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GEORGINA Post

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FREE ISSUE

Bradford Bypass could face federal impact assessment after all

By MIKE ANDERSON

The province's plan to fast-track the Bradford Bypass, a 16.2-km four-lane highway linking the 400 to 404, could face a new roadblock if the federal government decides to reverse its earlier decision not to subject the \$1.5 billion project to a federal impact assessment.

According to a spokesperson for the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, it has received "multiple requests" to reconsider the decision, made by former environment minister Jonathan Wilkinson, not to proceed with an assessment.

"In November 2021, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada received a letter with a request for the Minister to reconsider the response that the project does not warrant designation under the Impact Assessment Act.

Since then, the Agency has received multiple requests for the reconsideration of the former Minister's response that the Bradford Bypass Project does not warrant designation under the Impact Assessment Act. The Agency is currently reviewing the information provided in those requests," said Karen Fish, the Agency's manager of communications, in an email to The Post on January 21.

In May 2021, despite concerns raised by



BETH COWPER-FUNG (CENTRE) AND GNPLC STAFF

Nurse practitioner clinic to open in August

By MIKE ANDERSON

Clinic Director Beth Cowper-Fung and her GNPLC staff were literally jumping for joy after Health Georgina Chair Steve Jacobson officially handed over the keys last week to their new building at 21071 Dalton Rd. in

Jackson's Point.

"We're just so excited to be in the new building," said Cowper-Fung. "This has been a long time coming."

"We're getting back into a state-of-the-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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BYPASS CONT. FROM PAGE 1

SIGN NEAR QUEENSVILLE SIDE ROAD

environmental advocates, local municipal councils and residents, Wilkinson declined to subject the project to a federal impact assessment, even though he had agreed to do so for Highway 413.

The Minister determined that a federal impact assessment was unwarranted because the provincial regulatory review process was sufficient to “address the potential adverse effects and public concerns raised in relation to those effects.”

His decision was also influenced by a report by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, which said the potential for adverse effects would be “limited through project design, the application of standard mitigations measures and through existing legislative mechanisms.”

However, much has changed since last May.

The province’s decision in October to exempt the bypass from the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA), so it could fast-track “early works,” including an overpass at Yonge St. and 2nd Concession, may have backfired, with opponents of the bypass redoubling their efforts, including lobbying the federal government to reverse its earlier decision.

Environmental groups were buoyed by the appointment of a new environment minister, Steven Guilbeault, last October. Guilbeault is a former director of Greenpeace Quebec and a climate

activist who scaled the CN Tower in 2001 to draw attention to the issue of climate change.

Jack Gibbons, chair of Lake Simcoe Watch, frustrated with the province’s decision to exempt the bypass — which he calls the Holland Marsh Highway — from provincial environmental legislation, is hopeful that Guilbeault will lend a sympathetic ear and agree to a federal review.

On January 10, Gibbons co-signed a letter to Guilbeault with Claire Malcolmson, executive director of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, and Margaret Prophet, executive director of the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition, asking the Minister to initiate a federal impact assessment.

They argue the bypass, which cuts across the environmentally sensitive Holland Marsh and would have average daily traffic of approximately 58,000 vehicles, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, adds to phosphorus pollution, destroys wetlands and forests, threatens species at risk, and allows more road salt to flow into Lake Simcoe endangering fish habitats.

Gibbons also argues there is little support for the project around the Lake, pointing to a recent telephone survey of 900 residents in three Lake Simcoe ridings conducted by Lake Simcoe Watch, which shows that only 29 percent of Lake Simcoe

BYPASS CONT. ON PAGE 9

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Letter to the editor: Lake Drive dispute needs resolution

Thank you for the comprehensive article regarding the proposed airport in the Pefferlaw area. The decision to not support the proposal by the Town Council, apart from being the fastest ever decision it may have ever made, was the correct one. And an easy one since it is a federal matter for approval. Hopefully, we will find out who is pushing this in the region and/or federally?

