

BOOKS

Public space for knowledge sharing

BY RYAN GRACEY

WHEN I was finishing my undergraduate years at Lakehead in 2015, I had a conversation with a fellow student about my decision to enter the Masters of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alberta. He then asked me a question that has recurred in various forms and from various people in the years since. "Libraries? Aren't they dying out? Everything is going digital, isn't it?"

In 2015, I wasn't really prepared to offer an answer — how could I respond to the suggestion that my chosen vocation might be one which was dying? One thing that has struck me as I learned the history of libraries in my course work was just how good libraries are at dealing with change.

Despite their reputation as stalwart edifices — and they are that, for better or worse — libraries have been excellent at adapting to social and technological changes.

From the very beginning, librarians have grappled with just what it was we were doing, what form libraries should take, and what the appropriate boundaries for the profession were.

Early libraries were very different from today's — even including popular fiction in the collection was considered morally suspect, for instance — but eventually the concept of what a public library is came to include things like children's books, programs, computerized catalogues, and Internet access.

When I think about recent changes and what they mean, I have found it helpful to tell people that libraries are not about access to books — they are about access to knowledge.

@YOUR LIBRARY



Paper-based books are a large part of that knowledge, of course, but if you look at a library's offerings today you'll find a number of things that are not books at all, but do support the idea of knowledge sharing.

Extending the idea, it's not only sharing but also the creation of new ideas as people meet and interact. Libraries have been likened to a "community living room," but it might be more accurate to call them a "community kitchen" — a place where we gather to create something new that is shared by all. An excellent example of knowledge sharing and creation resides in the idea of library space as public space. The Thunder Bay Public Library has done programs for the public for decades, but we also offer spaces for groups to gather and share.

From knitting circles to public lectures to a simple table where people meet and talk about the day, our communities share knowledge with each other in a way in which physical books may not even make an appearance. These spaces are one of the few remaining public places where one does not need to pay a fee to enter, and the knowledge is shared freely.

The digital aspect of knowledge sharing makes its appearance with the rise of the Internet.

As we continue into the 2020s, it has become more apparent that the flood of digital knowledge is not only prohibitively large but can also be deceptive, misleading or simply incorrect. Libraries act as a guide to digital literacy — we not only offer Internet access, we can help users navigate and assess what they find.

Google searching is a fairly simple thing to do, but a basic search lacks context and an understanding of what a user may truly be looking for. Librarians have a lot of experience with getting the context behind a patron's search request that, at least at this point, search engines cannot replicate.

Understanding this context means that they can tailor information searches more precisely to a patron's needs. This reconception of public libraries is not always an easy one to make. Because libraries have been an institution for centuries, they have a strong cultural identity in the minds of the public.

The idea of a library as a quiet, solemn temple of reading is no longer accurate, and has not been accurate for decades in most places. The most difficult task librarians may face in the future is sharing what libraries are and what they must become as they change along with our world.

@Your Library appears in The Chronicle-Journal each Saturday in the Weekend Edition. If you have a comment about today's column, we would love to hear from you. Check out the blog at tbploftheshelf.com.

Working-class story of hope and struggle

Things Worth Burying by Matt Mayr
Published by Baraka Books
Softcover, 262 pages, \$24.95

REVIEW BY MICHAEL SOBOTA

MATT Mayr grew up in Manitowadge. Things Worth Burying, his second novel, is set the fictional town of Black River in Northwestern Ontario. This is a working class story about families clinging to shrinking, hard labour but high paying jobs in forestry. The lead character, Joe Alder, has a wife and seven year old daughter. He works for a small wood cutting operation, supplying trees on contract to a Quebec lumber company. Joe is a third generation bushworker. He has risen to a supervisory role with daily responsibilities over a small team of men working on this contract. Joe grew up in a cabin that his grandfather built, illegally on crown land and which shaped his own father's life, as well as his own.

Mayr establishes this exposition in natural but rapid paced opening chapters. And then his plot kicks in at an even higher pace. A worker dies accidentally while sent alone into the bush by Joe. A rookie OPP officer, assigned to the town, gets off on the wrong foot with Joe and an investigation of the death begins. Joe's wife, Sarah, abandons him and their daughter Anna, to take a writing course in Toronto. Overnight he becomes a single parent, struggling to balance his work and parenting.

