

# Waterfront

*Clink! We'll cheers to the upcoming Best. Summer. Ever. We are due.*



DIANE GARDISCH

20

It's the final countdown! Nah, just kidding. It's our May 2-4 countdown.

21

Safety alert: why your lake needs an automatic external defibrillator.

23

Yay, better Wi-Fi is soon coming to the cottage. (You're on mute.)

24

Grill these trendy alternatives to meat. Seitan in, tofu out.

COUNTDOWN

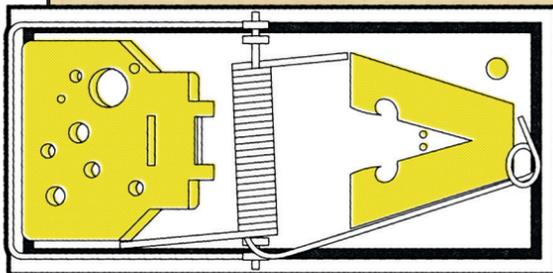
# MAY 2-4 À GOGO!

The top 10 things to do on opening weekend\*

\*We did not just make this up. This was based on your social media feedback.

10

Check the mouse traps.



6

Celebrate not finding any mouse corpses by drinking a big glass of wine.

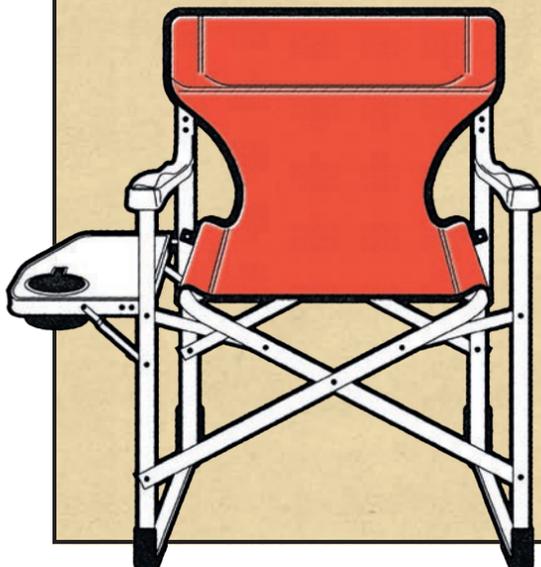
5

Read the log book from last summer.

Try to decipher your own penmanship.

4

Set up the dock chairs; sit down for a moment.



9

Fill up the beer fridge.

3

Yell to the neighbours, "I'm not coming near you unless you've had the vaccine! But nice to see you again!"

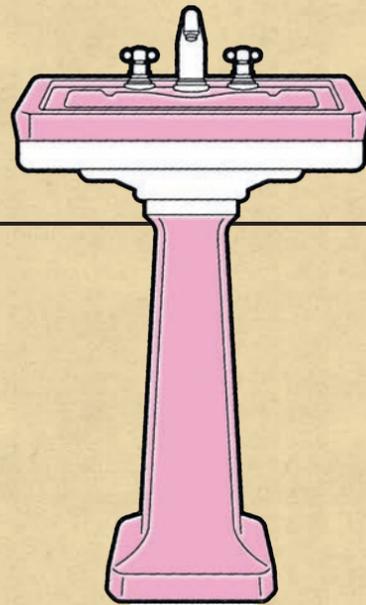
2

Jump in the lake even if the water is cold as reverse hell.

1

Smile.

Because—aww yeah!—you're at the cottage again.



8

Turn on the water.

Pray that there are no plumbing problems.

7

Deal with the inevitable plumbing problems.



TRIBUTE

## The captain of the cottage

**TIM DODD WAS** always happiest on Panache Lake, Ont., where he canoed, barbecued, and busied himself in his cottage workshop. Six years ago, Tim crafted an eight-foot replica of a pirate ship to mark his water intake. The three-masted barque (right), complete with mermaid figurehead, became a fun and striking landmark for cottagers all over the lake.

Sadly, Tim died last summer at age 74 from a heart attack at camp. He was fetching a few tools when he collapsed. Family members took turns performing chest compressions at camp and during the 15-minute boat trip to the marina; another 10 minutes elapsed before the ambulance arrived. Tim was resuscitated but never regained consciousness, dying two days later in the hospital.

His three adult kids decided the best way to honour him would be to acquire life-saving devices that could prevent another family from experiencing the same kind of loss. In late fall, three portable defibrillators were installed along the lake, and "come summertime we're planning on putting a few more in remote areas that are boat-access," says



Kathryn Dodd-Digby, Tim's daughter, who'd launched a fundraising campaign for the equipment in late August. The GoFundMe drive surpassed its \$10,000 goal within weeks.

About half of the contributions came from Panache Lakers, quite a few of whom had met Tim personally. "He was loved by so many," says Kathryn. "He was quick with a smile and a wave and

was more than ecstatic to show new friends around. I think he'd be extremely proud that we're taking something positive out of such a tragedy and doing something to help people on the lake that he loved so much," she says.

As for the pirate ship? Tim's family will now maintain the elaborate buoy in memory of its builder, as a testament to his creativity and spirit.—JIM MOODIE

TOP PHOTOS: COURTESY JIM MOODIE

## What is an AED?



The Panache Lake model

An automated external defibrillator, or AED, is a small, lightweight, portable device that can restart a heart by delivering a shock via electrodes.

### Better at saving lives

Research says that nine out of 10 cardiac arrests (outside a hospital) result in death. But when a bystander uses an AED, the chance of survival triples; when the AED delivers a shock, it increases five-fold.

### Easy operation

An AED only administers a jolt as required. If the electrodes can't detect a "shockable rhythm," the machine instructs the user—usually via voice command—to perform CPR (an AED won't shock someone with a normal heartbeat).

### Worth the cost

Units usually costs between \$1,600 and \$2,000; you can buy them through companies that sell first-aid supplies.—J. M.

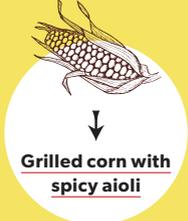
For more info, visit the Heart & Stroke Foundation website: [heartandstroke.ca](http://heartandstroke.ca).



IN OUR OPINION

# Grill this, not that

If you haven't jumped on the vegetarian/plant-based/chia-seed-filled bandwagon, now is the time! But creepy lab-grown burgers that "bleed" fake blood are, well, creepy. And Beyond Meat needs to check itself before it wrecks itself. So here's our Non-Meat Trend Report 2021: what to grill—and, more importantly, what to avoid.



LEGEND

- ↑ **GRILL THIS AND YOU'LL BE STRAIGHT FIRE.** Uh, if that still means cool.
- ↔ **MEH.** Go ahead and serve it. If you really want to.
- ↓ **WE ARE SO OVER THIS.** No more.

Make any of this stuff taste delicious! For our grill guide to rubs, sauces, and glazes, see p. 78.

WHO WORE IT BETTER?

The cottage fashion win of 2020 was masks paired with PFDs.



He did!

REPORTER

## Big bats, a Lyme leap & kitty is lit

This is batty

Holy colony, Batman! Earlier this year, renovators in Unity, Sask., found nearly 400 bats hibernating in the attic of a curling rink. A wildlife removal service spent most of February carefully extricating the 386 big brown bats—a common species—placing them in plastic tubs, and transporting them to a wildlife rehabilitator. There, staff gave the bats water and fed them mealworms to replenish the fat stores they'd lost. The goal was to—*shh*, go back to sleep now—encourage the bats to return to hibernation.

