

# Home sweet home—Casson-style

When it comes to artwork—specifically paintings—I look for three things: A goalie, golf course or a furry animal.

If one of those three aren't in the piece I have as much interest in the painting as I do in Australian cricket scores: zilch.

Tranquil scenes of forests are boring. Images of mothers pushing strollers down the street or historic houses are sleep-inducing. Abstract art, the kind where it looks like the artist was holding 14 paintbrushes at once before falling onto the canvas in the throes of a seizure (see Picasso, Warhol, et al), leaves me more fearful for the artist's sanity than impressed by the mess he's created.

However, my admittedly narrow-minded view of art has undergone a bit of an alteration after the events of last week.

A reader informed us that a painting by A.J. Casson sold for \$542,800—a record for a Group of Seven artist—at the annual Joyner Waddingtons Spring Auction of Important Canadian Art in Toronto.

The title of the painting—*Street in Glen Williams*—is what caught my interest for a couple reasons: (1) it was a neat local story for our paper and (2) as a former Glen resident, I was impressed the lovely hamlet was garnering national attention.

After reporter Lisa Tallyn secured a version of the painting from Joyner vice-president Rob Crowley, I took a quick glance.

"Orange and yellow trees and shadows," I thought to myself. Zzzzzz.

I forwarded the image to my wife, who appreciates art far more than her hubby, knowing she would get a kick out of the picture since the first house we bought back in 1983 as young newlyweds was in the Glen—a rambling

## John McGhie



five-bedroom, two-bathroom home built on the bottom of a 200-foot hill.

(Among the home's most memorable features were the orange vinyl flooring in the kitchen, the fish-shaped door knocker that complemented the fish-themed tiles in the kitchen and the fact the stained green living room carpet once resided in St. Alban's Church down the street.)

"Holy crap," my better half e-mailed back. "THAT'S OUR HOUSE!"

Taking another look, actually taking a closer look, I realized she was right.

There in the centre of the painting, with a red-framed window, was our former Main Street Glen home. Although the home has changed dramatically since Casson painted the scene in the late 1930s there was no mistaking the fact the scene was of the cluster of homes north of Joseph Street in the Glen.

While Cowley was unable to say exactly where Casson had trained his eye for the painting some 70-plus years ago, several callers to the paper this week agree that the image does depict the Joseph/Main Street corner.

While owning the Casson print would take a lottery win, it's kind of cool knowing our first home is immortalized in an expensive piece of Canadiana.

Even if it is missing a goalie.

—John McGhie is the managing editor of *The Independent & Free Press*

Ted Brown will return next week

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