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NEWS » URBAN FARMING

Local residents in urban hen pilot

Edmontonians will soon know if keeping hens in the city is legal



Amy Wilson stands with her daughter in front of her chicken coop and four chickens. » REBECCA LIPPIATT

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Amy and Timothy Wilson's backyard has a goldfish pond, a garden, several fruit trees...and four hens.

The Wilsons, who live in the Alberta Avenue neighbourhood, are raising four hens as part of the city's urban hen pilot project. City council approved the pilot last year, and it wrapped up at the end of August.

The Wilsons are one of 19 sites participating in the pilot. Amy showed me the chicken coop and the hens on a brisk Friday afternoon. "I had wanted chickens for awhile. We have always tried to make our food more sustainable."

The couple also have a two-and-half-year-old daughter. "It's good for her to learn where food comes from."

When the city approved them for the pilot, it was October and they rushed to

get ready.

They bought the hens and the coop from different sellers on kijiji, and Timothy built the movable chicken run. Finding the hens was a challenge since "it wasn't the right time of year to be buying chickens." They wanted a cold-hardy heritage chicken breed, which were prevalent breeds before commercial chickens became common.

Wilson said the hens have settled in well and are easy keepers. The hens eat laying feed, kitchens scraps, and weeds. Each hen lays an egg a day, although the hens lay fewer eggs in the fall and winter due to less sunlight. Although the Wilsons aren't allowed to sell eggs, they share about a dozen a month.

"We love the chickens. Everyone loves them. The kids can pick them up and hold them," said Wilson.

They clean the chicken coop

once a week and haven't had any problems with smell. In the winter, they insulate the coop with straw bales and close up the coop at night. During the spring and summer, the bales are mostly gone.

Right now only pilot participants can legally keep hens. Keith Scott, the city's coordinator of animal control, said, "chickens are considered a prohibited animal." After the pilot ends, the city will review the information and determine if the bylaw will change to allow hens. And for those curious, if the bylaw changes, residents won't be able to raise chickens for meat. Scott said he doesn't think that any livestock other than chickens and bees will be kept.

The pilot is part of the city's efforts to encourage urban farming. In 2012, the city created *fresh*, Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy. "One strategy in the

report was to try and see if hens and bees were viable in an urban environment," said Scott. "Over the last five or six years, there's been a real push from the community to allow hens."

One group behind that push is River City Chickens Collective. Margaret Fisher is a leader of the group and a pilot participant.

Fisher said the organization created a proposal for the city to read and said they have worked hard to dispel myths about keeping hens in the city. They also provide information sessions, courses, and resources. "Our courses have been sold out both times. There seems to be a fair bit of interest."

As for Wilson, she said she hopes the city continues to encourage urban farming. "It's just been a really positive experience altogether. Hens are easy, cheap, and fresh eggs are delicious."

INSIDE:

Community News
Read about what you need to know to prepare for the federal election.
» P2

Community News
Learn about neighbourhood teams and politics.
» P3



Eye on Community
It's Kaleido Festival's 10 year anniversary. Read about the past decade and learn what's new this year.
» P4-5



Perspectives
Learn about media bias.
» P6

Special Feature
Beekeeping is now legal in Edmonton.
» P8



Special Feature
Mari Sasano writes about the bonuses and drawbacks of urban farming.
» P9

Everybody's Business
Check out Go Cafe, a new business on 118 Ave.
» P11

Slice of Life
Long-distance relationships require commitment.
» P12



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NEWS » ELECTION

Getting ready to vote: 2015 federal election

What you need to know before you go to the polls

PAULINE ISMAEL

While we're still feeling the effects of the surprise political shift from the provincial elections this past May, we are already gearing up for the federal election on Oct. 19.

Helping to kick-start the momentum was the Maclean's National Leaders Debate on Aug. 6. It provided a stage for the debate between leaders on the important issues concerning Canadians today. This debate will be the first of many highlights during the campaign, and there are plenty of opportunities to become informed about the candidates in your riding running for Member of Parliament (MP).

Why you should vote

Our communities now include two ridings: Edmonton Centre and Edmonton Griesbach. Also, long-serving MP Peter Goldring will not be running for office, providing an opportunity for political change for our representation in the House of Commons. These factors build up the environment for change in the community, coinciding with the political momentum building across the nation.

Voting is important. Every voter contributes in fostering change that benefits the community as a whole. Our future MP represents the voices of the community. As my friend describes the process, "my particular vote won't be the decid-

election, they are becoming more politically aware and encouraged to vote.

What you need to know

In order to be eligible to vote, you must be a Canadian citizen, 18 years or older, and able to prove your identity

need either a driver's license or provincial ID card to verify your identity.

