

■ Regional News

Students present burial site findings

Project uncovered 18 potential unknown graves

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JORDAN – The outlines are vague to the layperson, but students at Niagara College believe they have uncovered 18 potential graves at the Jordan Historical Museum that were previously unknown.

Students from the college's GIS - Geospatial Management program presented their findings from a ground penetrating radar study of the area around where the Fry House is currently located on the museum grounds. A major project for the students, the study also unearthed information on a graveyard that has no known written records.

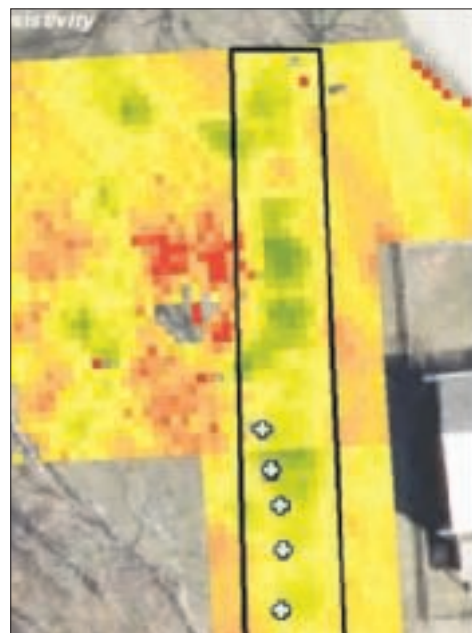
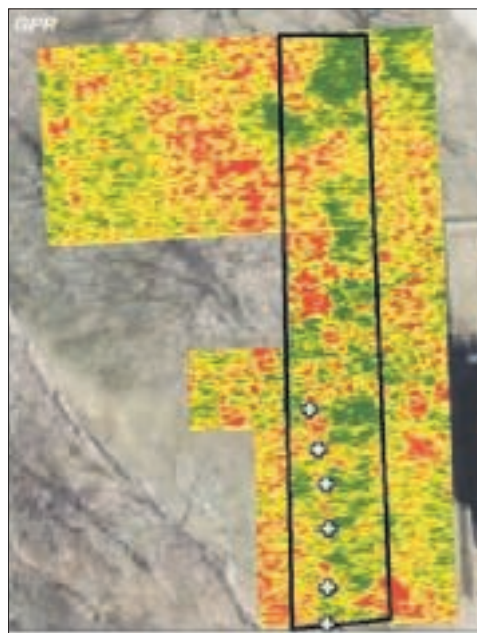
"It was very valuable for them to have done this. It was a pretty significant gift," said Lloyd Haines, with the Jordan Historical Museum Volunteer Association.

There remain eight visible gravestones on the site. Using those sites, the students conducted a non-invasive study of the surrounding area. Ground penetrating radar sends signals into the ground. The signals bounce off artifacts such as pipes, large rocks or graves, giving researchers an underground map.

"We can't say for sure what it is," said Travis Vanos, one of the student researchers, but based on a few criteria the students are confident they've uncovered a row of graves.

The findings will now spark an archeological assessment of the area ahead of the museum's planned expansion and redevelopment.

"I was surprised by the amount of burials



These renderings from ground penetrating radar and resistivity survey show what is likely a row of previously unknown graves on the site of the Jordan Historical Museum. Niagara College students recently presented their findings from a research project on the museum grounds.

Images courtesy Jessica Chan, Niagara College

on the west side," said Haines. "I didn't realize they went out that far."

While the purpose of the search was to find graves, that wasn't all the group uncovered. They also found a pathway that would have gone around the schoolhouse before it was moved.

For museum director Helen Booth it was the pathway that was the most exciting find.

"What really caught my attention...was the pathway around the school," she said. A former archeologist, Booth said these finds - called features - can provide a wealth of information.

"These give us more insight into how the land was used," she said.

Based on their findings the students are recommending no excavation within 400 square metres of the gravesite.

However, excavation around the pathway that was found is not being discouraged.

The graves could potentially interfere with the proposed amphitheatre, though it doesn't appear there will be a huge impact. Either way, Booth said they will respect the land and accommodate.

Construction on the renovations is expected to begin next year.

VIGIL CELEBRATES PETS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY

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ST. CATHARINES – A lot is said about grieving the loss of a pet, but there is also something else that must be done to help facilitate the healing process.

"Grief is automatic, we have no choice," said grief consultant, educator and author Marybeth Haines. "It's what's happening inside."

But that is only one part of the process, she said. It is equally important to mourn the loss of a furry friend.

"If it's kept inside, the more difficult it is to heal," she said.

Haines was speaking at a World Pet Loss

Memorial Day celebration vigil at the St. Catharines Museum Sunday.

"Today is an act of mourning," she said.

About 20 people gathered to remember and celebrate the lives of lost pets in addition to receiving comfort and support of others who have gone through a similar experience.

Carolyn Hunter of Ridgeway was there to remember the lives of three of her pets - a dog named Dizzy and cats, Suba and Cola.

"Cola passed away from cancer a couple of years ago," Hunter said. "I know Julie (Proulx, co-presenter at Sunday's event), and I'm interested in what she is trying to do."

Proulx is the owner of Pets at Peace on Lake Street. Pets at Peace offers grief services for pet owners.

"Our dog Skipper died 25 years ago, and it still makes us cry," Proulx told the gathering. "I think we need to give ourselves a chance to mourn."

Haines, meanwhile, said the unconditional love pets give to their human caregivers is one of a kind.

"The love from a pet is unique to any other," she said.

Growing up in rural Wainfleet, Haines said the animals she grew up with were not 'just animals' but much more.

"They were friends," she said. "When I look back, they taught me so much."

Attendees at Sunday's event received a paw print on which to write the name of a lost pet and place it into a "gift box" to symbolize what their furry friend had given them.



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