouring Shannen.

Ms. Koostachin came here a few years ago to attend Timiskaming District Secondary School.

She was an advocate for First Nation children's rights to equality of education.

The school in her hometown of Attawapiskat had been closed because of a diesel spill.

She asked the federal government to fund a new school.

Children in that community were being denied the basics of education because there was no funding available to fix the school.

Tragically, at 17 years of age Shan-

nen lost her life in a Highway 11 motor-vehicle collision but her memory lives on.

Because of her advocacy work, she was nominated for an International Children's Peace Prize, and inspired a documentary, a novel and even a character in DC comics' Justice League.

Congratulations to the team responsible for creating and installing this beautiful monument, a welcome addition to the New Liskeard waterfront.

There are many dark moments in Canadian history concerning the treatment of Indigenous people. The statue unveiling is not one of them.

As we move forward, here's hoping the newly-elected federal Liberals direct full funding for First Nation children's education.

## Obey the signals

The traffic lights in downtown New Liskeard have signals which tell drivers of vehicles and pedestrians when it is safe to cross the street.

Those signals are on a timer and, at best, it is imperative that people crossing at those intersections do so as quickly as possible.

Another thing to remember, when the yellow hand signal is up saying it is not safe to cross the street, then you do not venture out into the intersection.

Everyone should be paying attention to the signs, for personal safety.

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## In their shoes

*"An injustice anywhere, is an injustice everywhere."*  
 -- Martin Luther King Jr.



**Sue Nielsen**

When difficult situations arise I try to put myself in the shoes of others.

How would I feel if I was being persecuted and forced to leave my homeland?

Would I want the world to accept me?

In the case of the Syrian refugees, some people feel we are inviting trouble bringing these asylum seekers to our country and even to our community.

Others believe it is time to act in a humanitarian fashion and do everything we can to show compassion.

Certainly in our Letters to the Editor section we are seeing differing views about the Syrian refugees and war in general.

It is not useful to remain neutral when people are suffering.

The atmosphere created in the Western world regarding terrorism is based on fear.

"Fear is the mind killer," said author Frank Herbert.

The decibel level of complaint and rage towards Syrian refugees is largely unfounded.

I am a humanist. I believe in helping people, regardless of skin colour, gender, sexuality or religious affiliation.

I choose to lift people up, to empower and to love.

You can douse your coffee in cream, put salt on your food but I will write what I see is important.

Today I speak openly without attachment to what anyone thinks, other than my editor of course.

The Syrian refugee crisis is important.

It is a direct reflection on a world gone mad.

If we turn our backs on the

refugees we are indeed part of the madness.

It is time our political leaders treat terrorist acts as crimes...not acts of war.

It is time to stop arming any of the parties engaging in war in Syria and to observe international law and apply it to our global footprint.

Reward the nations contributing to peace not the ones selling arms behind everyone's back.

I heard presidential candidate Donald Trump speak about the Paris terrorist attacks.

He said, "Paris wouldn't have happened if those people had guns to defend themselves."

Isn't it time that type of rhetoric be called for what it is? Idiomatic hate speech.

Which brings me to the efforts of the humanitarian group called CREST.

These people do not believe in neutrality. They have stepped up to the humanitarian plate and are hitting home runs with love and compassion.

I am extremely supportive and proud of people who take a stand for others.

CREST is almost at the \$13,000 dollar mark of their \$16,000 goal to bring a Syrian refugee family to Temiskaming.

Christmas is the season of excess. We already have all that we need, why not donate to this cause?

If Jesus is the reason for the season, then surely he would approve of helping others in their time of need. At least that's what I view as Christian values not how big your flat screen television is.

## EDITORIAL

# Wonderful opportunity

The CREST (Community Refugee Engagement South Temiskaming) group are busy making preparations to host a refugee family in this region.

While it is unclear what region of the world this refugee family will come from, we know those people are fleeing some of the worst conditions in the world.

They have quite often been denied the most basic of human rights -- to be free to own a home, worship their gods, education, health care or to have gainful employment.

These are all the things we regularly take for granted in this country.

These refugees do not want to be mired in harsh political climates; they want to live as fully and freely as they can.

Those refugees when they eventually arrive in our community, will bring with them the collective wrongs that have been done to them.

We must be sensitive to this fact.

For the most part, these people are just like us, they will have different cultural backgrounds but they are

human beings.

Let us remember they want to come to Canada and begin to integrate into a society that is valued for its humanitarianism and freedoms.

This is a teachable moment for us all to help people and realize how fortunate we are to live in this country.

