THE BRONZE CHEF

Selah Schmoll follows up last year’s provincial silver medal with a bronze at the 2017 Young Chef Olympiad in India

Selah Schmoll, a second-year Culinary Management student, recently won the bronze medal at the Young Chef Olympiad in India.

By RYAN THORPE
Staff writer

Selah Schmoll took home the bronze medal for Canada in the Young Chef Olympiad (YCO) in India, an international culinary competition which featured more than 60 top young chefs from across the globe.

“I feel so proud having won bronze at this year’s YCO. It’s such an amazing feeling and a huge accomplishment,” said Schmoll, who competed through four rounds of competition from Jan. 27 to Feb. 1. “This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I feel so honoured to represent Canada.”

Schmoll, a Niagara Falls resident and second-year Culinary Management student, follows in the footsteps of former Niagara College student Daniella Germond, who took home the gold in last year’s competition.

“Training for the competition was a matter of striking a balance between her studies, her part-time job in the pastry department of Trius Winery and Restaurant, as well as lessons with Scott Baechler, chef and professor. Baechler, who accompanied Schmoll to India, trained with the student for roughly two months. “She takes direction very well and comes to training days with a smile,” he said. “It’s important that students push themselves way beyond their comfort zone. That’s not easy, sometimes even scary – the balance of work, school, life, then training – but, in the end, it refines their skills.”

Schmoll’s love for food comes from her time spent travelling abroad in Africa and Italy. It was the experience of immersing herself in these cultures’ cuisines, which led her to enrol at Niagara College and strive to turn her newfound passion into a career.

This marks the second time Schmoll has participated in a culinary competition. In last year’s Ontario Technological Skills Competition, she won the silver medal. It was an experience she credits with helping prepare her for this year’s YCO.

Upon hearing the news of the results, Craig Youdale, dean of the Canadian Food and Wine Institute (CFWI), said: “Competitions like this are rare when you can put your school’s training up against other programs from around the globe.”

Continued on page 2
Everyone has the right to learn

Continued from page 1

I have to thank everybody who sent these books to us because they are very much valuable. Frankly speaking, 90 per cent plus of the books cannot be found here. So you understand what it means to the people here,” says Wubshet Bekalu, dean of School of Commerce at Addis Ababa University, in Ethiopia.

Not only does T4C send textbooks to universities, but they also give $1 from every donated textbook to The Heart and Stroke Foundation Canada experience office, or the Student Administrative Council (SAC) office, at Brock University’s Student Life and Community Experience office, or at the local Heart and Stroke Foundation Niagara office in St. Catharines.

Bowling with Big Brothers Big Sisters

By LYDIA VERSLUIS
Staff Writer

The biggest fundraiser of the year for Big Brothers Big Sisters St. Catharines-Thorold is in full swing. It’s time for the Tim Hortons Bowl for Kid’s Sake.

The campaign offers the opportunity to make a lasting difference in a child’s life by collecting sponsors and spending some time bowling with family and friends. “The money goes to the kids on the wait-list,” says Marcie Clarkson, fundraising and business development manager.

“We don’t receive any sustainable governmental funding, so we have to fundraise everything.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters currently serves more than 900 children and youth in the community. There are 200 children on a wait-list.

Bowl for Kid’s Sake is Big Brothers Big Sisters’ largest charity event, earning the organization about 25 per cent of its operating budget.

“Ther e has been in the past, to be honest, this year is really slow. Before in February there wasn’t many events so we would make $100,000 on this event,” says Clarkson.

“However, there has been other events that come in to February and that has definitely affected us.”

This year’s campaign begins Feb. 7 and runs Feb. 11 and Feb. 18, with multiple bowling times, at Parkway Bowling Alley, in St. Catharines.

Participants are encouraged to dress up according to the theme of Canada’s 150th birthday. To participate, teams must raise a minimum of $60.

Clarification:

The Agri-Food Startup weekend referred to in a story in the Feb. 10 edition of the Niagara News was sponsored by ncTakeoff, part of the Meridian Ignite! series.

Love of food ignites her

Continued from page 1

He continued: “Selah’s success is truly impressive considering she is only beginning her career and this was only her second competition to date. Her success is in a culmination of all the individuals who have mentored her here at CWFI, as well as her work she has been doing at the Trius Winery right here in Niagara.”

Schmoll relished the opportunity not only to compete, but to do so in India, a country known for its varied and aromatic culinary culture, which she had long hoped to visit.

“I have always wanted to go to India and am so glad to have had the chance to go to a beautiful country full of life and do what I love: cook,” said Schmoll. “I also had the joy of meeting so many other students and mentors from different countries and forming lifelong friendships.

“Everything leading up to the competition has benefited my career – coming to training days with a good attitude, having to be organized, learning new skill sets, as well as managing time.”

Thank You

For many years Avondale stores have generously distributed 2,600 copies of each Niagara News issue across the Niagara Region.

Avondale demonstrates how good corporate citizens support student learning.
NC CELEBRATES 50TH
BACK TO THE FUTURE

This week Niagara College begins its 50th anniversary celebrations. It’s been a half century of learning, teaching and helping build Niagara communities. Here’s to 50 more

By ALEX YORKE  
Staff Writer

Niagara College began celebrating its 50th anniversary on Feb. 8, marking half a century of moulding minds and shaping futures.

In 1967, the college opened the doors of its Welland campus to 450 students. Today, more than 10,000 of them occupy the halls, taking classes in more than 130 unique programs.

“For us it is all about student success – and that’s been reflected in our rich history,” said Niagara College President Dan Patterson. “We are intricately woven into the fabric of the Niagara community, and this anniversary is a great opportunity to reflect on our past and get excited about the wonderful future in front of us.”

While the focus on providing a leading edge in education remains the same, many things have changed over the course of 50 years. In earlier days, the Eva M. Lewis Learning Commons, where many students spend their time was once an empty lot. Classes were held outdoors in the sun while more space was made to keep up with the increasing demand for post-secondary education.

Wendy Hounsham, English as a Second Language professor and alumna, shared some of her thoughts of attending the college in the 1980s.

“Most of what we now know as Niagara College didn’t even exist and some of the older buildings are now gone, and it was a much smaller place.”

“Going from a student here to an educator here makes a big difference in my thoughts about it,” Hounsham continued, “but I think the facilities are now very modern and very appealing. I teach in the International Department and I think that it helps bring those students to the college.”

The International Department at the college now hosts students from more than 80 countries, continuing to grow every year while taking ESL programs like the one Hounsham teaches.

