

O'DONNELL LETTER

A monthly publication devoted to providing friends and clients with insight and knowledge of the real estate world based on three core pillars of my business; Philanthropy, Business and Growth.

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

I don't know about you, but when I was a kid I always wanted to be a firefighter. I don't remember who gave it to me, but I had a really cool firefighting helmet. It



was bright red, the same as the firetrucks, and had the big shield emblem on the front, and wide brim that tapered down at the back. It was awesome! I thought how really cool it would be to ride in the fire truck on

the way to a fire, with all your buddies, and when you got there, you would go up the ladder from the ladder truck, and start putting out the fire. Now as it turns out in Real Estate, we also get to put out some fires, but while those 'fires' aren't life threatening like a real fire, they can definitely be life impacting. But I will get to that later.

Now back to when I was a kid and wanted to be a firefighter, I had friends that wanted to be police officers, doctors, etc. The thing I find the most interesting when I look back at it, is that only one of my group of friends from back home actually became what he wanted to be as a kid. I was just at a school reunion not to long ago, and it is amazing how many people as kids also wanted to be a police officer, firefighter, doctor, paramedic, etc. The one really interesting thing is that all of these professions have one very special thing in common. They all involve helping others, and putting other peoples' needs ahead of your own.

Consider the firefighter or the police officer. When an emergency is happening, and everyone is running away from the danger, those people are running towards the danger to protect the rest of us. They know they could be hurt or even killed, but

they put our needs ahead of their own. I find it very interesting that this instinct is so strong in children, and then as we grow older it fades in some, and stays very strong in others. It's those others that go on to become police officers, firefighters, paramedics, etc.

This also holds true for Doctors and Paramedics. I had one friend who wanted to be a doctor when we were kids, who is now an ophthalmologist. If he could only see us now! I know, I know, terrible pun. Paramedics are also on the front line of any



accident, fire, or other disastrous event, just like police officers and firefighters, and only want to help the injured. Now, we all know that police, fire and paramedics are all first responders and they are a very special group of people. Here are groups of people, who day in and day out, put our needs potentially ahead of their own and their families. Just look at what is happening the U.S. right now, with police officers being shot almost daily. So you have to ask yourself, why do they do it? What makes a person want to place themselves in harm's way to protect the rest of us? Do they have an over developed hero complex or something? No, I believe we all have the desire to be a protector

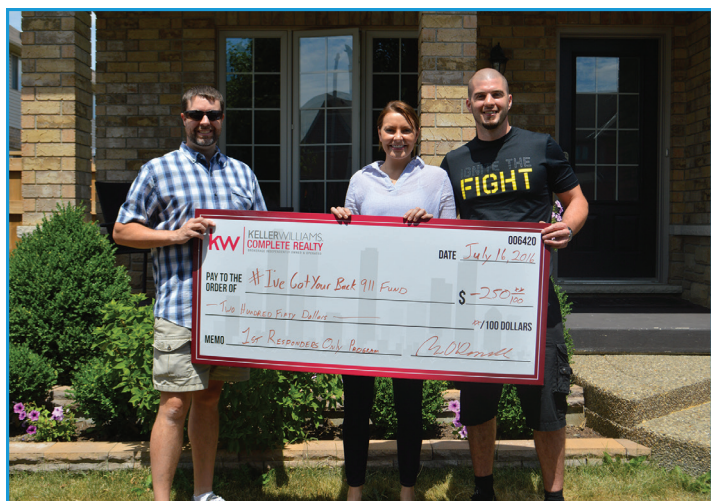
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE CONT'D

in some way it's just that theirs is simply stronger than the rest of us.

We already know that while a great many of us as kids thought we wanted to be a firefighter, police officer or paramedic, it just didn't turn out that way. Now, as I said that is not to say that we all don't have some level of protector in each of us. Just think about any time you intervened in a fight and helped put a stop to it, or called the police because there was a kid or pet trapped in a car in the middle of the summer, or someone needed help. All of those actions demonstrate that we all have the desire to help others, and be a protector of sorts within our community.

I did mention earlier that while I am not a firefighter, I do put out fires of a sort in my Real Estate practice. Just recently I was helping Michelle R. buy a home for herself and her kids, and on closing day the sellers' lawyer made a mistake on the selling price. A \$20,000-dollar mistake on the price! Understandably Michelle was freaking out so, I quickly reached out to our lawyer and mortgage broker, had the paperwork resent, and fixed the issue. Now while this was not a life threatening situation, I know Michelle was having as close to a heart attack as possible, without actually going into cardiac arrest. While it was not my job to babysit both sets of lawyers, I stay on top of things to make sure that if anything does happen we get it dealt with right away.

