

A sister publication to **The Review**, Redwater, Alberta

Local teacher-turned-author set to launch novel exploring teen social media risks

By Haylee Winger

Tara Hodgson, a lifelong resident of the Sturgeon County area and a dedicated educator, is celebrating the release of her new novel, *At Least I'm Trying*—a timely story that explores the digital risks facing today's teens. Born in St. Albert and raised near Villeneuve, Hodgson moved just outside Morinville at the age of 15. She attended Sturgeon Composite High School and now

lives with her family just ten minutes west of Morinville.

Hodgson has been a teacher for nearly 18 years, most of them in the Morinville area, including time at both Morinville Public and Four Winds schools. Currently teaching Grade 9 Language Arts, Hodgson says that reading and writing have always been her passion. "I've been teaching Grade 9 for several years now and it is, hands down, my favourite grade to

teach; my students inspire so many of my ideas," she says. She also credits a group of students—Kenyon, Indie, and Amelia—for reading her drafts and helping her develop authentic characters. "They are the best!"

Writing has been a lifelong love for Hodgson. "I have always loved writing. My Great Grandma and my Auntie were both writers and writing was an outlet for me growing up," she explains. While she never considered

writing professionally until recently, that changed when the idea for her first novel came to her a few years ago. "Once I started, it felt so natural and right that I wish I started earlier."

At Least I'm Trying explores the risks associated with technology and social media use among teenagers. Though the story is fictional, it was sparked by conversations Hodgson

Continued on page 2



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Tara Hodgson photo



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Tara Hodgson*Continued from page 1*

overheard at school.

“Snapchat is an incredibly popular app amongst teens, and they talk about it all the time, but when they started talking about Snap Maps and sharing their locations with followers, I found that alarming,” she recalls. This led her to do more research into how apps like Snapchat are used by predators to target youth. “At Least I’m Trying” highlights that potential implication of social media use,” she says.

The novel is best suited for readers aged 16 and older, due to sensitive subject matter, but Hodgson believes adults—especially parents—can also gain valuable insights.

“My main purpose in writing this book



Tara Hodgson photo

was to communicate the risks associated with unlimited tech use,” she says.

“Being aware of these risks, having conversations about them, and feeling safe enough to reach out for help if needed are all lessons that can be taken from reading. Also, learning to trust your instincts is a valuable message.”

Balancing both

teaching and writing hasn’t been easy, but Hodgson says the joy writing brings makes the effort worth it.

“I spend a lot of early mornings writing, especially on the weekends,” she says.

“My family is very understanding and supportive as well, so they give me time if I need it. Summer is full of writing; I always feel like I need

to be as productive as possible so I can make up for time I may miss during the school year.”

To celebrate the release of *At Least I’m Trying*, Hodgson will be hosting a book launch on Friday, November 21st, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Off the Mat in Morinville.

The venue, known for its indoor golf

simulators, is owned by a family whose daughters Hodgson has taught. “Their oldest daughter was actually an ARC reader for *At Least I’m Trying!* They offered their beautiful new space as a venue and I couldn’t think of a better place,” she says.

The event will be informal and welcoming, with books available for purchase at a discounted rate, as well as signing opportunities and conversation with the author. Guests are welcome to stop by anytime between 6 and 8 p.m., enjoy a drink from the bar, and even try out the simulators. There is no cost to attend, and no RSVP is required. Those who already own a copy of the book are encouraged to bring it along for

signing.

At Least I’m Trying is currently available in paperback and ebook formats on Amazon. As of this weekend, it will also be available at Bailey Books in St. Albert and is coming soon to Chapters St. Albert.

Looking ahead, Hodgson hopes to continue writing and sharing stories that resonate with readers.

“At this point, I just want to continue writing, so I hope people keep reading!” she says. “It’s truly my passion and I have so much to say, so many ideas to build into stories.”

Readers can stay connected with Tara Hodgson and her work by visiting her website at www.tarahodgson.ca.

Three AI-powered scams to watch out for

(NC) One of the biggest transformations artificial intelligence (AI) is driving is in the area of fraud. AI lets fraudsters impersonate more easily, personalize their scams and move faster than ever before. According to Mastercard, here are three scams where it’s playing a major role, and ways to keep yourself safe.

The grandparent scam: This is a good example of how fraudsters can use AI to personalize their scams like never before. Fraudsters will target seniors with a phone call when they’re off-guard or vulnerable. Using AI they will alter their voice to sound like a family member in distress who needs money right away.

Calls like this are meant to play on your emotions, so listen to your instincts. Ask yourself: Why would money be what they need, instead of help in some other way? If you are unsure, call them back using the number you have for them. Also, consider having a “secret word” that only family members know, to help verify identity.