“I remember coming here as a General Arts and Science student. I was a little bit lost. I had dropped out of university,” said Hounsham. “I just remember what an amazing faculty we had back then and they did wonders with us. We were a pretty sad bunch to say the least and we did really well. They changed our feelings about education and we all went on to study at university after that.”

Now Niagara College is on the forefront of innovation, providing what Patterson calls “work integrated learning,” bringing forward an education built on hands-on experience.

“Our Welland campus has been revitalized with over $19 million in new facilities,” said Patterson, continuing to mention some of the landmarks that NC has made even in the past two decades with the opening of the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus in 1998, with Canada’s first teaching winery, brewery and upcoming distillery.

“I think that our future is very promising,” said Patterson. “We’ve just launched a strategic plan and we are calling it the ‘pre-emptive college.’ That means the college anticipates not only today’s marketplace but tomorrow’s marketplace.”

This plan for a “pre-emptive college” has already shown fruit in future projects, with planned updates to the college’s automotive facilities to accommodate electric vehicle maintenance and the aforementioned opening of a teaching distillery.

Niagara College is not the only Canadian post-secondary institution celebrating an anniversary. 23 other Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology are also celebrating their 50th year across Ontario.

Several commemorative events have been planned to celebrate the landmark throughout the year, including ceremonial tree plantings in the spring and fall, a 50th anniversary dinner at Niagara College’s Canadian Food and Wine Institute, in May, and a “Start Something Amazing” bus tour in October that serves as an interactive travelling museum.

The recently announced William G. Davis Innovation Fund, honoring former Ontario Premier and minister of education, is also a part of the commemoration, offering students and alumni the opportunity to pitch innovative ideas with the hope of winning prize money.
No lions, tigers or polar bears – oh my

Unprecedented, unpredictable and extreme weather has been seen all over the world. Canada’s warm winter this year was predicted at the beginning of the season. In November, scientists monitored temperatures about 20 Celsius warmer than normal over most of the Arctic ocean. According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center, Arctic sea ice has been declining at a rate of 13 per cent a decade since 1979. This has had a direct impact on wildlife in this region.

Take the example of polar bears in Churchill, Man., where there are 1,000 polar bears in the Hudson Bay population. This species is under threat of extinction because of global warming. Every winter, polar bears in this area wait for the bay to freeze so that they can head up to hunt for seals, but the increased temperature delays and prevents their hunting grounds from forming at the right time, causing bears to starve. U.S. President Donald Trump has said global warming is a “hoax.” But it’s just a hoax, why are so many global warming phenomena actually happening?

Are we facing an inevitable disaster, which we deserve? How can we stop, or at least slow down, its pace? First and foremost, we should be sensitive to the issue at hand. Mild weather may ease our suffering during winter time, but don’t take it as a fortunate sign. We should realize what the real message from the earth is. Some people act like environmental issues don’t matter to them. However, every one of us has a responsibility for some degree of impact on the environment. Think about the process of production to transportation to our hands; the clothes we wear, the items we possess, many things we enjoy and take for granted. For us to assign blame for this problem solely to businesses and governments. What we need to do is to lighten ourselves and see what we’re really doing on and find out what we can do at an individual level. There are already many things you’ve missed and you could’ve done to make our planet greener.

For decades, hundreds of thousands of people in other parts of the world have lost their homes, livings and lives because of extreme weather. More and more species that have coexisted with us are going to disappear on the earth. It’s time to abandon selfish and short-sighted attitudes toward this environmental crisis. Instead we should think proactively about all of the small, individual choices and behaviours, which, taken together, can make a big difference. Otherwise, catastrophic environmental consequences are looming just over the horizon.

HYOJUNG MAY LEE

Future grads: Don’t panic, yet. Work road is long, winding

You did all the right things – graduated high school, went through post-secondary and have your diploma or degree. Now what? There’s the obvious – get a job. But before you jump in with both feet, take some time to celebrate. You worked hard to get to where you are and job-related tasks will soon eat up much of your time. However, it’s important to end the festivities. Cutting off your celebrations will give you an edge over your partying peers.

Wise graduates will have been keeping their resumes updated and current, checking things off as they go. Any small accomplishment is worth noting, as there are very few opportunities to get ahead without a post-secondary education or formal training in this area. There’s no shame in taking a Meijob for cash flow until you figure out your next steps.

Living in Niagara, sometimes flipping burgers isn’t a bad thing if you need to eat, and you don’t get paid commission per tables served. However, it’s not a good option. People can make your trip more financially beneficial. There are even work-abroad programs that can make your trip more financially beneficial.

Many students struggling with finding jobs in their relevant field make the decision to return to school. Often, it is to improve skills, but these days it is becoming a necessity. As more and more qualified grads compete for the same jobs, people are looking to give themselves an edge. In keeping with this trend, many employers are making additional certification application requirements.

The Niagara region conveniently has two post-secondary institutions with public transit fees built into tuition. For many recent grads, this is a viable option. However, this is an easy way to add a significant amount to student-loan debt. An important thing to keep in mind is to do your research and make sure you’re not just getting additional education for the sake of having it.

All of these are good options for those living in Niagara searching for something to do until they can jumpstart their career. But before you jump in head first to the job market, take some time to spare. Spend some time as free labour for a business in a field you want to be in.

The idea of jetting off to a foreign land is an option for recent grads with some cash and time to spare. Don’t need a cash flow or sign-up bonus – helpful if the job is far away. Don’t need a cash flow for a while? Volunteering is a good option for recent grads with some cash and time to spare.

Spend some time as free labour for a business in a field you want to be in. The idea of jetting off to a foreign land is appealing to many graduates, too. Learning a new language, meeting new people and exploring the globe can even make you more employable. There are even work-abroad programs that can make your trip more financially beneficial.

Bryan Groff poses Belinda Ham, second-year Occupational Therapist Assistant, for her graduation photo.

PHOTO BY RYAN THORPE

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Think about the process of production to transportation to our hands; the clothes we wear, the items we possess, many things we enjoy and take for granted to contribute to accelerating global warming. It’s certainly irresponsible for us to assign blame for this problem solely to businesses and governments. What we need to do is to lighten ourselves and see what’s really going on and find out what we can do at an individual level. There are already many things you’ve missed and you could’ve done to make our planet greener.

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Carly Soltesz

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Bryan Groff poses Belinda Ham, second-year Occupational Therapist Assistant, for her graduation photo.

PHOTO BY RYAN THORPE
Liberals axe electoral reform

By RYAN THORPE  Staff Writer

The Liberal government has dropped its commitment to electoral reform, a decision that Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau has indicated he will not move forward with after his party lost the 2015 federal election. The government's decision to back away from electoral reform has been met with criticism from across the political spectrum.