While my little adventure was interesting I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Matt and Stacy, a great young couple who I had the pleasure of helping buy their first home. They also happen to both be paramedics. While I am not a first responder, (even though I wanted to be one as a kid, and would really love to know where that hat went,) I do still have that sense of being a protector, and a high drive to help others. (Which is



why I wrote my book, and why I look out for the best interests of my clients such as Michelle) This is also why I created the First Responders Only program. Any time I work with a first responder, whether it is to buy or sell a home, I donate \$250 to any PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) charity of their choice. As it turns out Matt and Stacy have a friend named Jill Foster, who has started the **#ivegotyourback911** fund. It can be found at <http://www.ivegotyourback911.com>

First Responders are twice as likely to suffer PTSD. There's no need to suffer in silence. The help you need is here. This website offers resources and services for the First Responder community to understand the various steps of a PTSD program from managing a crisis through to implementing best practices into an existing program.

They are doing such great work bringing the issue of PTSD for first responders to the forefront of the media. It was an absolute pleasure to donate to such a great group of people.

This is important to me, and I know it is important to you as well. Most of you know a first responder of some kind, and you know they don't ever talk about any hard times they may be going through, and while I'm not a firefighter, police officer or a paramedic, that doesn't mean I can't do my part and help them. Matt and Stacy spend each day putting our needs ahead of their own, so I wanted to show that we appreciate what they do for us, which is why I created this program. Please let any first responders know about this program; it can be found at **www.freebook4firstresponders.ca** It's a way that we can all give back and support them when they need us, when they spend their career doing just that for us. The more first responders I can help, the more money we raise to help them when they need it most.

The Idea That I've Thought About For 6 Months Is Finally Becoming A Reality...

As a businessperson and entrepreneur, there isn't a day that goes by where I don't rub shoulders and brains with other fascinating people and entrepreneurs. Many of these people have incredible stories to tell. They are smart, intelligent; some are leaders in their respective fields, not to mention, many have discovered unique ways to impact the lives of their customers, clients and patients. And while I've always enjoyed these conversations, about six months ago it occurred to me, so would others.

So I asked, "Why not share these stories? Why not interview these people? Why not launch a Podcast? Why not create a site where they could be posted and listened to?"

With that, the concept for Niagara Uncovered: Local Advice Givers was born...

This is something I have been thinking about for a long time, but never really knew how to bring it to life. Podcasts have existed on iTunes for nearly a decade, but it was only recent that they became a viable media platform.

You're seeing this explosion right in front of your eyes.

According to USA Today, Apple announced that it has surpassed 1 billion subscriptions for podcasts via its iTunes app. And in a study by Edison Research, an estimated 39 million people have listened to a podcast in the past month. Even the large media networks: CBS, NBC, ABC, and FOX now offer audio versions of many of their favorite TV news shows. Why do this? Clear Channel's president of digital said it best, "We need to be wherever the consumers are." And right now, podcasts have exploded onto the scene.

In today's technology driven world, the barrier of entrance to get into the media business is easier than ever. It used to be that you needed an expensive studio, equipment, and a team of audio and video experts. Not anymore. And it's the consumer that is driving the popularity of Podcasts.

As more people own Smartphones, and as more car manufacturers manufacture cars with built-in Internet connectivity, (about 50% now, and by 2025, all cars will have Internet) soon

Podcasts will no longer be classified as Podcasts, instead, according to a recent Forbes article, "It will just be radio."

The article goes on to state, "If you're thinking about launching a podcast, you'd better do it soon," says Harbinger, the author of the article, "Because the competition is only going to get more intense."

So, next month I will get into some details and tell you a little bit about the Podcast I've created. With that, let me tell you a little about the Podcast I've created, that will launch this fall.

Podcast Name: Niagara Uncovered: Local Advice Givers. [The program will be featured on iTunes as well as on Stitcher—the #1 and #2 largest Podcast platforms.]

Podcast Mission: To interview Niagara business owners, entrepreneurs, our local authors and thought-leaders to bring Niagara residents the best advice from our community's brightest minds. As you know my purpose in life is to help people, to inspire people, and above all, to tell stories. I see Niagara Uncovered: Local Advice Givers as just another Platform that is capable of helping me to pursue each of those goals. In creating the identity of this program, from my own internal convictions and from talking with others, there are four Core Beliefs that will guide the guest selection, focus, and what strive to deliver to Podcast subscribers and listeners.

So stay tuned because next month I will share those four core beliefs and more details about the upcoming podcast.



Neil O'Donnell - Author and Creator

An entrepreneur and a relentless innovator of the real estate industry, Neil O'Donnell is the creator of the "Value-Driven Approach to Sell Real Estate," author of the infamous report "Frauds, Lies, Cheats & Unethical Scams." He also founded St.Catharines First Responder Only Program®, and is a licensed agent with Keller Williams Complete Realty. Neil has been called "provocative and entertaining," but also "a committed philanthropist" for his mission to raise/donate over \$10,000 to local and First Responder-related charities each year.