As all these developments begin to weigh heavily on Joe's shoulders, Mayr begins to fill in the novel's back story. We learn about his hard drinking, lonely and isolating father and grandfather. Joe's younger brother escapes from the town the day after he graduates from high school. Heavy alcohol consumption is common to Northern life, but these men all exhibit the resulting toxic masculinity that damages both their work and personal lives. Joe struggles with this inheritance and is not immune to alcohol as medicine, as a main coping mechanism. It seems ok to drink six or eight beers, regularly, to de-stress after a tough days work, as long as you don't dip into the hard stuff. He writes sympathetically about his characters and wants us, the readers, to be sympathetic with their flaws and the daily challenges of small town life.

His writing is clear, engaging, at times with dry humour, with generous and accurate details about the mechanics of working in the bush. Those details ground his story in credibility and draw us into wanting to know what will happen as his plot thickens.

Michael Sobota is a Thunder Bay-based writer.

BOOK REVIEW

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

- To register or make changes, please call 625-8463
- We are nut-safe. Please avoid nuts or items with traces of nuts.
- Join our Waitlist, if our registration is full. You will be contacted if space opens
- Participant Information Forms and Participant Handbooks will be emailed at time of registration.
- Safe Arrival: Call or text the Site Phone by 3:00pm on the day of the absence.
- Safe Dismissal: Photo Identification of those picking up participants.
- Indoor Shoes and appropriate outdoor attire are required.
- SESSION STARTS: Jan 7, 2020
SESSION ENDS: June 18, 2020
- Our Leaders are trained in the High Five Principles of Healthy Childhood Development, First Aid, Behaviour Management, Games, Sports and Crafts. Participants can register for 1, 2 or 3 days per week.

Registration for September 2020 will open on Aug 10, 2020.

JUNIOR INCLUSION SERVICES: JIS facilitates the inclusion of participants with disabilities in our programs. If you are interested in accessing JIS, please call 632-9430 before registering.

For Program information call 625-2954 | nrp@thunderbay.ca or visit thunderbay.ca under Recreation/Children and Youth

Thunder Bay CHILDREN/YOUTH respect. plays here

City of Thunder Bay Children's Programs

SUPPORT REQUEST LIST

THE SEASONAL SUPPORT REQUEST LIST IS USED TO COORDINATE AND SCHEDULE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH IN RECREATION & CULTURE DIVISION PROGRAMS.

- Support is scheduled based on the Request List, participant need and staffing.
- Fall / Winter / Spring up to 20 hrs and Summer up to 40 hrs of support.
- Join our Support Request List each season if you are interested in support.
- Support must be scheduled prior to registering in the program.
- Joining the Support Request List do NOT guarantee support.

WINTER 2020 Support Request List Open - Nov 4 Program Registration Begins - Dec 9	TO JOIN THE SUPPORT REQUEST LIST email: jis@thunderbay.ca call: (807) 625-3220
SPRING 2020 Support Request List Open - Jan 20 Program Registration Begins - Feb 17	TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM hotline: (807) 625-8463 registration opens at 8:30am
SUMMER 2020 Support Request List Open - April 6 Program Registration Begins - May 4	FOR MORE INFORMATION email: jis@thunderbay.ca call: (807) 625-3220
FALL 2020 Support Request List Open - Nov 9 Program Registration Begins - Dec 7	Thunder Bay CHILDREN/YOUTH respect. plays here

What TO Do

There is a nominal charge applied to all submissions that wish to be included in the What To Do section. \$10+HST for 25 words or less, and \$5+HST for each additional 25 words. All submissions must include date, time, place, and admission charge, and must be dropped off or sent in via email to events@chroniclejournal.com by noon Monday. Please note we will no longer be accepting submissions via fax. Please call 343-6222 with any inquiries.

WEDNESDAY

MUSIC JAMMING EVERY WEDNESDAY starting January 8th, 2020, 7:00-10:00pm P.M., Vickers Heights Community Centre, 1695 Broadway. \$3.00. Everyone welcome. Play, Listen or Dance!

SLOVAK LEGION CRIB NIGHT. Play starts at 7:00 p.m. \$7.00 per person. Prizes, sandwiches, coffee and tea are provided. Everyone welcome.

THURSDAY

SLOVAK LEGION "CATCH THE ACE" progressive draw. Ticket sales from 6:00 p.m to 8:00 p.m. and draw is at 8:30 p.m. Restaurant is open. License M835456. Also that night is a 50/50 draw. License M835464

SLOVAK LEGION LUNCH BUFFET – 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. \$12.95 + HST per person. Includes dessert and pop/coffee/tea.

FRIDAY

BRANCH 5 LEGION: "5 Man Accoustical Band", 229 Van Norman St., upstairs clubroom. Enjoy free entertainment while having fish diner 5pm-9pm.