Given all the information, such as the runways in the wrong direction and the amount of disruption to the community, what with 102,000 truckloads of fill to create a proper foundation for runways and buildings. And no guarantee that the fill would be removed if the project fails. One might think this was a boondoggle from start to finish.

But there is another question to consider. Since this is an election year, how quickly was this agreed to, so council would look good to electors?

Now, if we go back in time to the indirect waterfront issue, which is still pending after quite a number of years, this airport turndown was an amazing feat of municipal deliberation -- probably the quickest in Town history. My neighbours and I lived through several threats of loss of waterfront access. The

last one resulted in a proposal that seemed to have the tacit approval of a subcommittee of council and residents, only to be shelved and still pending. I lived on Lake Drive from 2002 to 2018, always with the threat of loss of my indirect waterfront, which was noted in my deed to property.

So with the upcoming elections, maybe the latter issue can be addressed for the sake of those still living with NO decision on an important issue, which, when solved, will give comfort to the owners and extra tax revenue to the Town -- a win-win situation. But don't hold your breath.

John Ecclestone, Keswick

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NURSE CONT. FROM PAGE 1

art medical facility, which is amazing for the Town, as there's been a long history of healthcare on this site. Dr. George Burrows was our consulting physician when we first took over in 2011; he stayed on with us pretty much until the day he passed."

While the building's outer shell, which Kenstruct Ltd. began constructing last April, has been completed, the interior renovations, funded by a \$1.6 million provincial grant, will start this week and are slated to be finished by August.

Barrie-based Bertram Construction Ltd. was awarded the contract after submitting the lowest of four bids.

Health Georgina provided the initial \$1.3 million for the building's construction.

But skyrocketing material costs during the pandemic forced the volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization to seek donations

from the community, with residents contributing \$220,000 to the project so far.

"It's very exciting, very gratifying to see this come to fruition," Jacobson said. "There's a lot of people in the community to thank."

"I'd also like to thank the Town of Georgina for working with us to get it done and giving us back a fair amount of funds that we paid in fees. There were also a lot of local people who worked pro bono. And, of course, I had a great team who were extremely dedicated."

The Georgina Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (GNPLC) originally opened in July 2011 at the same Dalton Rd. location, the former practice of the late Dr. Burrows. However, the older building contained asbestos insulation, so it couldn't be renovated, and GNPLC had to look for a new location.



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NEW GNPLC BUILDING ON DALTON RD.

But that search was put on hold when the building burned down in January 2018, forcing GNPLC to move to its current location at 152 High St.

"It's been quite a long journey," Cowper-Fung said.

"I was standing at the roadside on January 14 when the building burned, and we were very fortunate that we had access to 152 High St. by the next day, and we're up and seeing our patients again within 47 hours."

While Cowper-Fung is grateful that the Town and community pulled together to get GNPLC a new temporary home, she says the location is not ideal.

"We are in a difficult, tight building right now. That's not really meant for the work that's happening," she said.

"We are on two different floors, two different sides of a hallway. There's no intercom, so if you want to communicate anything, you have to take a run."

"It's going to be wonderful to get into this new facility where we have an enhanced HVAC system, additional examination rooms, a boardroom with an adjacent kitchen to accommodate education sessions, and a dedicated lab space. I'm really excited, and when we get all our equipment over here, it'll be fantastic."

Cowper-Fung also says the additional space will allow the clinic to take on more patients.

"Once we get settled, and everything gets moving along, then we can do a community

assessment and see how many more people are looking for primary healthcare. And once we know that we can always expand in this site," she said.

GNPLC currently has 3,500 registered patients, which, according to Cowper-Fung, can be expanded to 3,800. And, with the addition of another nurse practitioner, she says the clinic could add another 800 patients.

"It's fabulous to work in a lovely place. It's doubly fabulous to be able to provide care to patients in a lovely environment," she said.

"There'll be electric doors here. So it's going to be easier for patients to get in and out. There's more parking. And communication for the staff will be better because we'll be all on one floor."