Injection of hope

There could be a new preventative shot on the horizon. (It's not a vaccine. Because it's not always about you, COVID-19.) Late last year, a Lyme disease-preventing drug was approved for human clinical trials; the first trial began early this year in the U.S. The drug, when injected once a year, would give the patient Lyme antibodies directly; these would kill bacteria from a tick bite before the bacteria could harm the patient. Unfortunately, spring 2023 is the earliest that we'd see these meds available. So keep it up with those tick checks, cottagers.

Happy as a cat

And in other pest news...a recent study out of Japan suggests that catnip does more than just get kitties high. It also protects them from mosquitoes. Researchers covered house cats in catnip iridoids—defense chemicals found in certain plants—and exposed them to mosquitoes. The bugs hassled the catnip-free subjects, but mostly ignored the ones treated with iridoids. When one of the researchers tested the iridoids on himself—one arm doused, one left untreated—he got the same results. Does this mean catnip is the next human bug repellent? Well, you could try rolling around in the stuff during mosquito season to see what happens. But we wouldn't recommend that just yet.

PHOTO: JENNIFER SMUKAVIC



## BUY THE WAY

## Dream in condo

**The search:** 52-year-old Chatham, Ont., resident Shari Blackburn has always had a connection with the outdoors. She spent her childhood swimming on Lake Erie, and as a single mom, she passed her love of nature to her son, Tim. She'd take him kayaking and hiking, but it was after she began renting a friend's cottage in Bracebridge, Ont., that they both developed a fondness for Muskoka. "It was so beautiful and peaceful," says Shari. "I dreamt of buying a cottage there by the time I was 50."

Whenever she made the five-hour drive up from Chatham, Shari would check out local listings. While the average Muskoka cottage sells for approximately \$1,000,000, her budget was

\$350,000. Shari works as an HR manager at Barry Callebaut, a chocolate manufacturer, but she still had a mortgage on her home and was helping with Tim's university tuition. "All I really wanted was something I could call my own, with a roof that didn't leak," says Shari, with a laugh.

**The compromise:** After turning 50 in 2018, she'd given up on her dream. Priced out of Muskoka, Shari considered expanding her search to cottages in the Kawarthas or closer to home, "but none of them came close to matching the Muskoka landscape," says Shari, "so I decided to get a condo within my budget." In September 2019, she viewed

a two-storey one-bedroom loft-style 862-sq. ft. condo at Muskoka Bay Resort, just outside of Gravenhurst, Ont. The place was adjacent to hiking trails and was only a 15-minute walk from the wharf in downtown Gravenhurst. Better yet, it was listed for \$344,900. The following month, she pulled approximately \$100,000 in equity from her house to buy the condo for \$330,000. Condo owners are required to sign up for a resort membership that costs about \$3,000 annually, but includes access to a gym, steam room, and several pools. Shari pays \$208 in monthly fees to the resort, which covers exterior maintenance. "When you arrive there and that work is all done for you, it's amazing."

**The silver lining:** To help residents offset costs, the resort offers a rental program. In exchange for 40 per cent of the earnings and a small cleaning fee, the resort lists Shari's condo when she isn't using it. All she has to do is schedule dates for when she'll be at the condo. In October alone, she made approximately \$2,000 in profits.

Nowadays, Shari is up at least once a month, and Tim, now 30, joins her occasionally. "Maybe I'll sell the condo or maybe I'll retire here, who knows," says Shari. "For now, I'm just looking forward to the next getaway."—ALI AMAD

COURTESY SHARI BLACKBURN

## OWNER ADVICE

### SHARI'S THREE REASONS TO OWN A CONDO OVER A COTTAGE:

**1 You can invest in real estate on a small budget—if you adjust your expectations**  
"I didn't get my dream place, but by putting my money into a cheaper condo, I still have something to enjoy that I can hopefully make a profit with," says Shari.

**2 You don't have to worry about maintenance and upkeep**  
"I didn't want to buy something that meant more work and less time to relax," says Shari. Her monthly condo fees cover landscaping, grass cutting, and snow removal. And since she's a resort resident, Blackburn can rest assured someone is keeping an eye on the place when she's not there.

**3 Condos offer flexibility**  
"Cottages are mostly more secluded, which does have its advantages," says Shari. "But I'm the type of person who likes having the option to go to the gym, get a drink at a bar, or stay in for the night." Shari can also work from her condo because it has reliable internet, not always a given in cottage country.

# Waterfront

Warning: contents of this section are overtly in-your-face super Canadian.



KYLE METCALF

**20** We rank some of this country's most pest-acular creatures.

**21** So you think you're Canadian? Take our quick survey.

**23** When life gives you a pandemic, you build yourself a boat.

**24** TV at the cottage? Gasp. Someone get the smelling salts!



COTTAGE LOGIC

# Canada's most unwanted

**The beaver** Cottage pest or beloved national emblem? Probably both, since this buck-toothed rodent isn't going to stop chewing on your trees or be removed from our five-cent coin any time soon. Well, if the beaver gets to be on Canadian currency, why not some of our *other* pesky critters? Here are 10 of Canada's most maligned creatures—whether they deserve our wrath or not—monetized in ascending order of perceived annoyingness.\*

<p><b>¢25 coin</b></p> <p><b>Ant</b></p>	<p><b>¢10 coin</b></p> <p><b>Water snake</b></p>	<p><b>¢5 coin</b></p> <p><b>Porcupine</b></p>
<p><b>\$1 coin</b></p> <p><b>Crow</b></p> <p><i>Loud, loud, loud.</i></p> <p>But crows <i>are</i> very clever, possibly even smarter than primates. Respect.</p>	<p><b>\$2 coin</b></p> <p><b>White-tailed deer</b></p> <p>Deer might destroy your entire garden while spreading ticks. <i>Thanks for that.</i></p> <p>Well, at least they're cute.</p>	
<p><b>\$5 bill</b></p> <p><b>Woodpecker</b></p> <p><i>(Of any sort. Take your pick, Royal Canadian Mint.)</i></p> <p>Yes, they annihilate your wood siding. But that could be because you have carpenter ants. The more you know. <i>"You're welcome,"</i>—Woodpeckers.</p>		
<p><b>\$10 bill</b></p> <p><b>Raccoon</b></p> <p>Just be glad your cottage isn't in a large urban centre, where raccoons outnumber people.</p>		
<p><b>\$20 bill</b></p> <p><b>Mosquito</b></p> <p>Mossies are a potentially disease-spreading pest. But you do have some defenses against them: bug spray, mosquito netting, winter.</p>		
<p><b>\$50 bill</b></p> <p><b>Deer mouse</b></p> <p>"How do I successfully mouse-proof the [insert any noun]?"</p> <p><i>You don't. Oh, you try. But...you don't.</i></p>		

**MOST HATED**

**\$100 bill**

## Red squirrel

The C-note goes to the red squirrel. Did five teenagers break into your cabin and trash the place? No. That was a red squirrel that fell down the chimney.

**One squirrel.**

\*Okay, so who actually *deserves* to be Canada's national creature? See p. 55

REPORTER

## BOAT SAFETY BEAT, REAL ESTATE DEAL & HYBRID HYPE

CHECKLIST? CHECK

The recreational boating industry breathed a collective sigh of relief in late spring when Transport Canada announced that it was not going to scrap the Rental Boat Safety Checklist. In the fall, TC had proposed removing the checklist as "acceptable proof of competency" for boat renters who had not taken a boating course, citing safety concerns. Keeping the checklist is the right decision, says Sara Anghel, the president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association Canada. "Removing it wouldn't make our waters safer, and it would punish boat rental companies already struggling under pandemic-related restrictions."

