

Kitchener Post

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2016 • KITCHENER, ONTARIO



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Gaels take off for OFSAA | Page 18

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ADAM JACKSON PHOTO

Hot dog

Bowser, a Neapolitan Mastiff, takes a drink from a water bottle during the K-W Humane Society's Wiggle Waggle Walkathon at Victoria Park last Sunday. Hundreds of dogs strutted their stuff through the park as part of the fundraiser.

Weekend drive-by kills father of three

Christopher Birch, 29, faces first-degree murder and weapons charges

BY LAURIE SNELL
Kitchener Post staff

Charges have been laid and a man is in custody for the shooting death of 33-year-old Brandon Makins last Friday, according to Waterloo Regional Police Service.

Twenty-nine-year-old Kitchener resident Christopher Birch appeared in court on Tuesday morning, in relation to Makins' death.

Staff Sgt. Mike Haffner said this is the third murder in the region this year.

"On May 27, at about 9:30 p.m., we responded to a report of gunshots on Greendale Crescent," Haffner said.

"Upon arrival, police located 33-year-old Brandon Makins of Kitchener, deceased."

With Birch being arrested over the weekend, Haffner said there is no threat to public safety.

"The altercation between the two males happened outside of the residence, and ultimately that's where Mr. Makins was killed," he said.

It is believed that Birch approached Makins in his vehicle on Greendale Crescent, fired a weapon and drove off in his car.

"These two people were known to each other," Haffner said.

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Partial demo slated for heritage site

BY LAURIE SNELL
Kitchener Post staff

The old Schoerg family farmhouse at 330 Joseph Schoerg Cres. is the next heritage property in Kitchener to face demolition — a partial demolition of its rear annex to fix what's currently deemed unsafe.

That's because given the choice — to demolish it entirely and build a brand new home, or to spend the time and money to repair the rundown heritage home — Pat George and his JHS Properties team opted to save it.

They just didn't think it would take so long, nor did they plan on having to demolish any part of it.

"It's been a long process, that's for sure," George said. "We just thought, it's a cultural area and if we could save the house we would do it."

George's company purchased the property and surrounding land to build the Deer Ridge subdivision in the late 1990s. They have been trying to repair the heritage-designated farmhouse ever since.

The two-and-a-half-storey, red brick house is a classic example of a Mennonite Georgian style building. David Sherk, son of early pioneer Joseph Schoerg, built the homestead in 1830. It is believed that Sherk was the first non-native child born in what would soon become Waterloo County, and his building it is one reason for the farmhouse's heritage designation.

"Looking back, would I do it again? Probably not, because I didn't realize all of what is involved here and how bad the house was," George said. "At the time it seemed like a worthwhile thing to do."

He added, the company has spent well over \$100,000 just to gut the house and temporarily hold up the rear annex, which was a later addition to the house. To fix it, according to City of Kitchener documents from 2007, would cost upwards of \$235,000.

"At one point, we had a report that indicated the house was possibly better than what it was," he said. "It was pretty run down."

"When we actually started the process, the house was vacant and the prior owner had applied for a demolition permit. We basically decided we would attempt to save the house, which became a lot longer process and a lot more involved than what we had ever imagined."

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