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Opportunity abounds in modest places

TIME was a young guy or gal with an ounce of ambition would seek out the big city lights, most likely places like New York City, Paris and Montreal.

Los Angeles is also seen as very cool; those obsessed with Royal watchers learned last week that Prince Harry and Megan Markle ditched this country in favour of the Hollywood movie mecca. We expected no less, but here's a prediction: Harry, a down-to-earth sort, will not be happy in Tinseltown.

Many young people seeking their fortunes may not know that one of the richest men in the world — the amiable fellow who has consistently been in the top-three list of the world's wealthiest billionaires — does not live in L.A., or any of those fancy places.

No, Warren Buffett still lives in Nebraska, in the small city of his boyhood. Omaha is perhaps an unglamorous, but stable part of the world, where nothing of serious import seems to happen, but people seem to be quite content nonetheless.

If Buffett had grown up in Thunder Bay, he'd probably be there still, knowing a good thing when he saw it, and seeing the potential that others have seen.

Last week, the Northern Policy Institute (NPI), our very own think-tank, predicted the Lakehead will soon be in dire need of having to fill a myriad of well-paying jobs. The list is amazingly and surprisingly vast: optometrists, plumbers, salespeople, physicians, computer techs, pipefitters. Underground miners, drill operators, accountants and investment consultants also make the list.

"With retirement and out-migration coupled with an already aging population, it's important more than ever to understand the occupations in which these (labour) shortages fall," noted the NPI report.

The good news is that as a result of the foresight of the city's forebearers and movers and shakers, Thunder Bay boasts both an excellent college and university, where it is possible to get the training to fill many of the aforementioned positions. In Thunder Bay, someone willing to put in the hard work can become a doctor as easily as a chef or carpenter.

The overall aim, says the NPI report, is to "ensure that skills shortages are met, that migrants move to the North for the right jobs, and for Northern Ontario's youth to prepare themselves for careers that will allow them the option of remaining in their home cities after they graduate."

Sounds good to us. And who knows, maybe some who choose the Lakehead for keeps will get fabulously wealthy along the way, if that is their cup of tea.

Not possible in Thunder Bay, you say? Mr. Buffett would surely beg to differ.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Identifying infected to slow virus spread

WITH regards to the recent revelation that there are positive results for COVID-19, I started to wonder why these individuals do not have their names published.

It's not that I think we should be pointing a finger at them, but for the protection of others that they may have come in contact with, the identities would help.

I know several individuals who have returned from down south. Some might be in need assistance but are not in habit of asking for help. Some returned before government directives to isolate and may have initially contacted family or friends "for a coffee."

Again, not pointing a finger; just want to protect others.

Walter Kolinski
THUNDER BAY

Too much hype for cure-all solution

DR. W. GIFFORD Jones only talks about one issue: the failure of the world to recognize the value of vitamin C — which he sells. According to Gifford Jones, vitamin C cures everything from acne to polio to heart disease. Now he claims it will save you from COVID-19.

His advice is bordering on the dangerous, sometimes countering the advice of public health officials. Last year a group of local doctors complained in this section about the continued opportunities this newspaper gave him to advertise his product under the guise of medical advice. At that time I thought, finally, now we'll get a trustworthy medical columnist. But, no. The Gifford Jones vitamin C bandwagon continues as he passes his bril-

liance on to his daughter, and thence to us.

Gifford Jones belongs in the same group as conspiracy theorists, anti-vaxers and that crazy guy who believes COVID-19 came from the introduction of 5G wireless technology.

The only reason I read this guy's column every week is so that I can be amused by his next claim. Oh look, vitamin C can cure toenail fungus.

Carol MacNeill
THUNDER BAY

Different views on vitamin C dosage

IT WAS interesting to read two columns on the March 24 Healthstyle. In Doctor Game, Dr. Ken Walker (aka W. Gifford-Jones MD) advises companies to help protect their employees from COVID-19 by giving them one gram (1,000 mg) of vitamin C three times a day.

Not more than 10 centimetres away, in the Norwest Wellness column (Know The Facts About Diet And Immune System), dietitian Stacey Tymura writes that "taking more than 2,000 mg of vitamin C per day can cause side effects like diarrhea, nausea, stomach cramps and other health problems."

What-oh-what do we do and where-oh-where do we go for sound health advice? Just wondering.

I hope that there are many toilets at work places for employees if companies do follow Dr. Gifford-Jones' advice and if Stacey Tymura is indeed correct.

Eugene Kotyk
THUNDER BAY

(Editor's note: Both writers agree on where you should go for sound health advice — check with your doctor.)



Revealing misdeeds essential to protect the most vulnerable

BY MARGARET WANLIN

RECENTLY, I attended one of two packed showings at Magnus Theatre of the film *There Are No Fakes*. It is about an art forgery ring headquartered here in Thunder Bay in the early 2000s to produce imitation Norval Morrisseau paintings.

The film is described as "a journey into the largest art fraud scam in Canadian history, leading to Thunder Bay, Morrisseau's birthplace, where an almost unbelievable new tale emerges about the origin of the paintings, and the story turns several shades darker."

Shown in February on TVO, the film is available to be streamed anytime on tvo.org.

The movie left me, and I think many others in the room, feeling stunned. So many questions: How could that happen here right under our noses? Weren't there any signs that other people might have noticed? It wasn't just about the art — there were people detained against their will to produce the art and for other purposes. Various methods of restraint were used.