A HUNK 'A BURNING-HOT REAL ESTATE

Flashback alert: the Conestogo Lake, Ont., theme-room cottage we profiled a decade ago ("The Rooms With the Views," Spring '11) went up for sale earlier this year. For \$700,000, a lucky prospective cottager had the chance to score waterfront access, two firepits, a hot tub and tiki bar, and two bunkies. But more importantly, since furnishings were included, the new owner could also get all 1,100 sq. ft. of wacky decor—including a Coca-Cola malt shop-style kitchen, an Elvis-inspired bedroom, a psychedelic Dr. Seuss bathroom, and, of course, a dungeon-like medieval master suite complete with replica swords and crossbows. Cosy, right?

THE ISLANDS OF DR. MOREAU

Turns out that a hybrid mammal species has been quietly living in B.C.'s Haida Gwaii for thousands of years—and we're only finding out about it now. A rabbit? A wholphin? No, it's just an ordinary-looking weasel. The "Haida ermine" likely resulted from interbreeding between North American ermines and Eurasian ermines. The initial interspecies hookups probably happened about 300,000 years ago. The hybrid then would have evolved mostly in isolation. Scientists say that this discovery reinforces the theory that island archipelagos allow for the emergence of "unique" animals. Cool! Maybe someone will find a centaur living in Georgian Bay.

SURVEY SAYS

# HOW CANADIAN ARE YOU?

A cottager questionnaire

1

You eat ketchup chips on the regular. (See p. 22.) Or, you eat them, then say, "This is a weird flavour; why did we invent it?"

Always  Never  Sometimes

2

You love Canadian wildlife. (See. p. 55.)

Always  Never  Sometimes

3

But you also kinda hate Canadian wildlife. (See p. 20.) Of course, it's a *fond* hatred.

Always  Never  Sometimes

4

You cook over the campfire. (Did someone say stick bread and foil packets? For recipes, see p. 84.)

Always  Never  Sometimes

5

You use a Robertson screwdriver, the most Canadian of all toolbox items. (See p. 33.)

Always  Never  Sometimes

6

You watch hockey, and shout at the TV as if it will actually affect the outcome of the game. (See p. 39.)

Always  Never  Sometimes

7

You spend time in a canoe. (Got one? See p. 29 for tips on how to protect it.)

Always  Never  Sometimes

8

When you see the word "Roots," you think, Oh, that's a Canadian brand. (See p. 66.) Unless you're looking in the mirror. Then you think, This pandemic has been hell on my hair colour.

Always  Never  Sometimes

9

You're deeply concerned about unintentionally harming your lake, and you will do anything to protect it. (See p. 35.)

Always  Never  Sometimes

10

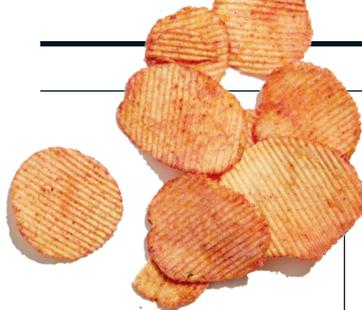
You re-purpose old Muskoka chairs into something else, to keep the spirit of the chair alive. Because *Muskoka chair*. (Check this out: p. 31.)

Always  Never  Sometimes



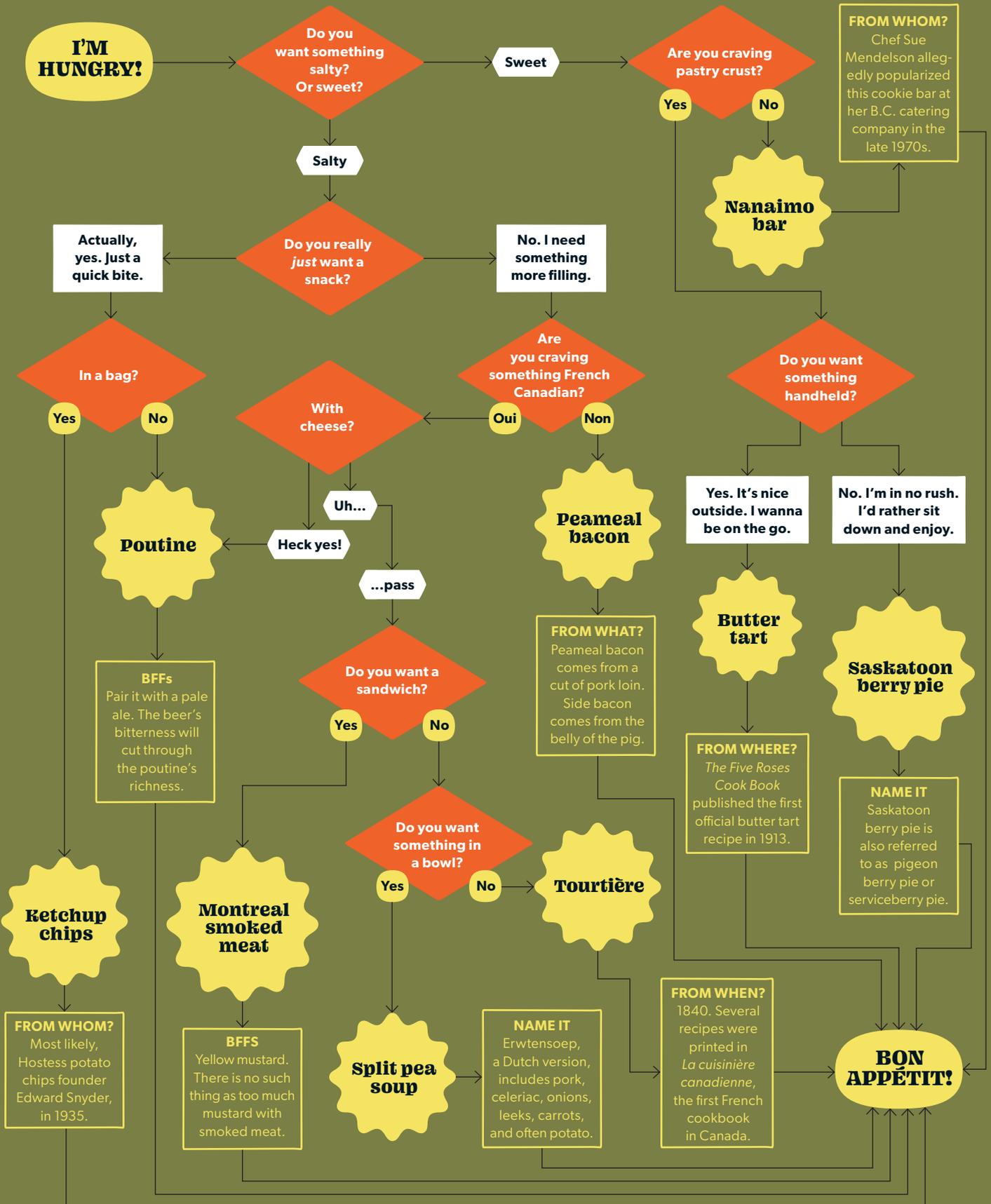
If you answered anything to any of these questions, you're very Canadian. Even if you didn't complete this survey at all, you're probably still very Canadian. One hundred per cent Canadian.

THIS PAGE: LIAM MOGAN, ROOTS CANADA; GRUSHIN, DAN HUSSEY & TASIA OMELYANENKO. OPPOSITE: CHRIS CHAN.



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What Canadian-made treat should you eat this Canada Day?