Trudeau has indicated that the government's decision to drop electoral reform was made after careful consideration of the issues and the impact of reform on the Canadian political system.

The decision has been met with criticism from some who believe that the Liberal Party's decision to drop electoral reform is a mistake. Others, however, have praised the government's decision to back away from electoral reform.

The decision to drop electoral reform has been met with mixed reactions from the public. Some have welcomed the government's decision, while others have expressed disappointment with the decision.

The Liberal government's decision to drop electoral reform is likely to be a significant topic of discussion in the upcoming federal election campaign.
How risky is it to be a journalist?

Journalists aren't pawns on the RCMP's chessboard. As yet, Ben Makuch, a VICE News journalist, may soon find himself behind prison bars for refusing to turn over chat logs of his interviews with suspected terrorist Farah Mohammed Shirdon.

Makuch appeared in court on Feb. 6, in order to appeal a 2016 Ontario court decision, which ruled in favour of the RCMP, ordering him to turn over key background files to the police agency.

Shirdon, whose whereabouts is currently unknown, is a 22-year-old Calgary-born soldier of the Islamic State. He was charged with a number of terrorism-related offences in September 2015.

The case against Makuch stems from a series of articles he wrote in 2014, based on conversations he had with Shirdon over the instant messaging app Kik.

The implications of this case are certainly wider in scope than the respective crimes for Makuch and Shirdon, and anyone interested in the ability of the press to serve as a proper check and balance in a democratic society should be concerned with the court’s decision.

In the final analysis, this should be considered as little more than an attack on the freedom of the press. The right of journalists to protect their sources must be defended, regardless of the context. Journalists depend on the public for much of the information they report. In most cases, sources are more than willing to have their names attached to the information they provide.

But, given certain circumstances, it is understandable why a source may be unwilling to do so. This may be because they face reprimands or legal punishment, may not want to self-incriminate, or may be unwilling to come forward unless anonymity is assured.

A journalist is only as effective as his or her reputation. Should they prove willing to hand over important information and files, or the identity of sources, it can have a chilling effect on potential future contacts and whistleblowers.

Why would anyone in their right mind contact a journalist offering sensitive information in the public interest if they feel as if they will be easily identified and ousted?

The fact is, some of the most important stories in history would never have been reported, had the journalists involved in the investigations proven themselves unworthy to sources earlier in their career.

Attacks on the freedom of the press of this nature have a negative effect on society as a whole, as important issues surrounding politics, crime and corruption may go unchallenged, unchecked or unreported.

Media rights are under threat whenever the state attempts to force journalists to either ruin his career, or unreported.

Media rights are under threat whenever the state attempts to force the RCMP’s case against him. If they want to be able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a journalist is guilty of what they claim, then they should do their jobs and find the evidence to back up their claims.

And yet, Ben Makuch, a VICE News journalist, is currently facing off against the RCMP in Ontario courts.

In mainstream media, which in some fashion has taken over nearly everything in most of our daily lives, you see it everywhere – people getting offended. I call it the offended epidemic.

And like most of everything else online, it is just a big charade.

Or in other words, it’s not cool to have an alternate opinion, just like it isn’t cool to post pictures of your Kraft Dinner on Instagram.

When people decide to voice any controversial opinion, social justice warriors leap to defend a blade of grass from being cut so they can look like the kindest, sweetest people. They become experts on complex subjects, ignoring the depth of issues and telling people they are terrible or stupid people for having their own opinions.

It’s a branch of the same narcissistic-superiority complex that forces people to post their amazing vacations, weddings, meals and children to the world. The end message? I’m better than you.

And this is a problem we all need to address within ourselves, because it is killing the world, at least North America.

We don’t need to look further than the States for proof.

While some opinions debatably should be considered antiquated or uncivilized, when it becomes “hip” to be politically correct, always accepting and never controversial, it censors true opinion.

And what do people do? They start fighting with each other over everything and shaming those they don’t agree with – and the people with the controversial opinion always lose to the masses.

This encourages everybody with even a slightly controversial opinion to stay in silence, especially when they’re losing followers, noticing less interaction on their social media pages and in some cases losing friends entirely.

It’s the modern equivalent of being banished from town. That’s not progress for society – it’s regression. That’s the same mentality that got Galileo locked up for saying that Earth revolves around the sun.

The “offended epidemic” causes a lot of reciprocal problems, which grow deep roots in society and change the way we think, vote and act towards each other. These little altercations get taken person-on-person, with people blocking friends and destroying relationships and communication over trivial differences, forcing people into a division of two groups: the ones who get offended over everything, and the ones who now are just fed up with the political correctness.

When people are backed into a corner by accepting these divisions, they’re blinded. We saw them seek defense in a man who said what they wanted to say to all of their Facebook friends and Twitter followers, even if they had to ignore the appalling qualities of the person who defends them just to get their voices back.

In the grand scheme, we desperately need forms of political correctness. We need values and equality, but you know what they say about too much of anything?

Look, I don’t like hunting. I believe a real man shoots animals with a camera. But am I going to tell every single hunter out there that they’re savage and I hate them? No. If you do, you become the same type of person as the hunter. You become a detriment to the progress of society. You become somebody who, although may not have voted for Donald Trump, continued to hurt the country by being the reason the very people you shame feel so strongly that they need a voice.

Donald Trump's presidential victory was a shock. Was it because people were afraid to admit that they were going to vote for him? SUBMITTED PHOTO

When Donald Trump was elected, it shocked people. The polls didn’t show it. Very few people predicted it and Americans generally didn’t seem to want to voice that they supported Trump.

This is a direct result of political correctness damaging the world.

When millions of people come forward to support somebody who is so extreme in their positions, but won’t talk about it in public, it implies that they felt fear in voicing those views.

This is what America and the world can blame for Trump.

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Busing is still an issue for some students at Niagara College, but the wheels are in motion to solve a problem caused by increased enrolment. Some students were unable to attend the first classes of the school year this January, although not for a lack of trying.

French Pagarigan, a second-year Computer Programming student, missed a number of classes at the beginning of the Winter term, as he was left behind by the bus heading from Niagara Falls to the Welland campus.

He was far from being the only one. The reason? The bus was at capacity.

“There were a couple of times I missed my classes,” said Pagarigan.

Earlier this year, Niagara College Student Administrative Council (NCSAC) published an open letter addressing student concerns and explaining the situation which led to students being unable to access transit.

“Ideally, I would love if we could tell students to live close to their campus, but we can’t really do that,” said AliceMary Nakiwala, president of NCSAC. “One of the biggest bus-taking populations lives in Niagara Falls, which makes it super hard for us to manage it.”

