

# home *and* COMMUNITY

community news, home tips and more, brought to you by Cathy Erskine, Sales Representative

## don't miss...

### ANNUAL MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

February 28 – March 29 at Bronte Creek Provincial Park. Enjoy tours by period-dressed interpreters, a visit to the Pancake House, fresh maple candy and taffy made while you watch, gift shop, wagon rides, farm animals, heritage homestead and heritage artisan demonstrations.

## Five keys to a long-lasting relationship...with your home

It's February, the month of love! Just as you will celebrate your relationship with your significant other on February 14, why not take some time to look at ways you can improve the relationship you have with your home?

Like many homeowners (and honeymooners), the first year is pure bliss. Now that you've been in your home for a few years, you may find the unadulterated love is fading. You peruse the real estate section (just out of curiosity!), drool over spectacular homes on HGTV and take the long route home along your neighbourhood's nicest street, eyes peeled for sale signs. Before you go trading in your home for a newer, bigger, or more posh model, make sure you're doing everything you can to love your current home the way it deserves to be

loved!

**Make time** – Like any relationship, the one you have with your home needs your time and passion. Make an effort to clean it regularly, spoil it with a pretty new accessory every once in a while and spend more time enjoying your favourite nook.

**Don't try to change it** – Sure, home improvements are great. But if you're constantly seeing a feature you love in another home and trying to force it into your own, you'll never be satisfied. Make the most of your home's attributes and strive to showcase its best features.

**Address conflicts immediately** – Don't let things fester! Home maintenance is your responsibility so attack the issue not your home. If your furnace isn't working properly, don't try

to kick it into submission – call an expert to fix things properly. If your roof springs a leak, don't procrastinate – have it fixed right away. Your home deserves it.

**Be proud** – Accept compliments about your home graciously and boast about its best attributes rather than pointing out its shortcomings.

**Banish negativity** – If you complain daily about the clutter on your countertops or the boxes piled in the spare room you always envisioned as a serene guestroom, take action! Invest in some pretty organizers for your kitchen. Dedicate a weekend to emptying the boxes in your soon-to-be guestroom and purge items you haven't used in a year. Work towards a solution rather than focusing on the problem.

## It's a busy month filled with great events in Burlington

If you're starting to feel a touch of cabin fever setting in take a look at some of these exciting events coming this month to Burlington.

### The Burlington Heritage Fair

February 7 at Burlington Central Library

This year's Heritage Fair will celebrate the bicentennial of Sir John A. Macdonald and the 50th anniversary of the Canadian flag. Enjoy a free day of seminars, interactive displays, children's activities and exhibits by local heritage organizations. For seminar schedule, visit [www.bpl.on.ca](http://www.bpl.on.ca)

### 10th Annual Chocolate Brunch

February 8 at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club in Milton

Enjoy an incredible brunch with family and friends while raising money for isolated seniors, people with dementia and those dying at home. There will be raffle tickets offered for two tickets to anywhere WestJet flies, door prizes, a silent auction and chocolate tastings, of course! Order tickets online at [www.acclaimhealth.ca](http://www.acclaimhealth.ca)

### A Lovers' "Valentine Show" Tribute to the Best Crooners of All Time

February 13 at Burlington Performing Arts Centre

Spend Valentines Day with that special some-

one enjoying tributes to the best crooners of all time including Dean Martin, Elvis, Tony Bennett, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Paul Anka and many more. Visit [www.burlingtonpac.com](http://www.burlingtonpac.com) for tickets.

### Heritage Month Open House at Joseph Brant Museum

February 18 – 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Explore your community heritage and enjoy a tour of the museum, which illustrates the historic founding, settlement and development of the Burlington area, past to present. Featured exhibitions include: HEAPS OF FUN, an interactive exhibit featuring toys and games from the past. Admission is free!

