

ONTARIO NEWS

■ COURTS: Esseghaier one of two accused of plotting to attack Via rail passenger train

Terror suspect rants against gay rights

SAM PAZZANO
QMI Agency

TORONTO — An alleged terrorist accused of plotting to derail a New York-to-Toronto train ranted against gay marriage in court Wednesday in his latest crusade against the Criminal Code.

Chihab Esseghaier, who is representing himself on terrorism charges and has campaigned to be judged by the Q'tran instead of the Criminal Code, took advantage of a five-minute speech to air his views against gay marriage.

"Homosexual marriages are protected by the Criminal Code because the code doesn't consider this a crime. Even the animals don't do this," said Esseghaier, 30, a Tunisian PhD student from Montreal.

Justice John McMahon interrupted the accused's rant, saying, "Excuse me, we are going to do this my way."

But Esseghaier cut the judge off, saying, "Excuse me, even animals don't do that, except maybe donkeys."

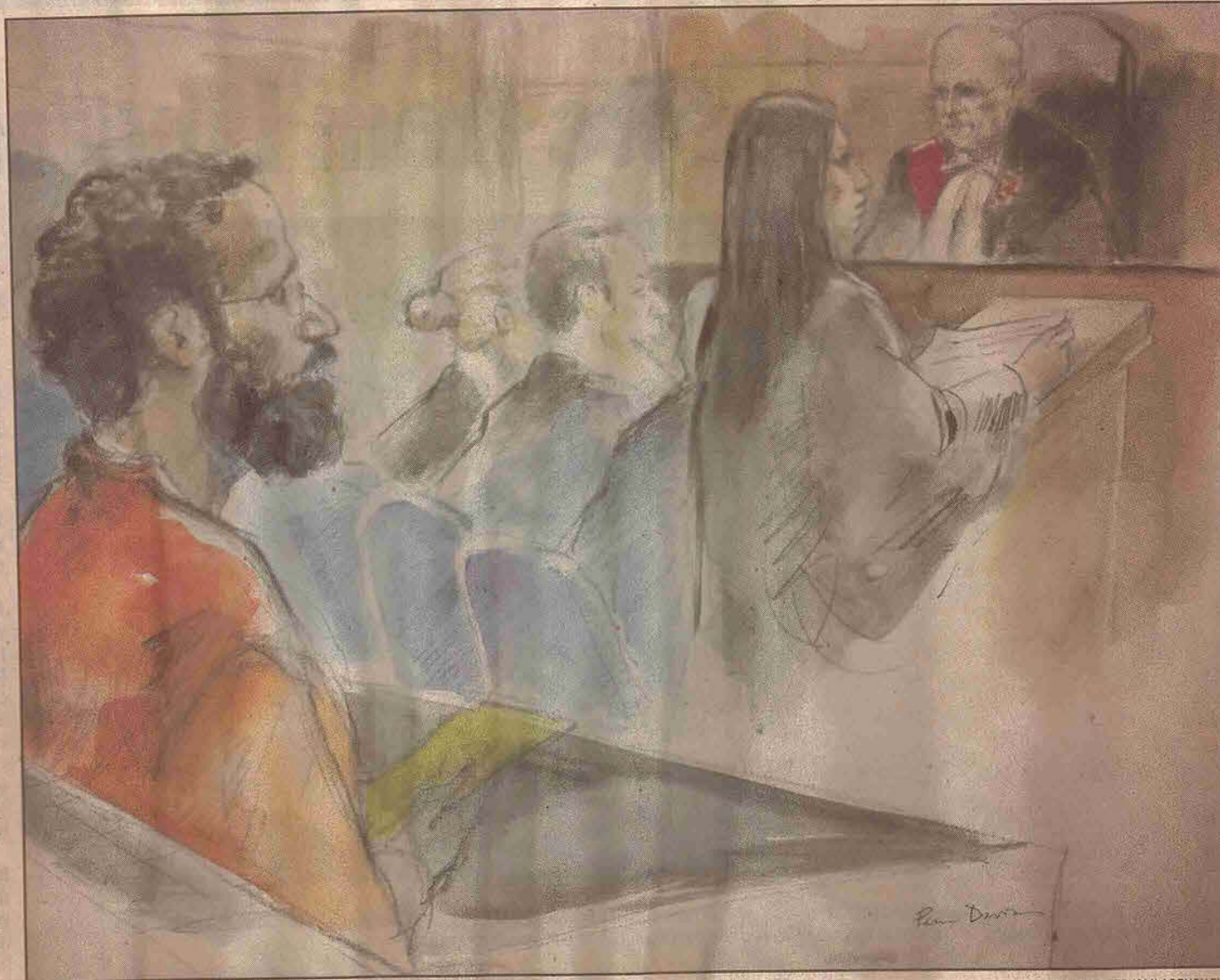
When McMahon asserted his authority, saying the accused's views on the Criminal Code "aren't relevant today," Esseghaier reminded the judge that he had given him five minutes to speak and was breaking his promise for the allotted time.

When he was permitted to continue, Esseghaier then complained that he was strip-searched, saying a guard "forced me to show him my sex (genitals)."

Esseghaier and co-accused Raed Jaser both appeared in court Wednesday, facing charges linked to a complicated investigation in what the RCMP has alleged was an al-Qaida-inspired plan to derail a passenger train.

Jaser, a Toronto van driver, and Esseghaier are charged with participating in a terrorist group and conspiring to murder for the benefit of a terrorist group.

They also face a charge of interfering with transportation facilities for the benefit of a terrorist group, between Aug. 26 and Sept.



Accused terrorist Chihab Esseghaier, seen in this court sketch drawn last June, appeared in court Wednesday and ranted against gay marriage.

25, 2012.

The two alleged terrorists will be back in court Feb. 21.

Jaser and Esseghaier "planned to record a video in which they took responsibility for the train derailment," a court document released this month stated.

The pair also drove to Jordan Station on Sept. 17, where the Maple Leaf train commutes daily on its way from New York

to Toronto, according to allegations in the recently released court documents. The police investigation called Project Smooth was already underway at the time of the Jordan Station trip and Jaser's North York home was under surveillance, although the accused weren't arrested until seven months later.

Four days after the Jordan Station, Ont., visit, the RCMP

obtained a warrant to surreptitiously enter the accused men's homes and vehicles to acquire "maps, pamphlets, brochures" and other material about "the Canadian railway system," according to the documents.

The stealth operation enabled police to gather information on Jaser and Esseghaier without tipping off them or any associates of the ongoing police investigation,

RCMP Cpl. Patrick Flannery wrote in the documents.

None of the allegations have been tested in court.

At the time of the arrests there was no imminent threat, the RCMP maintained.

Jaser's lawyer, John Norris, has said his client will vigorously defend all charges against him.

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■ COURTS

Girl, 17, guilty of pimping fellow teens

OTTAWA — A 17-year-old girl burst into tears as an Ottawa judge found her guilty of human trafficking in the prostitution of young teens.

Judge Diane Lahaie delivered a series of guilty verdicts Wednesday morning in the disturbing case of young teen pimps, forcing other young teens into sexual service.

Lahaie was convicted of human trafficking, sex assault, uttering threats and other charges. More verdicts are still to be dealt with.

The alleged ringleader of the underage sex ring was left alone in the prisoner's box after her two co-accused copped mid-trial guilty pleas.

The girl could face an adult sentence for beating up, threatening and drugging girls as young as 13 into working as prostitutes.

And while some johns noticed the girls' young ages and agreed to pretend to have had sex with them to protect them from their pimps, others were less kind.

Court heard that one man raped one of the girls after dressing her in a pink bikini.

Another girl, who thought she was going to a sleepover, was forced to give oral sex to a man in a waiting car.

Many of the girls were befriended on Facebook, only to later be strong-armed into sex and in some cases photographed nude.

One of the teen's co-accused earlier this month received a three-year youth sentence for human trafficking.

Lahaie rejected a joint position of one year in detention for the other co-accused, who pleaded guilty to counts relating to just one victim.

— Tony Spears, QMI Agency

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Plowing through



SCOTT WISHART/THE BEACON HERALD

Chef Ryan O'Donnell shovels through deep snow and ice for a passage that will be an integral part of this weekend's Alumni Guest Chef dinners at Stratford Chefs School. See the story on PAGE A3.

■ GAS LEAK: Residents never informed about Arden Park Hotel

Thanks for nothing, affected residents say

LAURA CUDWORTH
Staff Reporter

Jennifer Knox spent Monday night shivering at home when she could have been toasty warm at the Arden Park Hotel.

She's not the only one. About 97 residences were without heat because of a gas leak at Brunswick and Albert streets. The mercury dipped below -20C that night with a windchill below -30C.

"We froze," Knox said. "We just bundled extra clothes on and blankets and waited. Thank God we didn't have children."

Union Gas made arrangements with the Arden Park Hotel to put residents up overnight but neglected to tell residents. They didn't neglect to tell the media, though, and that has infuriated Knox.

"I don't like people who try to make themselves sound like they did all this stuff and they did dilly-squat," she said.

"I'm angry. I'm angry no one was informed about this...In my opinion they did nothing to inform any neighbours."

The letters never ended up in the mailboxes anyway. The Union Gas letter arrived after the city sent out a package of information, which was hand delivered by police, to every home, Shaw said.

When the Union Gas letter did arrive at the fire department no

one saw the information about the Arden Park Hotel near the bottom of page two.

"They didn't highlight it. It's just included in the letter," said city CAO Ron Shaw. "We only noticed it after."

As far as Knox is concerned, it was a Union Gas problem to deal with, not a city problem.

"Union Gas needs to take responsibility, that's what needs to be done," she said.

Meanwhile, extra staff were called in to the Arden Park and Festival Inn to accommodate residents who needed a warm place to stay.

"Nobody showed up," said hotelier Vic Hayter.

Typically few residents take advantage of such offers because they want to be home when service technicians arrive to re-light appliances, Stass said.

Most had service restored by 2 a.m., she added.

Knox and her husband would have gladly left for the night had they known there was a warm room waiting for them.

"To get a comfortable sleep would have been nice," she said.

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■ DEPORTATION DEMAND

Bieber petition heading to the White House

ERIC KELSEY
REUTERS

A petition asking the Obama administration to deport Stratford pop star Justin Bieber after his arrest last week on a drunken driving charge, on Wednesday passed the 100,000-signature mark needed to require a White House response.

The petition so far has collected about 118,000 signatures since being added by user "J.A. from Detroit" to the White House website on Jan. 23, the same day Bieber was caught drag racing on a residential street in Miami Beach in a rented Lamborghini.