Upon arrival at the polling station, you have three options for presenting identification. Show one piece of government-issued ID with your photo, name and address (i.e. driver's license or provincial/territorial ID card) or provide two pieces of ID with at least one displaying your current address. If you do not have this information, take an oath and have one person from the same riding attest to your address (that person can only attest to one person).

The voter information card you receive in the mail with information about the registered voters, hours of operation, and location of polling station is not an acceptable form of identification.

If you are working on election day, by law your employer must give you time off to vote if work hours prohibit you from voting.

For further information on the elections or about your candidates in the Edmonton Griesbach or Edmonton Centre riding, check the related links.

Want to learn more? Attend a Politics 101 session on Sept. 29 at 6:30 pm at Alberta Avenue Community League.



"MUSICAL CHAIRS WITH CANDIDATES"

Voters will need to know election information before voting on Oct. 19. » PAULINE ISMAEL

ing factor, but voting as a whole is very important."

Many young voters I have spoken with have shared this sentiment in the democratic process. After witnessing the unexpected change in the provincial

and address.

Ensure you are registered to vote by checking online at www.elections.ca. If you need to register or update your information, go to the voter registration online or call Elections Canada. You will

Federal election Monday, Oct. 19	watch?v=hSf2__qpeGAhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSf2__qpeGA	parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6404810&File=4	Griesbach candidates Conservative: Kerry Diotte kerrydiotte.com Green: Heather Workman heatherworkman.ca Liberal: Brian Gold briangold.liberal.ca NDP: Janis Irwin janisirwin.ndp.ca	randyboissonnault.liberal.ca Green: David Parker greenparty.ca/en/riding/2013-48014 Libertarian: Blaine Bilocerkowec libertarian.ca/candidate/blaine-bilocerkowec/ NDP: Gil McGowan gilmcgowan.ca
Elections Canada elections.ca 1.800.463.6868	Information about federal government and their functions parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/OurCountryOurParliament/html_booklet/three-levels-government-e.html	Communities in Edmonton Griesbach riding Alberta Avenue Delton Eastwood Elmwood Park Parkdale	Edmonton Centre candidates Conservative: James Cumming jamescumming.ca Liberal: Randy Boissonnault	
Vote Compass Online questionnaire helping you determine how your political views align with political parties. votecompass.com	Fair Elections Act (Bill C-23) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_Elections_Act	Communities in Edmonton Centre riding Sprucewood Westwood		
National Leaders Debate www.youtube.com/				

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NEWS » POLITICS

Sitting down with Brian Mason

Questions and answers about riding changes, provincial politics, and more

STEPHEN STRAND

NDP House Leader Brian Mason is the Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation, and the MLA for Highlands-Norwood. I recently sat down with Mason for a brief interview about his riding.

Since you became an MLA in 2000, how have you seen your riding change?

Well, I think I have seen a number of changes and I think for the better. I think in particular in the Norwood and Alberta Avenue area there's been an improvement.

I'll go back to when I was first elected to city council in October of 1989. So, that's over 25 years ago, and one of the first things I did was go on a citizen patrol at night along 118 Avenue. What I observed is people in the communities have been working over decades to try and improve the neighbourhood. I'm very pleased to say that I think that they are having some real success now. They have been very very committed community people who want to make the neighbourhood safer.

We now see festivals held on 118 Avenue that people from all over the Edmonton region and people from outside of Edmonton attend. We have also seen, now, young families coming in and improving the properties and staying and putting their kids through schools. I always thought it was a great community, but it's becoming better and it's because of the work of the people that have lived there over the last 25 years.

What do you foresee for the future of Highlands-Norwood?

I think we have some challenges on the horizon. The potential redevelopment of Rexall Place is one. We want to make sure that's done in a way that enhances the community, because it could have a negative impact if it's done poorly. So, that's one.

Schools is another one. I have worked over the years with parent groups to try and keep our schools open. While we have had a few close, we've kept more open. So, I want to continue to do that, to work with the public school board in particular.

I want to work with the community and with the school trustee, Ray Martin, in order to make sure that

the community gets the best possible education opportunities for their kids.

With the Oilers moving downtown, what would you like to see happen to Rexall Place?

I'm more interested in a good process that results in a good outcome. I think the community needs to be closely involved in that, and it needs to be some sort of development that will enhance the quality of life in the community that won't draw additional problems into the area. I think that I won't try to predict what that is exactly, but I am hopeful that Northlands and the city will work with communities in order to make it a positive development.

With the NDP now being the ruling party in Alberta, what does this mean for your riding?