IN SHORT

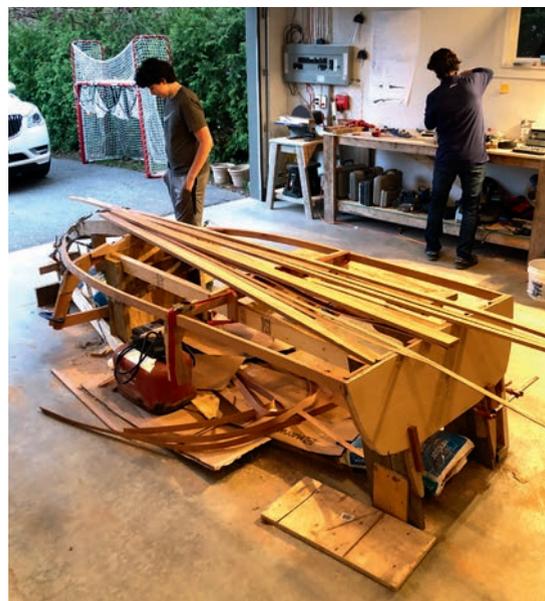
## COVID FLOATED HIS BOAT

**AFTER 13 MONTHS OF PLANNING**, sourcing, sanding, and epoxying, Aaron Fremont, a cottager on Kennisis Lake, Ont., finally has a boat. But the process has been eight years in the making: this civil engineer ordered the boat plans from a magazine in 2012. He started gathering timber and drawing the first few sketches before putting the project aside to build a house with his wife, Michelle. And, as is often the case with large-scale projects like this, he put it aside waiting for the “perfect” time.

It turns out that perfect time was the pandemic—it gave Aaron the push he needed to brush off the dusty box with plans for the ‘Squirt’ model from marine design company Gen-L and get back to work. He purchased lights and a heater to keep his workshop—the garage—comfortable while he worked through the winter. “It’s the kind of project that takes a good amount of time and under normal circumstances, I wouldn’t have had that time without a sacrifice to other obligations,” he says.

Aaron chose to customize his boat with vintage flair. He sourced multiple 1950s engines—not knowing which one would work best with the boat—and an antique steering wheel from Kijiji and used dark red mahogany wood. He wanted something that “looked cool and was new, but embraced the old-style charm,” he says. And because building a boat isn’t a big enough project, Aaron also decided to restore two of the vintage engines to potentially use with the boat. “I was a little bit apprehensive taking them apart because I don’t have that much experience working in mechanics,” he says. “It was a lot of disassembling, reassembling, and disassembling again until I got it right.”

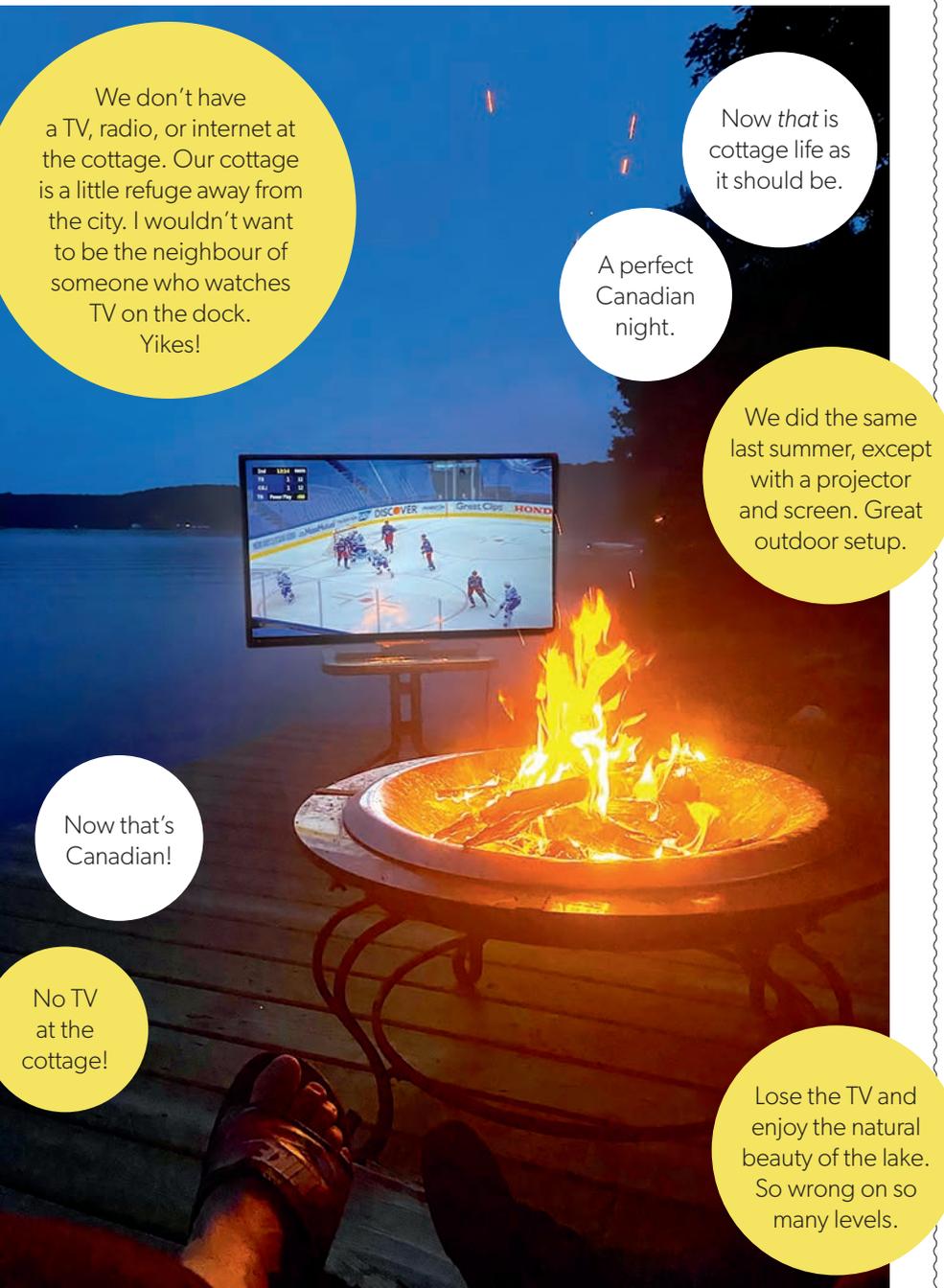
The 11x4 boat is now sitting at the Fremont cottage, ready for a summer on the water. “This experience has been very therapeutic for me,” Aaron says. “When I had a long day at work on the computer, it gave me the opportunity to get up and use my hands in a different way. I’m going to miss it.”—MARIE WAINE



INTO THE INSTA-VERSE

# UMM...WHAT THE DOCK?

After we posted this shot, our Instagram feed exploded with comments. Ultimate Canadian cottage moment or ultimate Canadian cottage blasphemy? You be the judge!



We don't have a TV, radio, or internet at the cottage. Our cottage is a little refuge away from the city. I wouldn't want to be the neighbour of someone who watches TV on the dock. Yikes!

Now that is cottage life as it should be.

A perfect Canadian night.

We did the same last summer, except with a projector and screen. Great outdoor setup.

Now that's Canadian!

No TV at the cottage!

Lose the TV and enjoy the natural beauty of the lake. So wrong on so many levels.

WHO KNEW?

# 90

The percentage of beer consumed in Canada that's also manufactured in Canada.