While the outside of the building is complete, there is still landscaping to be done, including a possible parkette and the placement of a granite stone next to the entrance, with a commemorative plaque recognizing Dr. Burrows.

Health Georgina is still accepting donations through its website, www.healthgeorgina.ca.



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Question: What is the Non Residency Speculation Tax?

The Non Residency Speculation Tax (NRST) is a fifteen percent tax that applies to a non-resident's purchase or acquisition of a residential property located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario. There are twenty-one different geographic areas that make up the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region, including the Regional Municipality of York, City of Toronto, City of Barrie and City of Kawartha Lakes. For example, if the purchase price of a home located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region is \$1,000,000.00, and the purchaser is a non-resident, then the NRST payable will be \$150,000.00, in addition to the purchase price and other applicable taxes, such as Land Transfer Tax.

Non-residents are foreign entities (including foreign corporations), taxable trustees, or individuals who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

The NRST applies to residential properties containing at least one and no more than six single-family residences. Examples of properties to which the NRST would apply include a detached house, a semi-detached house, a townhouse, duplexes and triplexes. The NRST does not apply to properties containing multi-residential apartment buildings with more than six units, agricultural land, commercial land or industrial land.

The NRST was put in place April 21, 2017; any agreement of purchase and sale signed after April 21, 2017 could be subject to the NRST if the applicable conditions are met.

There are a few exemptions to the tax and some available rebates; the full list can be found on the Ontario Ministry of Finance website. One exemption is for a Protected Person. A Protected Person is a foreign national who receives refugee protection under Section 95 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada) at the time of the purchase. Another exemption is available if a foreign national jointly purchases a residential property with a spouse who is a Canadian citizen, permanent resident of Canada, or Protected Person.

If you have any questions about the Non Residency Speculation Tax, give our office a call, and one of our lawyers would be happy to answer them.



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SHANNON SCHAEFER

Sutton District High School grad pens children's book

By TINA NOVOTNY

During the COVID-19 pandemic years, childhood anxiety disorders have been more widely discussed than ever before. Lockdowns, COVID variants and virtual learning have fuelled the normal anxieties kids experience into more heightened states of mental distress.

Shannon Schaefer, who grew up in Sutton, has written a children's book to help soothe children experiencing anxiety and overwhelming emotions, just as she did when she was young. *Rudy's Belly of Bees* takes the reader through a high-stakes day, when the title character Rudy stresses over a relay race that will take place later at school.

"I think even the most well-intended people (like parents) can get it wrong when it comes to addressing others' mental wellbeing and offering the proper supports, mainly because it's such an individual experience," says Schaefer.

interactions with classmates, including her friend Wyatt, who also minimizes her anxieties about the relay race.

"Peer pressure or reassurance is often a projection of how others interpret a situation and its likely outcome," continues Schaefer. "It can be challenging for children to see themselves in those projections when navigating new emotions different from their peers."

Rudy's Belly of Bees is beautifully illustrated by Becca Marshall, including one panel that shows Rudy feeling a tidal wave of worry before the relay race.

"Since my childhood, I have had three dreams that always replay during times of high stress - the tidal wave, my teeth falling out and dreams where I am late," says Schaefer. "As much as visual, these dreams are feelings of being overwhelmed and powerless."

Rudy also has to manage her Schaefer's sharing of her

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childhood anxiety in this courageous book will help parents open discussions with their kids about a range of challenging emotions.

"I feel the movement towards destigmatizing mental health surfaced more so during my pre-teen/early teenage years. For example, Bell's Let's Talk Day was founded in 2010, putting me at 11-years-old with habits

already formed", says Schaefer. With *Rudy's Belly of Bees*, children will have a chance to address difficult feelings at a much earlier age using this delightful picture book as a valuable tool.

For more information and to purchase *Rudy's Belly of Bees* visit Rudy's Belly of Bees by Shannon Schaefer at <https://books.friesenpress.com/store>.

