



Tyler Sagriff jigs his line on Hungry Bay in the morning hours of late January with hopes of catching some walleye.

Photo by David LeClair

Braving the bone-chilling cold

By David LeClair

All layered up, Tyler Sagriff was hopeful and ready for a successful morning of walleye chasing below the thick, iced-covered surface of the Bay of Quinte.

Sagriff, a 38-year-old angler, set out on foot before the crack of dawn in Shannonville from the shore of his grandfather, Maitland Sagriff’s old trailer park, Snookies Hideaway Campground, onto Hungry Bay. He was born and raised in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, but is now a Belleville resident, married, and shares a home with his in-laws to help cut costs for both families during these challenging times of such a high-cost economy.

Sagriff went to high school at Moira Secondary, but never completed Grade 12. He works as a machine operator on the tail end of an asphalt paver but is currently laid off for the

season.

The early morning journey onto the ice was illuminated by a bright LED headlamp that could shine seemingly as far as the eyes could see. Pulling his black folded-up fish hut on a sled, getting traction on the ice was tricky because much of the ice surface was not yet covered in snow.

Sagriff was introduced to Hungry Bay by his mom and dad when he was young. He took up fishing at six or seven years old and was taught most of the ins and outs by his uncles Robbie Sagriff and John Sagriff, along with his father, Warren Sagriff.

He called himself an average angler and outdoorsman who loves fishing and hunting.

“I’m no diehard; I’m not going to put myself in danger out here on unsafe ice. No ice is safe ice,” said Sagriff as he explained the importance of spudding your way onto the ice, especially the first time of the season.

Before passing away, his grandfather did not get out on the bay very often. He was always working on his campground, selling minnows, doing ice hut rentals, and preparing and selling food at the food shack. The canteen on the property sold eggs and bacon for breakfast and had hotdogs, sausages, and burgers for lunch.

Sagriff explained that he kept following the tradition of fishing Hungry Bay with his family. “I have been fishing here forever; it’s something that is sacred and sentimental to me,” he added.

The hut was set up, a hole drilled, and a line dropped in a matter of minutes after deciding on a spot to set up his camp for the morning.

“Quite a bit of ice compared to what people are saying,” Sagriff remarked. “About a foot, foot and a half,” he added. “That’s why I come down here. I have fished here for 16 years; I trust it and know what I am

dealing with.”

To the south is Big Island, to the west is Point Anne, and east of Hungry Bay is Deseronto.

“This is pretty well the only place we ever fished,” said Sagriff. Unfortunately, his father Warren passed away when Tyler was 16 years old, but he still spends quality time fishing with his uncles and mother.

Using mud-minnow heads for bait, Sagriff explained that everyone is different when baiting their hook with minnows.

“We like to use just the heads. A lot of people use the full body, but I found I was losing more fish,” Sagriff said. “Fish would just suck them off the hook by the tail.”

Finally, fish started biting around 7:30 a.m., and Sagriff reeled up three small perch from the frigid water. He does not wear gloves during ice fishing to feel the action in his rod when the fish bite.

Sagriff ventured outside of the ice hut and drilled another hole into the frozen bay. He only fishes one line at a time as he doesn’t want to “go against himself.”

“I only want to attract fish to one rod,” he said. Sagriff will usually fish in the same spot for a full day. “I don’t know how hard it was fished this weekend,” he said.

The day ended with only three small perch caught. Sagriff was disappointed with the morning’s outcome on the bay and said he usually has better luck. With the wind blowing harder than in the early morning, he packed his hut and gear back on his sled and travelled to his black pickup truck across the bay.

Being the first in his family out on the ice this year, Sagriff said his uncles and mom will hopefully join him later this week.

Click on the above link to see a video look at this story.

Senators battle it out with Laval Rockets

By Louis G. M. Oliver

Saturday’s game between the Belleville Senators and the Laval Rockets started with a helmet-battering fight between rookies, with No. 10, Zack Ostapchuk, versing No. 24, Logan Mailloux, on centre ice. This hand-to-hand encounter set the tone for an action-packed gloves-off evening between the Senators and the Rockets, eventually leading to a 3-2 win for Laval.

Tensions were high among the fans, with chattering and ruckus filling the swarming arena. Your usual popcorn explosions and beverage spills in conjunction with the rise and fall of the energy transferred from the game. Not to mention the ambiance of cowbells and clappers filling the air.