Try 'em! Cottage Life staff picks:



**Great Lakes Brewery Canuck Pale Ale**



**Bench Brewing Jordan Harbour Pale Ale**

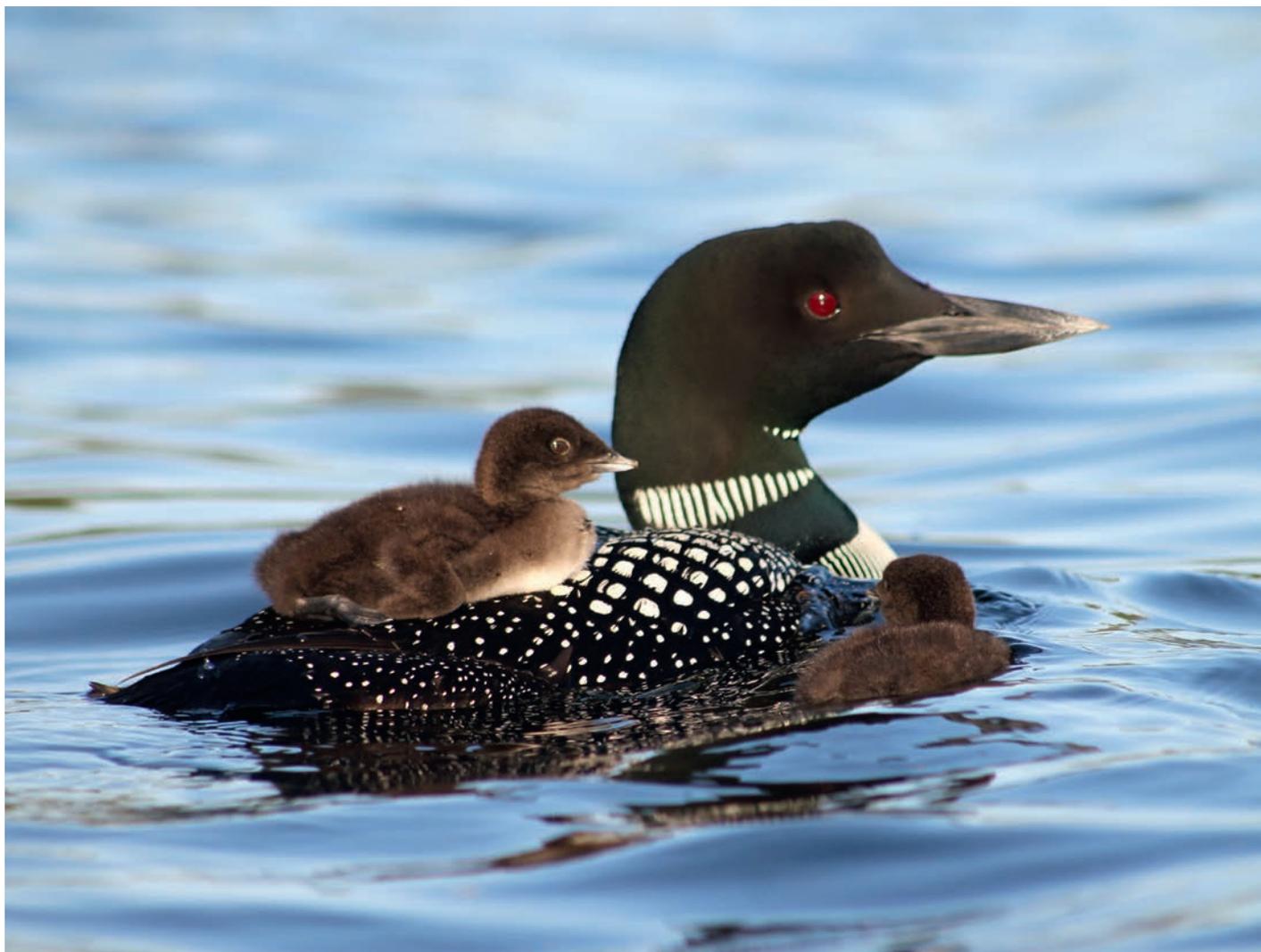


**Town Brewery Outside Jokes Pale Ale**



**Rouge River Brewing Company Apricot Mango Peach Sour**

Source: Beer Canada



## NATURE

## The kids are not alright

**IF YOU'VE EVER FOUND YOURSELF** in despair over a late ice-off delaying your boat launch, know that the cottage's unofficial mascot, the common loon, feels the same way.

A collaboration between Birds Canada and Acadia University researchers suggests that late ice-off dates are negatively associated with common loon reproduction. The research includes 16 years' worth of loon surveys, conducted off and on between 1982 and 2019; it shows that years with later ice-off dates are associated with fewer loon pairs, fewer breeding attempts per pair, and fewer young per pair.

Common loons are particular about their lakes, and usually return to the

same lake year after year, typically just after ice-off, says Kristin Bianchini, a waterbirds and wetland scientist with Birds Canada who worked on the study with long-time Ottawa loon researcher Robert Alvo. They'll spend up to six weeks socializing and establishing their breeding territory. That can involve the birds developing a new pair bond or re-establishing a prior one, and defending their territory from other loons looking to move in.

Ice-covered lakes are a no-go for the common loon. Loons need a significant stretch of open water—up to half a kilometer—to generate enough speed for lift-off, so landing on an icy lake might mean the loon won't be able to

take off again. To avoid this, the birds will perform reconnaissance flights to check out if there's ice cover, says Bianchini. If so, they'll retreat south and try again later.

The researchers still don't know exactly *how* late ice cover negatively impacts common loon breeding. But there is one factor that could play a role: black flies. Specifically, the species of black fly that is adapted to feed on common loons—the loon black fly. In Aprils with cool temperatures (in which we also see later ice-offs), these biters live longer and are more abundant. Imagine the loon parents, says Bianchini, trying to incubate and protect their eggs while being swarmed by black flies. "It's pretty bad for them in some years, and it will cause them to abandon their nests. Just like people, they can't take the black flies."—GRACE HUNTER



BUY THE WAY

## A friend in deed

**The prophecy:** Joe Wong recalls a promise that his friend Mark Luz made when Joe was the best man at Mark's wedding in Southamptton, Ont., in 2000. "He told me, 'One day we're all going to own cottages here,'" says Joe, a 47-year-old University of Toronto professor. Over the next decade, Joe made the drive from Toronto to several Southamptton cottage rentals with his wife, Jennifer, and son, Oliver. Eventually, Mark bought a cottage in the area, and they'd often be joined by another old friend, Bryce McCandless, his wife, Liz, and their three kids.

They would spend summers biking, playing tennis, and enjoying the sandy beaches of Lake Huron. Over beers at

the 2011 Honda Indy Toronto, Joe and Bryce decided to make Mark's prophecy a reality. "Instead of spending money on separate rentals, we thought, why don't we just buy a cottage together?" says Joe.

**The arrangement:** The pair set a budget of \$350,000 and began searching for a cottage that could fit all eight members of both families. That fall, they found an 1,800-sq. ft., four-bedroom, three-bathroom cottage a short walk from the beach and Mark's cottage. The families bought the place for \$320,000, agreeing to split the down payment, as well as the \$2,600 mortgage and any maintenance costs.



Each couple took a room, and the kids sleep in bunk beds in the other two. They alternate two-week periods in the summer, with the Wongs taking Thanksgiving and the McCandlesses opting for Easter. "But we always try to be together for New Year's and Canada Day," says Joe.

**The silver lining:** After a decade of ownership, the sharing arrangement has stayed intact. Bryce handles all the financial bookkeeping, while each family puts about \$250 into an account every month for minor purchases and repairs. They also consult each other on any needed major repairs, such as redoing the upper floors or replacing the roof, which they did last year. After the mortgage is paid off in 2023, Joe and Bryce have agreed to give each other the opportunity to sell their share. "It's good to have that financial flexibility," says Joe. "But I doubt either of us will ever want to sell."

Both men are keen to keep the cottage in their families for future generations. "Bryce and I always say that it's the best purchase we've ever made," says Joe. "Our families are creating irreplaceable memories together, and I couldn't imagine doing this with anybody else."—ALI AMAD

COURTESY JOE WONG

OWNER ADVICE

## JOE WONG'S THREE FINANCIAL TIPS FOR CO-OWNING A COTTAGE WITH FRIENDS

### 1 Mutual trust is key

Joe opted to buy a cottage with a trusted lifelong friend. "It's also important to partner with someone in a stable financial situation," says Joe. "I am a tenured professor, and Bryce is an executive at a major roofing company, so we're never concerned about the other person making payments."