The fake order: This



is a type of phishing scam, where fraudsters send a message designed to look like it’s coming from a legitimate source, in order to get sensitive information or login credentials from you. A common version is sending a fake invoice or confirmation for an online order.

Treat any unexpected messages like this with suspicion. Fraudsters often pose as businesses you trust. Never click on links or use any contact information from this type of message. Reach out to the business yourself through the phone number or contact form on the company’s website. They’re victims of the scam, too, and can work with you to get to the truth.

Authorized push payment (APP) fraud: AI tools can let fraudsters ask you for legitimate-seeming fast payments that

often go through before your financial institution can react. They usually focus on impersonating quick but necessary payments, such as Canada Revenue Agency back taxes, bank overdraft fees or credit card bills.

Thanks to the speed of AI, all it takes is a moment’s lapse in attention for someone to send what could be an irreversible payment. But, AI is also being used to strengthen fraud prevention. Payment providers, like Mastercard, have developed tools that work in the background while you complete a purchase. These systems are designed to detect this type of fraud automatically, in real-time and stop the fraudulent transaction in its tracks.

It’s up to all of us to be more cyber safe – better cybersecurity makes for a safer community.

Keep your money safe from sneaky screen scraping

(NC) Have you ever signed up for an app that promised to simplify your finances, only to wonder why it needs your online banking password? If the request gave you an uneasy feeling, you may have had good reason to distrust it.

Some financial technology, or fintech, apps use a method called screen scraping to log into your bank account. The app asks you for your username and password. Then, it uses that access to pull financial data like balances, transactions and even investments so that the app can manage them in one place. It may sound convenient, but it’s a cybersecurity nightmare.

• Handing over your login information means giving up more than just your username and password:

• You’re giving a third party access to all the sensitive information you usually guard safely.

• You risk losing your legal protection against unauthorised transactions.

• Your bank may not repay your losses if your data gets breached.

The access you give out matters

Some things, like government services, use banks as sign-in partners to access your account. This isn’t the same thing as screen scraping because you still sign in through the bank itself, and the bank provides confirmation for the secure login – your information stays secure.

With screen scraping, you’re giving a third-party app your banking login, letting it see and potentially make changes to your account. That includes personal information, transaction history, the products you use and more. And because it’s logging in with information you gave, if something goes wrong it can be extremely difficult to prove you’re not at fault.

Even if the app markets itself as secure,

giving a fintech company this kind of access to your account may go against your bank’s terms of use.

That’s why experts, as well as the Government of Canada, advise against it.

How to protect yourself:

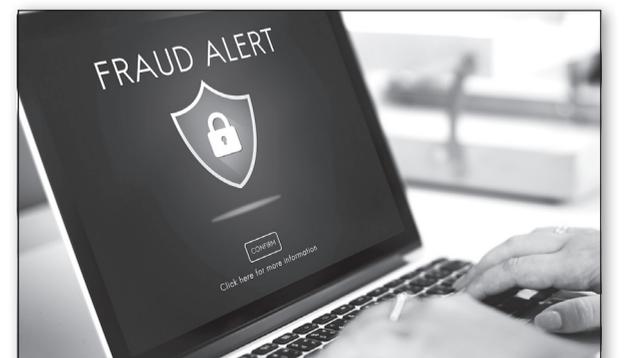
• Never share your banking credentials with an app, by text or email or over the phone.

• Avoid apps that ask for your bank password, no matter how helpful they claim to be.

• Use only secure, approved channels to access your financial data.

Fraud is evolving fast, and screen scraping is one of the sneakiest ways bad actors can get to your money. The best defence is always keeping your passwords to yourself.

Learn more at canada.ca/money.



Sturgeon County steps up with kids programs during teachers strike

By Shelley Winger

With classes paused during the teachers' strike, Sturgeon County is stepping in to help families by offering a variety of special programs to keep children active, engaged, and having fun this month.

The County's Family and Community Services department has created a lineup of activities designed for children aged 5 to 12, ranging from craft kits and themed play days to field trips, outdoor learning sessions, and drop-in recreation.

The temporary programming gives parents options for care and enrichment while schools are closed, and most events are free or low-cost, depending on the activity.

Among the upcoming offerings is "Hug-a-Tree and Survive," a safety-based program that teaches children how to stay safe outdoors and what to do if they become lost.

For kids who love animals, the Edmonton Valley Zoo field trip on October 22 is available for ages 6 to 12, while another excursion later in the month will take participants to the Telus World of Science in Edmonton.

Several community halls across Sturgeon County will also host creative theme days. Events like "Fantastic Fall" and "Monster Mayhem" offer harvest or Halloween-inspired crafts, games, and activities.

Children are encouraged to wear costumes to Monster Mayhem for some extra festive fun.