Neil also supports many great local and national charities too, such as: Lincoln Humane Society, CIBC Run for the Cure, Heart & Stroke Foundation, MADD: Mothers Against Drunk Driving among others. Neil is a leader in the St.Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake business community as well, and co-founded ENG (Entrepreneurs Networking Group™) St.Catharines Chapter—an exclusive group of business owners, sales professionals and entrepreneurs, focused on three core pillars of impact: Philanthropy, Business, and Growth!

By Neil O'Donnell, author: of 'The Value-Driven Approach: A practical guide to protect yourself from REAL ESTATE GREED & bank and extra \$30,000 by THINKING like the great Warren Buffett.' He is a licensed agent with Keller Williams Complete Realty and a local entrepreneur as well. For a free copy of his book visit: www.FreeBookPayitForward.ca

THE SUPERVILLAINS OF REAL ESTATE

The Gatekeeper. He is angry and filled with resent that for homeowners, he is no longer their primary source of property-information...

The Cheetah, as well as Dr. Ego—a villainous creature whom always chooses his self-interest over the best interest of the client.

So today, let me introduce you to yet another Real Estate Supervillain, a terribly resentful creature. His name? **The Gatekeeper**.

This is the most insecure of all Real Estate Supervillains to the point his insecurity defines him. He feels so commoditized and so interchangeable, by his prospective clients, that he's devised an "evil scheme" to restore the balance of power. He is, as his name describes, **The Gatekeeper**.

Want to know the details on a specific property? Just want to know the price of a home you're interested in? Too bad – you must contact **The Gatekeeper**.

By attempting to control the flow of all real estate-related information, this Supervillain establishes himself as the "necessary middleman," standing between you and what you want to know. And, just as is the case with most insecure people, this Supervillain jokes excessively, can't enjoy silence, and is overly authoritative – all in a desperate attempt to make himself appear important.

But make no mistake. It's the role of being the "middle man" this villainy character most relishes.

Secretly, he resents information-seekers. He hates this new "Information Age" and the Internet, which has made it so easy for people obtain the property-information that was once reserved only for Realtors®.

"What happened to the 1970's?" he says to himself, (in his angry voice) "When only Realtors® had MLS information!! and EVERYONE!! had to come to me!!"

This Supervillain, it's quite apparent, hates the fact that his role as a primary information-source has been decimated – that his importance has been reduced to nothingness. So, he strikes back by protecting every last shred of information that he can think to safeguard.

And this Supervillain is EVERYWHERE. You need not look far, or search too hard, to find **The Gatekeeper**.

Want to see that latest list of foreclosure or bank owned properties? "Tough luck!" says **The Gatekeeper**, "Not without coming to me first. Call this #... Or text this # to... Or visit my website..." – where of course, another "gate" awaits you.

Even the smallest of details that might interest you, like, "how many bedrooms or bathrooms (?) what is the square-footage (?) are there any

pictures..." again, you find the **The Gatekeeper** standing between you and what you want to know.

And truthfully, as the middleman, this Supervillain is more annoying than dangerous and, as much as this Supervillain desperately wants to feel important, and have power – being a "control-freak" – he doesn't realize how "small" it makes him look. He hates being labeled a "salesman" too, but his pest-like behavior has won him six back-to-back Oscars.

Salesman. Middleman.

It's just the role that he plays perfectly, and it comes natural to him. And, it should be noted. This Supervillain's secondary personality-type is that of The Cheetah.

So as a word of caution, should you decide to engage **The Gatekeeper**– start running – because now that he has your contact information, he's coming...

This Supervillain is dual threat.

But what truly puts the 'super' in Supervillain, with this one, is his need to control and "keep" information from you – in his mind, it's the only way to keep you "dependent" on him. To keep you "needing" him. It's sort of sad, but the simple concepts of trust and relationship are foreign to **The Gatekeeper**. Precisely, what make him so dangerous...

You just never know if he telling you the whole truth. He may be keeping a Trump card from you, because he thinks that is what makes him important and necessary—that he has information that you do not.

The solution? When you spot **The Gatekeeper**, and it's not hard, realize you have someone in front of you who can't be trusted.

Information is everywhere, you shouldn't be held hostage simply to obtain what is readily available. If **The Gatekeeper** were smart, perhaps he'd pioneer a new approach to sell real estate, through research and testing, so legitimately he could better serve his clients.

He could even put those findings in a book, the accepted method to document knowledge. Not to mention, a much better way to convey value.

Of course, I've been saying that for years now. And for years now, this Supervillain has never changed course. So I doubt he ever will.

Again, thank your for reading this column.

I speak about the Real Estate Supervillains in a way that is, hopefully, entertaining and a bit tongue-and-check. But I'm also quite serious about the frustration and danger and annoyance they cause. Protect yourself.