However, it is highly unlikely that Bieber, 19, would be deported, as federal law dictates that a visa could be revoked or denied for a conviction of a violent crime with a one year, or longer, prison sentence.

Bieber told police after his arrest that he had taken prescription medicine, had been smoking marijuana and had consumed alcohol. If convicted, he could face up to six months in jail, although experts say he will likely get off with a lighter sentence for his first offense.

Representatives for the singer did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment and to what kind of visa Bieber holds to reside in the United States. He is



Canadian pop singer Justin Bieber gestures at a beach as he takes a break in a resort in Punta Chame, on the outskirts of Panama City. While Bieber vacations, a petition calling for his deportation has already surpassed 100,000 signatures.

likely to have an O-1 visa reserved for artists and entertainers. The singer was also charged with driving on an expired license and resisting arrest without violence. He is scheduled to be arraigned in Miami on Feb. 14.

See PETITION | Page A4

New lagoon



Nuhn crawler turning heads
PAGE A2

Playoff series set



Familiar foes in WOOA post-season.
PAGE B1

Deaths.....A4
Classified.....B6
Comics.....B6
Comment.....A5
Local.....A2, A3, A4
Sports.....B1, B2, B3



■ PUBLIC WORKS

Wood rail proposed to replace concrete barrier on Joffre St.

DONAL O'CONNOR
Staff Reporter

A public works report is proposing the concrete block barrier on Joffre St. that's there to block vehicular access to a residential backyard be replaced with a wood-faced rail.

The proposal was backed Wednesday by the public works

subcommittee over the objections of property owner Tom Drake, who contended access to his backyard is needed for emergency services and for maintenance of his property.

Drake has long argued for access and once more contended other cul-de-sacs in the city are handled differently.

The concrete blocks were set up as a temporary barrier.

The proposed change to the barrier stems from a June 22, 2011 meeting of council when council denied a request from the owner of 386 William St. for access to his property from Joffre St.

At the time council directed that staff investigate a permanent

barrier to limit access to the William St. property from Joffre and report back to the subcommittee.

A steel guide-rail, such as is used to guide traffic away from a hazard, was cited as a possible alternative to the wood-faced rail but the wood-faced structure is considered more appropriate for pedestrian areas.

Steel posts used to secure the rail offer a barrier for vehicular traffic.

Repairs to the existing curb and gutter will be part of the project if it's approved by city council.

The estimated overall cost is about \$3,000.

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FAST 5 WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY

- ANTI-GAY RANT**
An alleged terrorist accused of plotting to derail a New York-to-Toronto train ranted against gay marriage in court Wednesday. Chieftest Eschehaler cut off the judge to spout that "even animals don't do that, except maybe donkeys."
- HOG CASES**
Ontario's billion dollar a year hog industry has been hit with two more cases of a highly contagious virus that is lethal for newborn pigs.
- LEFT OUTSIDE**
A Toronto man, 39, faces a child abandonment charge after his three-year-old daughter was found alone in a car parked at a Markham, Ont., Costco in frigid temperatures.
- AUTO UP**
Canadian automakers had another great year in 2013, posting record sales. A Bank of Montreal economics report said light vehicle sales grew for the third consecutive year - up 4% from the previous year.
- COLD PUPPIES**
A Mountie rescued three puppies from the side of the road in Halifax and the dispatchers purchased them food, treats and toys after an officer on patrol at 10:53 p.m. saw the three black puppies huddled together for warmth in the -12C cold and snow.

■ NUHN INDUSTRIES: Lagoon crawler hitting the road

Crawler is turning heads

MIKE BEITZ
Staff Reporter

Maybe it's the agitation cannon. Maybe it's the triple port header pump. Maybe it's the massive wheels or the brilliant red paint job.

Whatever it is, there's no denying that the Nuhn Industries lagoon crawler is an attention-getter.

It turned heads last fall when the Sebringville company took its prototype amphibious vehicle to trade shows around the country.

And it will certainly turn them again this week, as the first two production units make their way along the highways between here and California.

"It's been a pretty hectic month around here," said company vice-president Ian Nuhn Monday, after unit 001 and 002 were sent away on a flatbed truck.

On the back was a sign that said "Oversize Load," appropriate for a pair of vehicles that are eight metres long and tip the scales at six metric tons each.

One of them is going to the World Ag Expo in Tulare, California, and the other is going to a customer.

"It's such a relief," said Nuhn of watching the first finished production units roll off the line. "Everyone here just let out a sigh and said, 'wow, we did this!'"

More crawlers will hit the road next week as production ramps up to meet demand for the futuristic-looking, remote-controlled vehicle. It was designed by Nuhn to crawl into liquid manure lagoons, float there as it agitates the solids from the bottom, and then pump the nutrient-rich mixture out into farm fields before driving out again.

"The first prototype was the easy part," said Nuhn, noting that it was designed and built in about 10 days last summer.

Since then, that design has been modified, refined and fine-tuned to make it "bulletproof," he said, as well as easy to build and



SCOTT WISHART/BEACON HERALD

Ian Nuhn and the team at Nuhn Industries Ltd. are shown with one of the company's lagoon crawlers in Sebringville Wednesday.

I love when they come back with stories like that. It makes you want to keep doing what you're doing."

Ian Nuhn, company vice-president

replicate.

Over the Christmas holidays, employees constructed a "rotisserie jig" at the Sebringville factory that allows the frame to be rotated easily for welding.

Streamlining the production of the lagoon crawlers is important, noted Nuhn, especially as sales

of its more traditional manure pumps and spreaders continues to grow as well.

The company is limiting its initial production run of the crawlers to 20, but Nuhn said interest in North America and around the world is keen.

He's not particularly surprised.

"As soon as I saw the first prototype and saw the results in the field, I knew we had something big," he said.

At the recent Agritechnica trade show in Germany, the world's largest exhibition for agricultural machinery, the reception for the lagoon crawler was "nuts," said Nuhn. The company made strong contacts with potential buyers from Russia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, just to name a few.

"It's a global issue that we've solved," he said, noting that there are international patents pending for the amphibious agitator.

The intense interest in the big red machine - which looks like something Batman might drive if

he needed to agitate his manure lagoons - is not limited just to farmers though.

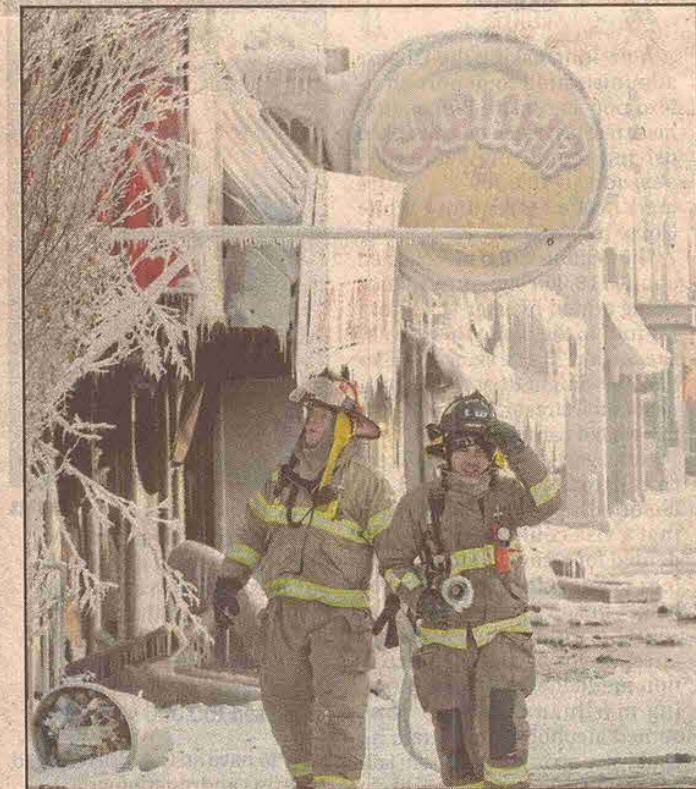
Nuhn said that when people have seen the crawler on the back of a truck on the highway, they react.

Some have guessed that it's used to clear the racetracks at NASCAR events. Truck drivers transporting the machine have seen people race ahead, pull over to the side of the road and take photos.

"I love when they come back with stories like that," said Nuhn. "It makes you want to keep doing what you're doing."

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■ FIRE: Building destroyed in blaze



MIKE DIBATTISTA/QMI AGENCY

Firefighters survey the scene of a Wednesday morning fire in Niagara Falls that caused at least \$500,000 worth of damage and destroyed a building in the city's tourism district.

Major fire in Falls tourist district

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — Damage is pegged at more than \$500,000 in an early morning fire that destroyed a building in this city's tourism district.

The burned building, which housed a number of businesses, was unoccupied at the time of the blaze and no injuries were reported.

On Wednesday afternoon, some 15 hours after the fire began, Niagara Falls firefighters remained on scene and continued to pour thousands of gallons of water onto the structure. Heavy smoke continued to billow from the debris.

The fire was reported about 12:15 a.m. Wednesday. "There was heavy smoke and fire in a portion of the building," said Niagara Falls Deputy Fire Chief Phil Ross. "We responded with three stations and had the fire pretty well contained by about 8 a.m."

destroyed.

On Wednesday afternoon, a second excavator was brought in to knock down a wall near the back of the building.

"We're coming at it from both sides, but it's been pretty stubborn," said one fire official at the scene.

— Tony Ricciardo, QMI Agency

NATIONAL NEWS

■ POLITICS: Former Liberal senators will sit as independents

Trudeau fires senators from Liberal Party



DAVID AKIM
Parliamentary Bureau Chief

OTTAWA — Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau fired all his senators Wednesday morning.

And in doing so, the third party in the House of Commons effectively resigned its position as the official Opposition in the Senate. Supporters hailed the move as the most bold and dramatic bit of Senate reform in a century. Opponents scoffed at it as a flip-flopping "smokescreen" ahead of a potentially damaging audit of the spending habits of all senators.

What Trudeau did was to tell the 32 senators that had been appointed by Liberal prime ministers Paul Martin, Jean Chretien and, yes, Pierre Trudeau that they were no longer members of the Liberal Party of Canada national caucus.

They still had their jobs. They are still honourable senators collecting their base salary of \$135,200 a year.

But they are no longer on Trudeau's team.

"These independent senators will no longer be part of the parliamentary and operational team of the Liberal Party of Canada," Trudeau later told reporters. "As far as political operatives, these senators will no longer be Liberal



AARON HARRIS/REUTERS FILES

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau fired his senators Wednesday. The now-former Liberals will continue to serve in the Senate, but will no longer be members of the Liberal caucus. The move is intended to reduce partisanship in the upper chamber.

organizers, fundraisers, activists in any form."