### 2 Stick to a budget

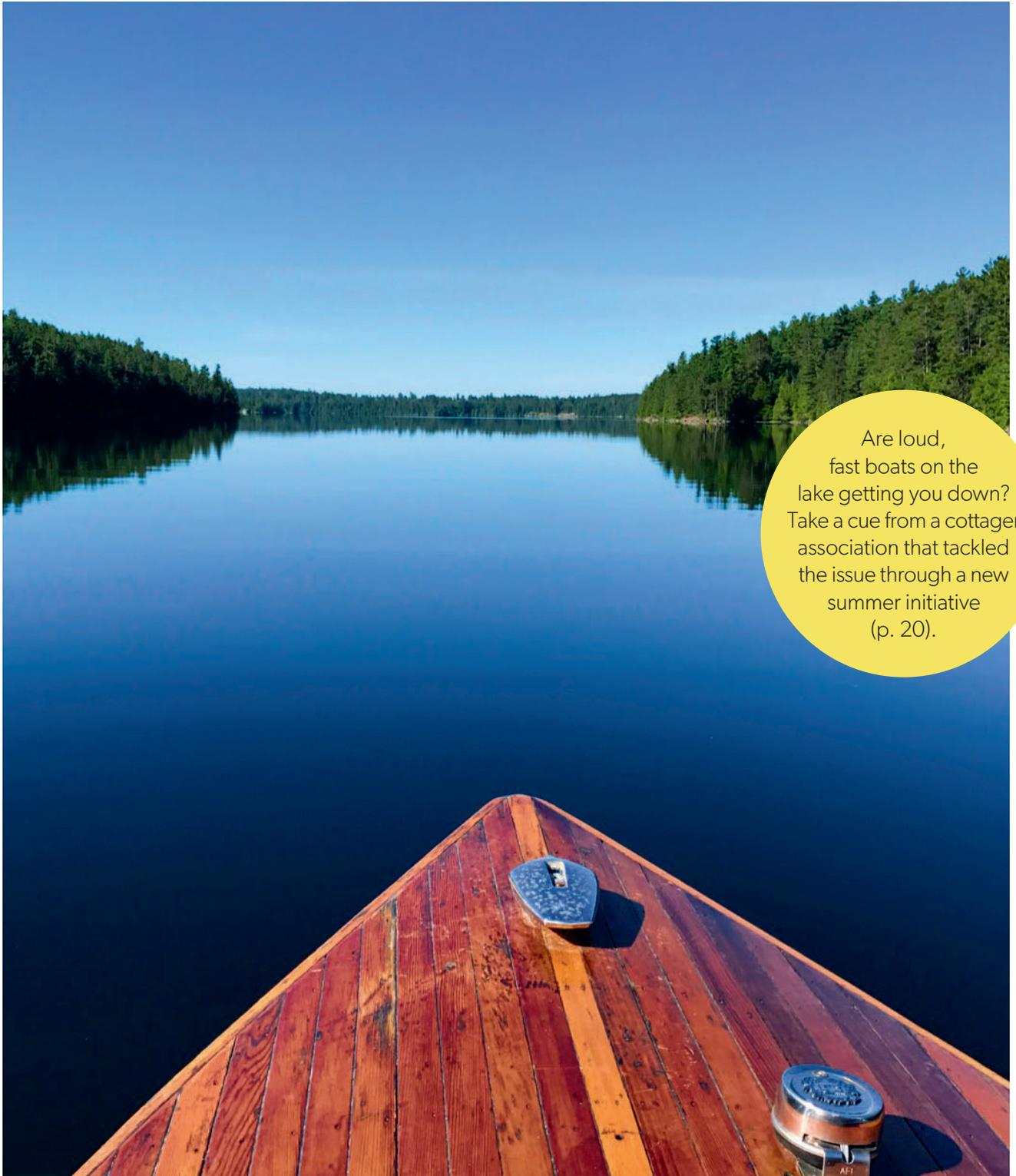
"When you're cottage-hunting with another family, you might start to differ on how much you want to spend," says Joe. "Agreeing on the budget beforehand and setting an absolute limit avoids any messy complications."

### 3 Find a partner with similar tastes and spending habits

"Bryce and I work so well together because we're both practical," says Joe. For example, when they discussed getting a new stove for their cottage this summer, the pair opted to purchase a simple, functional model. "Buying a \$15,000 stove might make sense for others, but it didn't make sense for us to spend that much on something we'd use for less than half of the year."

# Waterfront

Items in this section are hotter, tastier, and more acrobatic than normal.



CAROL DOW

Are loud, fast boats on the lake getting you down? Take a cue from a cottager association that tackled the issue through a new summer initiative (p. 20).

**21** Canada has five Turkey Lakes! Great, now we're hungry.

**22** How to makeover a bathroom with glue and CL mag covers.

**23** Bic's new EZ Reach lighter is a pyro-tastic cottage tool.

**24** The latest news on the Rondeau Provincial Park leases.

COTTAGE LOGIC

# FEED THE NATION

Who knew you could compose a pretty delicious\* holiday meal based only on Canada's many lakes with food names?



PHOTO: COURTESY CHARLESTON LAKE ASSOCIATION. ILLUSTRATION: MELISSA ARCHER



GROUP EFFORTS

## THIS'LL LEARN THEM

ONTARIO'S CHARLESTON LAKE ASSOCIATION is facing a familiar problem: increasing cottager complaints about boat speed, noise, and wake. "About 80 per cent of our members' concerns are about boating safety," says Michael McAdoo, who is part of the CLA's environmental directors board. In response, the board formed a committee, chaired by board member John Webster, to address the issue. They launched the Boater Awareness and Safety System this past summer.

The association hopes that BASS will reduce boat speed and noise and promote safe boating through five key educational and awareness elements: traditional media such as newsletters; web-based media on the CLA website and social channels; increased and improved signage around the lake; youth programs, such as a new boating safety module included in the CLA's day camps; and other materials, such as pamphlets. "Our main goal is to see an increased awareness of boating safety," says John. The CLA is also working closely with the community youth in an effort to encourage safe boating practices from an early age. This summer, students handed out the informational pamphlets along the boat launches and encouraged residents to complete a boater survey.

Although the summer has ended, BASS will remain a part of the CLA—at least for the foreseeable future. "People don't always realize that if you drive your boat a certain way, it creates a larger wake," says John. Disruptive noise, swamped boats, and displaced or washed-out loons' nests are just some of the unfortunate consequences of increased boat traffic. "The more people know about boating safety, the more they can shift their behaviour in and around the lake," he says.

BASS is an example of what community organizations can accomplish, says John. "We're just a group of people that have banded together, volunteered our time, and are trying to raise awareness around an important issue."—KARIN SALK

**HAPPY LAKESGIVING!**

We went into a food coma after tallying up all these tasty lakes

LAC CANAPÉ: 1

SHRIMP LAKE: 5

PUNCH BOWL LAKE: 1

SQUASH LAKE: 4

POTATO LAKE: 6

LAC PUMPKIN: 1

YAM LAKE: 3

PARSNIP LAKE: 1

LAC ROLL: 2

TURKEY LAKE: 5

GRAVY LAKE: 2

HAM LAKE: 7

PIE LAKE: 4

COFFEE LAKE: 4

25+

CRANBERRY LAKE

WE STOPPED COUNTING... SORRY.