I like to think that I represented the riding very well in opposition. I kept up a very critical approach to the government, but also fostered good personal relationships with people on the other side of the aisle. Now that we are in government, I don't expect that the riding's going to get any special treatment, but I do hope that our government, and I'm confident that our government is going to be focused on building and strengthening communities and doing those things that are necessary to allow that.

How did you get into provincial politics? Why did you chose to run with the NDP?

During my time on city council, where I was not a member of any party, I found myself feeling that I was getting closer and closer to the views of the New Democratic Party. At that time, you will recall, most of Edmonton had elected the NDP. So, my provincial colleagues, when I was first elected to city council, were all New Democrats. They were helpful to me and we had good working relationships, and I knew Grant Notley when I was a student and I admired him very much.

When Pam Barrett resigned her seat and a byelection was called, I was approached. At first I was reluctant to do it, but in the end it was a chance for adventure.

What were you hoping to achieve when you first became involved in provincial politics?

There was a number of things that sparked my interest. One was to stop the privatization of healthcare. At that time, [Ralph] Klein was pushing for more private healthcare, and they had just passed Bill 11, which was a very controversial bill, allowing more private healthcare. We had fought hard against it. My first private member's bill was to repeal Bill 11. Needless to say, that never got anywhere.

Also, electricity deregulation was a big problem. It was pushing up electricity prices for consumers. That was an issue for me as well.

Another priority was to work with the local communities in order to make the neighbourhood a safer and better place to live.

Why did you choose to live in Highlands-Norwood? What originally drew you to this neighbourhood?

When I first ran for city council, I lived in Riverdale, which is just outside the boundary for the ward. Some of my opponents tried to make hay about it, so I simply said, "If I'm elected into this position, I will move into Ward 3." When I was elected, we started looking for a house, and within a year we found a house that we liked. Within a year we moved into the Highlands.



NDP MLA Brian Mason at his Highlands-Norwood office. >>STEPHEN STRAND

NEWS » COMMUNITY

Politics and neighbourhood teams

Grassroots co-operative effort gives people a voice in the democratic process

CHANTAL FIGEAT

Is there something about your neighbourhood that you'd love to change? Maybe you'd like to see our roads in better repair. Perhaps you'd like more park space for your children. Or maybe feral cats are digging up your garden.

These may seem like minor issues to some people, but they loom large in your mind because of their immediate impact on your life.

Participating in the neighbourhood teams' effort can help you take practical steps to change issues that may also be bothering your neighbours.

The model for neighbourhood teams originated with Obama's campaign, where they used the slogan "Respect. Empower. Include."

Neighbourhood teams first appeared in Edmonton with Linda Duncan's 2008 campaign in the Edmonton-Strathcona riding. These groups strive to establish and encourage participation to build relationships between neighbours and friends. Through respect and empowerment, a collective of individuals can establish the capacity to meet future community needs.

Duncan succeeded in holding on to her federal seat in Edmonton-Strathcona. Her election in 2008 made her the only non-Conservative MP in Alberta.

"It's a wonderful way for neighbours to get involved in the democratic process," said Donna Staszewski of the Edmonton-Griesbach Riding Association. Staszewski

explained that "teams hold meetings to discuss and plan for future events and actions. These meetings provide an opportunity for members to share what is important in their community and how they can continue to be involved in the electoral and democratic process." The teams have a common goal of electing Irwin, but Staszewski said the teams will continue to work after the election in order to "continue to foster community activism and to provide our elected officials with information about the needs and concerns of citizens in the riding of Edmonton Griesbach."

"For me, it's really about community and how at that grassroots level you can get people involved," said Janis Irwin, NDP candidate for Edmonton-Griesbach.

As for voter apathy, Irwin said, "People have concerns even though they don't vote." Irwin has worked as a high school teacher, vice-principal, and university lecturer.

Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Parkdale, and Cromdale (east of 82 Street) are in Zone 3 of the Edmonton-Griesbach riding. Each neighbourhood team has a unique character. Teams have held information sessions and have helped at festivals and Big Bin Events.

Jim Storrie works with the neighbourhood teams in Zone 3. Storrie commented that Zone 3 is "diverse, intergenerational [and brings in people] from all economic levels. We aren't all concerned with the same issues," said Storrie. "The approach we're taking is to give

people the power to speak for themselves," Storrie continued. People are able to develop skill sets in a supportive atmosphere. The general atmosphere of Zone 3 is very congenial and cooperative. "We're hoping that social capital will continue after the election is done."

Although neighbourhood teams work to address serious issues and raise a candidate's profile, they also like to have fun. Events like barbecues are planned at local venues where constituents are invited to chat with their candidate.

To find out more or join a team in your area, contact Janis Irwin's office at 780.477.1343.