At first, these senators were stunned. But after an hour or two of talking it over, the gang Trudeau "fired" came out of their closed-door meeting to tell reporters that, henceforth, they would call themselves the Senate Liberal Caucus. And they will,

er, act like Liberals. Later, when the Senate got going, this group insisted they would carry on as the official Opposition in the Senate.

So while some important procedural questions remain a point of argument on Parliament Hill, nothing much has really changed.

IN BRIEF Yukon Quest dog sled race moves route due to thin ice

Organizers of the annual Yukon Quest sled dog race are moving the start and finish lines this year because warm weather has raised fears about the racers and spectators being on the ice.

The 1,600-km race usually starts on the Chena River in downtown Fairbanks, Alaska. "The relocation is due to thinner ice than normal from

last week's warm temperatures, and concern for having 2-3,000 spectators on the ice," organizers said.

The unusually warm weather also means the finish line will

be moved from downtown Whitehorse, Yukon, to the Takihini Hot Springs due to dangerous conditions on the Yukon River.

— QMI Agency

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Family rescued after three nights in the wilderness

KENORA, Ont. — A family of four survived a harrowing experience after spending three nights stranded outside in the severe cold in northern Ontario before being rescued by police.

The unidentified family, which includes two children aged 6 and 10 years old, left Kenora on Jan. 18 to go on a week-long trip which they would spend trapping near Wingiskis Lake, approximately 250 km east of Winnipeg.

— QMI Agency

Also, the timing of Trudeau's senatorial excommunication seemed a bit fishy to his opponents, coming days before the auditor general is expected to release his first findings about the way senators spend our money. Everyone on Parliament Hill believes this audit will be trouble for both Liberals — er, the Senate Liberal Caucus — and the Conservatives.

The NDP wryly noted that last fall Trudeau voted against an NDP motion that specifically called for senators to be non-partisan.

"It's not only an about-face," NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair said. "It's something he said was impossible. Now it's possible. What led to that sudden change of heart? I think that we might be seeing some interesting things coming from that auditor."

The NDP, of course, has no senators and are praying that the audit is political poison to the other two parties.

As for Harper, his government has been vowing for eight years to do something, anything, on Senate reform but, even with a majority in both houses since 2011, it has done absolutely bupkus.

Meanwhile, in one topsy-turvy morning, Trudeau effectively cast himself as a reforming agent of change and, as one Conservative wryly told me privately, "neutralized away one of the founding principles of the Conservative Party of Canada."

And yet, nothing really changed. Every single senator remains unelected and unaccountable. The ones calling themselves Liberal more so now than ever.

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REWIND
 today in history

January 30, 2014

1969 — The Beatles tied their last public performance on the roof of Apple Records in London, which had to be broken up by police.

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MONEY NEWS

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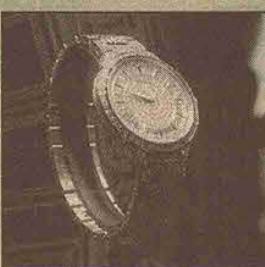
& DUDS

Biggest % losses in stocks over \$5

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Richmont, the biggest player in high-end watches, is currently building a fine watchmaking campus in Geneva where it will train enamel painters and engravers for its own needs, part of a \$67 million investment in training and research over 10 years.

AUTO INDUSTRY SALES

Boom times for auto industry in Canada

HANK DANISZEWSKI
QMI Agency

Canadians dug into their credit to buy and lease more vehicles last year, helping the auto industry post record sales for 2013.

A Bank of Montreal economics report says light vehicle sales grew for the third consecutive year.

Preliminary numbers show sales of light vehicles — which include cars, SUVs and standard pickup trucks — jumped to 1.74 million units in 2013, an increase of 4% since the previous year and a 10% increase since 2011.

"A solid model lineup and

new offerings from manufacturers, at very generous financing terms, will continue to generate interest from the Canadian consumer," said Alex Koustas, an economist with BMO Capital Markets.

Much of the boom in auto sales has been fuelled by credit. Since 2009, Canadian automotive loan balances have increased 165%, compared with 35% in total consumer loans.

Leasing vehicles has also made a minor comeback in popularity. Prior to 2007 it accounted for almost half the market, but by 2009 had sunk to 10%. Since then, leasing has recovered to 20% of the market.

It was an even better year for auto dealers in the United States, with annual sales of 15.6 million vehicles, up 8% from the previous year. Much of the demand was driven by sales of



GMC Terrain

SUVs and light trucks. Auto assembly plants in the London area are benefiting from the strong sales

The Cami plant in Ingersoll has 3,000 union and salaried employees, making it the region's largest employer. The plant produced about 340,000 Terrains and Equinoxes last year.

The Toyota assembly plant in Woodstock has more than 2,000 employees after it boosted production last year.

The plant produced a record 211,000 units of the RAV4 crossover utility vehicle.

Koustas said.

Koustas predicted auto sales will slide marginally, to 1.71 million units in 2014 from 1.78 million units in 2013.

Despite the drop in projected volumes, annual auto sales are still expected to mark the third best performance on record.

Technological advancements and improved fuel economy from compact cars to full-sized pickups have helped with the continued growth, Koustas said.

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Google close to settling antitrust probe

Google is close to settling a three-year European antitrust probe with "much better" concessions to ally concerns over blocking rivals such as Microsoft from Internet search results, two sources said on Wednesday.

A settlement with the European Union's regulator would mean that Google, the world's biggest Internet search engine, would escape a possible fine of as much

as \$5 billion or 10% of its 2012 revenue.

Such an outcome would mirror the company's success in the U.S. last year where it received only a mild reprimand from the Federal Trade Commission, which said Google had not manipulated its website results following a 19-month investigation.

— Reuters

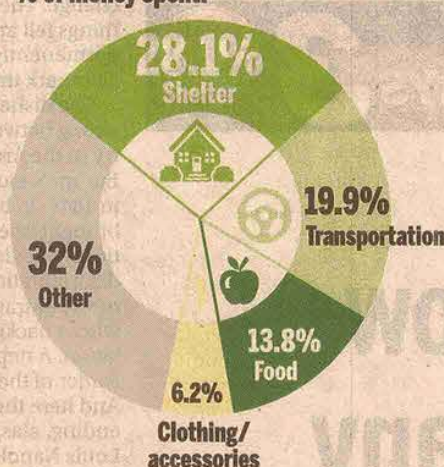
DOLLAR	BRITISH£	EURO	S&P/TSX	NASDAQ	DOW	NIKKEI	GOLD	OIL	PRIME
DOWN 0.14¢ 89.52¢ US	UP 0.06¢ \$1.8505 CDN	UP 0.15¢ \$1.5265 CDN	DOWN 44.44 13,643.22	DOWN 46.53 4,051.43	DOWN 189.8 15,738.79	UP 2.70 15,383.91	UNCHANGED \$1,251.00 US	DOWN \$0.05 \$97.36 US	UNCHANGED 3%

Household spending up

According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, Canadian households spent 2% more on goods and services in 2012 compared to the year before.

Canadians spent an average of
\$56,279
on goods and services in 2012

% of money spent:



Average amount spent by household

Shelter	\$15,811	+4%	(from 2011)
Transportation	\$11,216	-0.1%	
Food	\$7,739	-0.7%	
Household operations	\$4,111	-0.6%	
Recreation	\$3,773	+1.7%	
Clothing/accessories	\$3,461	+3%	
Health care	\$2,285	+3.3%	
Furnishings/equipment	\$2,183	+7.7%	
Miscellaneous	\$1,430	-10.7%	
Education	\$1,386	+14%	
Tobacco/alcohol	\$1,274	+6.3%	
Personal care	\$1,194	+10.4%	
Reading/print materials	\$214	-3.2%	
Games of chance	\$202	+21.7%	

Amount spent, by province

N.L.	Highest % spent on food:	\$52,271	+4.6%	(from 2011)
P.E.I.		\$50,745	+12.3%	
N.S.		\$51,347	+2.7%	
N.B.	Highest % spent on shelter:	\$49,696	+3.6%	
Que.		\$48,870	-0.7%	
Ont.		\$58,062	+1%	
Man.	Highest % spent on transportation:	\$51,730	+3.5%	
Sask.		\$53,165	+26.6%	
Alta.		\$69,870	+8.4%	
B.C.		\$58,808	+2.6%	

MEDIAN DINNER/QMI AGENCY



LOCAL NEWS

Thursday, January 30, 2014

Make way



City workers like Shawn Hummel of parks and community services continued the seemingly non-stop task of snow removal from city sites and parking lots on Wednesday. Here he dumps another full truckload at the old fairgrounds, a handy location for smaller loads from the parks system. They're making way for the next batch of snowy weather scheduled to hit soon.

SCOTT WISHART / THE BEACON HERALD

PUBLIC WORKS: Water main repairs a challenge

DONAL O'CONNOR
Staff Reporter

City waterworks crews continue to be challenged with repairs to broken water mains caused by deep frost and frozen pipes.

Water department manager Joe Salter said in an interview Wednesday there were line breaks this week at Kemp Cres. and at Arden Park Rd.

The two breaks pushed the winter toll to five since the beginning

of January.

The department has been called out to a similar number of indoor frozen line problems involving customers and has been advising householders experiencing freezing pipes to get heat to problematic pipes.

Salter noted conditions for the crews working on broken mains have been "terrible."

The frost in the ground is close to a metre (roughly 3 ft.) deep, he

said.

The department has been monitoring water in the Dufferin and Forman storage towers to ensure freezing doesn't occur.

Water in the ground is about 10C, explained Salter, but when water use is low and the water sits in the tanks — which aren't heated — the temperature drops.

Wednesday afternoon the water in the Dufferin St. tower was at 1.5C. In the Forman St. tower it

was 2.4C.

With the usual evening water use, refilled water flowing into the storage towers will push the water temperature up again in both reservoirs.

If water crews are being challenged by the weather, so have public works crews who have been clearing snow off roads and sidewalks.

City engineer Ed Dujlovic told the public works subcommittee on Wednesday that over-time hours for snow clearing this month up to Jan. 20 amount to 456 as compared with 267 for the whole of January 2013.

"We're having some challenges of where we're putting the snow," said Dujlovic, citing concerns about the height of some snow banks.

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PUBLIC WORKS

Matilda work proposed for 2014

DONAL O'CONNOR
Staff Reporter

Matilda St. residents located from Galt Rd. to the Roadhouse drain may be asked to fork over funds for improvements to the street.