For families looking for indoor recreation, there are multiple Drop-In Rec Days at the RQB Arena, featuring skating, shiny hockey, and gym sports such as volleyball, pickleball, and floor hockey.

Children 10 and under must attend with a caregiver, while older kids can join independently.

Each session costs



\$5 per activity.

Other highlights include PJ Parties at various locations, where kids can enjoy crafts, stories, and a dance party: Games Galore, a morning filled with group games and social play; and Friday Flicks, movie afternoons complete with free snacks at the Gibbons Community Cultural Centre.

Families can also take part in community connection events such as Connect in Cardiff Park, which combines a short walk with play-ground time for children and caregivers.

The County has emphasized flexibility in the schedule, with new programs being added week by week depending on participation and available resources.

This approach helps ensure that families across the region have multiple opportunities to get involved, no matter where they live or what their schedules look like.

By spreading activities across several communities, Sturgeon County is making it easier for families in both rural and urban areas to access programming

without long travel times. From Morinville to Gibbons to Calahoo, the events offer a mix of fun, learning, and social connection at a time when regular school routines are disrupted.

Participating in these programs also gives children a chance to try new activities, build confidence, and make friends outside their usual school environment. Parents are encouraged to review the program schedule and plan ahead to ensure their children can attend events that best suit

their interests and abilities.

In addition to structured activities, these programs provide a safe and supervised space where children can remain active and engaged throughout the day. For families juggling work schedules or unexpected childcare needs, this support can be particularly valuable during the strike.

Program times, dates, and locations vary, and some activities require registration in advance.

Many programs fill quickly, and the County encourages parents to check for updates regularly, as new events will be added each week depending on community interest and availability.

Registration and full program details can be found at www.sturgeoncounty.ca/strike-programs.

For more information, contact Family and Community Services at 780-939-8334 or programs@sturgeoncounty.ca.

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A Message from Canada's news publishers

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Respectfully,
Canada's news publishers



SOURCES

¹ Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities 2023-2024, combined with proprietary industry data.

² Totum Research Canada, January 2025. Canadians 18+, n=2418.; Pollara for the Dais, 2025 Survey of Online Harms, Canadians 16+, n=2502.



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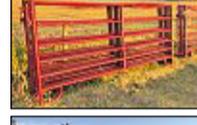
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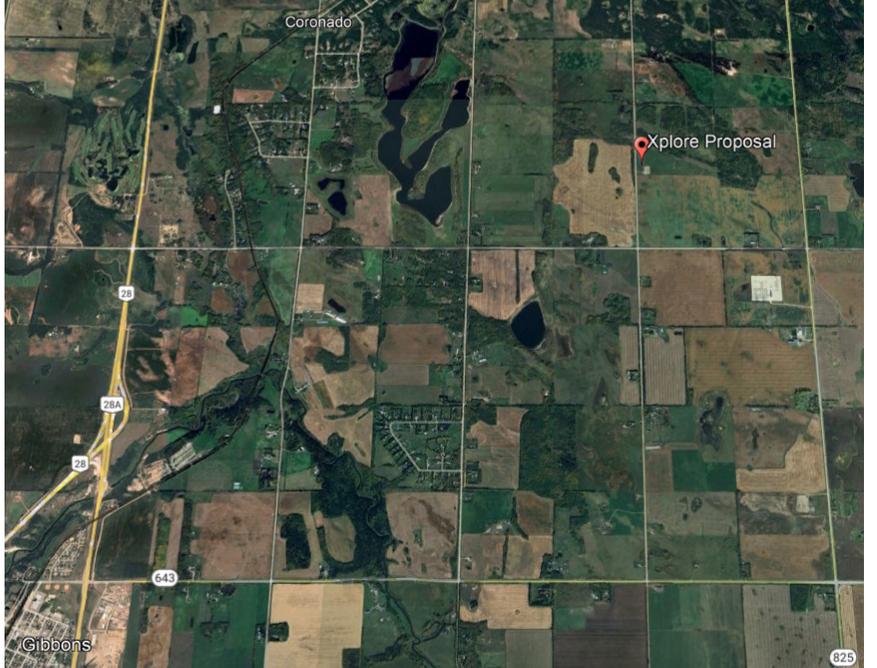
PUBLIC NOTICE / AVIS PUBLIC

Xplore Inc. would like to notify area residents of a proposal of a new telecommunications installation situated on a portion of NW 29-56-22 W4M located in Sturgeon County. The proposed installation will be a 45m self-support tower. All of the equipment required to operate the facility will be located inside an equipment shelter at the base of the tower.

Xplore Inc. souhaite informer les résidents de la région d'une proposition d'installation de télécommunications située sur une partie du NO 29-56-22 W4M dans le comté de Sturgeon. L'installation proposée sera une tour autoportante de 45m. Tout l'équipement nécessaire pour faire fonctionner l'installation sera situé à l'intérieur d'un abri d'équipement à la base de la tour.