WHAT'S ON » FESTIVAL

Kaleido's 10 year start

Looking back at the festival that changed everything

DAVE VON BIEKER

I fancy myself an optimist, but I wasn't feeling optimistic back in 2006.

I walked the sprawling grounds of the very first Arts Alive! festival and wondered if the festival may have been a mistake. Officially there were 600 patrons, but I don't remember seeing more than 50 at any event.

I thought festival organizers had spread themselves thin. The massive main stage emphasized the empty chairs. Dancers and actors may have outnumbered their audience. Gallery spaces were still.

Artistic director Christy Morin and the festival team spied a future I did not. They saw Kaleido, a festival shutting down streets so 60,000 guests could watch performers fill every open space.

In 2006, public perception of Alberta Avenue was decidedly negative. Morin says that despite positive elements, the Ave was "seen as a drug scene and a place to come get involved in crime."

I had moved in with great trepidation just a year prior, but Morin had lived here a long while. She was tired of the darkness.

Morin met with neighbourhood friend and actress Anita Lennie to do something that would "edify the community."

At an art show put on through the Business Association, Morin bumped into neighbourhood artist Michelle Hayduk. She began to hear about artists living around the Ave. Corb Lund. Members of Captain Tractor. Maybe, with all these artists, we could host a festival.

Why a festival? Because that's what we do in Edmonton. Because Morin and her theatre and music friends could pull this off. With some help.

The city hired Ken Chapman to strategize a better future for Alberta Avenue. Chapman caught the vision and brought support for this huge undertaking.

That first festival, then called Arts Alive!, landed on a "very chilly Thanksgiving long weekend."

Many helped. A group of

reservists lent their brawn to convert the old George's Cycle building into a theatre space. One woman strapped on rollerblades to deliver flyers. Police hung borrowed parachutes from the ceiling to provide ambience. Judy Allan brought help from the Avenue Initiative. The Alberta Avenue Community League opened their doors.

The Kaleido spirit—a vivid blend of community, creativity and crazy ideas—was born.

Morin said she remembers watching all of this come together, like a "barn raising." Seeing those theatre lights go up, "got [her] really jazzed to see that it can really happen."

Where I saw small crowds, Morin saw hope.

"I was actually quite delighted," Morin remembers. "Because we really did not know if we were going to even bring people ... There was such a stigma about the community that even to have families come was just a positive ... we knew it would be a beginning."

The festival grew, with many highlights along the way.

In 2008, Avenue local Scott Peters of Captain Tractor produced *Songs from the Ave*. This collection celebrated the storied past of Alberta Avenue with original songs from locals like Terry Morrison, Chris Wynters, Paul Bellows, Barry Westerlund and Randy Ritz.

In the third or fourth year (the Kaleido team didn't keep great records of these things then), the streets were closed. "That was huge for us," Morin reflects. The road was now a canvas.

In time, organizers were given access to the Alberta Cycle building. This brought 18,000 feet more space, including a black box theatre.

Somewhere around year six, Delhi 2 Dublin transformed the entire parking lot into a throbbing dance hall. That's when Morin really saw her vision come to life. She turned on her phone and filmed, in awe. "That was what was always in my mind's eye."

That year also broke attendance records at 17,000. People from beyond Alberta Avenue were finally catching

on.

Of course, with growth come challenges.

Morin and volunteers stayed up all night in year five, checking on the tents to make sure the 80 km/hr winds didn't carry them away.

Then there were the winds of change, bringing down the Alberta Cycle building after major structural problems were discovered.

These challenges have revealed Kaleido's greatest strength. Morin tells me that "the part of the festival that is great and challenging all the time is having to be nimble—to flex and make things work. That speaks to the production team."

Nimble is the perfect word. Nimble as a dancer on a vertical wall. Nimble as a bellydancer's hips. Nimble as an acrobat or an African dance troupe leaping over a half-dozen adults in a playground.