Every year, NCSAC asks the admissions department for the estimated number of enrolled students from September to January, in order to organize the transit budget. The International Division, however, has difficulty providing these figures. For example, this January, 450 new international students came to Niagara College. “There is an issue with transit in the Niagara region,” said Steve Kosh, executive director of NCSAC.

NCSAC’s efforts to provide flexible bus service is a priority but students are still experiencing difficulties. PHOTO BY IRYNA RYBCHAK

“IT ISN’T JUST FOR STUDENTS, BUT THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY. BECAUSE IT’S NEVER THE SCHOOL WHICH WORKS WITH TRANSIT, IT’S ALWAYS THE STUDENT UNION.”

Kosh continued: “Your tuition goes to pay for academics, your tuition doesn’t pay for buses. What pays for buses is an ancillary fee, the U-pass fee. We at SAC aren’t supposed to be using our student activity fee to pay for the bus.”

As a result of the situation, NCSAC set up a meeting with the college executive, who offered to give support to the student council.

“The college has been very supportive,” said Nakiwala.

“There are now five additional buses running from Niagara Falls to Welland, two in the morning and three in the evening, which has helped ameliorate – even if not alleviate – the situation.

“Now what’s happening is there are so many people at 6:30 p.m. and if they can’t get on, they have to wait two hours for the 8:30 p.m. bus,” says Jessica Movil, a second-year Civil Engineering program student.

Movil continued: “In the beginning of the year there used to be a line-up to get to the college, but now there is a line to go back home. Everybody usually shows and it’s like a big crowd of people just trying to squeeze onto the bus. It’s like chaos.”

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Love is in the air

By CARLY SOLTESZ Columnist

The word “exclusive” carries weight to it. It’s owned and revered position to be so special to someone, but to me, there is an underlining pressure to it. The idea of only having one person I would give that title to is always somewhat silly to me. I prefer to borrow a term from the beloved Lucy Maud Mont- ygomery and say “kindred spirit.” I use “kindred spirits.” I can have a limited spirit mo- ment with someone I hardly know or a stronger bond with the street, rather than just having this “halluc, end” connection with only one person.

To have my partner love and care about every single thing I do is amazing. I am always happy and they are always happy. I am always excited, and they are always excited. I am always ready, and they are always ready, but I am lucky enough that they are always different in our moments to keep things interesting but unexplored. For instance, I can’t predict my mood to keep up with all the fads - don’t I count myself a part of band on the shelves and books I like to read that are for too many so I instead imagine what it would be like to own a pet. It’s like playing with a puppy when something new is announced in the world of literature, films or television.

I have met many kindred spirits in various classrooms throughout my education, some in the form of teachers and some peers with more life experience and advice to offer. I have met many kindred spirits that absolutely exhaust me, mentally and emotionally. Sometimes they’re a friend I can’t shake when the relationship changes, sometimes it’s a co-worker or boss that you can’t avoid. After even the shortest amount of time with that person, this kindred spirit I want to call is the one who can say hello. He or she is the friend that I can talk to as if I am completely Not to have the one that is always there, even when I am alone, is the one I have in myself. I have a support system to lean on, but I can also stand on my own two feet in that relationship, through good or bad times. I can call anyone my best friend, and it’s not what a true soulmate is supposed to be?

Photo by HARLEY DAVIDSON

What does love mean to Niagara College students?

By KATHERINE DRISCOLL

Looking for a thoughtful gift for your loved one? Just want a new read to snuggle up and read with your loved one? Too many options? Here are some recommendations for books that check all of those boxes. Visit niagaras-news.com for the full list.

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe
By Benjamin Alire Sáenz

“...a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”

Perfect for: Folks looking for books that are as much about friend love as they are about romantic love, anyone who enjoys reimagining of classic fairy tale tropes or anyone who is interested in reading the book that inspired so many reimaginings and adaptations.

Pride and Prejudice
By Jane Austen

“It’s a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”

Perfect for: Anyone who wants to read a book with queer characters where one’s hand is held, or anyone who enjoys stories that explore the complexity of the love between a mother and daughter, or anyone who enjoys humorous stories that involve old demons feeding off the strength of women being accidently summoned.

Rose’s Run
By Susan Crampton

“How about focusing on the end of the world right now?”

Perfect for: Anyone who enjoys stories that explore the complexity of the love between a mother and daughter, or anyone who enjoys humorous stories that involve old demons feeding off the strength of women being accidently summoned.

Nineteen Eighty-Four
By George Orwell

“...in our time, forever after...”

Perfect for: Anyone who enjoys stories that explore the complexity of the love between a mother and daughter, or anyone who enjoys humorous stories that involve old demons feeding off the strength of women being accidently summoned.
Are you a green consumer?

What can you do to protect the environment – and it’s not just the garbage you have to worry about.

By HYOUNG MAY LEE
Staff Writer

Would you change the products on your shopping list if your choice is harmful to the environment?

Having concerns about environmental issues, more and more individuals participate in green consumerism as they check and shop for products with less or no environmental impact.

According to the online blog, Articles function, green consumption is defined as “the practice of using environmentally friendly products that do not cause risk for human health and do not threaten the function of diversity to natural ecosystems.”

Green consumption covers a full range of activities, including producing goods, reusing or recycling materials and the protection of nature.

Environmental issues are influenced by large companies and governments. However, consumers have a significant influence on the flow of goods in the market, as consumer trends are determined by consumers themselves.

Now, consumers have not only the right to buy the products they desire, but also the responsibility for their choice of products.

How can you be a green consumer?

There are plenty of ways you can help.

“Be environmentally friendly as I can be,” said Alyssa Lavesseur, a first-year Horticulture Technician program student. “If something has a recycle symbol on it, that’s good.”

Steps to being a green consumer are to:

- Buy organic food, or natural products seem to be expensive, but not all of them.
- Buy them because it’s healthier and environmentally friendly.

He continued: “I think we shouldn’t use the stuff that is damaging the environment too much like spray products and deodorants (with harmful chemicals). It has a negative effect on the environment.”

Organic ingredients or materials are normally considered to be beneficial for nature and our health because they are grown without toxic pesticides or herbicides that hurt or deplete the ecosystem.

Selecting products made of recyclable materials is also a good habit to practice. Those materials include glass, wood, or metal. If you ever consciously look at packaging items, you would find there are the recycling symbols or other environmental labels on them.

Items with environmental symbols are less likely to affect the environment.

Considering a product that harms the environment as little as possible is the start of becoming a green consumer.

Lavesseur said she thinks that each person has a responsibility.