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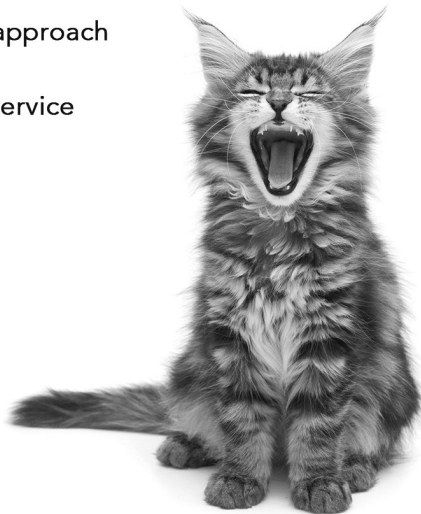


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No rent control on units occupied from Nov 2018

By KAT ANDERSON

Three years ago Premier Doug Ford introduced an exemption to Ontario's rent control rules for units first occupied after Nov. 15, 2018.

New buildings, additions to existing buildings and most new basement apartments that are occupied for the first time for residential purposes after November 15, 2018 are exempt from rent control.

This was done to stimulate the development of much-needed rental supply in hopes of lowering the rents. More than 7,500 purpose-built rental units have been built in Toronto since the policy was enacted, says market research firm Urbanation. However, the the number of units actually built since the policy came into force hasn't been enough to address the rental demand.

The issue of dismissed rent control was not noticeable in the past year due to the provincial pandemic rent freeze mandate. That rent freeze came to an end on January 1, 2022. Landlords have to provide 90 days' notice to raise the rent for tenants that have occupied their units for 12 months or more.

As a consequence, we expect many tenants will become

subject to rent increases this spring. The rent increase will mean tough times for the tenants still recovering from the loss of income due to the pandemic.

Last fall Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. found that 11 per cent of rental households in the Toronto region were in arrears. Some households that fell behind in rent during the pandemic already have rent repayment schedules this year with no increase in wages. Adding the increase in rent might push their housing budget over the limit and force them to move.

To avoid rent hikes, tenants might prefer renting older units where the rent increase guideline for 2022 is 1.2%.

Rentals.ca says the average rent in the Greater Toronto Area sat at about \$2,167 per month in November, and in the city alone is projected to hit \$2,495 per month by the end of the year.

If you are a landlord of a newer unit, you might want to keep in mind that although the rent is not controlled by the government now, it's still controlled by the market. An open conversation followed by a reasonable negotiation is the best approach to keep your tenants and yourself happy.

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BYPASS CONT. FROM PAGE 2

voters support the bypass.

"It just doesn't make sense to proceed with a project which will cost over a billion dollars when it is supported by only 29 per cent of Lake Simcoe voters," Gibbons told The Post.

"Since Doug Ford refuses to subject this project to an environmental assessment, we're forced to appeal to the federal minister of the environment to require a federal environmental assessment to determine whether this is an appropriate way to meet our future transportation needs."

"It just makes absolutely no sense to spend over a billion dollars on this project without determining whether there's a better way to meet our transportation needs or to determine how the environmental impacts of the project can be minimized. It is just irresponsible to spend over a billion dollars and to threaten the health of Lake Simcoe without doing proper studies."

Gibbons hopes the feds may force the province to look at alternatives to the bypass, including upgrading local roads, like Queensville Side Rd. and 8th line.

Meanwhile, Liberal MP Leah Taylor Roy, who represents the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, has sponsored a petition to have the federal government review the project's environmental impact and the feasibility of the proposed route.

The petition, which is open until February 6, has received 2708 signatures as of January 24 — this follows a previous petition on Change.org, which garnered more than 9,150 signatures.

Steven Del Duca, the Ontario Liberal leader, has also pledged to stop the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413 until an updated environmental assessment is completed.

"Ontario Liberals are committed to stopping Highway

413, and pausing any further work on the Bradford Bypass until a new environmental assessment can be done in an open and transparent way," said Del Duca, who, as former minister of transportation in Kathleen Wynne's cabinet, initially stopped the construction of Highway 413.