A hard wrist shot from Lassi Thompson set the game in motion during the first period, making the score 1-0, and bringing the Sens up another point in the second. Garrett Pilon made a saucer pass to Matthew Highmore, getting it in the top right shelf.

Unfortunately, it was a short-lived victory for the Sens as the Rockets rebounded with goals by Jared Davidson and Xavier Simoneau with just 1:39 left on the clock for the second period ending in 2-2.

In the third, another point for the Rockets during a power play by Emil Heineman and a near-end game tie



Photo by Louis Oliver

Zack Ostapchuk of the Belleville Sens faces off with Logan Mailloux of the Laval Rockets. This was one of the many exchanges during this action-packed evening between the longstanding rivals.

from a post shot by Senators Maxence Guenette.

In an after-game interview with the head coach of the Belleville Sens, Dave Bell said he was happy with all the player’s performances, mentioning Zack Ostapchuk and Bokondji Imama for their offensive “boosts” and that the resulting loss for Belleville was due to a slip up in the second half and subsequently not being able to make up for it in the third.

In total, 12 penalties were split between the rivals, adding up to 37 minutes in overall penalty box time, with every call except two offences being physical exchanges.

When all was said and done, and the Zamboni swept the ice, 79 shots were taken, with Belleville having 47 and Laval 32.

With this memorable clash in the books, the Belleville Senators and Laval Rockets left the ice, leaving fans eagerly anticipating their next fast-paced and unpredictable match-up.

Looking onward, the Senators will hit the road again and face off with the Milwaukee Admirals on Wednesday night. Followed by back to back games with the Grand Rapids Griffins on Friday and Saturday.

The next home games scheduled will be on February 9th and 10th, where the sens will be rematching the Utica Comets at 7 p.m.



Photo by Louis G.M. Oliver

Volunteer and mother of two, Christine McKenna, helps tutor a child with a reading activity. (Top left) the parable of the mustard seed looms above.

Empowering minds through learning

By Louis G.M. Oliver

Through a side door in the earth-baked building of Parkdale East Church, what used to be an old nursery still shelters helping hearts that are assisting children and adults with remarkably complex minds grow and develop.

Links to Learning Resource Centre first opened its doors on Nov. 6, 2000. As their website describes, “Links to Learning Resource Centre is a non-profit organization that empowers parents, caregivers and educators of children with disabilities or special needs through support, education and provision of information and materials.”

A rectangular staircase spirals down

into this basement for busy brains. There, on the walls in the main learning area, murals of bible verses and paintings adorn the surrounding space. One is a familiar story to all who attended Sunday school – Mark 4:30-32, the parable of the mustard seed.

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?”³¹ It is like a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds on earth.³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

The seeds in this story are the young minds of neurodivergent people, eager to take in knowledge and sprout into their

environment. This is made possible of course because of people like Joan Burton, executive director of Links to Learning. Burton says the reason they started 24 years ago was “because the parents needed a place to come and talk about their (children’s) disability. Then we noticed part of what they needed in help was their children weren’t reading, and we developed a tutoring program.”

“The youngest we’ve had is five... and 22 would be our oldest right now.”

Burton further points out that when someone has a disability, catching up is a lot different than a neurotypical brain in that it may take years to get to a similar point. It varies entirely depending on the student. As for the current participants,

many, if not all, are still affected by the pandemic’s residual changes because of the reduced hours it caused due to cohort restrictions.

“We now run Monday and Tuesday instead of Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday,” Burton explains.

Luckily, Burton isn’t alone in this. Of the many volunteers that have been on the schedule, Christine McKenna, recently retired telecommunications project leader and mother of two, has found the time to volunteer.

“It took me a while to find something to volunteer (for) that I was interested in,” McKenna says, then “this popped up, and it was kids, it was learning – that interested me.” Ever since McKenna

started, she says she has loved it and that “I was so sad when I went away (for holidays).”

McKenna reflects on her time at the centre.

“I thought I was here to help the kids with reading, and it’s more than that.” She explains the importance of social development on top of language learning.

McKenna adds that any new volunteers should “be open in what you’re going to expect and come in with a heart that you want to help. Doesn’t matter what it is. You just want to help.”