It is uplifting to see the community support the CREST in their efforts to help settle a refugee family locally.

This family will eventually need clothing, furniture, etc. but for now, the main focus is to reach the \$16,000 fundraising goal. There is only a few thousand dollars left to raise.

Then when we see this goal accomplished, a local couple will kick in equal funding to help bring another family here.

How wonderful. With all the strife and conflict in the world, these are the stories that are worth their weight in gold.

This is what the Temiskaming region has become known for -- its kindness, generosity and willingness to help others.

## SCORING FOR THE FOUNDATION

This week approximately eight players from the New Liskeard Cubs hockey team did themselves and their team proud.

They put on their Cub jerseys and they helped move the Temiskaming Foundation from their home in downtown New Liskeard to their new location above Yves Prime Cuts Meats on Highway 11B.

Great job Cubs!

It's not all about what happens on the ice. Developing well-rounded young men who see the bigger picture of community should be the goal of organizations working with youth.

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After life's withdrawals, sometimes the Food Bank is the only option.

## Never forgotten

“No mother or daughter ever live apart, no matter what the distance between them.”  
-- C. Watson



Sue Nielsen

A young woman goes out one evening and never comes home. It sounds so simple, but of course it is anything but.

The Melanie Ethier missing person case reached a milestone September 29, 2016.

She has been missing for two decades or twenty years.

Since I arrived at The Speaker in 2005 the Melanie Ethier case became part of my writing duties.

Just as the police have their assignments, as a journalist, I had Melanie's disappearance on my writer's radar.

But I thought about her disappearance from a much different perspective.

I came to regard the teenaged girl with the big, bright smile from a mother's perspective. My heart ached at the thought of what Melanie's mother, Celine, must be going through.

To not know where your baby girl is can only be described as a nightmare no parent ever wants to live.

And now twenty years after her disappearance that fateful night in late September, Melanie Ethier's missing person case is all about the people she left behind.

Her mother, her sister, her family members, friends and an entire community wonder where she is and if she will ever come home.

I can't imagine how strong one would have to be to go on each day not knowing where your child is.

If I were in Celine's shoes, I don't think I could get out of

bed in the morning.

Celine deserves to know what happened to her daughter.

Where is Melanie? Was she murdered? Abducted? If so, are there killers still at large?

The person or persons responsible for Melanie's disappearance can only be described as monsters. People, who would take a young girl in the prime of her life, but keep that secret inside of themselves for twenty years.

I'll never forget the words of Sue Sgambati, producer of a W5 show on Missing Persons.

She said, "There are rooms of experience no one should enter."

A missing person case is one such room.

Ms. Sgambati says police in Canada identify criminal suspects using a DNA databank in Ottawa. It has not been expanded to cross-reference missing persons or unidentified human remains. With no national DNA database to help identify missing person remains—families are left in despair while their loved ones go unidentified as John or Jane Doe.

Apparently, in the United States, they have a national DNA databank. The American databank has cross-referenced 500 missing persons with family members since it was created in 2003.

Perhaps someone in Canada could introduce a private members bill on behalf of Melanie Ethier and other missing persons to have a national DNA databank established?

## EDITORIAL

# Cultural awareness

This weekend there will be more than 50 cultural events held across South Temiskaming during Culture Days.

There is something for everyone to enjoy.

If a region is judged by its culture, then Temiskaming might fare well on the cultural scale.

You might think living this far north and in a rural setting that there would be less of a cultural presence in the region, but such is not the case.

We are culturally aware, as the region has been recognized by Culture Days Canada.

There are artists, crafters, musicians, poets, writers, filmmakers, history buffs etc. all eager to showcase their cultural flair.

Cultural awareness involves standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values and those of others.

Cultural values include our beliefs and perceptions, why we do things and how we see our world. When people are culturally aware they realize we are not all the same, but we all matter.

## Don't forget the food bank drive

This coming weekend is a busy one with so many activities vying for our precious attention.

But there's one event that people should mark on their calendars and make a conscious effort to support.

It is The Temiskaming Speaker Community Food Bank Drive taking place Saturday, October 1 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

There are five area food banks in South Temiskaming needing your help to supply food to children, adults

and seniors.

They are the Temagami Our Daily Bread Food Bank, Cobalt/Coleman/Latchford and Area Food Bank, Haileybury Food Bank, Salvation Army Food Bank and the Englehart Food Bank.

Support the food bank nearest you by donating non-perishable food items, money, or your time.

You will be helping those less fortunate among us stave off hunger.

Hunger is a threat to our health, our prosperity and our individual dignity.

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