“I feel like I have to do something even if it’s just a little bit. If everybody does something little that’s bad, it adds up,” she said.

“People are less concerned. They don’t think it’s happening. Oh, it doesn’t really affect me. It’s not going to happen to me in my lifetime. So they just buy whatever. I think we should get more people to be proactive about it and talk about it. There is a lot of evidence,” said Lavesseur.

Cakiroglu said, “Many environmental issues have a correlation with global warming. I don’t want to make it happen.”

Here are some easy products you may want to avoid in order to protect the environment:

- Facial cleansers with microbeads
- Shampoos and soaps with sulfates
- Deodorants with triclosan
- Lip balm derived from petroleum
- Moisturizers containing palm oil

More stores are shutting their doors

By HALEY SEDGWICK
Staff Writer

Aeropostale, Macy’s, GAP, HMV, Barnes & Noble, Sears and JCPenney – all of these retail stores have something in common: store closures.

With online shopping becoming the go-to for consumers there does not seem to be a turning back as brick-and-mortar stores are falling by the wayside.

A survey conducted annually by comScore and UPS found that consumers made 51 percent of their purchases through online shopping last year – a figure that has been trending upward for several years.

The choice to shop online may be more convenient for those purchasing, however, online shopping has had a negative impact on brick-and-mortar stores.

In 2016 alone, retailers such as French Connec- tion, Dianer, Target, Aero- postale, Smart Set and Cost Plus World Market closed their doors for good in Canada, and the list of closures within the U.S. is even longer.

For some, online shopping is a matter of convenience.

“I have an Amazon Prime account and around $40 a year, I get free, two-day shipping on almost everything I buy, which is super convenient,” said Bobbi Cakiroglu, a student at Brock University.

“Shopping online, I find, is usually cheaper even if you do have to pay shipping and there’s always way more selection than in store. Another plus for me is that I don’t have to go to a store and talk to people,”

Miranda Verde, a mother of two, St. Catharines, says, “I choose to do online shopping for everything because life just gets too busy and so do a family in going from store to store hoping to find what you are looking for. It’s so much easier to click a few buttons and have it arrive on your doorstep, sometimes within two days.”

Department stores, the biggest victims of the online shopping epidemic, are closing faster than consumers can keep track. Even Wal-Mart has closed locations in recent years.

According to an article in Forbes, published June 2, 2016, this is where department stores go wrong.

Setup:

Department stores are built around the idea that customers come to the store for inspiration and discovery, however, in recent years, things have changed.

Consumers now look to the Internet for their inspiration – social media, blogs, etc., and when they want to buy their specific products, they often choose the cheapest retailer, meaning that department stores are left scrambling to adjust prices in order to cater to what consumers want.

Lack of uniqueness:

When it comes to buying clothing, department stores often cannot keep up with retailers like Zara and H&M, who can put out new fashions consistently each month. Department stores such as Macy’s, Sears and Hudson’s Bay have to keep up with clothing retailers, and despite featuring certain brands such as Ralph Lauren and Coach, they can’t afford to go out on a limb for something that hasn’t been proven to sell.

This often means that several mall anchor stores carry the exact same products as one another, for about the same price. Independent brands carried by these retailers often turn to the Internet to sell their products, where they can ensure that their brand is well-represented and that their full assortment of items is displayed, as opposed to the same five or six styles and lines available in every department store.

Little to no value to add:

Thanks to the world of online shopping, you can easily find great brands wherever you’d like to, regardless of which store is carrying them. With the click of a button, you can compare the prices at seven different retailers, as opposed to driving to your local Hudson’s Bay and buying the item for whatever price they have, simply because it’s the only option.

It’s not all bad news though – discount retailers, such as Winners, TJ Maxx and Marshalls, have reported increases in customers. These stores do not have online shopping options in Canada, and each individual store has different products, providing benefits for choosing them over a typical retail store.

While this may not be the death of retail shopping, the growth of consumers buying online proves challenging for shopping centres and malls, which once thrived on the fact that society depended on them for their shopping needs.

Stores closing in North America (2017):

- Macy’s (68 stores)
- Sears (48 stores)
- Kmart (108 stores)
- Trader Joe’s (all stores)
- CVS Pharmacy (70 stores)
- HMV Canada (all stores)
- American Apparel (all stores)
- Wet Seal
- JCPenney
- The Limited (all stores)
- Aeropostale (570 stores = U.S.)
- American Eagle Outfitters (150 stores)
- Chico’s (120 stores)
- The Children’s Place (200 stores)
- Jos. A. Bank/Men’s Warehouse (250 stores)
- Office Depot (300 stores)
The battle over top judge

Democratic party expresses ‘serious doubts’ over President Trump’s U.S. Supreme Court nomination

By RYAN THORPE  Staff Writer

President Trump has nominated Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, the first step toward filling the vacancy created by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Gorsuch, 49, currently serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

The nomination is expected to be heavily contested, as Democrats have made clear their intention to wage battle over the future of the nation’s highest court.

Chuck Schumer, the Senate’s top Democrat, has expressed “serious doubts” concerning Gorsuch and has indicated his party will move to implement a procedural impediment whereby the nominee will need to secure 60 votes rather than a simple majority.

In response to the potential political maneuver, Trump has encouraged Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to “go nuclear” should the Democrats move to block the nomination.

Vice President Mike Pence said Gorsuch will be confirmed to the Supreme Court “one way or the other” in a speech delivered in Philadelphia on Feb. 4.

Many Democrats still seem incensed over the Republican-controlled Senate blocking a vote on former President Barack Obama’s choice for the seat: Judge Merrick Garland.

While the nomination has been lauded by Republicans and conservatives, many legal and civil rights organizations have denounced Gorsuch, saying he will move to scrap key protections for workers, women and the LGBT community.

Gorsuch has drawn comparisons to the man he would be replacing on the bench, the controversial Justice Scalia.

Like Scalia, Gorsuch is a “textualist” and a supporter of “originalism.”

Textualism is the belief that only the wording of laws, and not their potential consequences, should be reviewed. Originalism proposes the constitution should be interpreted as it was understood at the time of its writing.

The announcement came late on Tuesday, Jan. 31, during a primetime White House ceremony.

Trump characterized his process of selecting a nominee as potentially “the most transparent judicial selection process in history.”

Following his introduction by Trump, Gorsuch said: “Standing here in a house of history, and acutely aware of my own imperfections, I pledge that if I am confirmed, I will do all my powers permit to be a faithful servant of the Constitution and laws of this great country.”