The city's 2014 capital budget provides for the proposed work as a local improvement, but residents will have a say in whether the work gets done.

The work was considered back in 1991 but residents objected and the project was dropped. With local improvement projects, municipal costs are shared with local property owners.

Proposed is the construction of an 8.5-metre asphalt road, complete with curb and gutter, that home owners would be asked to fund at 60% of the total cost. The municipal share would be 40%.

Installation of a storm sewer is proposed with the same cost sharing ratio.

Sanitary sewer work, a man-hole replacement, water main and sidewalk replacement would all be funded 100% by the city.

City engineer Ed Dujlovic told the public works subcommittee cost calculations were yet to be done for each property.

The subcommittee is recommending the work to council.

Councillors also supported a request made by Coun. George Brown that the cost of a bicycle lane be included for council consideration.

Brown noted that Matilda leads to two high schools. The engineering budget provides \$700,000 for the proposed work, with \$172,000 funded from abutting properties.

If a majority of affected property owners oppose the improvement, the project cannot proceed as a local improvement for two years. Payment can be phased in over a number of years.

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STRATFORD CHEFS SCHOOL: Snow tunnel dug from kitchen to stove

Digging this weekend's guest chef dinner

SCOTT WISHART
Staff Photographer

There's a saying that when life hands you lemons, make lemonade.

Chef Ryan O'Donnell applied that sentiment to a snowy dilemma facing his preparation for this weekend's Alumni Guest Chef dinners at Stratford Chefs School.

A three-metre high mound of compacted, plowed snow blocked the route from his kitchen to the

outdoor wood-burning stove he'll be using for the meals.

It's been our first real winter in a while, after all. Rather than be discouraged, though, O'Donnell and his students at the school took shovels in hand and started digging on Monday.

The plan is to create a functional high-walled path from kitchen to stove that doubles as an artistic expression of the season.

"We'll use it as a logistical

means of moving food around," he said before chopping away at the icy mass Wednesday.

"But it will also be a way for guests to enter the building in a kind of magical setting, with lights and ice and snow, all contrasted with the fire."

Ryan O'Donnell, Stratford Chefs School

"But it will also be a way for guests to enter the building in a kind of magical setting, with lights

and ice and snow, all contrasted with the fire.

"We saw it as a way to create some drama."

Guests will get a hot drink at the front door of the Prune on Albert St. before walking past the oven and through the tunnel, where they'll get hot snacks, and then enter the restaurant.

O'Donnell, a 2010 Chefs School grad and now an instructor at the school, will be joined outside by second-year students to cook in view of the guests seated comfort-

ably, and warmly, inside.

And while this has felt like the coldest week of the winter so far, it really hasn't fazed O'Donnell or his students.

"You don't feel the cold when you're chiseling through a block of ice," he noted.

There may still be a limited number of seats available for the dinners, which will feature seasonal local produce.

For more information, call 271-1414.

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REGIONAL NEWS

■ **LAW:** Reports suggest pop star to be charged with assault

Bieber appears at Toronto police station

CHRIS DOUCETTE
QMI Agency

Canadian pop icon Justin Bieber will appear in court March 10 to face an assault charge for allegedly attacking a limo driver over the Christmas holidays.

The Stratford native — who faces legal problems in the United States and Canada — surrendered to Toronto Police Wednesday night at 52 Division in downtown Toronto.

The baby-faced pop star turned troubled youth arrived in an SUV at the police station on Dundas St. W., just west of University Ave., shortly before 8 p.m. and was met by a throng of screaming young fans and media.

A handful of officers escorted Bieber through the crowd and into the station where he was interviewed by investigators about the Dec. 29 incident.

About 90 minutes later, the teen heart-throb managed to sneak by reporters and fans by leaving the police station through a back door and driving off in a different vehicle.

Soon after, Insp. Howie Page released a statement explaining the singer has been charged with assault.

The Biebs and some pals took in a Toronto Maple Leafs game from a private box at the Air-Canada Centre on the night in question.

Page said it's alleged a limousine driver picked up a group of six people, outside a nightclub, near Peter St. and Adelaide St. W., around 2:50 a.m. the following morning.

"While driving the group to a hotel, an altercation occurred between one of the passengers and the driver of the limousine," he said. "In the course of the alterca-



International pop music sensation Justin Bieber turns himself in to Toronto Police on Wednesday evening.

JACK BOLAND/QMI AGENCY

tion, a man struck the limousine driver on the back of the head several times.

"The driver stopped the limousine, exited the vehicle and called police," Page said, adding the assailant left the scene before officers arrived.

Bieber has also been in trouble with U.S. authorities in two cities south of the border recently.

On Jan. 23, he was arrested in Miami and charged with driving under the influence after police allegedly caught him drag racing a rented Lamborghini on a main thoroughfare.

According to court records, he pleaded not guilty Wednesday to those charges in a written plea submitted by his lawyer.

If convicted, Bieber could face up to six months in prison. But experts say that if he's found guilty, Bieber will likely receive a lighter sentence because it would be his first offence.

Bieber is scheduled to make a court appearance Feb. 14 to formally answer to those charges.

He was also charged with driving on an expired license and resisting arrest without violence for the Miami incident.

Bieber has also been under investigation in California, where he resides, after a neighbour claimed he egged his home late last year and caused \$20,000 in damage.

Toronto City Councillor Adam Vaughan — whose ward includes 52 Division — cracked a joke Wednesday about Bieber's pending arrest to reporters at City Hall.

"What's the difference between Rob Ford and Justin Bieber? Justin Bieber shoots and cuts his own videos," Vaughan said.

— With files from Don Peat and Reuters

REACTION

Twitter reacts to Justin Bieber's latest scrape with the law:

■ "Wow... now Bieber is facing another criminal charge back home in Canada?" @danabrams

■ "Justin Bieber is officially even more embarrassing than the #Toronto Maple Leafs." @toronto_life

■ "If your son/daughter has stated they would go to jail for Justin Bieber — I question your parenting. Lol." @KelseyBelleTO

■ "Grammy winner @kathygriffin's advice to Justin Bieber: Do NOT

hang out with (Toronto Mayor) Rob Ford."

@fusetv

■ "And just like that... 'Free Bieber' T-shirts popping up in downtown Toronto, mugshot and all." @melissagrelo

■ "Bieber back in jail and now in Toronto?? This dudes turning up hahahahaha" @Beardegidlo

■ **AUTO INDUSTRY**

Weather disrupts supply chain

HANK DANISZEWSKI
QMI Agency

Toyota auto assembly plants in Woodstock and Cambridge face a sharp production slowdown because of a disruption in the parts supply chain.

The problem started several weeks ago

HANK DANISZEWSKI
QMI Agency

when the chain was interrupted by blizzards and extreme weather in many parts of the continent.

The weather situation was complicated by other logistical issues in the supply chain, said Greig Mordue, general manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing

Canada. He said the parts shortage is hitting the assembly lines now.

"The problem started with the inclement weather but has subsequently escalated. It's not localized to one geographic region or one specific part."

Mordue said the production slowdown is rippling out to the many parts plants in the region that supply the Woodstock and Cambridge plants.

Both plants are operating on two shifts and employ a total of 7,000 people.

"We have had many disruptions, but our team members continue to report to work. But no one has been laid off, no one will be laid off."

Mordue said the company hopes to return to normal production in the next few days.

He said the production slowdown could eventually affect Toyota dealerships, but he said there's still adequate inventory.

Toyota was faced with a major disruption in its parts supply chain in 2011 when its home base of Japan was hit with a tsunami and earthquakes.

Last year a total of 506,000 vehicles rolled off the lines at Cambridge and Woodstock plants.

Mordue said the Woodstock plant added more staff and production capacity last year and produced a record 211,000 of the RAV4 crossover utility vehicle.

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Greig Mordue, general manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada

■ **PETITION**

System established for odd topics

Continued from A1

Bieber's life off-stage has been rocky in the last year with problems ranging from scuffling with paparazzi in London to a felony investigation into whether he pelted a neighbor's house with eggs in his gated community near Los Angeles.

Bieber is also reportedly going to be charged with assault in connection with a December incident in Toronto involving a limo driver, according to unnamed police sources cited by the CBC.

It is not known exactly when the White House will respond to the petition.

The petition system was launched in

2011, and has forced the White House to respond to odd topics such as building a "death star" from the "Star Wars" films as a way to create jobs and deporting British TV personality Piers Morgan over pro-gun control comments after the 2012's Newtown shooting.

Other potential sources of the transmission, including the scopes and medications themselves, have been ruled out.

Hepatitis C is a viral infection carried in the blood, affecting primarily the liver. The infection is often asymptomatic, but chronic infection can lead to scarring of the liver and ultimately to cirrhosis or liver cancer, which generally takes more than 10 years to develop.

Michelle.Ruby@sunmedia.ca

MICHELLE RUBY
QMI Agency

Brantford, Ont. — The head of the Brant Community Healthcare System issued an apology on Wednesday after test results confirmed that a patient was infected with hepatitis C during an endoscopy last May at Brantford General Hospital.

Transmission of the disease was confirmed through blood test results from the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

All other patients who received an endoscopy on May 29, 2013 in the same procedure room as the infected patient have been cleared of hepatitis C, said Jim Hornell, president and CEO of the Brant Community Healthcare System.

An investigation is ongoing into the probable transmission of hepatitis C to

another patient who had an endoscopy at BGH on Nov. 8, 2013. Those results could be available in one to two weeks.

An endoscopy involves examining the inside of a person's body using a medical device consisting of a long thin tube, which has a light and a video camera.

"On behalf of the entire organization, I would like to apologize to the individual who acquired hepatitis C during one of our endoscopy procedures, and thank them for their co-operation to determine the exact cause," said Hornell.

"It is extremely unfortunate and we will do everything in our power to provide the appropriate medical care for this individual, as well as continue our investigation to ensure something like this never happens again."

Dr. Tom Szakacs, an infection control specialist at BGH, said the transmission

could have occurred if a syringe used to inject sedative medications on a patient previously infected with hepatitis C was then used on the next patient.

Alternatively, said Szakacs, if sterile technique isn't followed, it may cause contamination of a stock medication vial that is then a source of virus for the next patient.

Other potential sources of the transmission, including the scopes and medications themselves, have been ruled out.

Hepatitis C is a viral infection carried in the blood, affecting primarily the liver. The infection is often asymptomatic, but chronic infection can lead to scarring of the liver and ultimately to cirrhosis or liver cancer, which generally takes more than 10 years to develop.