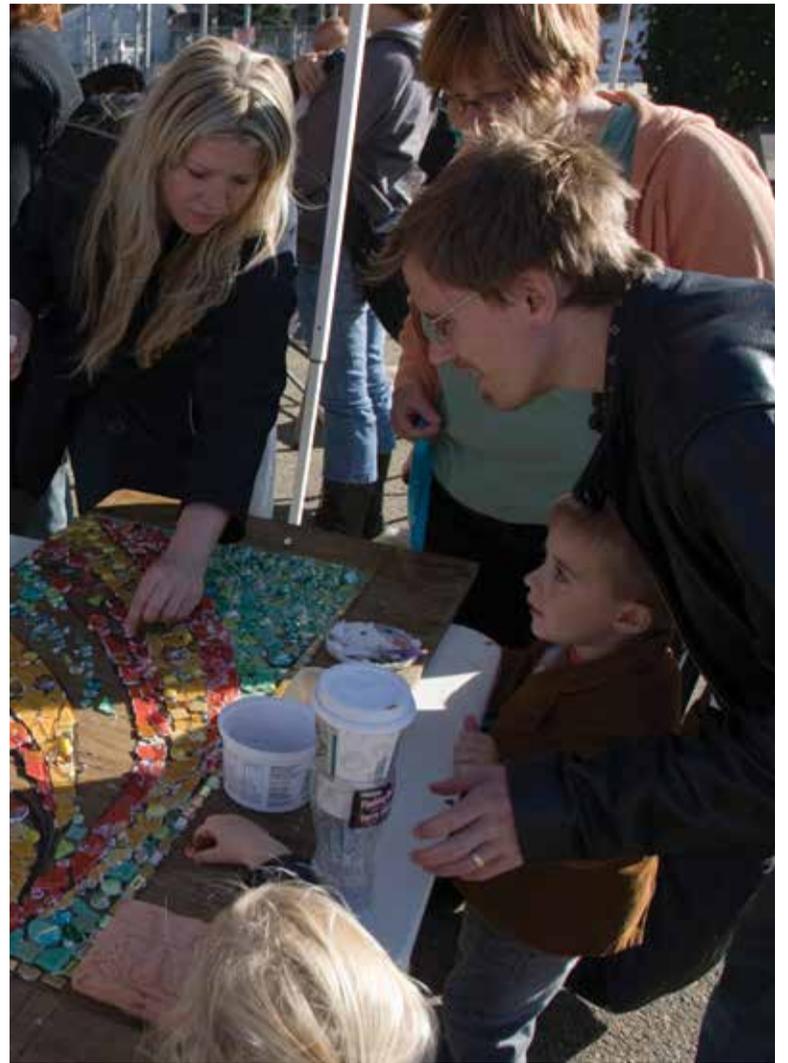
"There's a lot of initiatives that happen along the city and then they just sort of ... fall apart," Morin tells me, "but I think the tenacity and the determination and the will to want to see this become something beautiful and this community to really get up out of the ashes and wipe itself off and say 'this is the soul of who we are.'"

The 60,000 guests don't come for superstars. They come to feel positive creative energy as wild, weird and vivid as a kaleidoscope itself.

In full-circle fashion, *Songs from the Ave* will rise again Sept. 11 at 8 PM to celebrate Kaleido's decade as a festival. Performers from the original project will gather on the grassy space that used to be Alberta Cycle to sing our stories. "We're bringing together some of the people who created this festival and album to celebrate our neighbourhoods," says festival producer Sharla Matkin.

I asked Morin if she ever thought we'd make it to 10 years.

"I just kept thinking to myself, will I still be here? Will this thing still be going on? And then here it is, it's 10 years, and it almost feels like it just has started."



Kaleido 2008: Community members collaborate on the Kaleido mosaic installed on the outside walls of the 118 Ave ATB bank and Alberta Avenue Community League. >> PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN



Kaleido 2014: A patron plays the piano on the Carrot corner. >> EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY



Kaleido 2011: The late Heather Syren with her zombie pals channel Michael Jackson during their Thriller performance. >> EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY

Elmwood Park Community League

Saturday Sept 19 Free BBQ and chili cook-off!
Wednesday Sept 23, 7 pm League AGM at the Sands Hotel.

WHAT'S ON » FESTIVAL

An all-encompassing festival

Kaleido Family Arts Festival celebrates 10 years

BRIANNA MCCUTCHEON

Kaleido Festival offers a vast array of sights, including theatre, song, dance, visual arts, and even film. This colourful gathering has been going strong and is celebrating 10 years this September.

Sharla Matkin, Kaleido's theatre programmer for the past four years, discussed the festival's evolution.

"It started as a small community festival with bands playing their music. It has now changed into this festival with performance spaces everywhere and anywhere along the Avenue." Matkin is serious about the variety of locations: on stages, in alleys, on rooftops, in parks, and even in neighbourhood houses. Not to mention these shows are free. "You can come all day and not spend a cent, there's not that pressure," said Matkin.

The celebration will include fireworks on Sept. 12 at 11 pm as well as an ode to the festival's musical past on Sept. 11. Back in 2008, Scott Peters created a CD with various artists about the 118 Avenue community called *Songs From the Ave*. Matkin wanted to bring back what she calls "the love record to the neighbourhood" for the anniversary. Opening the festival on Friday night at 8 pm, all the songwriters and singers that compiled the CD will be there for a campfire singalong.

People can also expect more theatre. "This year I'm really excited because we have more outside theatre," said Matkin.