COME JOIN US FOR HEALING ROOMS Leap Into The New Conference Friday, February 28th at 7pm, Saturday, February 29th 10am, 7pm. Conference Location Saalem Church, 21

Walkover Street, Thunder Bay. Worship Leader Matt Walsh, Speakers Dr. Juanita Lubin & Pastor Curtis Hinds. Both speakers are from Catch the Fire Church Toronto. All welcome. 807-345-1441 www.livingwellhealingrooms.ca

FRIDAY NIGHT DANCE Bar Polonia Opens 4:00pm at Polish Combatants Branch No. 1, 209 N. Cumberland Street on Feb. 28/2020 8:00pm-11:00pm. Live Band "Road Worn Chaps". Cover charge.

SLOVAK LEGION LUNCH BUFFET – 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. \$12.95 + HST per person. Includes dessert and pop/coffee/tea.

WEEKLY FISH & CHIPS Port Arthur Legion Branch 5, 229 Van Norman Street, Friday, February 28, 5-7pm. Full order \$15.00; Children, half orders, takeout available.

SATURDAY

BRANCH 5 LEGION: No afternoon or evening dance.

COME DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY to "Radar & The Rockets". Live band with 70's, 80's & 90's music. Saturday, Feb. 29th, 2020, 8:00pm to 12:00am. Elks Lodge #82, 201 N. Syndicate Ave. Free Admission.

SATURDAY NIGHT DANCING – Bar Polonia Opens 4:00pm - Polish Combatants Branch No. 1, 209 N. Cumberland Street - "COUNTRY FUN NIGHT" - Feb. 29/20 - 2-Tone Music DJ, 8:00pm - 12:00am -

SINGLES WELCOME, LINE DANCING, LADIES COME OUT AND BOOGIE!!

WINTER VENDORS MARKET at West Thunder Community Centre, Saturday February 29, 2020, 10am – 3pm. Come check us out at 915 Edward St South. All welcome!

SUNDAY

SPAGHETTI DINNER Knights of Columbus Sun. March 1, 2020. Take Out – 1-5p.m. Spaghetti / Meatballs, Meatballs, Sauce, Salad, Rolls. Own Containers are greatly appreciated. Sit Down – 5:30p.m. All you can Eat! Salad, Spaghetti, Meatballs, Rolls, Coffee. Contact 623-3252.

SUNDAY JAM SESSIONS, 7pm-10pm, First Presbyterian Church, corner of Grey & Walsh. Admission \$4 - light refreshments.

THUNDER BAY THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION Therapy on horse back for children and adults with special needs. Pancake Breakfast - Sunday, March 1, 2020, Murillo Town Hall, 9am-12:30pm. Children under 5 FREE, Ages 6-11 \$5.00, Adults \$12.00. Finn & Regular Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Sausages, Juice, Tea & Coffee. Everyone Welcome!

UPCOMING

JANET'S TWO-BIT AUCTION, Port Arthur Legion Branch 5, 229 Van Norman Street, Thursday, March 5. Doors open at 6pm with food available from kitchen; auction

starts at 7pm. Door prize of two round-trip tickets to Winnipeg courtesy of Kasper Transportation. Advance Tickets in Club Room \$5.00; at door \$6.00. Many wonderful prizes for the cost of a quarter.

K OF C 1447 IRISH NIGHT, Saturday, March 14th, Dinner & Dance, \$33/ticket. Corn Beef/Cabbage Buffet. Entertainment – Celtic Rhythms Dancers. Dance – 8:30-12:00 midnight (Pro Sound Music). Tickets available at the Columbus Centre or call 623-3252.

K OF C 1447/8602 SHRIMP FEAST, Saturday, March 7th. Two Sittings: 5p.m. & 6:30p.m. \$26/ticket. One Pound of Golden Shrimp, Salad, Home Fries, Hot Vegetable, Dessert, Coffee. Tickets available at the Columbus Centre Office or call 623-3252.

SLOVAK LEGION SPAGHETTI TAKE OUT – Sunday, March 8th, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Gluten free available by phoning 623-3354 Ext. 1 or 2 to preorder. Please bring your own container.

STOP BY THE THUNDER BAY 55 PLUS CENTRE for our Annual Health & Wellness Expo on Saturday, March 7 from 10 am to 4 pm. Join us for presentations, prizes, vendor booths and more! Call 684-3471 for more info.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2020 will be held at St. Thomas Anglican Church on Saturday, March 7, 2020 at 11 a.m. This year's service, written by the women of Zimbabwe is "Rise. Take up your mat and walk".