Michelle.Ruby@sunmedia.ca

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Trudeau plan converts Senate into Survivor

If Liberal leader Justin Trudeau's wish of an independent, non-partisan Senate came about, the upper chamber would function much like the television show *Survivor*, where members would be forced to make alliances to ensure their priorities are successful.

The difference would be that rather than political partisanship, you'd see personal alliances not unlike the children in *Lord of the Flies*, sans conch. And that didn't work out too well.

Trudeau put that scenario in play Wednesday when he declared all 32 Liberal senators will no longer represent their party. They will sit as independents who can still be members of the Liberal party.



As of now, they get no party budget, they can't sit on committees and they have no leader. Sounds more like the Occupy movement than the chamber of sober second thought. And Occupy, unfortunately, didn't achieve its goals either.

The 32 senators are to decide among themselves if they will name a leader and if they will try to organize themselves into some kind of group that would allow them to sit on committees. Regardless of what people think of the Senate — and much of it isn't good, given the recent spending scandals — most observers who follow the chamber agree the committee work is important and has made valuable contributions to bills originating in the elected House of Commons.

The Senate is bound to settle down and operate somewhat similarly to how it does now. Liberal appointees are members of the party and are likely going to vote in favour of their party's wishes most of the time. Conservatives, with 57 of them forming the majority, are unlikely to follow Trudeau's lead.

If the Senate did work entirely non-partisan, the elected government would be in a state of permanent minority in which even a majority party would be forced to acquiesce to the whims of individual non-elected senators, or small groups of senators who have successfully formed alliances strong enough to sway the votes. Can't see how that improves things.

Newfoundland and Labrador Liberal Senator George Baker said the move will depoliticize the upper chamber. But pure independence and non-partisanship won't happen. People, especially those who are members of political institutions, just don't operate that way. It's not in their DNA. They work to sway votes by conversing with like-minded people and that will never stop. Several former Liberal senators said they intend to stay on as party members. P.E.I. Senator Catherine Calbeck said she's fine with this because it just means she's not a member of the national party caucus that meets daily, but she'll still go to the Senate Liberal caucus every week.

As counter-intuitive as it sounds, any move — short of an elected upper chamber — that increases the credibility of the Senate is self-defeating, because it gives unelected senators more authority to thwart the elected House.

There is one advantage to what Trudeau has in mind. He says he'd establish an open and transparent process that allows for public input before naming candidates, such as the one followed for Supreme Court judges. That may weed out the shameless political apparatchiks, such as Mike Duffy, who wanted himself made a Conservative cabinet member so he could have access to a bigger budget, allowing him to raise more funds for the party. In fact, that might go further in ensuring a better decorum in the Senate than freeing members from their party responsibilities.

Sort of like ensuring people stuck on the island aren't loud-mouthed, self-important and sneaky.

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POINT OF VIEW

Minimum wage now normal for too many

Minimum wage earners in Ontario need an increase, but even at \$11 an hour, which has been suggested as the rate at which the provincial government will probably peg the new rate, those who depend upon legislation to define their income will still be living below the poverty line.

The last time an increase was legislated was four years ago, when it was pegged at \$10.25. A provincial board is calling for increases to be pegged to inflation.

Even those who are welcoming the increase admit it's not enough. Those who advocate on behalf of minimum wage earners were seeking something like \$14 an hour, which they claim would surpass the poverty line.

But several communities in Ontario have tried to determine "living wages" — incomes that would provide individuals with enough money to allow adequate and healthy food, good clothing, adequate shelter and transportation — and by most measures, \$14 doesn't cut it.

As of 2013, the established living wage for someone living in Hamilton was \$14.95; in Toronto, \$16.60; in Kingston, \$16.29; and in Windsor, \$15.06.

The point is that increasing minimum wage levels provides little satisfaction for

the recipients and less satisfaction for those who operate enterprises that pay their workers the bare minimum.

It's not that minimum wage earners should be receiving more income; the problem is that it won't be enough.

The government's focus should be on improving everyone's income, and making sure that the minimum wage doesn't become an established wage for a growing part of the working population.

But that's what's happening. Last fall, a Toronto-based research organization found that the number of minimum wage earners in this province has more than doubled since 2003. As of 2011, 9% of Ontario's workforce, 464,000 individuals, were receiving minimum wage.

Scarier yet is the fact that not all of those minimum wage earners are young people. The same study found that 40% of Ontario's minimum wage earners were 25 years or older.

The Liberals need to enact policies that help create a business environment in which the percentage of Ontarians who depend on minimum wage is reduced and not enlarged.

It's frightening to think that, for too many people in Ontario, the minimum wage is becoming the established wage.

— Peter Epp

Arab Spring may be dead, but hope alive

It has taken a little longer than it did after the 1848 revolutions in Europe, but on the third anniversary of the Egyptian revolution we can definitely say the Arab Spring is finished. The popular, mostly non-violent revolutions that tried to overthrow the single-party dictatorships and absolute monarchies of the Arab world had their moments of glory, but the party is over and the bosses are back.

People in the Middle East hate having their triumphs and tragedies treated as a second-hand version of European history, but the parallels with Europe in 1848 are hard to resist.

In many places the Arab revolutionaries had startlingly quick successes at first — Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen — just like the French, German and Italian revolutionaries did in Europe's "Springtime of the Peoples."



For a time, it looked like everything would change. Then came the counter-revolutions and things fell apart, leaving only a few countries permanently changed for the better, such as Denmark then and Tunisia today.

The disheartening parallels are particularly strong between Egypt, by far the biggest country in the Arab world, and France, which was Europe's most important and populous country in 1848. In both cases, the revolutions at first brought free media, civil rights and free elections, but also a great deal of social turmoil and disorientation. In both France and Egypt, the newly enfranchised masses elected presidents whose background alarmed much of the population: A nephew of Napoleon in one case, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in the other. And here the stories diverge for a time, but the ending, alas, does not. In France, President Louis Napoleon launched a coup against his own presidency, and re-emerged in 1852 as Emperor Napoleon III. It had been a turbulent few years, and by then a large majority of the French were willing to vote for him because he represented authority, stability and tradition. They threw away their own democracy.

In Egypt last year, the army allied itself with former revolutionaries to overthrow the elected president, Mohamed Mursi, and within a few months, after an election which will genuinely represent the wish of most Egyptians to trade their new democracy for authority, stability and tradition, Field Marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi will duly assume the presidency. The counter-revolution is as popular in Egypt now as it was in France then. After the defeat of the 1848 revolutions, there were no further democratic revolutions in Europe for 20 years. If that timetable were to apply to the Arab world, the next round of democratic revolutions would be around 2035.

However, the 1848 revolutions were violent explosions of popular anger that succeeded in hours or days, while those of 2010-11 were largely non-violent, more calculated struggles that took much longer to win. Non-violent revolutions give millions of people time to think about why they are taking these risks and what they hope to get out of it.

They may still lose focus, take wrong turns, even throw gains away, but once people have participated in a non-violent revolution, they are permanently politicized and in the long run, likely to remember what they came for.

A world authority on non-violent revolutions, American Erica Chenoweth reports that violent revolutionary struggles succeed only 30% of the time, whereas non-violent campaigns succeed almost 60% of the time.

"Holding all other variables constant, the average country with a failed non-violent campaign has over a 35% chance of becoming a democracy five years after a conflict's end," she writes.

The game isn't over yet.

— Gwynne Dyer is an independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

Olympic Games, spy games: An empty exercise

LARRY CORNIES

With only days remaining before the Winter Olympics are set to begin in Sochi, Russia, it's worth looking again at what the world is doing there — and why.

The two main sports venues on the Black Sea have become armed camps, their unprecedented security precautions being the result of threats, both stated and implied, by a host of terror groups. "Black widow" suicide bombers are already being sought; jihadist groups have promised to deliver a "present" to those who attend the Games.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's "ring of steel" around the Olympic venues has been augmented by an unmatched level of monitoring in cyberspace. Russian

security agents, operating with help from the FBI and agents from other countries, such as Canada, have warned that anyone travelling to the Games should consider themselves under surveillance at all times. Big Brother will have more tentacles than George Orwell could ever have imagined.

So great are security concerns that many governments have warned their citizens about getting anywhere near Sochi. A Canadian government travel advisory this week warned travellers of "an ongoing insurgency in the North Caucasus, located approximately 150 kilometres from Sochi," and alerted Canadian tourists to "take sensible precautions" and "maintain a high level of personal security awareness at all times and in all places."

The choice of Sochi, in the sub-

tropical climes of south Russia, as the site for the 2014 Olympics may have been a novel one in 2007. But the reality today is that the powder keg of Chechnya sits just over the Caucasus Mountains to the east. Nearby Ukraine is in convulsing with anti-government protests.

And then there's the cost. Sochi will undoubtedly go down as the most expensive Games — not just Winter Games, but Games, period — in history. It's estimated that \$51 billion has been spent so far — and all the bills aren't yet in. That's more than the GDP of 12 of the world's countries, according to the International Monetary Fund. Previously, the record had been held by Beijing, at \$44 billion. Vancouver's 2010 Winter Games, by comparison, cost \$6 billion. (Sochi's initial

budget called for spending around \$12 billion.)

Without wading too far into Kumbaya-type sentiment, it's fair to say that the Olympic Games have long been — and really should be — about more than money. Indeed, they should even be about more than sport. They should, at least in modest measure, be about the meeting of nations and peoples from around the world in competition, but also in the discovery of the indomitable spirit that they share and of the human qualities that bind them all.

This is borne out by the "fundamental principle of Olympism" contained in the Olympic Charter itself. "Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value

of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.

The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."

Yet when athletes spend their time at the Games in protective isolation, when they and their spectators are being warned to get in and out of the Olympics as speedily as possible, when all involved are subjected to unprecedented monitoring and spying, and when the amounts of money at stake reach gargantuan (some would say obscene) proportions, it's hard to see how "the harmonious development of humankind" and "the preservation of human

dignity" gets done.

Most Canadians have never seriously questioned the value of the Games before, believing them to be a legitimate, if sometimes difficult, expression of the worthwhile goals of its charter.

But if Sochi's price tag, security and invasions of privacy are the new normal, if sport is being placed at the service of the propaganda projects regardless of cost, then we should rethink the current Olympic model and consider alternatives, such as decentralization. A made-for-TV spectacle without opportunity for the "harmonious development of humankind" is just another reality show, and an empty exercise indeed.

Larry Cornies is a London-based journalist and educator.