Gorsuch pursued his undergraduate studies at Columbia, is a graduate of Harvard Law School and received a Marshall scholarship to Oxford. He is a former partner at one of Washington’s top litigation firms, where he pursued a series of successful cases.

He has been in his current position for 10 years.

The other reported finalist on Trump’s shortlist was Thomas Hardiman of Pennsylvania, who is also a federal appeals court judge.

If confirmed, Gorsuch would become the youngest Supreme Court justice since Clarence Thomas in 1991.

There is currently no clear timeline for his confirmation.

Tech giants push back on Trump’s immigration ban

By ALEX YORKE  Staff Writer

Silicon Valley just got political as more than 100 tech giants have gathered to file a legal brief against U.S. President Donald Trump’s controversial 90-day immigration ban.

In the brief, the companies make the argument that operations were affected by the ban, and that the order is unconstitutionally “reflecting significant harm on American business, innovation and growth.”

The opening argument says that, “America proudly describes itself as a ‘nation of immigrants’; adding ‘nearly all of us can trace our lineage to another country.’

The argument continues, outlining that immigrants are some of the country’s greatest innovators and that the order “hinders the ability of American companies to attract great talent; increases the costs imposed on businesses; makes it more difficult for American firms to compete in the international marketplace; and gives global enterprises a new, significant incentive to build operations—and hire new employees—outside the United States.”

Among the signatures listed on the document were representatives of the heavy hitters Microsoft, Apple, Google and Intel, with social media companies Facebook, Twitter and Reddit also offering their support for the movement.

“It’s painful to see the personal cost of this executive order on our colleagues,” said Google Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai in a memo to his employees obtained by Bloomberg News.

“We’ve always made our view on immigration issues known publicly and will continue to do so.”

Google has also set up an emergency fund for those affected by the ban, offering $4 million in support in the largest humanitarian effort in the company’s history.

Elen Musk, founder of Tesla and SpaceX, has rallied behind the tech community’s outcry, adding his companies to the list on Feb. 6 after hearing about the brief.

Despite this, Musk is also part of a business advisory council to the Trump administration and is still an active member.

Notable companies absent from the list included mobile giants Verizon, T-Mobile, AT&T and Sprint, which may be leaning on the current government’s support for the long rumoured Sprint and T-Mobile merger and AT&T’s attempt to acquire Time Warner Cable.

The Trump administration defended the ban on Feb. 7 when Judges of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals questioned whether or not the order targeted people over their religious beliefs, also asking if they could present verifiable evidence that individuals from the seven countries impacted by the ban were actually a danger to the United States of America.

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**Trump revives Dakota pipeline**

First-Nations continue protests against Trump’s executive order

By KATHLEEN DRISCOLL

U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent executive order reviving the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) project has caused a resurgence of dissent. Upon having its planned course re-routed near the drinking water source of the Standing Rock reservation in 2015, there has been much controversy surrounding the proposed DAPL.

The pipeline was re-routed after initial plans to have it run near Bismarck, N.D., were scrapped due to concerns about the potential impact on the drinking water. In addition to the source water protection issue, members of the Standing Rock tribe have opposed the proposed changes in the DAPL’s route because it would cross lands of sacred significance to the Sioux Nation.

This prompted the nation to establish the Sacred Stone Camp, as a way to physically protest the proposed pipeline. These protests became international news due to criticism of use of force by local law enforcement agencies.

With the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ruling Energy Transfer Partners, the corporation behind DAPL, needed to review alternative routes, the issue was seemingly resolved. However, with this most recent development, there has been more in mass protests against the pipeline project.

**How Does This Connect to Canada?**

The Aamjiwnaang First Nation, outside of Sarnia, has 60 industrial facilities within a 25-kilometre radius that exposes those living there to harmful chemical pollutants.

Residents believe the exposure to these pollutants has resulted in the unusually low male birth rates. The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation has currently taken Enbridge to the Supreme Court to fight against the company’s proposed pipeline, Line 9.

The Chippewas of the Thames alleges the government failed to properly consult them, which they claim is a violation of treaty rights.

As of Jan. 2015, 126 First Nations communities had water-advisory warnings in effect. Niagara News spoke with three First Nations Niagara College students, for their thoughts on Standing Rock:

*Thames alleges the government* 

President Kathleen Driscoll

**Cap-and-trade for a cleaner Canada**

Gas prices keep on rising as the government creates incentives for a cleaner future

By RACHEL BRODERICK

You may have noticed your gas bill is much higher than normal. You may also have noticed the price of gasoline increased by 15 cents or more in the last few weeks. Well that’s because of a new cap-and-trade plan introduced in Ontario as of Jan. 1.

The government projects the total extra costs of the initiative will amount to $136 per year for the average household. Why are we paying more, and what is the money going to?

Some of it will go to public transit, incentives for electric vehicles and rebates worth up to $2,000 per household for improving a home’s energy efficiency, such as installing a new furnace, windows or insulation.

This system really isn’t intended to make much of a difference for the average household. It is meant to hold businesses accountable for the amount of carbon they are putting into the air. With this tax, businesses will have limits on the amount of pollution they can emit. Companies that exceed those limits — which will be reduced each year — can buy permits or allowances through government-run auctions or from other companies that come in under their limits.

According to ontario.ca, there are some things you can do to help keep costs down, such as carpooling. “Is it really going to stay this high from now on?” Marie wondered. “I really hope not. They are making it harder to drive a car.”

The Ontario government introduced a cap-and-trade scheme on Jan. 1 in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent before the year 2050.

**Photo by Lynda Versluis**

The Ontario government introduced a cap-and-trade scheme on Jan. 1 in order to try and reduce emissions by 80 per cent before the year 2050. This system really isn’t meant to make much of a difference for the average household. It is meant to hold businesses accountable for the amount of carbon they are putting into the air.

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To join the fight against climate change and lower your costs, you can choose to:
- Eat and buy local
- Travel cleanly
- Practice conservation
- Drink tap water
The fight for equality and pockets

By MEGAN BEAM Staff Writer

The general idea of women's clothing pockets has always been present in their jeans simply because they haven't been given the capability of having their belongings in a large bag or purse is no excuse for having pockets and not allowing women to carry their items.

But this isn't a new problem. There is a history of women's clothing not having pockets. It was only in recent years, as smartphone continued to grow in size, that the women started speaking up, because to any woman who had to endure having to use the pockets given to them by fashion designers knows there is no feasible way an Apple iPhone or a Samsung smartphone will be fit in the pocket.