Festivalgoers will have the chance to see one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies performed by Thou Art Here, an Edmonton-based theatre group.

"They've put together three scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and they're going to perform in someone's house, then the audience will move with them to the park. [After that] the audience will carry on with them to a building on the Avenue to finish it off," said Matkin.

The festival has also brought more presence to the 118 Avenue neighbourhood. Alberta Avenue has seen its fair share of downs, but with festivals like Kaleido popping up, Edmontonians are feeling a newfound love for the area.

Christy Morin, artistic director of Kaleido Festival, revealed, "People want to buy houses

in the 'festival zone'; people are attracted to the area." Morin is still shocked by the change that has happened. "When we started, we never thought we would have a festival zone, [people want to live close by]."

The festival, as Morin explained, is self-sustaining and they're still in need of volunteers. "We need people...even if you have a 12-year-old and yourself, we have space." Volunteers have an opportunity to participate in a festival and be "a part of the Kaleido family."

Kaleido Festival will be unfolding on the weekend of Sept. 11-13 with a warm welcome to all visitors. To find out more information about parking or festival hours, visit the website at kaleidofest.ca.

"The festival has also brought more presence to the 118 Avenue neighbourhood. Alberta Avenue has seen its fair share of downs, but with festivals like Kaleido popping up, Edmontonians are feeling a newfound love for the area."

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 Sunday, Sept. 13: 10:30 am-6 pm



Kaleido 2011: Marcus Fung facilitating a community drum circle.
 >> EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY



Kaleido 2014: Ken Stead and a friendly robot walk together.
 >> EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY

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EDITORIAL

Media bias in news coverage

Awareness and critical thinking are essential to fully understanding issues

MIMI WILLIAMS

As we head towards the Oct. 19 federal election, it's a good time to remind ourselves that democracy is effective only to the extent that voters are well-informed, with the ability to think critically and independently. It's also important to remember that all media—mainstream and otherwise—can be biased. This is not necessarily a bad thing as long as we are aware of it.

Media exhibit bias by choosing to report or not report specific news items, or when reporting, to include some details and ignore others. Observers can only detect these biases through omission by comparing reports from a variety of different news outlets, an endeavour made easier with the Internet. Unlike previous generations, which had news delivered to their televisions, radios and doorsteps at set times from a select number of providers, today we have several news sources available

around the clock.

People on the conservative side of the political spectrum have long pointed to Canada's media and accused them of having a left wing or liberal bias. At the same time, liberals and the left accuse them of having a conservative bias. Both sides

have been, from time to time, correct. Canadians appear less likely to be drawn to or approve of the bias seen on media outlets like Fox News. This lack of enthusiasm led to the demise of the Sun News Network, which was unable to maintain enough subscribers to keep operating. Even if our news outlets aren't impartial, we seem to want them to at least pretend to be.

In May, the *Edmonton Journal* caused local outrage when it published an

endorsement of Jim Prentice's Progressive Conservatives the weekend before the provincial election. The paper's editor-in-chief subsequently admitted that the directive was issued from Postmedia headquarters in Toronto.

"The owners of the *Journal*

“Even if our news outlets aren't impartial, we seem to want them to at least pretend to be.”

made that call, and the editorial was written by a member of the editorial board. It was reviewed and edited by senior *Journal* editors, and then published as is," Margo Goodhand wrote. "Editorials are always expected to reflect the opinions of the owner/publisher..."

If we are concerned about bias, then we need to be just as concerned about the con-

centration of media ownership. Currently, *The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* are the only major English-language newspapers in Canada not controlled by Postmedia.

In the past, political coverage has often focused on what politicians or other elites have to say about public policy issues, often ignoring the voices of those directly affected by the decisions that will be made. While criticism on social media pushes these mainstream outlets in directions they might not otherwise go, Canadians still receive a very narrow view of the news, dominated by people of a certain economic class, usually white and usually male. This is not to say that we should dismiss what these people have to say about politics. It means we should ask ourselves what perspective we aren't hearing. Whose worldview is being ignored?

Bias in the media can be corrected when assumptions

are challenged directly. For example, no reporter today would write a story saying that a woman deserved to be raped because of what she was wearing (although some might still imply it by reporting what she was wearing). In the past, this would be taken as a matter of course. By calling out certain biases and assumptions, we've been able to demonstrate how absurd they actually are and force the media to change the way they report.

As voters, we must take it upon ourselves to notice contradictions and inconsistencies in the news and take note of whose agenda and whose interests are served by a particular story. The media are often described as the fourth pillar of democracy, after the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. By being active, critical consumers of news instead of passive recipients, we've got the opportunity to see it fulfill that potential.