### Chilly Half Marathon and Frosty 5k

February 28 and March 1 at the Waterfront Hotel in Downtown Burlington

On February 28, head downtown at 9 a.m. on for the FREE Pre-Chilly & Frosty Fun Run & Walk, a short fun run or walk to help ease pre-race jitters. Stay for refreshments, race packet pick-up, and get free advice on running and racing from the fun run and walk host, marathon expert and coach Mark Sullivan, who has run over 164 marathons - including 28 consecutive Boston Marathons! The Chilly Half Marathon and Frosty 5 K will take place on March 1 at 10:05 a.m.



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community news, home & garden tips and more **February 2015**

## don't miss...

Heritage Month Open House at **IRELAND HOUSE MUSEUM**  
February 17 – 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Enjoy tours which details Burlington from the 1830s to the 1920s through the Ireland family! Enjoy baking demonstrations, historical interpreters, and a traditional craft. Admission is free!

## Smart renovation projects that provide big returns

If you're planning on tackling some major home improvements this year, it's a good idea to do some research first. If increasing your property value and eventually getting a high return on your investment (ROI) is important to you, steer clear of projects that don't have universal appeal and aim for improvements that a majority of buyers are seeking.

Did you know that a sunroom addition is considered one of the worst renovations for getting a high ROI? A home office remodel is right up there, along with an upscale garage addition. All three projects provide only an estimated 50 percent cost recoup.

Here are five projects that could see a recoup of up to 80 percent of your investment:

1. **Flooring.** Today's buyers prefer hardwood, even in places like bedrooms. If hardwood isn't in your budget, there are a number of excellent quality laminate substitutes out there that look as good as hardwood and last nearly as long. If carpet is old, dirty and worn down, replacing it will also offer a good return on your investment.

2. **Bathrooms.** If your bathroom is stuck in the 80's and desperate for some TLC, you can tear it out and rest easy knowing that you will likely re-



coup most of the money you spend on the renovation when it comes time to sell. Spend a few extra dollars on fancy faucets and light fixtures – these are good selling features.

3. **An income suite.** A properly completed and legal income suite is one sure way to raise the property value of your home. Plus, you can look forward to collecting rent each month you remain in the home.

4. **Kitchens.** We've all heard it before – kitchens sell homes. Even when completed on a bud-

get, a kitchen renovation will earn you a good ROI. Buyers look for new or refinished cabinets, pretty backsplashes, new flooring and upgraded appliances.

5. **A finished basement.** Any time you are adding living space to a home, you are appealing to buyers. The key here is to avoid expensive, luxury finishes, like a state-of-the-art wet bar or solid hardwood flooring. Keep the space open and usable, install a drop ceiling and use good quality flooring.

## Valentine's Day – Did you know?

While many consider it a "Hallmark holiday," the history of Valentine's Day as we know it today dates back to the 17th century, though the day was first linked to romantic love as early as the 1300's.

So, just who was St. Valentine and why is this designated day of love celebrated on February 14? Dozens of theories exist. Some say the martyred patron Saint Valentine was put to death in Ancient Rome for performing marriage ceremonies against the laws of Claudius II (who believed single men made better soldiers). Two other St. Valentines are well-known and it is said that all three entered martyrdom on February 14. Oth-

ers suggest the day originated from the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, a fertility celebration that took place each year on February 14. The first recorded association of St. Valentine's Day with romantic love was in the 14th century in England and France, where it was believed that February 14 was the day on which birds paired off to mate. It was then that it became common for lovers to exchange handwritten love notes and refer to each other as "Valentines."

### Fun Facts:

- Countries around the world that celebrate Valentine's Day: Canada, the U.S, the U.K., Mexico, Australia, France, Italy and Denmark

- In Canada, some 80 percent of people plan on celebrating Valentine's Day in some way

- Every year on Valentine's Day, the city of Verona, Italy receives countless letters addressed to Shakespeare's fictional character Juliet

- In North America, men typically spend twice as much as women on gifts for their sweethearts

- The most popular Valentine's gifts in Canada are cards, flowers and candy

- It's estimated that about 1 billion cards are exchanged every year on February 14

- Richard Cadbury produced the first box of Valentine's Day chocolates in 1868