

# home *and* COMMUNITY

community news, home tips and more, brought to you by Andrew & Debra Furry

## don't miss...

Enjoy a Mother's Day brunch at the historic **MCFARLAND HOUSE**, located just south of Niagara-on-the-Lake along the Niagara Parkway. Have a tour and afternoon tea featuring a selection of food and drink traditionally served at an English Tea meal.

## Reasons why an offer may be rejected

It's no secret that buying a home can be a stressful experience. From securing financing to scouring online sites for the perfect home, touring open house after open house and finally submitting an offer, there are many "hold your breath" moments as you hope for the desired outcome.

But what happens when that offer is rejected and your dream suddenly crumbles? In the best case scenario, the seller has given some sort of indication as to why your offer wasn't accepted, arming you with the knowledge you need to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

Here are five reasons why your offer may have been rejected:

**Too many conditions:** It's pretty common to include a home inspection and financing as

conditions on your offer. But if you have also made the offer conditional on the sale of your own home, you might be asking for more than the seller is willing to deal with.

**No pre-approval:** A seller wants to be sure that you can actually afford the home they are selling, especially if there are other offers on the table. While a pre-approval doesn't guarantee financing, it shows the seller you have done your due diligence in preparing to buy a home and aren't just making an offer on a whim.

**The offer was too low:** Let's face it, everyone wants to get a good deal. But if a home has been fairly priced according to market value and you come in with an offer thousands of dollars below asking price, there's a

good chance the seller won't even entertain it. The current market is pretty hot, with many homes selling above asking price, so offer the top price you are willing or able to pay for a home off the get-go and hope for the best!

**Inconvenient closing date:** If you're asking for a closing date in less than a month or perhaps longer than 90 days, it may be a deal breaker for some sellers.

**Asking for inclusions the seller doesn't want to include:** It's fairly common for items like appliances and light fixtures to be included in a home sale. But if you have asked for the crystal chandelier in the dining room that the seller clearly stated was excluded in the sale, don't be surprised if your offer gets rejected.

## Get set to golf Twenty Valley!

You probably already know that Twenty Valley is teeming with wineries and vineyards. But did you know that the area is also full of award-winning golf courses gearing up for a busy 2015 season? All across Lincoln and as far as Welland, you can find a course that's perfectly suited to your taste!

Twenty Valley Golf and Country Club in Vineland is a public course featuring 18 holes over 142 acres in the beautiful Niagara Region. Twenty Valley Golf and Country Club features imposing elevation changes, challenging water features and large greens. This public course offers splendid views for players, a pro shop, driving range and is located smack dab in the heart of wine country. Visit [www.twentyvalley.com](http://www.twentyvalley.com).

Named as one of the "Best Courses under \$65 in Ontario" by Ontario Golf News, Sawmill Golf Course in Fenwick is one of the prettiest courses around. Manicured fairways, fast greens, native fescue grasses and mature brush lay nestled into the escarpment, making every hole as nice to look at as it is fun to play. Saw-

mill features a fabulous clubhouse and players club and many leagues. Back for another year, igolf KIDS has become one of the area's most popular introductory golf programs. Aimed at giving back to the community, this fun league introduces children aged 4-8 to golf on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Visit [www.sawmillgolf.com](http://www.sawmillgolf.com).

Recognized by Golf Digest as a four-and-half-star facility, Peninsula Lakes Golf Club features three 9-hole courses located in pic-

turesque Fenwick. There's the original Quarry Course at 3,240 yards, the Hillside Course at 3,318 yards and the Orchard Course at 3,279 yards (touted by some as the most beautiful par-3 course in Niagara). Locals can join one of the many leagues or snag a membership while visitors to Twenty Valley can purchase a 'Stay and Play' package through Peninsula Lakes and Inn on the Twenty or The Coach House at Jordan Station B&B. Visit [www.pen-lakes.com](http://www.pen-lakes.com).



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## don't miss...

Explore gigantic spheres of spring colour at the spectacular **ANNUAL HYDRANGEA DISPLAY** at Niagara Falls' Floral Showhouse. Located at 7145 Niagara Parkway, the display opens just in time for Mother's Day on May 9 and runs until June 5.

## Is your home making you sick?

Now that winter is behind us, we can all say goodbye to cold and flu season! Hooray! Getting active outside and making the most of fresh local produce are just a few of the ways Ontarians enjoy a healthier lifestyle when the warmer weather arrives. But what if there is something lurking in your own home that's making you sick?

Here are a few sneaky culprits that might be causing chronic illnesses in your home:

**Your bed** - Everyone has that perfect pillow, the one that makes bedtime that much more enjoyable. But did you know that your precious pillow is a breeding ground for bacteria, mould spores and dust mites? To avoid the allergy-like symptoms that can be caused by these invaders, experts recommend replacing your pillow once per year (or washing it several times annually if possible). An old pillow could also lead to neck and shoulder problems as it loses support over time. The same goes for your mattress. The first step to take is using a protective mattress cover that you can remove and wash. At least once per year, sprinkle baking soda over your mattress for a few hours and let it go to work absorbing odours and bacteria. Then vacuum and air out for a few more hours.

**Pets** - As much as you love your four-legged



friends, allowing them to sleep in your bed isn't ideal. Allergens like dander, dust, mould spores and bacteria can hide in their fur, transferring to your bed as they roll around. You'll also have a more restful sleep with pets sleeping in their own bed. Lastly, you should try to bathe your pet regularly now that the warmer weather has arrived, whether at home or at a professional groomers.

**Cleaning Products** - Your mother may have taught you that the toilet isn't clean until it's been bleached into submission but there are a num-

ber of all natural, green products on the market today that don't contain harsh chemicals and VOC's. These substances can cause everything from headaches to eye and respiratory tract infections. A simple solution of vinegar and water is also an effective, affordable and safe cleaner.

**The humidifier** - If the air in your home is especially dry, a humidifier can be the perfect solution. But it's important to change the water daily and give the unit a thorough cleaning every week to prevent the growth of mould, which can cause a number of allergy-like symptoms.

## Getting help with home decorating apps

If you've just purchased a new property, part of the fun is choosing exactly the right décor to make your space your own. But mistakes can be time consuming and costly. Fortunately, there are some great apps that help you navigate the decorating jungle.

Available for both iPhone and Android, Houzz is the coolest design app to hit smartphones since Pinterest. Offering a vast array of stunning photos of every room in a home, it allows you to create a custom database of your favourite elements. The images are tagged, so if you need that exact item, you can find out

where to buy it. Houzz also provides a list of pros to hire by area and a useful advice area.

BrightNest is a hot free new app just launched at the end of March. Now available for both iPhone and Android, BrightNest is a perfect helper for both first-time and seasoned homeowners that want a bit of maintenance guidance. BrightNest provides tips and reminders of household chores, like cleaning gutters, but also neat décor tips, like how to use chalk paint or mason jars—or both! Its friendly, colourful interface has a youthful appeal and the tips for quick cleaning and fun

decorating projects are customizable to your particular lifestyle.

Have you ever seen the perfect colour, but were never able to find it at the paint store? Maybe the shell pink you always wanted on a magnolia, or the perfect blue on a neighbour's porch? Now there's an app to capture that colour and take it with you. Benjamin Moore's Color Capture and Sherwin Williams' ColorSnap are both excellent and easy to use apps that snap pics of whatever colour you love so you can reproduce it in paint. Both are free and available for both platforms.