"Having pockets would be all the difference in the world starting up and being able to store all the things that I need," says Hess. "It would be nice. Maybe only a few items, but it would be nice to not have to carry a purse or bag around with me." Hess also says she isn't the only woman who has to carry purses and purchase pockets and shorts designed for men because she not only finds them to be a more comfortable fit and of higher quality, but for the simple reason that they possess real pockets.

The general response as to why designers seem to be excluding women's pockets from their designs is simple, it has to do with the way men's pockets were designed, and the way they were worn.

"For me, my preference is being married, and the other 10 years of my life I'm single," says Hess. "Having a pocket would personally, are very frustrating."

While men's pockets were excluded from women's clothing, women weren't completely left out. While men's pockets were excluded from women's clothing, women weren't completely left out. They were capable of carrying their belongings, and were able to do so, but in a different way.

"I honestly could tell you that we don't have them," says Hess. "I would rather carry my keys, phone and wallet around with me, but I am one of the people that agree."

A man is able to grab his keys, phone and wallet when heading out for the day and is able to place them in his pockets. When women are doing the exact same thing, they are often forced to carry a purse, or bring a bag, which is not the option that they desire.

"Women don't have pockets."

"The option wouldn't hurt."

With that being said, some companies have started to hear the cries and have answered with starting to add pockets on women's clothing to their brand of jeans. Which brings us to the question of women fake pockets on their pants, because women saying they would like to have pockets means they want them solely for design and fashion. Giving women the pockets and the look they want their pants to have while also minimizing the extra bulk a real pocket would bring is the overall design and decoration. It's humorous to think that even though it has been more than 60 years since Dior gave women the option to fake pockets, women are still having to deal with industries which simply focus on women constantly dodging the pocket's and the look they want their pants to have while also minimizing the extra bulk a real pocket would bring.

"Fake pockets, for me personally are very frustrating."

"I always found those easy to brush off and ignore."

Looking back at this issue, it is more than just women not having pockets. The larger and more overarching issue is that women are constantly dodging the pocket's and the look they want their pants to have while also minimizing the extra bulk a real pocket would bring. It seems to be common practice within the fashion industry as mid-range fashion and does not mean that the pockets are "too splashy" or of "danish hourglass figure."

"Fake pockets, for me personally are very frustrating."

"I always found those easy to brush off and ignore."
Elizabeth marks 65 years as queen

By ABUBAKR ELGHUL
Special to the News

Feb. 6, 2017 marked the 65th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II’s reign over the Commonwealth, becoming the first queen in history to celebrate a Sapphire Jubilee. The Queen decided to observe this landmark event quietly at her estate in Norfolk, U.K., where she will be spending time away from the public eye with no engagements planned, according to media reports. Public celebrations began early in the morning with the Royal Gun Salute commemorating 65 years of the monarchy, with a 41-gun salute at Green Park and a 62-gun salute at the Tower of London. The Queen celebrated her 90th birthday last year and is the longest living reigning monarch of the passing of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, of Thailand. The only other queen she could compete with in terms of reign was Queen Victoria, who was two years shy of her own Sapphire Jubilee after ruling for 63 years. British Prime Minister Theresa May made a statement congratulating Queen Elizabeth stating that the Sapphire Jubilee “marks yet another remarkable milestone for our remarkable Queen. I know the nation will join with me today in celebrating and giving thanks for the lifetime of service Her Majesty the Queen has given to our country and to the Commonwealth,” said May. “It is a testament to her selfless devotion to the nation that she is not marking becoming the first monarch to reign for 65 years with any special celebration, but instead getting on with the job to which she has dedicated her life.” Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also made comment in the form of a Twitter post, with the message, “Today marks the Queen’s 65th anniversary on the throne — her #SapphireJubilee. Warmest congratulations & best wishes on behalf of Canadians.” Jubilees are held to commemorate special anniversaries of long-term ruling monarchies, with milestones including Silver (25 years), Ruby (40 years), Gold (50 years), Diamond (60 years), Sapphire (65 years) and finally Platinum (70 years).

The Queen last celebrated her Diamond Jubilee on Jan. 8, 2012 in which she held numerous events for the occasion including a tour of Britain. Only four rulers in history have celebrated a Platinum Jubilee, including Louis XIV of France, Johann II, Prince of Liechtenstein, previously mentioned King Bhumibol, of Thailand, and Sobhuza II, of Swaziland, who also happens to be the longest reigning ruler in history at an 82-year reign. Should Queen Elizabeth continue her rule until the age of 95, in the year 2022, she will become the fifth.

World Hijab Day about awareness

St. Catharines mosque opened its doors to the public for World Hijab Day to teach about traditional attire

By ALEX YORKE
Staff Writer

Feb. 6, 2017 World Hijab Day, the St. Catharines mosque opened its doors to members of the public.

Visitors were invited to try on a scarf of their choice, take a photo, take it home and learn more about the reasons why women choose to wear the hijab.

The organizer of the event, Bilkis Al-haddad, says this is the second year that the event has taken place in St. Catharines.

The event is “for knowledge (and) for awareness,” Al-haddad says. “If they (people who aren’t Muslims) know why we are wearing it how we wear it, they’ll have some kind of knowledge and they’ll know. We are wearing it for our creator.”

The hijab means “a covering,” says Al-haddad. “It (the hijab) is very comfortable and I was surprised how nice I looked in it.”

Al-haddad added her main focus is to have her daughter growing up “understanding that we may not all have the same beliefs but we all can still love each other.”

Irrah Mohamud, a volunteer at the event who began to wear the hijab in her mid-30s, says the hijab is her identity.

“It’s who I am, it represents me,” says Mohamud. “Without it, I wouldn’t be complete.”

She says the hijab is a personal statement that we may not all have the same beliefs but we all can still love each other.

She goes on to add: “What I find to be oppressive is when people give me problems for wearing it and people tell me to go back to my own country.”

She says the irony is that she was born here and her ancestors originate from Britain. “We’re just like everybody else, it just looks a little bit different. That’s why I just want to do my thing and live my life and do what makes me happy.”

Organizers of the event estimated at least 300 people came to the event.

Elizabeth Scott, assistant to St. Catharines Liberal MP Chris Bittle, was one of those people.

“It (the hijab) is very comfortable and I was surprised how nice I looked in it.”

Seeing it on myself I have a greater appreciation of how beautiful it is. Not only aesthetically but what it could mean to the individual person who chooses to wear it,” says Scott.

Scott says she’s very pleased the mosque opened its arms to people who aren’t Muslims so they could “get to know what the mosque does” and “just to feel more neighbourly since people are afraid due to knowing little about the culture and religion.”

Melissa DeBeau and her daughter Grace were also part of those who participated in the event.