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ABOUT US

The *Rat Creek Press* is a non-profit community newspaper in north central Edmonton serving the communities of Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue, and Westwood.

COMMUNITY, COMMUNICATION, CAPACITY

The *Rat Creek Press* goals are to help connect residents with what is happening in the community, provide a forum where information and ideas can be exchanged, and help individuals learn new skills, acquire experience and develop leadership.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Rat Creek Press* is a forum for all people. We encourage comments that further discussion on a given article or subject, provide constructive criticism, or offer an idea for community activity. Letters should be no longer than 250 words and must include the full name, location and contact information of the author. Op-Ed columns should be 400-700 words and observe formal rules of spelling and grammar. The RCP reserves the right to edit all material and to remove any electronic comment at any time.

All columns, letters or cartoons submitted are attributed to the author and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the *Rat Creek Press*. Send submissions to the *Rat Creek Press* Editor via email at editor@ratcreek.org, or 9210-118 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5G 0N2. Mail may also be dropped at the address above.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Space is available to non-profit groups for event and program listings as well as volunteer opportunities on a first-come first-serve basis and will be printed as space permits.



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EDITORIAL NOTE: THIS IS AN EDITED & ABBREVIATED VERSION OF A VERY PASSIONATE LETTER TO THE MAYOR. ALSO CIRCULATED ON FACEBOOK.

Letter to Mayor Iveson

Twenty-one years ago, I bought a house in Parkdale. I was working at Lurana Shelter, so couldn't afford much but I loved my little house and I loved my not so little yard where I could have a dog.

I grew to love my little block and my neighbours. Like "Nona" who built her house on this street with her husband when they came from Italy and raised their family. The house she still lives in, where she still spends every day tending her garden and dispensing invaluable gardening advice to her neighbours.

Like her son, Nick, who got married and bought a house on the same street as his parents where he and Julia have raised their own wonderful family. Like Ernie who shovels our walks in the winter and on his garage sale travels picks up little things he thinks my girls would like. Like Lina, who has the most beautiful flowers in her front yard and brings some to my girls for them to plant in their garden.

However, my neighbourhood also had challenges.

When my stepdaughter came to live with us, I decided I'd better get involved and help make this a better community for her. So I got involved with the community league. And the neighbourhood patrol. And the business association. And PAAFE. And countless committees. Hours and hours and hours of time. We saw some positive changes.

Then I had two more girls. And this little house started to feel pretty little so we thought about moving. But how could we leave our neighbours? Do we want to spend more time driving? We are just so close to everything!

So, we just got cozy and settled in and worked where we

could to keep the community moving in a positive direction. We worked on stadium issues. We worked on problem properties. We wrote letters, and when that didn't work, more sternly worded letters. And on we went in our little house in our little neighbourhood.

When Carmen Pervez/Abdullah Shah and his crew start buying houses in our community, we organized and talked to our councilor and called bylaw and called EPS. They apply for permits and we fight those permits. Even when we win, they continue to operate them and the city can do nothing, we are told, to stop it.

One of Mr. Pervez's associates told me that the Red Alert gang is watching me. Last year, after we were successful at a SDAB hearing against Mr. Pervez, he came to my house in his Lamborghini and sat revving his engine for at least three minutes while I was outside.

Despite this, I agreed to talk to the *Edmonton Journal* for an article last November. In the course of her investigation, Elise Stolte spoke to a tenant who told her of horrific conditions and fear. I told her I would help him. I'm the Executive Director of Dickinsfield Amity House, and I felt I had the skills to assist. With the help of the wonderful staff at Brian Mason's office we got him and his roommate out to a safe place and found them a new apartment where they paid less for a much better place.

To date, I've been contacted by at least a dozen people, current and former tenants, who tell me stories of the conditions and treatment by these slumlords. Tenants spoke of high rent (at least \$850 per tiny room) in a building with at least eight units. They need assistance to get out, or get

their damage deposits back, or sometimes they just want to tell their story.

I am only telling you this because Pervez and his associates portray themselves as offering housing to the downtrodden. In my opinion, they are exploiting vulnerable people and putting them and surrounding communities at risk.

Why am I writing to you? Because after 22 years in which I volunteered, helped my neighbours, contributed to my community, worked in non-profits serving the city's vulnerable for very little financial reward, I am ready to leave Edmonton.

I spent my August long weekend getting signatures on petitions and talking to neighbours and preparing for a SDAB hearing. We lost. They get to have their illegal suite become legal. The same suite where EPS arrested a bunch of very bad guys and found seven handguns and who knows how much drugs. This is a block away from where my nine-year-old plays in the yard with my dog. I just can't do this. I am fighting against my own city.