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In Memoriams In Memoriams

JOHN MAVITY
January 30, 2013

A MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN

When tomorrow starts without me
And I'm not here to see
If the sun should rise and find your eyes
Filled with tears for me
I wish so much you wouldn't cry,
The way you did today
While thinking of the many things
We didn't get to say
I know how much you love me
As much as I love you
And each time you think of me
I know you'll miss me too
When tomorrow starts without me
Don't think we're far apart
For every time you think of me
I'm right there in your heart
Forever remembered
Forever loved
Laurie and family

Coming Events Coming Events

Blowes Travel and Cruise Centres
together with Ellison Travel & Tours
present...Ireland's Hidden Treasures &
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Second Annual
Stratford Heritage & Collectors Show
Saturday, February 22, 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Rotary Complex, McCarthy Road, Join
us for a fun family day. Door Prizes.
Exhibits and collections of all types. Free
parking, good food. Admission \$5, kids
under 12 free with an adult.
Presented by the
Stratford Perth Heritage Foundation.Community
Calendar

SATURDAY

Stratford
SENIOR CITIZENS - activities at the Kiwanis
Community Centre include: 7 p.m., euchre.Stratford
PRAYER FOR CANADIAN MILITARY - every
Saturday, 7:30 p.m. at 182 Wellington St. Call
519-271-2220 for more information. All welcome.St. Mary's
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SATURDAY
NIGHT LIVE STUDY GROUP-C, 12:12 Big Book,
7 p.m. at St. James Anglican Church, Church St.
S. For more information, call 271-7755.Stratford
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - Shiftworkers
Group-C, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at St. James
Church, 230 Ontario St. Call 271-7755 for more
information.Mitchell
NOW! Every Saturday 1-4 Come listen to or join
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Music - formerly Schriebers, lovely downtown
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519-348-8169 for more info.Community
CalendarSt. Mary's
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SATURDAY
NIGHT LIVE STUDY GROUP-C, 12:12 Big Book,
7 p.m. at St. James Anglican Church, Church St.
S. For more information, call 271-7755.London
WYELMA SUPPORT GROUP, London and
District, St. Jude's Anglican Church (SW corner of
Fanshawe and Adelaide), 1:30-4 p.m. Group
Meeting. Wyelma Review. What you need to
know to be a partner in your health care
presented by Ev McDowell and Jeff Parton, Co-
Leaders, London and District Wyelma Support
Group. For more information contact: Ev
McDowell, 519-241-2705 / Nancy McIntosh
519-666-2205.Stratford
AVON TRAIL HIKING CLUB - Saturday, February
1st, 2013 - Heart Burn Day 9 a.m. Meet at the
north side of the Allman Arena. Approx. 3 km, 2.5
hours from the Stratford side trail to the Country
Club and back, followed by a drive over to the
Rotary Complex. Easy to moderate. Dress for
weather. Bring coat for chili sampling at the
Rotary. This is a fundraising event for the Heart
and Stroke Foundation. Contact: Bernard
(519) 273-1468 berniebow@gmail.comThe community calendars appear daily,
Monday for Wednesday events - Tuesday for
Thursday events - Wednesday for Friday
events, Thursday for Saturday events - Friday
for Sunday and Monday events - Saturday for
Tuesday events. The Community Calendar
only accepts announcements for non-profit
groups and organizations. All other
announcements are paid and can be posted
under "Coming Events". Please submit
information at least four business days prior to
the event. For more information or to submit an
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SPORTS

Thursday, January 30, 2014 Sports Editor Steve Rice • 519-271-2222 ext.205 • steve.rice@sunmedia.ca

WOAA SENIOR AA HOCKEY: Second year in a row Tavistock, Milverton have played in the opening round of the playoffs

Royals, Drives meet in Senior series

STEVE RICE
Sports EditorIt took overtime in the last
rescheduled game Tuesday night
but the playoff matchups are
finally set in the South Division
of the Western Ontario Athletic
Association (WOAA) Senior AA
playoffs.And for the second year in a
row the Tavistock Royals and Mil-
verton Four Wheel Drives will
meet in the opening round.The Royals clinched second
place in their final regular-seasongame on Satur-
day, 5-4 win in
Komoka that left
both teams with
identical 16-6-2
records, but the
Royals with a
2-1 edge in the season series to
claim the higher standing.The Drives slipped to seventh
on Tuesday night when they
were defeated 5-4 in overtime by
the Petrolia Squires, moving the
Squires past the Drives up to fifth
place.Milverton, 10-11-3, had won
two in a row prior to the overtime
loss.The Royals have had eight
former Stratford Cullitons in
their lineup this season: Tyler
Townsend (10-22-32 in 19 games),
Wes Kropf (12-15-27 in 23 games),
Kyle Wilhelm (11-12-23 in 22
games), Josh Gaynor (5-16-23 in
21 games), Reid Yantzi (5-9-14
in 23 games), Tyson Aitchison
(2-4-6 in 17 games), Calvin Thom-
son (0-1-1 in 11 games) and goalie
Evan Groenesteghe (11-6-0, 320
GAA, 3 shutouts).Stratford minor hockey prod-
ucts Reuben Smith (9-18-27 in 21
games) and Brett Green (2-5-7 in
18 games) also play for the Roy-
als.The Drives are led by former
Listowel Cyclones Dennis Dewar
(14-12-26 in 21 games), Tyler
Egerdee (5-14-19 in 20 games) and
Brent Freeman (9-17-26 in 19
games), who also played in El-
mira. But their lineup also in-
cludes former Cullitons' de-
fencemen Alex Ehrlich and
goalie Tyler Huston.Tavistock swept the four-game
season series, winning at home
5-4 in overtime on Oct. 12 and 8-0
on Jan. 3, and in Milverton 5-3 on
Nov. 8 and 9-2 on Nov. 29.

Other Series

The other series in the South
have regular-season champion
Tillsonburg (21-3-0) playing
eighth-place Goderich Pirates
(1-23-0), No. 3 Komoka (16-6-2)
against No. 6 Moncton Wildcats
(9-9-8) and No. 4 Clinton (12-10-
3) against No. 5 Petrolia (11-10-
3).The Wildcats played 11 over-
time or shootout games this sea-son, finishing 5-6 in those games,
so they could present a big chal-
enge to Komoka.Monkton went 0-3 against the
Classics but two of those games
were decided in a shootout.The Wildcats' lineup included
former Cullitons Pat Looby (7-16-
23 in 21 games), Mike Pleon (4-7-
11 in 22 games) and Andrew
Lorimer (1-5-6 in 20 games).
Chett Binning and goalie Kyle
Brodhagen have also played for
the Wildcats this season.

SPORTS

■ **CURLING:** Brian Dahms rink emerges as 'A' Division champions

Curlers rock and roll at annual Greenspiel



News From The Club

The Stratford Country Club's ninth annual members' Greenspiel was held the weekend of January 17-19. This year we had a Rock and Roll theme and teams were given suitable names.

Games were held on Friday and Saturday with the finals for A-D divisions on Sunday afternoon. There were some amazing teams and seven times throughout the weekend draws to the button were used to break tied games.

In the D Final game, team Jittersburg consisting of Jason Blum, Brent Webley, John Weir and Nancy Hazeleger defeated team Honey Grippers comprised of Richard Cook, Hugh McDonald, Steve Cooper and Cheryl Muir.

The C Final game saw clear winners, The Magic Bus driven by Mark Romphf, Tom Walden, Chris Thomas and Joan Neely defeat team Rock Bottom shining on with members Ken Hundert, Tom Barker, Ivan Buchan and

Taylor Jantzi.

B Finals were played by team Shake Rattle and Roll with Evan Aitchison, Marg Heyden-Pearson, Diane Mitchell and Jack De Groot defeating The Beatles consisting of Graham Rae, Steve King, Deb Best and Bob Ernest.

In the A Finals, team 'Brian and the Pacemakers' consisting of Brian Dahms, Clark Mitchell, Lindsay McLeod and Michelle Romphf defeated the Big Boppers team of Alex Robertson, Christine Aitchison, Mark Straus and Mark Hesketh.

Congratulations to everyone and thank you to our organizing committee: Jerry Dillow, Marg Dillow, Jane Kille, Marg Heyden-Pearson, Dave 'Eliot' Scott, Mary Lou Scott, Evan Aitchison, Christine Aitchison, Mark Robertson and Rich Cook and Greenspiel founders: Mike McCallum and Megan Jentz.

LEAGUE PLAY

On Sunday, January 19, the Sunday Morning League played. Rob Malcho 7 vs. Taylor Jantzi 5, Jason Blum 8 vs. Hugh McDonald 0, Shawn Malvern broke the tie in an extra end for 5 vs. Tom Barker 4, Bob Hughes 13 vs. Mark Romphf 2. In the late draw, George White

11 vs. Steven Schwartztruber 6 and Ross Dietrich 8 vs. Dave Scott 4. Team Ross Dietrich continues to lead with 131.5 points followed by team Jason Blum with 124.

In the Western Union Competitive Mixed League on Jan. 20: Evan Aitchison defeated Brian Dahms, Marianne Elliott defeated Hugh McDonald and Matt Ignor defeated Larry Creeden. With one week to go before playoffs and several teams tied in points, the games held on Feb. 3 should be very interesting.

The Mitchell Pearce Professional Corporation Club Championship League results for Jan. 21 were for the A Division: John Campbell 6 vs. Ross Dietrich 4, Matt Ignor 7 vs. Dave St. Louis 2, Jason Malcho won the tie breaker vs. Scott Buchanan in their 5-5 match-up and Evan Aitchison 6 vs. Steve Monteith 4. In a make up game held Jan. 22, Evan Aitchison 6 defeated Ross Dietrich 5.

Team Evan Aitchison is leading A division and is still without a loss this season. They are followed by team Matt Ignor.

In B Division: Hugh McDonald 9 vs. Bob Callingham 1, Mark Romphf 8 vs. Tom Walden 4, Brian Dahms 5 vs. Ken Hundert 4 and Marianne Elliott 7 vs. Marg

Heyden-Pearson 6. Team Mark Romphf is leading B division with a tie for second between team Marg Heyden-Pearson and Brian Dahms.

The Thursday Night Mixed League sponsored by Turner Plumbing and Heating/Stratford Metal Products held games on Jan. 23 with the following results: Graham Rae bested Alex Robertson, Jim Snider doubled Brian McLachlin, George White overpowered Hugh McDonald, and Ann Snider tripled Brian Dahms.

In the second draw, Scott Langford out-manuevered John Patterson, Jerry Dillow tripped up Bert Groenestege, Wayne Klooster stepped past Bob Neely and Steve Monteith overcame Brian MacLachlin.