IN SHORT

## Take covers

**WALLPAPER IS OUT**, and magazine covers are in. At least, they are for Sheila Guest. In 2018, the Port Severn, Ont., cottager had a bathroom wall that needed a makeover. “It was a mess,” says Sheila. “It was a piece of panelling that had been covered in Mactac—white with gold flecks; insert grimacing face—and there were holes from water pipes where an old

sink had been installed.” Sheila also had many years’ worth of *Cottage Life* issues stacked in the cottage. “I dreamed up the idea to wallpaper the space with the magazine covers. I only wish I’d had enough to do the whole wall.”

After removing the covers and cleaning the wall, Sheila coated it with Mod Podge (a crafting product that works as a glue, sealer, and finish). She also gave the back of each cover a good coating before sticking them on the wall and smoothing them out, “just like you would with regular

wallpaper,” she says. Next came several sealing coats. She repeated the whole process for the backsplash over the sink.

Sheila didn’t place the covers in chronological order; “I lay them out on the kitchen table first to get the overall look of the grid. Eight years of ad agency work paid off.”

Friends who see the bathroom, “think it’s pretty neat,” says Sheila. “I’m sure sometime in the future those who inherit the cottage will change it. But I won’t be offended.”

Whaaa? We will.—JACKIE DAVIS



REPORTER

## TIME TO FLY, FISH FIND & SHOW STUFF

**THE SKY’S NOT THE LIMIT**

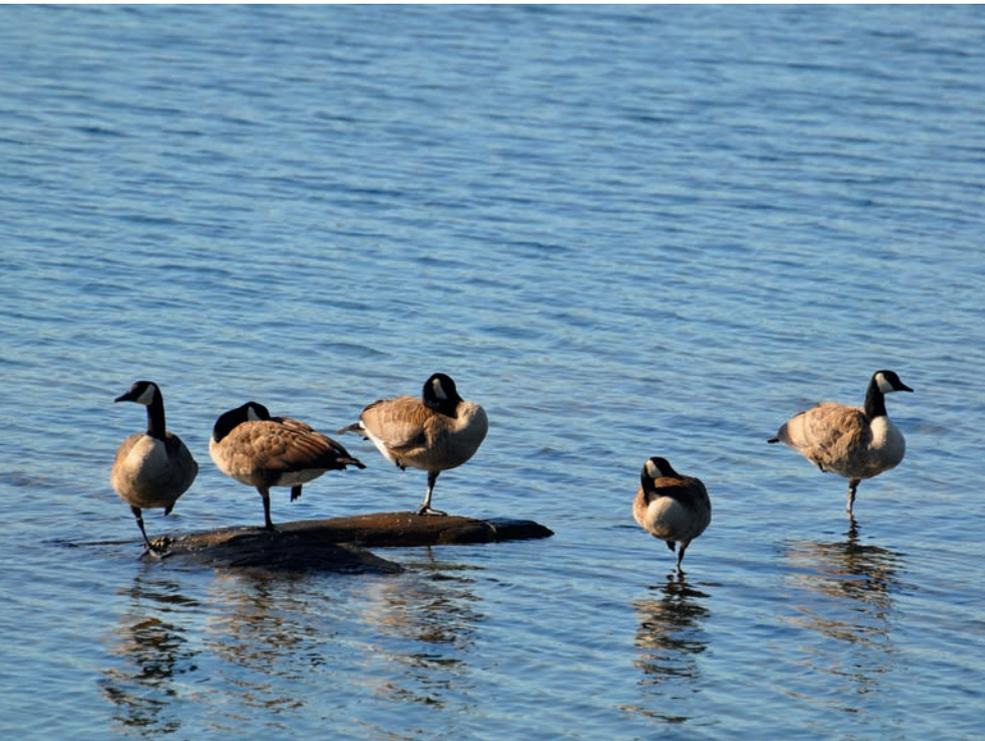
Recent research out of the University of Guelph shows that monarch butterflies raised in captivity could still be able to migrate successfully. Previous evidence had suggested that captive-raised but-

terflies appear to “lose their capacity to orient southward during fall migration,” say the researchers. To disprove this theory, they tested one group of monarchs in a flight simulator and another group released into the wild and outfitted with radio trackers. Most of the butterflies in the flight simulator didn’t seem to know where they were supposed to go, but 97 per cent of the released insects flew towards monarch overwintering grounds in Mexico. This suggests that although the butterflies may be initially confused, they can reorient themselves IRL.

**A WIN FOR TEAM OPTIMISM**

This summer’s heat dome had a grim impact on Alberta’s fish populations. Experts blame the record-breaking temperatures for the large numbers of fish washing up on the province’s shores. It’s not abnormal to have rising water temperatures in the summer; this ultimately reduces oxygen levels in lakes and, in turn, kills fish. But it is abnormal for the water to heat up so quickly, and kill so many fish early in the season. “Fish kill week” in Alberta is considered to be the last week of July.

THIS PAGE: COURTESY SHEILA GUEST; OPPOSITE: GEESE; COURTESY JUDY TARVES-ELLIOTT; LIGHTER, COURTESY BIC



THAT'S WILD!

## A LEG UP

**ALL WORK AND NO REST** makes goose a dull bird. Photo contest entrant Judy Tarves-Elliott sent us a shot of this small gaggle of Canada geese that stopped by her McGregor Bay, Ont., cottage for a break. “They were resting in a peculiar one-legged stance that I’d never seen before,” she says. Neither had we. Quick, to the *Cottage Life* experts database! Turns out, this is common in ducks, geese, and other water birds. “There are two reasons that waterfowl and some other birds stand on one leg,” says Scott Petrie of Delta Waterfowl in Bismark, N.D. “One of them is to thermoregulate—to help adjust their temperature.” Birds usually do this in the colder months; they lose body heat through their feet. “The other reason that birds stand on one leg is simply to rest a leg,” says Petrie. And it’s not unusual to catch a group of geese in this pose: “They spend a lot of time standing on one leg while sleeping.” Sleeping on one leg? In perfect unison and without falling over? Canada’s got talent.—J. D.

But this year, the annual event happened a month early, and it killed more fish than in previous years, according to Alberta Environment and Parks. But silver lining? A lake full of fish implies that it’s clean. “Hey, you saw lots of dead fish,” Michael Sullivan, a Parks fisheries scientist, told the *Edmonton Journal* in July. “That means there are lots *there*.”

### SHOWS AND TELL

Streaming soon on a small screen near you: another Canadian cottage-set

show shot in actual cottage country. (Remember *Mosquito Lake* and *Falcon Beach*? That’s okay. Nobody does.) *The Lake*, produced by Amaze, centres around a man (Jordan Gavaris) reuniting with a child that he’d given up for adoption in his teens. Daughter loves the city; Dad loves the lake from his youth and hopes that they can reconnect if he recreates for her the same cottage experiences that he had growing up. Gee, nothing can go wrong with that plan! *The Lake* will premiere on Amazon Prime Video in 2022.