I was still ruminating over this situation and how it could have happened when I heard about a fire in an over-crowded rooming house occupied by foreign students studying at Lakehead University. Apparently, there was an over-capacity number of students in the home and a fire had ensued. No one was seriously injured.



ONE CITY, MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay produce this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

Again the question: How could that happen here right under our noses?

So I started to think about the connections between these two events. Yes, there are similarities. Both have victims and perpetrators. Someone was taking advantage of disempowered or vulnerable people for their own financial advantage. Sadly, nothing new about that as a reality of our world.

But we need our community to be better than that. It needs to be safer, fairer and more just for all the people here. The mandate of Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay is to help us find that better way.

I'm reminded of the CBC documentary *Somebody Knows Something*. Maybe that idea is true in these cases. Maybe there were clues that residents of the commu-

nity might have picked up. With that information, the police or fire officials may have been able to intervene to reduce the level or duration of risk and harm to the victims. And the perpetrators could have been stopped.

Sadly, vulnerable people can be taken advantage of by opportunists. How can we help vulnerable people to be less vulnerable? Many groups and organizations share in this work — a meal, a place to stay, a place to be, a number to call, someone to talk to, information about the rules so that people will know when someone is trying to take advantage of them. Other groups are involved in empowerment training to help people find their voices and their options.

It is these actions — the work of the social safety net and the individual actions of citizens, volunteers and community organizations — that can help our community be safer for all. Let's not look the other way when we see injustices being done. Let's not mind our own business when vulnerable people may be at risk. Caring and engaged citizens make us the kind of community that we can all be proud of in our 50th year as Thunder Bay.

Margaret Wanlin is a consultant in community economic development, planning and evaluation, and is committed to Thunder Bay and making it better. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.

Hillman faces an uphill battle

BY SUSAN DELACOURT

IN THE midst of a global pandemic and an unprecedented border shutdown between the two countries, Canada formally named its ambassador to the United States. She is Kirsten Hillman, who has been doing the job in an acting capacity since last summer.

Justin Trudeau made the announcement official on Thursday morning.

Hillman is a veteran public servant and trade expert who earned the trust of Justin Trudeau's government during the tense free-trade negotiations with Donald Trump's White House. Until about a month ago, that seemed like the most difficult thing that a Canadian envoy to Washington would have to handle.

As the first woman to serve in this role, Hillman takes on the post when Canada and the U.S. are consumed with containing a virus that knows no borders, but one that has forced the closing of borders between the two of the most economically integrated nations on earth.

It would be hard to find an ambassador appointed to oversee Canada-U.S. relations at a more pivotal time.

Canada and the United States have been acting in lockstep so far on attempts to contain the virus. One of the last things that Parliament did before going into lockdown earlier this month was quick passage of the new North American Free Trade Agreement — NAFTA 2, as it's called. By mutual agreement at the top levels, non-essential travel was banned between the two countries a week ago, and Canada has stopped taking asylum-seekers at the U.S. border.

But Trump and Trudeau do not seem to share views about where the COVID-19 crisis is headed in the next few weeks — especially about containment measures.



NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Trump has been saying that widespread physical distancing should be over in the U.S. by the Easter holiday in mid-April. Trudeau is not voicing the same optimism, saying Canada could be in some kind of lockdown for "months."

The U.S. president's main preoccupation seems to be what this virus is doing to the economy; Canada's prime minister says repeatedly that public health has to be the priority.

One of Hillman's main jobs in the days and weeks ahead will be to make sure that this discrepancy doesn't hurt Canada's efforts to wrestle down the virus, or do damage to the Canadian economy, which depends so much on trade and traffic with the U.S.

An over-early relaxation of containment measures in the U.S. would almost inevitably spill over into virus spread or economic damage to Canada, if essential cross-border traffic has to be further curtailed.

Hillman's appointment breaks a usual pattern of the ambassador's job going to people with close political ties to the prime minister of the day. This isn't an accident; Washington is a hyper-political town and expects that the ambassadors are politically connected to the countries they represent.

Hillman is replacing David MacNaughton, who went to Washington with exactly those credentials after Trudeau took power. MacNaughton, a longtime Liberal, worked closely with Trudeau's

team, especially chief of staff Katie Telford, long before the 2015 election. He stepped down last summer, before the last election, and Hillman has been acting in the job ever since.

At the same time, the U.S. has also been between ambassadors when it comes to Canada. Trump's first appointee, Kelly Craft, left last summer to take up a new post as her country's ambassador to the United Nations. In February, Trump formally nominated Craft's replacement: Aldona Wos, a former physician who served as ambassador to Estonia in past Republican administrations. Her history as a powerful fundraiser for the Republicans fits with the habits of U.S. presidents, of both stripes, to reward big donors to the plum post in Canada.

Wos's appointment still has to be confirmed by the Senate — a process that presumably awaits a return to more normal times in Washington.

Hillman's background is rooted in trade law, serving in a variety of advisory roles in government — at the World Trade Organization, in the old Foreign Affairs Department and as chief negotiator for the Trans-Pacific Partnership. She is respected by Conservatives and Liberals, having worked at high levels for both types of government. Her elevation from acting to permanent ambassador had been expected — even predicted in this paper a couple of months ago.

It's one of the few developments that could have been predicted in global politics in this strange year. Nothing about Hillman's job will be predictable in the days and weeks ahead.

Susan Delacourt writes for the Toronto Star. Email her at sdelacourt@thestar.ca or find @sdelacourt to follow her on Twitter.