“We’re here to spread love and I really want to teach my daughter that young age,” says DeBeau. “It is important for her to understand why women wear the hijab and know that different is good.”

She added her main focus is to have her daughter growing up “understanding that we may not all have the same beliefs but we all can still love each other.”

Irrah Mohamud, a volunteer at the event who began to wear the hijab in her mid-30s, says the hijab is her identity.

“It’s who I am, it represents me,” says Mohamud. “Without it, I wouldn’t be complete.”

She asks people not to judge women who choose to wear the hijab.

“Don’t think they were forced to wear it by their fathers or their husbands. Just ask. If you have a question, just go up to them and ask,” she said.

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Hunters Pointe shuts down

By COREY LEBLANC  Staff Writer

For the past five seasons, the Niagara Knights practice course and the host of the team’s invitational tournament has been Hunters Pointe Golf Course, in Welland.

But the tournament next season will have a new host, as Hunters Pointe officially closed its doors on Jan. 24. The team staff and Matthew Davies, director of athletics and recreation, must now begin the search for a place for the Niagara Knights golf team to lace up their cleats. This comes at a good time, however.

According to Davies, the athletic department was in the middle of reviewing its finances and were putting together tendering offers to other courses.

“What we do is we take a look at all the courses that are available and we sit down and we evaluate the considerations and also look at the price points and then make a decision,” said Davies.

The executives at the college and the coaches together must review these finances every season and contracts for the host course are usually given on a two- to three-year basis, according to Davies.

Until such a time as the decision is made, the Knights will not only be leaving the location of their invitational up in the air, but also leaving their players without an official practice facility, putting more emphasis on the importance of finding a course to call home.

Proximity is certainly something that we would take into consideration because we want our student athletes that are on the golf team to be able to get practice rounds in without having to travel too far,” said Davies.

“The quality of the golf course and sort of the ancillary services, whether it’s the driving range, the putting green, the short-game space, sort of that training avenue. They’re all considerations,”

This comes at a time when the golf team is under such high praise after claiming three gold and one bronze medal at this year’s OCAA championships. Team staff now have a little more than six months to tender offers to local courses and see what kind of services best fit their needs.

Davies is not concerned about finding a suitor in the Niagara region, given the abundance of golf courses the area has to offer.

“I don’t think that’s something we’re concerned with at this stage,” said Davies. “It’s just the concern of how close to either campus is it going to be. Is it going to be a neighbour course or is it going to be one that’s a further drive? I’m pretty confident that we will find a future host for the tournament.”

Even though the process to find a new home is only beginning, the team being optimistic is a good sign for the team in the 2017-2018 season.

More over, the team can finally close the book on Hunters Pointe after five seasons of dedication to the college.

“Although we thoroughly enjoyed our time at Hunters Pointe and are sad to see them go, we’re just going to follow due process and reach out to the Niagara golf community and see what fit there is in terms of courses and our Knights golf team,” said Davies.

Wherever the Knights decide to tee up next season, it’s guaranteed that the home field will provide advantage.

How this will drive the defending champions, will only be decided in time.

Three Knights up for awards

By COREY LEBLANC  Staff Writer

It’s award season. Niagara College will be sending two coaches and one student athlete to the 5th Annual Niagara Awards Breakfast on Feb. 16, at Club Roma, in St. Catharines.

The awards are a tremendous honour and encapsulate success, dedication, performance displayed by the Knight’s players and coaches alike in 2016.

Of the nominees here at the college, two of them are representing the golf squad, a team that greatly exceeded their expectations last season.

Here’s a brief look at the college’s three nominees and their accomplishments during the college’s 2016 season.

Josiah Dixon  Golfer

Bognor, Ont. native, Josiah Dixon had a marvelous season. He’s a front-runner to accept the Male-Athlete of the Year award. This season he tied for second at the Knights Classic and the Georgian Invitational. He also won gold at both the OCAA and the CCAA championships as he capped off what was a truly impressive season. His clutch performances and determination might just take him over the top.

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RUGBY: America Six Nations Week 1

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Josiah Dixon takes a swing. PHOTOS BY COREY LEBLANC
Dubai is the epitome of luxury and wealth, one of the seven Emirates of the UAE and home to the world’s tallest skyscraper. One would imagine travelling in this city would be only for the rich and famous. Yet a few tips can help to make this trip more affordable.

GET TO DUBAI

Unfortunately, there is no secret to getting a cheap flight to Dubai. With that in mind, most destinations have a high and a low season. Flights to the Middle East tend to be cheaper around the months of April and May.

A PLACE TO STAY

With hotels such as the famous Burj Al Arab and the Armani hotel inside the Burj Khalifa, the tallest skyscraper, Dubai’s hotels are the second most expensive after Geneva. This city is not very big, and if you look for non-centric hotels you will find good deals, especially close to the airport.

GETTING FROM A TO B

As soon as you step out of the airport, luxury cars and black sedans line up at the arrival doors. Unless one of these is waiting for you, then you must take a taxi, but naturally, these are expensive, too.

So, to get around Dubai on a budget, you want to do it on the subway. First, you must buy a Nol card. There are four, depending on how often you plan to use the subway.

The fares start from 4 AED (United Arab Emirates Dirham, where 3.67 AED is equal to about $1 US) plus a one-time 2 AED card. However, being Dubai, card prices and fares escalate quickly so that you can gain access to the golden wagons, where exclusive seats and Wi-Fi await.

There are many ways to get across the creek that divides Dubai. One of them is the Abra, a traditional wooden boat that only costs 1 AED. This is a true Dubai experience.

SHOPPING

The Dubai Mall is the largest in the world and it is worth taking one day to walk around it. To live the real experience, though, you must go to the traditional markets. There’s nothing like an afternoon tea surrounded by heavy spice smells and colourful crafts. Don’t forget to bargain your way to better deals.

VISITING PLACES

If you happen to be rich, Dubai can be a grown-up playground. You can drive F1 cars. You can do all sorts of extreme sports. You can take camel rides. You can even ski in the 50 Celsius desert. The good news is that there are many more things to do on a budget. To learn more about the culture, the Sheikh mosque is the place to go. It offers free tours in the mornings, except for Mondays.

Take a chill day on the same beach as the Buj Al Arab, the hotel where Andre Agassi and Roger Federer played a tennis match on the floating helipad.

Go to the Dubai Museum. It’s free and it tells you all you must know about the destination’s history.

At night, suit up and get a good place at the edge of Dubai Mall’s lake. Amaze yourself with the Las Vegas-style fountain dance show with Burj Khalifa in the background.

With these tips in mind, pack your bags, get a ticket and go. The people are very friendly and there is something for everyone.