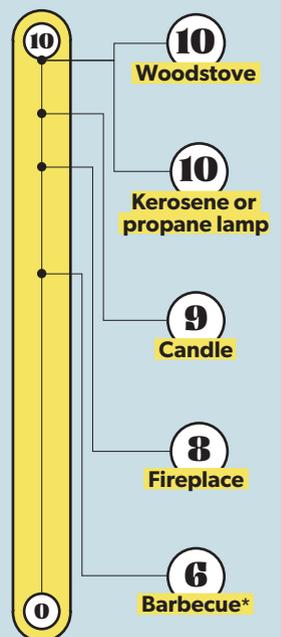
BUYABLE



### WE LIKE IT HOT

At the cottage, you light stuff on fire: candles, when the power’s out; the woodstove, when it’s cold; the firepit, every night that it’s not raining. So, we tried Bic’s new EZ Reach lighter—a pocket lighter with a 4-cm-long wand to keep the flame away from your fingers—in a variety of cottage applications (see below). Results? Our testers found the lighter easy to use; great for hard-to-reach, finicky wicks, like the ones in a kerosene lamp; and way more portable than a barbecue lighter. But, we wondered, couldn’t the wand break off, say, rattling around in a bag, or if accidentally dropped onto a hard surface? Not likely. We smashed the EZ Reach’s wand with a rock; with a larger, heavier rock; with a hammer; and with a 10-lb barbelle. The wand came out hideously mangled, but firmly attached. Oh, and the lighter still worked. Straight fire! (\$2.99 each; [canadianfire.ca](http://canadianfire.ca) or [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca))

### Usefulness score out of 10



\*Barbecue lighters out-performed the EZ Reach for some testers. Of course, lighting a barbecue is a barbecue lighter’s dedicated job.



## GOVERNMENT

# A new lease on lake life

**COTTAGE OWNERS IN** Rondeau Provincial Park, along with Chatham-Kent City Council, have proposed a plan to buy 40 acres of park land from the Ontario government.

The cottagers, who occupy 279 privately-owned cottages on less than one per cent of the park's 8,000 acres, own their cottage structures but lease the land from the province. While this tenancy agreement has been in place in Rondeau since 1894, the land leases are set to expire at the end of 2022.

The park was initially designed with cottagers in mind, says Keith Graham, a director of the Rondeau Cottagers Association (RCA). "The government went out and advertised and went to trade shows, and even went to the U.S. to try and solicit people to come and build cottages in the park," he says. The goal was to promote the area and make some revenue.

Then, in the late 1950s and the early '60s, the government began mandating that cottages didn't belong in parks. Graham says the shift happened because Ontario parks were experiencing overcrowding and the government wanted to expand the amount of available public land.

Now, to avoid having to move or demolish their cottages in the next year, the association is working with the city council to buy the land that Rondeau cottagers occupy. The total value of all the lots is estimated at \$29.2 million.

The municipality of Chatham-Kent would pay the provincial government a lump sum, and would then resell the lots to the cottagers (but at no profit). "It makes it easier for the province, so that they don't have to deal with 279 transactions," says Graham. The city

won't incur any out-of-pocket expenses during these transactions. Whatever costs the city incurs will be added to the cottagers' bill.

In addition to paying the provincial government \$29.2 million for the land, Chatham-Kent has offered to transfer a city-owned woodlot to the province with the intention that it be added to Clear Creek Forest Provincial Park (owned and protected by the government). Combining the woodlot with Clear Creek Forest would create more park land than the total of the cottage lots, says Graham. "So, at the end of the day, more land would be protected."

But not everyone is supportive of the sale. Ken Bell, an environmental activist who lives in the Chatham-Kent area, started an online petition lobbying to keep the land public. Bell claims that the cottagers have introduced invasive species and disturbed sensitive habitats. (At press time, Graham, who says that these statements are factually incorrect, was working to have the petition taken down.)

Graham argues that having to demolish the cottages or remove them would cause even more environmental destruction. He also says that the cottagers frequently take part in initiatives to protect the park. "Rondeau is continually held up as an ecological jewel in Ontario," he says. "We've been there for 125 years. How can you say we're hurting it?"

If the transaction were to go through, the cottagers will have to abide by both park regulations and local bylaws. "It's not envisioned that you can go and tear down your cottage and build a palace," says Graham. "That's not what the community wants."—ANDREW CRUICKSHANK



## OVERHEARD

### The swim of things

One October, while he was preparing Thanksgiving dinner at the cottage, my neighbour watched a moose begin to swim across our lake. It appeared that the moose was having difficulty about 15 minutes into the swim. Concerned, this neighbour phoned the Canadian Wildlife Service and explained that he thought a moose was "labouring" while trying to cross the lake.

Complete silence. Then the voice on the phone said, "Sir, how do you know that she's in labour?"

—KARLA N. SMITH

BUY THE WAY

# Trailer park joys

**The backstory:** Growing up in a working-class Toronto family in the 1970s, Susana Martinez didn't have many opportunities to vacation in rural Ontario. "We couldn't afford to rent a cottage, let alone buy one," she says. But when she was 10, her parents splurged on an all-inclusive stay at Elgin House, a lakeside resort on Lake Joseph, Ont. Susana, now a 53-year-old client service administrator for a Toronto wealth management company, has fond memories of waterskiing and long nature hikes from that rare childhood trip. "I fell in love with the calming effect of being near the water," she says.

Years later, she was keen to share those same experiences with her husband, Ben Bull, a 53-year-old IT security consultant, and her four kids. In 2008, they began renting cottages in Muskoka and the Kawarthas every summer. After three years, they noticed rentals were getting pricier: a two-week stay in a cottage to accommodate their family of six could cost as much as \$4,000. When her mother passed away in 2011, Susana received a small inheritance that got her and Ben thinking. They wanted a place in Muskoka, which was a convenient two-hour drive from Toronto. A cottage was out of their price range, but what if they got a trailer in the same area?

"It took some convincing for me," says Susana. "I wrongly associated trailers



with the rundown yards and doors hanging off hinges that you'd see in TV shows like *Trailer Park Boys*."

**The compromise:** Susana soon discovered that her preconceptions about trailer parks were ill-founded. In July 2012, she and Ben came across a Kijiji listing for a trailer in Port Severn's Hidden Glen on Georgian Bay—what is now a gated community less than two hours from Toronto. Sited on the water, the trailer was in excellent condition and came with a new front deck, as well as a dock. It had 600 sq. ft. of living space, with a double bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom, as well as an extension with enough room for the kids to sleep. The trailer was listed just under \$60,000, but after a quick negotiation, Susana and Ben bought it within their budget for \$50,000. They also had to pay approximately \$4,500 (it has since increased to \$6,000) in annual dues to lease their lot

from Hidden Glen, which also covers park maintenance and septic pump-out.

They spent about \$6,000 on upgrades including a back deck and new bedroom floors. Dubbing their new retreat the "Trottage," the family visited most weekends and for the holidays. Susana and Ben, who don't own a car, spend \$140 on a rental per weekend.

**The silver lining:** With their children now grown up (their youngest is 18), Susana and Ben realized they wouldn't be using their trailer as much. So last September, they sold a third share of their lease to a friend, who will spend time there when the couple isn't using it and pay a portion of the annual dues. They plan on keeping their trailer as a possible retirement getaway. "Having a place to escape to has been so important," says Susana. "This has been the spot where we can all relax and share time together, no matter what else is going on."—ALI AMAD

COURTESY SUSANA MARTINEZ

OWNER ADVICE

## THREE REASONS TO EMBRACE TROTTAGE LIFE

### 1 A million-dollar cottage view—for a fraction of the price

Susana knows that she won't be getting the same return on her investment that a cottage would offer since Hidden Glen owns the land that her trailer sits on. "But it's still an investment in my quality of life," she says. "Plus, I wouldn't be able to afford this little slice of Muskoka waterfront otherwise."

### 2 Built-in communities

Trailer parks offer lots of opportunities to socialize and take part in events such as horseshoe tournaments and disco nights. "It's been great for our kids to share this park with so many other families," says Susana. "We've also built close friendships with neighbours who we even vacation with outside the park."

### 3 Less upkeep

"In the spring, all I have to do is put out the outdoor furniture and do a little cleaning," says Susana. "With a cottage, it can take days to get things in order." Another trailer perk: for a \$100 annual fee, Hidden Glen takes care of winterizing her trailer in the fall. "For that price, somebody else does it for us, and we don't have to worry about the pipes bursting—it's great."