

# Weavers or rippers?

Northern News Services

David Brooks, a Canadian-born American writer and columnist, has written that there are two types of politicians: weavers and rippers.

Weavers are those who try to fix things, bringing people together as they build consensus, weaving together the social fabric. Rippers are those for whom politics is war, not caring about the destruction they cause in their quest for power — thriving on disruption and dissension while ripping the social fabric.

In his recent book ‘Ripper: The Making of Pierre Poilievre,’ Mark Bourrie documents Poilievre’s rise through the conservative ranks as a political attack dog, a ripper to the core. At the beginning of this campaign, Poilievre tried to keep that tendency under wraps as he appealed to Canadians for support.

The majority of Canadians were not fooled. A recent Angus Reid poll found 55 per cent of Canadians have a favourable view of Carney, who is a weaver, while only 36 per cent favoured Poilievre. In addition, Carney was preferred as prime minister — 50 per cent to 28 per cent — over Poilievre. It is clear Poilievre can’t hold a candle to Carney when it comes to education, skills, experience, accomplishments or leadership.

As I write this column, there are two weeks left till voting day. Running out of time to turn things around, Poilievre is reverting to his preferred approach as a ripper and is trying to smear Carney — the classic far-right politics of personal destruction.

Those are also the politics of U.S. President Donald Trump, who is a big-time ripper. With his wrecking ball style of politics, he has

## MICHAEL Miltenberger

Michael Miltenberger is a former longtime MLA and cabinet minister residing in Fort Smith.



done his best to destabilize and attack Canada with his global economic war and threats to Canadian sovereignty. Active disinformation campaigns are underway by groups such as ‘Canada Proud,’ trying to discredit Carney. Social media is the vehicle of choice where all this is happening 24 hours a day, seven day a week.

Nasty, American-style politics is here. It feels like they are putting a gun to our heads — vote for Poilievre or else. Trump denied knowledge of the extreme right-wing Project 2025 manifesto till he was elected. Then all those extremists came out of the shadows and into positions of power to implement Project 2025 with lightning speed, maximum damage, confusion and disregard for the rule of law. We are seeing that style of politics bleed over into Canada. Like the billionaires gathered around and supporting Trump, big money interests are gathering around and supporting Poilievre. In both cases, they’re buying influence, access and, of course, hopes for massive wealth for themselves. At the same time, they would have us believe they have our best interests at heart. We only need to look south of the border to the social and environmental horrors that are being visited upon the average American and their country. It is not working well for them.

Back to rippers and weavers and what this all means for us in the NWT. The consensus-based system of government in the NWT promotes a culture of weavers. We have learned over the years that that no one government can successfully go it alone. This is why a territorial leaders table has been established and why the Thebacha Leaders Council was formed in the Thebacha riding. As of April 29, we need to be able to hit the ground running. It is imperative that the governments of Can-



Politicians come in two varieties, according to author and political commentator David Brooks: weavers and rippers. LBJ Library Photo by Jay Godwin

ada, including Indigenous governments, work together to start delivering on the national to-do list. That list will strengthen Canada’s sovereignty, enhance our security, especially in the North, and create the conditions for our economy to be efficient, effective and resilient.

In the NWT, that means creating the conditions for an expedited process to build projects of national interest, such as the Macken-

zie Valley Highway; a road through the Slave Geologic province; developing the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link to capacity; fully develop Inuvik’s advantage as the key hub for Arctic security; positioning Aurora College to train a broadly-based Northern workforce, and settling land claims to promote political peace and economic certainty.

For that we need a prime minister who is a weaver, not a ripper.

# If you have an idea for an event, there’s funding for that

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First off, I’d like to say thank you to David for stopping to say hi and for reading my columns. It means a lot

Now on with this week’s column: Resilience, community, and the power of sport - those themes have run like a steady current through every one of our columns. Whether it was a child lacing up skates for the first time, a group of kids discovering a new sport, or a table tennis game on a concrete slab at -40 C, the message remains the same: When we create safe, welcoming, and fun environments, kids thrive.

That’s why this week, we’re not just telling a story. We’re offering an opportunity. If you’ve ever wanted to bring youth together, grow your sport or program, or build something new in your community, this is your moment. The GNWT has released three fantastic funding streams to help support your big (or small) ideas.

**Youth Corps Program**

This fund supports longer-term skill-building and leadership experiences for youth. Think of weekly programming, outdoor survival



**GUEST COMMENT**

Thorsten Gohl is the co-ordinator of Physical Literacy NWT

camp, leadership intensives, land-based learning, or youth-led projects that build confidence and teamwork. This is ideal for youth between 12 and 25, schools, community groups, and recreation leaders with a long-term vision. The deadline to apply is May 10.

**Youth Contribution Program**

This is for shorter, targeted initiatives that can thrive under this stream. Single events, workshops, day camps, or even travel support to attend another community’s program are all eligible. If you’ve got a one-time idea or pilot project in mind (like a youth mental wellness day or a basketball skills camp), this is for you. The deadline to apply for this is also May 10

**Regional Youth Sport Events (RYSE)**

This is for multi-community sport events that bring youth together across regions. From hosting badminton tournaments to cross-regional Dene games or weekend hockey festivals, it’s all about building friendships and developing physical literacy through sport. This program focuses on regional, not territorial, events. Like the previous two, the deadline to apply is May 10,



When we create safe, welcoming, and fun environments, kids thrive, writes columnist Thorsten Gohl. Photo courtesy of Thorsten Gohl

For more information on this funding, check out our website: <https://physicalliteracy.info/funding/gnwt/>

Now, maybe you’re wondering if your idea is “big enough.” Here’s the truth: a snowshoe race, a two-day paddle camp, a weekly youth hangout that ends with everyone learning to juggle, it all counts. In fact, remember me joking about starting a snowball-fighting territorial sport organization? Well, the joke’s on me ... because if you pitch it right, with a focus on inclusion and wellness, there’s probably funding for it.

So here’s your invitation. Dream it. Design it. Deliver it. Make a difference. And know that a whole community (and some helpful application tips) have your back. Let’s keep growing the North together one youth-led story, one sport, and one snowball at a time.

Thorsten Gohl is the co-ordinator of Physical Literacy NWT.