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ARIES Mar 21/Apr 20



Timing is everything, Aries. Even though you are anxious to start something big, this might not be the right moment for it. You'll benefit from stepping back to reassess.

TAURUS Apr 21/May 21



You are craving comfort, but growth is just outside of your range, Taurus. This week, a financial focus pays off. Don't ignore your gut when it comes to a financial matter.

GEMINI May 22/June 21



You may be charming and magnetic right now, Gemini, but are you paying attention to what other people are saying? It's time to listen more than you're speaking.

CANCER June 22/July 22



Emotions are running strong right now, Cancer. It is alright to be passionate. Your intuition will be heightened, but do your best to take a measured approach in the days ahead.

LEO July 23/Aug 23



Leo, it's important to remember that, while the spotlight loves you, not every stage is meant for a solo. Share the attention midweek and others will love you even more for it.

VIRGO Aug 24/Sept 22



Virgo, perfection can wait right now, even if you are craving ultimate order. Embrace progress even if it doesn't come in a polished form. Say yes to a new opportunity.

HOROSCOPE

LIBRA Sept 23/Oct 23



Libra, you are balancing a dozen things. This seems like a pattern for you, but avoid overextending yourself. Speak up and advocate for your needs.

SCORPIO Oct 24/Nov 22



You are focused and quiet working behind the scenes this week, Scorpio. Some people need to be flashy with fanfare, but that's not you right now. Relish in the quiet success.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23/Dec 21



You might be fired up with fresh ideas, Sagittarius. Just be sure your vision is rooted in reality. Write it down and stay open to feedback. It's best to avoid spontaneity right now.

CAPRICORN Dec 22/Jan 20



Capricorn, you're bound to tire out if you don't pace yourself. Delegate things when you can, especially by the end of the week. A surprise compliment at work brings joy.

AQUARIUS Jan 21/Feb 18



Aquarius, let your curiosity lead you somewhere new. Someone different from your usual crowd could offer unique insight that you hadn't considered previously.

PISCES Feb 19/Mar 20



Pisces, creative energy is high right now, especially around Wednesday. You're close to a creative breakthrough, but you might need a practical play to get there.

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On November 11, the Fillies SU250 team laced up for a fun-filled skate, bringing big smiles and even bigger team spirit to the rink. - Sturgeon Hockey Club photo



Residents headed to the Morinville Community Cultural Centre to cast their ballots during advance voting on Saturday, October 11. - Town of Morinville photo

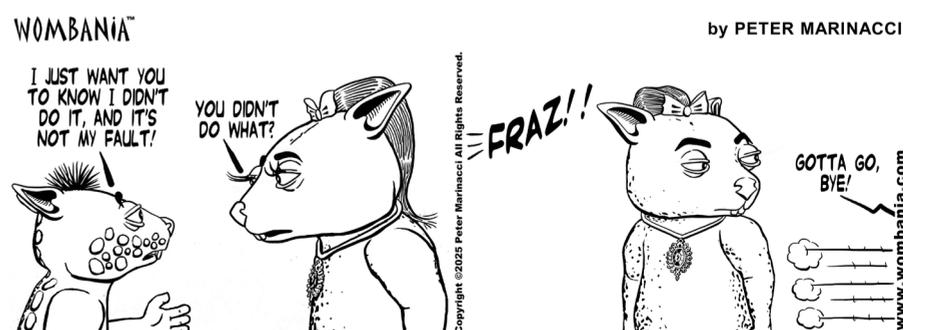
NOTICE OF CORRECTION

There was an error in last week's article, *Sturgeon Valley Fertilizer Sports Centre celebrates grand opening with two-day community event.* The festivities kicked off on the evening of Friday, October 3rd, with a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony and speeches. We incorrectly reported that Deputy Mayor Andy Beaton gave remarks; in fact, it was Mayor Carol Tremblay who gave the opening and closing remarks at the ribbon cutting event. Additionally, we would like to clarify details regarding the historical first puck drop. The first puck drop was performed by Legal's Chief Administrative Officer, Robert Proulx, during the first game of the day. However, the game was played by members

of the Blades sledge hockey team, not the Sturgeon Sting, as previously stated.



Official ribbon cutting L: Town of Legal Chief Administrator Officer - Robert Proulx, Councillor - Trina Jones, Councillor - Fred Mallott, Deputy Mayor - Andy Beaton, Mayor - Carol Tremblay, Mayor of Sturgeon County - Alanna Hnatiw, FCM Board Member - Neal Comeau, on behalf of Minster Dale Nally - Kristena Digwell, on behalf of MP Michael Cooper - Patty Schultz.



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