On Jan. 24, the Edward Jones Investments Senior Men's League games had the following results in the early draw: Roly Bullock defeated Irv Riehl, John Patterson defeated Bob Hughes, Brian Dahms tied Jim Campbell. In the late draw, Tom Sainsbury defeated Ray Landry, Jim Snider defeated Clark Mitchell and Ross Dietrich defeated John Campbell.

In curling, some senior bonspiels are called 'Masters' and we had a local team represent Strat-



CONTRIBUTED

'Brian and the Pacemakers' were A Division champions at the Stratford Country Club's ninth annual members' Greenspiel earlier this month. From left are Lindsay McLeod, Clark Mitchell, Brian Dahms and Michelle Romphf.

ford at the Masters Robbie Burns Bonspiel held at the Ayr Curling Club. The Stratford team finished first after defeating teams from Elmira (6-5) and Kitchener Granite Club (8-2). The Stratford team consisted of skip Ray Landry, vice Tom Sainsbury, second Doug Sproule and lead Jim Hurry. Congratulations.

Our Home Inspections by Willie-



CONTRIBUTED

B Division champions, from left, Diane Mitchell, Evan Aitchison, Marg Heyden-Pearson and Jack DeGroot.



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C Division champions, from left, Chris Thomas, Mark Romphf, Tom Walden and Joan Neely.



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D Division champions, from left, John Weir, Nancy Hazeleger, Brent Webley and Jason Blum.

HOCKEY

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

EASTERN CONFERENCE												
Atlantic Division												
	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
Boston	52	34	15	0	3	159	115	71	20-5-2	14-10-1	6-4	W-4
Tampa Bay	53	31	17	2	3	157	131	67	16-6-3	11-11-2	5-5	L-1
Toronto	55	28	21	2	4	158	170	62	18-10-1	10-11-5	7-3	W-1
Montreal	53	28	20	2	3	131	134	61	15-9-3	13-11-2	4-6	W-1
Detroit	53	23	20	4	6	150	167	56	11-11-5	12-9-5	5-5	L-2
Ottawa	53	24	25	2	5	152	164	56	10-11-4	11-14-3	5-5	L-1
Florida	53	14	30	4	4	101	152	36	9-15-5	5-15-3	2-8	L-2

METROPOLITAN DIVISION												
	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
Pittsburgh	53	37	14	2	0	171	78	78	22-4-0	15-10-2	7-3	W-1
N.Y. Rangers	55	29	23	1	2	141	139	61	12-13-3	17-10-0	7-3	W-2
Philadelphia	54	26	22	1	5	147	158	58	14-10-1	12-12-5	3-7	W-1
Carolina	53	24	20	6	3	134	150	57	13-10-5	11-10-4	6-4	L-1
Columbus	53	26	23	3	1	154	151	56	14-11-2	12-12-2	7-3	L-1
Washington	53	24	21	3	2	153	158	56	14-9-4	10-12-4	3-7	W-2
New Jersey	54	22	21	3	8	127	155	55	12-7-6	10-14-5	5-5	L-2
N.Y. Islanders	56	21	27	4	4	158	187	50	9-12-8	13-15-0	4-6	L-4

	WESTERN CONFERENCE											
	CENTRAL DIVISION											
	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
St. Louis	52	36	11	3	2	180	119	77	19-5-2	17-6-3	6-4	W-3
Chicago	55	32	10	6	7	194	154	77	18-4-7	14-6-6	3-7	L-4
Colorado	52	33	14	2	3	153	137	71	17-7-3	16-7-2	7-3	W-1
Minnesota	55	29	20	2	4	133	135	64	19-7-2	10-13-4	6-4	W-1
Dallas	53	24	21	4	4	154	157	56	13-9-5	11-12-3	4-6	L-1
Nashville	55	24	23	2	6	136	166	56	13-11-4	11-12-4	5-5	W-1
Winnipeg	55	25	25	1	4	155	152	55	13-11-4	12-14-1	6-4	L-1

	PACIFIC DIVISION											
	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
Anaheim	55	39	11	1	4	184	134	83	21-2-2	18-9-3	7-3	L-1
San Jose	53	34	13	1	5	165	126	74	19-3-3	15-10-3	7-3	L-1
Los Angeles	55	30	19	2	4	133	116	66	16-7-3	14-12-3	3-7	L-1
Vancouver	54	27	18	3	6	137	138	63	14-8-5	13-10-4	4-6	L-1
Phoenix	53	25	18	6	4	154	160	60	15-8-3	10-10-7	4-6	W-1
Calgary	53	19	27	4	3	124	169	45	10-14-3	9-13-4	4-6	W-1
Edmonton	55	17	32	4	2	144	190	40	9-14-2	8-18-4	3-7	W-2

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
N.Y. Islanders 5, St. Jose 4 at Edmonton
Chicago at Vancouver

THURSDAY'S GAMES
Montreal at Boston, 7 p.m.
Washington at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Buffalo at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Colorado, 9 p.m.
San Jose at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Philadelphia at Anaheim, 10 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

FRIDAY'S GAMES
St. Louis at Carolina, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Washington at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at Winnipeg, 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Edmonton at Boston, 1 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Montreal, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at Colorado, 3 p.m.
Philadelphia at Los Angeles, 4 p.m.
Florida at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Phoenix, 8 p.m.
Nashville at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Dallas at Anaheim, 10 p.m.
Minnesota at Calgary, 10 p.m.
Chicago at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Detroit at Washington, 12:30 p.m.
Winnipeg at Montreal, 1 p.m.

TUESDAY'S RESULTS
Ottawa 3, Columbus 2
Philadelphia 5, Detroit 0
Boston 3, Florida 2
Toronto 3, Tampa Bay 2
Washington 5, Buffalo 4 (OT)
Montreal 3, Carolina 0
St. Louis 3, New Jersey 0
Nashville 4, Winnipeg 3
Phoenix 3, Los Angeles 0
Chicago 4, Chicago 4 (OT)
Minnesota 4, Anaheim 2

Rangers 2, Islanders 1

Not including last night's games:

Rank	Team	Points
1	Sidney Crosby, PIT	27
2	John Tavares, NYI	23
3	Joey Mullen, NYI	22
4	Patrick Kane, CHI	25
5	Corey Perry, ANA	20
6	Nicklas Backstrom, WAS	23
7	Joe Thornton, WSH	23
8	Alex Ovechkin, WSH	38
9	Phil Kessel, TOR	27
10	Chris Kunitz, PIT	26
11	Joe Pavelski, SJ	28
12	Max Pacioretty, MTW	26
13	Patrick Sharp, CHI	26
14	Tyler Seguin, DAL	28
15	Evan Mackay, PIT	14
16	David Krejci, BOS	18
17	John Carlson, WAS	17
18	Clayton Kump, PIT	17
19	Jonathan Toews, CHI	17
20	Nicklas Backstrom, WAS	22
21	Patrick Marleau, SJ	22
22	James Van Der Grinten, DAL	19
23	Thomas Vanek, NYI	19
24	Duncan Keith, CHI	27
25	Alex Steen, STJ	27
26	Dave Krieger, BOS	11
27	Marion Hossa, CHI	11
28	Eric Staal, CAR	14

FIRST PERIOD

No Scoring.

SECOND PERIOD

1. NYI, Netelso 10 (Orosz, Catterucci) 19:33

2. NYI, Pouliot 9 (Brassard, Zuccarello) 19:13

THIRD PERIOD

3. NYI, Carcillo 3 (Moore, Boyle) 4:36

Goal - NYI: Henrik Lundqvist (N.Y. 18:13); NYI: (Tavares vs. Mullen) (1:54-5)

Power plays (goals-chances) - NYI: 0-1; NYI: 0-4

Chances - NYI: 10; CHI: 10

Linecomers - Jimmy Murray, Ryan Galloway

Attendance - 50,027

HOCKEY

GOJHL

GREATER ONTARIO JUNIOR											
GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
Chatham 8 LaSalle 1	22	10	10	0	171	78	78	22-4-0	15-10-2	7-3	W-1
London 5 Stratford 0	22	10	10	0	171	78	78	22-4-0	15-10-2	7-3	W-1

MIDWESTERN CONFERENCE											
GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
Kitchener	29	6	5	1	151	75	69	15-1-1	10-11-5	7-3	W-1
Elmira	29	6	5	1	151	75	69	15-1-1	10-11-5	7-3	W-1
Waterloo	29	6	5	1	151	75	69	15-1-1	10-11-5	7-3	W-1
Stratford	21	15	3	1	132	116	48	11-11-5	12-9-5	5-5	L-2
Cambridge	18	15	3	1	132	116	48	11-11-5	12-9-5	5-5	L-2
Georgetown	18	15	3	1	132	116	48	11-11-5	12-9-5	5-5	L-2
London	13	19	7	1	111	152	38	10-11-4	11-14-3	5-5	L-1
Brantford	15	2	2	1	119	146	32	10-11-4	11-14-3	5-5	L-1
London	7	30	4	1	100	191	31	9-15-5	5-15-3	2-8	L-2

WESTERN CONFERENCE											
GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	GF	GA	Pt	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
LaSalle	29	9	2	1	190	125	63	12-13-3	17-10-0	7-3	W-2
Lamington	28	11	2	2	120	129	58	14-10-1	12-12-5	3-7	W-1
Chatham	26	10	0	1	156	126	58	14-10-1	12-12-5	3-7	W-1
London	21	16	0	1	139	129	49	13-10-5	11-10-4	6-4	L-1
Samia	22	16	1	1	170	148	51	14-11-2	12-12-2	7-3	L-1
Thames	18	2	2	1	157	156	41	10-12-4	11-14-3	5-5	L-1
St. Marys	6	33	1	0	97	239	13	10-14-5	10-14-5	5-5	L-2
Lambton	2	2	39	1	91	234	5	9-12-8	13-15-0	4-6	L-4

6 p.m.: Cambridge at Brampton, 7:30 p.m.; Fort Erie at Leamington, 7:30 p.m.	Phoenix 126, Milwaukee 117
Friday League at Stratford, 7:30 p.m.; Sarnia at St. Marys, 7:30 p.m.; Leamington at St. Thomas, 7:30 p.m.	6 p.m.: New York, 6 p.m. New York 77
Liswell at Brampton, 7:30 p.m.; Caledonia at Niagara Falls, 7:30 p.m.; Welland at St. Catharines, 7:30 p.m.	Houston at Dallas
	Charlotte at Denver
	Chicago at San Antonio
	Memphis at Sacramento
	Washington at L.A. Clippers
	Atlanta at Detroit (PPD)
	THURSDAY'S GAMES
	Phoenix at Indiana, 7 p.m.
	Cleveland at New York, 8 p.m.
	L.A. Clippers at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.
	TUESDAY'S RESULTS

Bantam Titans extend streak to 13 straight with two more weekend wins

Jared Gould led Stratford's scoring with a hattrick. Colton Gibson and Jakob Smith earned assists. The forward line of Aiden Benton, Cole Iacabellis, and Zach Richardson worked together to create a number of scoring opportunities for the Warriors.