"We will not allow shovels to go in the ground unless the impacted communities have the chance to see an updated assessment that proves it is environmentally safe. We would ensure those assessments look at induced demand, climate change and alternative solutions to deliver infrastructure to the Lake Simcoe region that serves its people and environment today and into the future. If the updated assessments fail to meet this standard, we will stop the Bradford Bypass just like Highway 413."

Despite growing opposition to the Bradford Bypass, York-Simcoe MPP and Transportation Minister Caroline Mulroney remains committed to the project.

Mulroney says the bypass is much needed infrastructure that will reduce traffic congestion and make it easier for local farmers to get their goods to market.

She points to support for the project from municipal councils, like Bradford West Gwillimbury, Georgina and East Gwillimbury, as well as the Holland Marsh Growers Association.

Mulroney also believes that despite the decision to exempt the project from the province's Environmental Assessment Act, her government will take the necessary steps to mitigate any potential environmental impacts.

"The Bradford bypass already underwent the most stringent environmental assessment process, the individual environmental assessment, and that was done back in 2002. It's the most stringent kind of process that is available under the

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WINDROW CAUSED BY SNOW PLOW

Town launches driveway windrow clearing pilot project

By MIKE ANDERSON

Are you unable to shovel the snow left by snow plows at the end of your driveway?

Well, now you can get help getting rid of that heavy snow.

The Town has approved a pilot program to provide windrow clearing, the pile of snow left at the end of driveways by plows, to residents who can't physically shovel and require assistance.

However, eligibility is restricted. Occupants of a household must be over 65 years of age, or under 65 years of age, providing all occupants of the address, over the age of 12, are physically unable to remove snow. To qualify, residents must provide a formal doctor's note, disability certificate or Functional Abilities Form (FAF) signed by a medical practitioner identifying they are unable to shovel snow.

The application process is now open to eligible residents. The program is scheduled to begin on Feb. 1, 2022.

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria can expect to see service within 24 hours, after the snow plowing of roads is completed following a minimum 7.5-centimetre (three-inch)

snowfall event.

"I am so pleased council has approved this windrow clearing pilot program that will provide another level of service in Georgina," said Mayor Margaret Quirk.

"This is a service our community needs as many seniors and people with disabilities are unable to clear the heavy windrow created by snowplows. We have an exceptional team looking after our winter maintenance program and I know the addition of this pilot project will be welcome in our community."

According to the Town, the windrow clearing service clears snow from the end of residential driveways for one car width only (approximately seven-feet or 2.1-metres wide) and stores it within the boulevard and/or appropriate location on site. The service does not include the clearing of snow from the private walkways to a residence, the driveway or the snow windrow left by the sidewalk plow.

To fill out an application form, visit www.georgina.ca/snow.



TWIG GARDENS & CO IN UPPER KESWICK

Keswick retailer named finalist for national award

By MIKE ANDERSON

Twig Gardens & Co. was announced as a finalist in the Ontario Made Awards on January 19, 2022.

This is the first year the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) has held the Canadian Made Awards, and Twig Gardens & Co. was nominated for the Merchandising Excellence Award, which is awarded to an Ontario retailer that demonstrates merchandising excellence of Ontario-made products.

"We're really excited about it, super-excited. This is the first legitimate award we've been nominated for," Craig Reynolds, owner of Twig Gardens & Co., said.

Twig Garden & Co. is a gift and home decor store featuring merchandise by local artists and artisans. Their website states that they embrace the vacationing atmosphere and the active life presented in Georgina, and that there is something for everything to be found in the store.

The finalists were chosen through a vote by consumers between December 1, 2021 to January 7, 2022.

"The large number of votes cast for our Inaugural Ontario

Made Awards demonstrates how eager consumers are to support their local manufacturers and retailers. Ontario's manufacturers and retailers are the backbone of our economy, and the Ontario Made Program celebrates just that," the CME press release said.

Twig Garden & Co. opened in spring of 2018, and Reynolds said supporting and encouraging local artists and artisans is important to him.

"A lot of people don't realize how many artisans we have in the area and how many people craft at home. I know it's tough for a lot of artists, because a lot of them don't have a place or the means to showcase their stuff and sell it to make money," he said.