For more information and volunteer opportunities for Links to Learning Resource Centre, visit their website: links-tolearning.ca

Quinte West to host national soccer cup

By David LeClair

It was a good day to be indoors Wednesday in Quinte West with Mayor Jim Harrison, members of the council and community city partner representatives to announce that Quinte West will be hosting the U-15 Canada Soccer Championships this October.

In 2020, the city and the local organization committee partners submitted a bid to host the Toyota National Championships. In 2021, The city of Quinte West was selected to host the U-15 Cup.

The tournament has been scheduled to take place at the Centennial Park fields from October 9 to 14, bringing 15 youth male and female teams from across Canada and attracting 2,000 plus participants into the Quinte West economy, including elite athletes, coaches, and officials over the five days.

“Centennial Park would be turned into soccer central on the Thanksgiving weekend, featuring not only soccer games but other free community programming and soccer-themed activities,” said Harrison.

The resurfacing of the natural turf was completed in the fall at Centennial Park to fields six through 10, putting the play surfaces up to par for hosting the annual tournament. The City of Quinte West has invested \$75,000 to upgrade the fields and bleachers, and the mayor said that this makes Quinte West a great city and a supportive one.

On video conference, MPP Todd Smith spoke about his excitement for Quinte West being chosen to host the tournament and remarked about how supportive the community is while hosting major sporting events.

“I suspect this atmosphere is going to provide visiting players a week they’ll never forget, and that’s a great goal to work toward,” stated Smith.

According to Smith, the provincial government partnered with the City



Photo by David LeClair

Dug Stevenson, executive director of the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board (centre), speaks on the process his colleague Trevor Norris went through to pitch hosting the tournament in the Bay of Quinte region.

of Quinte West with a grant of \$42,000 from the Ontario Sports Hosting program.

Jaclyn Grimmon, Director of Community Services & Strategic Partnerships at the City of Quinte West, said the funding received to support the event is instrumental in assisting the city in developing amateur sports opportunities for the youth who live in our community.

“We look forward to the benefits of that funding being realized when we

host the event this fall,” said Grimmon.

A local organizing committee, “the LOC,” has been put in place to work together on the immense planning ahead to make the tournament a great success. Some of the local support includes the Bay of Quinte Marketing Board, Quinte West Soccer Association, Volunteer Information Quinte, and 8 Wing CFB Trenton.

Grimmon expressed that hosting a major event like the U-15 Cup is a significant undertaking that involves a lot

of leg work. “It’s something that doesn’t happen overnight,” she said.

Quinte West is one of three communities across Canada hosting soccer championships in 2024. Hosting the event this fall comes with many benefits. Sports tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in tourism, and the city council stated that the city has already seen the benefits through other events hosted in the town.

All the tournament’s regular matches,

semi-finals, and championships will be free for spectators’ enjoyment.

Sponsorship packages ranging from \$250-\$5,000 will be available, giving local businesses unique opportunities to participate and support the event.

Dug Stevenson from the Bay of Quinte Marketing Board, stepped in for their destination development manager, Trevor Norris, who is on the organizing committee. Norris had seven minutes to pitch Quinte West to Soccer Canada in 2018. The marketing board and Soccer Canada officials toured the region, visiting multiple sites, and Centennial Park in Quinte West was chosen as one of the official 2024 championship destinations.

“This is an incredible opportunity for the city, and I commend them for taking it on,” said Stevenson. “It’s a lot of work, but as we know, it has some amazing payoffs,” he added. Stevenson thinks this is only the beginning, and more high-stature events will be attracted to Quinte West in the future.

An estimated 200-250 volunteers will be needed to help manage the big event in the fall, along with immediate volunteers required right away to help get everything together, according to Tracey Legault-Davis, Manager of Community Programs & Communications. “Something like this can’t run without volunteers,” explained Legault-Davis. HPE is proud to help the city recruit volunteers interested in participating in the championships.

Jean-Francois Harvey, 8 Wing Trenton Commander, stated it’s an exciting year for Quinte West and CFB Trenton. This year marks the centennial anniversary of 8 Wing. “We have the Quinte International Airshow and now have soccer.” “This is a great time to be here and part of the community, Harvey said.

For more information visit quintwest.ca/2024soccer