A pair of losses for the Tavistock "MTE" Juvenile Reps made for a tough week in OMHA Beechy Juvenile action. Suspensions and nagging injuries made for a short bench in a 6-1 loss to first-place Glanbrook Rangers and a 9-0 loss to the Beverly Bandits.

Regardless of the lopsided score against a full Beverly squad, Midget AE call-up goaltender Thomas Darlington (Tavistock) turned in an excellent performance in net for the short-handed Titans. The five Titans taking to the ice consisted of first year players Jamie Wells (Stratford), Josh Wagler,

Travis Hyde, Connor Drinkwater and veteran Scott Entwistle, all of Tavistock. The single line rose to the challenge with no spares or room for penalties, to create numerous opportunities. Unfortunately, the Titans remained unrewarded in their effort as they were unable to beat a sharp Beverly keeper.

A black and white photograph of a man with short hair and a beard, wearing a dark jacket over a collared shirt. He is standing next to a dark-colored vehicle, possibly a truck or SUV, with his hand near his chin in a contemplative pose. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the vehicle and some foliage.

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The Chevrolet bowtie logo, consisting of two crossed chevrons forming a horizontal oval shape.

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HWY

HWY: 8.6L/100 KM
CITY: 12.6L/100 KM



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[illegible]

**End of February-
"PLAYOFFS BEGIN"**

NUHN15000023080

Stratford and Area Forecast

Today	Tomorrow	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
				
High -6° Low -7°	High -3° Low -5°	High 1° Low -12°	High -8° Low -15°	High -9° Low -13°
Variably cloudy.	Cloudy with a few flurries (pop 40%). Winds westerly 20 km/h.	Cloudy with light snow (pop 70%).	Variably cloudy. Winds westerly 20 km/h.	Sunny. Winds south-westerly 20 km/h.

Today:
Normal High -3.1°
Normal Low -10.2°
Record High 9.1°/1988
Record Low -26.7°/1948

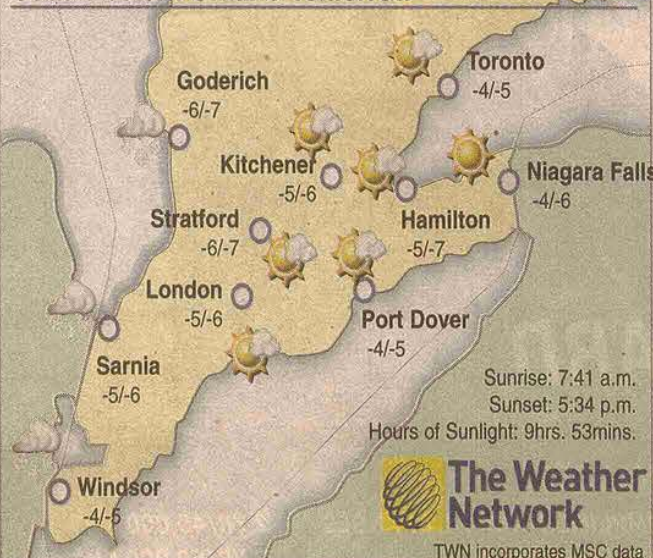


Know what the weather
will be 14 days from now.

Check the 14 day trend



Southwestern Ontario Tomorrow



Canada tomorrow

Banff	p.cloudy	-9/-18
Calgary	p.cloudy	-9/-16
Charlottetown	flurries	0/-8
Edmonton	p.cloudy	-11/-18
Fredericton	p.cloudy	0/-12
Halifax	p.cloudy	1/-6
Iqaluit	p.cloudy	-20/-22
Kamloops	sunny	-3/-11
Kingston	flurries	0/-4
Moncton	cloudy	1/-10
Montreal	p.cloudy	0/-8
Ottawa	p.cloudy	-1/-9
Quebec City	flurries	-2/-11
Regina	p.cloudy	-14/-22
Saint John	p.sunny	1/-9
Saskatoon	flurries	-13/-24
St. John's	p.cloudy	-2/-5
Thunder Bay	p.cloudy	-14/-23
Toronto	p.cloudy	0/-4
Vancouver	p.cloudy	7/3
Whistler	m.sunny	1/3
Whitehorse	p.cloudy	-9/-15
Winnipeg	p.cloudy	-16/-22
Yellowknife	p.cloudy	-24/-29

United States tomorrow

Atlanta	sunny	12/1
Atlantic City	p.cloudy	6/-1
Boston	cloudy	4/3
Buffalo	flurries	-2/-4
Chicago	cloudy	-6/-10
Cleveland	flurries	-1/-3
Dallas	p.cloudy	21/13
Denver	flurries	2/-8
Detroit	flurries	-1/-7
Honolulu	showers	27/21
Houston	p.cloudy	23/17
Indianapolis	flurries	-1/-1
Los Angeles	p.cloudy	18/7
Las Vegas	p.cloudy	16/5
Miami	p.cloudy	27/22
Minneapolis	p.cloudy	-14/-19
Myrtle Beach	p.cloudy	8/4

New Orleans tomorrow

New Orleans	p.cloudy	18/13
New York	cloudy	3/-1
Orlando	showers	24/13
Philadelphia	cloudy	4/-2
Phoenix	p.cloudy	22/9
Pittsburgh	flurries	2/-2
Salt Lake City	flurries	2/-8
San Francisco	showers	13/6
Seattle	showers	7/1
Tucson	p.cloudy	22/8
Washington	cloudy	8/-1

The World tomorrow

Amsterdam	p.cloudy	5/-2
Athens	cloudy	18/9
Bangkok	p.cloudy	32/21
Beijing	sunny	5/5
Berlin	cloudy	-2/-5
Brussels	p.cloudy	7/0

Buenos Aires tomorrow

Buenos Aires	tshowers	29/26
Dublin	rain	8/3
Hong Kong	sunny	22/18
Istanbul	p.sunny	8/3
Jerusalem	cloudy	16/4
Kiev	m.sunny	-14/-21
Lisbon	cloudy	-14/10
London	showers	9/4
Madrid	rain	5/0
Moscow	sunny	-13/-23
New Delhi	sunny	20/8
Paris	p.cloudy	8/3
Perth	sunny	30/20
Rome	showers	15/11
Singapore	p.sunny	29/24
Sydney	sunny	28/21
Tel Aviv	cloudy	20/9
Tokyo	sunny	13/6
Warsaw	cloudy	-5/-11

LOCAL NEWS

On to the Sochi Olympics
— fingers crossed!

As originally conceived, the Olympic Games were supposed to be a non-political contest of strength and agility, designed to downplay differences in mankind while emphasizing the fact that we are all equal inhabitants of our planet and we rise or fall depending on our capacity for friendly competition. So much for original intentions.

Hitler's 1936 Olympics in Berlin were intended to be a showcase for the ideals of racial supremacy. The official Nazi party newspaper wrote that blacks and Jews should not be allowed to participate in the Games.

When threatened with a boycott by other nations, Hitler switched gears and lifted the ban.

At the same time, the Nazis removed signs around town stating that "Jews were not wanted" in an attempt to sanitize Berlin's image to the world.

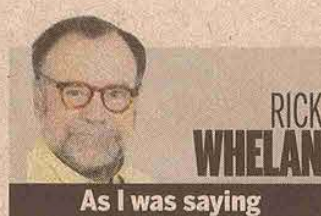
Apparently the Russians aren't good students of history. As the world gears up for the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, the wheels seem to be falling off the idealized Olympic cart.

It seems clear that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants these Olympics to be a showcase for his "new Russia."

But instead, many observers say the Games will only underline Russia's growing problems with civil unrest, corruption and terrorism.

First there were the rather disturbing news reports from the Russian government regarding its treatment of homosexuals.

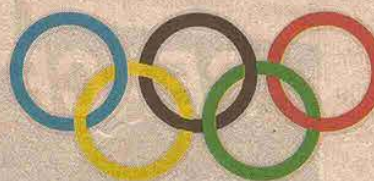
Apparently Putin decided to kick off his Olympic PR campaign with the reminder that



As I was saying

homosexuality in that country is a crime, punishable by lengthy prison terms.

(In an hysterical skit on Saturday Night Live last week, they did a "report" on America's back-up plan for the figure-skating competition. They then showed clips of America's alternative Heterosexual Figure Skating Championship — as a "hedge against any last-minute problems with Russian organizers.")



The skaters all had beer-bellies, wore an assortment of NFL jerseys and could hardly remain erect on the ice.)

And just as the furor over Russia's anti-gay policy was dying down, Anatoly Pakhomov, the mayor of Sochi, reactivated the controversy by announcing this week that in the entire city of Sochi there is not one gay person.

"It is not accepted here in the Caucasus where we live," Pakhomov said. "We do not have them in our city."

That came as quite a surprise to the 300 gay men who were watching the mayor's televised pronouncement from one of the city's numerous gay bars.

Of course the real worry is the threat of terrorism. With any international event of this size and scope, terrorism is always a threat. But this divided region of Russia seems to have officials particularly worried.

Recent terrorist attacks in the area have claimed the lives of over 30 people in recent months. Both U.S. President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper will not be attending.

British security officials have reported recently that a terrorist attack during the Games is "very likely to occur."

In response to these threats, Russia has created a "Ring of Steel" around Sochi. Security is the tightest for any Olympics ever and thousands of additional troops have been deployed to the area, making the price tag for this Olympics (exceeding \$50 billion) the most expensive in history.

Clearly, pulling off a terrorist attack in Sochi will not be easy. But that doesn't mean that some disaffected group or individual won't do their best to try.

Many family members of Olympic athletes are declining to attend for fear of pending violence. And regardless of how things turn out, the specter of terrorism will hang over these Games like an ominous cloud of gelignite.

The Olympic rallying cry has always been "Citius, Altius, Fortius" — Faster, Higher, Stronger. I sincerely hope that sanity prevails and these games will be peaceful and exciting and meaningful ... a pure display of strength and beauty.

But they are beginning on a disturbing note of rancor. Let's hope mankind's better angels will lead the way in Sochi.

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