Reynolds says instead of charging rent, they charge the artists and artisans only a small percentage to showcase their work.

You can visit Twig Garden & Co. and purchase their wares in Keswick at 10 The Queensway S, Unit 2.

Award winners will be announced at Ontario Made's Virtual Awards Ceremony on Thursday, February 24th, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Ask The Expert

with Dylan Henderson



Q: I am a unionized employee dealing with an employment matter, but I feel as though my union has not been representing me to the best of their ability. When should I consult an employment lawyer?

In most unionized instances, you cannot simply hire your own lawyer and take your employer to court. This is because once registered with a union, the union itself becomes your exclusive bargaining agent. You are instead represented by an elected member of the union known as a representative. It is this representative, with the assistance from the union, who is to ensure that the employer is complying with the collective agreement.

Often, collective agreements outline the process that workers must follow and the admissibility of outside counsel if their employer is not complying with the terms. Accordingly, if you were to retain a lawyer it is likely your employer would not accept their jurisdiction to address your matter. However, under certain circumstances you may be able to pursue legal counsel outside of your union. The most prominent avenues recognized are a human rights complaint, a workplace health and safety issue, or a claim against the union for a breach of their duty of fair representation.

- Under Ontario's Human Rights Code (or Canadian Human Rights Act if you are a federal worker) employees are ensured equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. If your complaint is about a breach of your human rights, you may be able to bring an application to the Human Rights Tribunal;
- All workplaces within the province are under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act. Pursuant to this legislation, you are entitled to procedures and protections from unsafe work. If your employer responds negatively because you acted on your rights, then you may be able to make a complaint at the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It should be noted, this process requires an election between the routes through your collective agreement's grievance arbitration or to the Ontario Labour Relations Board;
- Finally, if the union fails to act in a manner that is appropriate you may have a complaint for a breach of their duty of fair representation. Grounds for pursuing this complaint include allegations of bad-faith conduct, discrimination, or arbitrariness on the part of the union in its decision-making process.

These potential avenues can all lead to your ability to seek legal counsel outside of your union. To discuss the particulars of your case and whether an employment lawyer is able to assist, please contact our office.

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Environmental Assessment Act,” she told The Post on January 13.

“We are also updating the environmental assessment process to reflect changes that have occurred since 2002. And there are over a dozen environmental studies, like air quality, hydrology and fish and wildlife impact assessments, that are yet to be completed.”

“We are taking into account changes to regulations, we are taking into account new information about the highway, and we are undergoing a series of new studies that we believe are important before we move forward.”

Mulroney also added that her government is responding to the concerns expressed by local councils and environmental advocates.

“We also take feedback from municipalities and environmental groups very seriously. And the

environmental issues that are being raised will be considered and mitigation will be proposed, and then we will determine the right path forward,” she said.

“Our government cares deeply about the health of Lake Simcoe, and we want to make sure that we’re taking the necessary steps to protect it. But we also know this highway is a needed piece of infrastructure for York-Simcoe and the Greater Golden Horseshoe. And as we move forward with it, we are going to move forward in a way that is respectful of the environment.”



MARGARET PROPHET & CLAIRE MALCOLMSON

OBITUARY

Helen (Beechener) Carle 1940 -2022



On Friday January 14, 2022 Helen (Beechener) Carle of Spruce Grove and formerly of Bonnyville, Alberta and Sutton, Ontario passed away at the age of 81.

Helen is survived by her daughter Lisa (John) sons Michel (Connie) and Marvin (Elaine); Stepsons Maurice (Jacqueline) and Roger (Elaine). Grandchildren Samantha, Dylan, Jayson, Madisson, Morea. Brother Marvin, Nieces, Nephews and many friends. Helen is predeceased by her husband Rene, her parents Stanley and Hazel, brothers George and Jim, sister Joyce.

Helen will be lovingly remembered and dearly missed.

Helen’s wishes were for no formal funeral service. A celebration of life will be announced for this spring.

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