When I went to my childhood home in St. Albert, my dad told me that he was very frustrated with the city, because the drainage near his house is almost nonexistent. Drainage. My dad is frustrated with a puddle!

I thought, this could be my life. I could be mad about a puddle. Not because my daughters see way more than any child should. Not because my city allows the vulnerable and communities to be abused over and over. Not because I have to leave my house during an event in a city-owned facility for which inadequate community protection is provided.

Not because, in spite of

research and the example from cities all over the world, my city continues to concentrate services and poverty to the detriment of everyone. Not because I have given years of my time-time away from my family that I'll never get back-in vain, trying to make difference. But I could be mad about a puddle.

And I thought back to how much time my parents had to spend away from me to make our neighbourhood safe. None. My neighbourhood was safe. And so I wonder, why? Why am I doing this? And I decided I can't. I need to live somewhere that is just safe. Without me fighting, calling, letter writing, petitioning. Just safe.

So, after 22 years, I am going to be preparing this beautiful little house, filled with memories, to sell. And I will move back to my childhood home. And my children will play outside, and not take pictures of blood on sidewalks. And not tell stories at school of the "squat" team who ran into a house on their street with their guns out. And I will be mad about a puddle.

But I will feel sad that nothing has changed for the people I'll leave behind. Sad for this community that is far too often forgotten. Sad for the city I loved, the city which allows slumlords to profit while communities suffer.

-Tracy Patience

Brian Mason, MLA

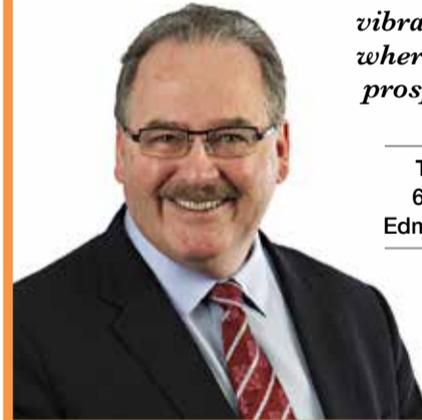
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URBAN FARMING » BEEKEEPING

Beekeepers are now free to bee

Successful city pilot program changed bylaw and allows beekeeping

MARI SASANO

For many years, people have surreptitiously kept beehives in the city. They were illegal, but a new city bylaw means that all those beekeepers (and any new ones interested in joining them) are now free to be.

"A lot of them were advocating with the city to change the bylaw. It was mostly harmless, and they were doing it without anyone noticing," said Hani Quan, the city's acting senior planner.

As a result of this advocacy, the city ran a pilot program in 2014, and this April, changed the bylaw. Only 17 hives were licensed this year, but Quan expects more as the word spreads.

"Response has been great, he said. "We launched a bee video campaign to address the common things we heard."

While beehive licences are free, there are some conditions: you must follow any provincial beekeeping regulations, take a beekeeping course, provide a site plan, and notify your neighbours. Each property can have one beehive, and they must be located according to city guidelines.

One early adopter was Northlands Urban Farm. Beekeeper Patty Milligan, who ran a honey business under the name Lola Canola, was asked to be part of an experimental bee project in 2013 as part of the farm.

"At that time, it wasn't legal to have bees in the city, but Northlands got permission for these four hives, and that came through May 2014," said Milligan.

Although she started the hives late in the season, the bees (provided by a beekeeper near Barrhead) thrived and survived the winter. And as far as safety in the neighbourhood? Bees are generally docile and Milligan is educating people to understand their behaviour.

"When we have our tours, I would grab a frame and usually I'm just wearing a ball cap and I think it's neat for [people] to see that. Some people assume that being within a few feet of the hive, you need to cover yourself. I love fostering that recognition that we can really co-exist with bees easily."

Another concern—swarming—can be mitigated through good bee husbandry.

"Swarming isn't an aggressive sort of thing, but visually it can be

scary. But in actuality, they're just trying to find a new house."

For those who are interested in starting up a hive in their yard, there are a few steps to follow before you're up and buzzing. First of all, you're only allowed one hive, and there are regulations on where you can put it.

Milligan runs beekeeping courses and cautions that maintaining hives requires commitment, dedication, and knowledge.

"You'll be looking at them through the summer every week to 10 days. If you have one hive, every week you just go through the hive and inspect it." And of course, when it comes time for harvesting, you'll have a hot, sticky and sometimes stinging time. But the payoff is worth it: fresh honey, straight out of the combs, is sweet and slightly cinnamon-flavoured. The Northlands hives should produce around 600 pounds this season, but the work that it takes to harvest it has its own rewards.

"Just that moment when you're looking at a frame and I think, I get to look in this whole little world."



Beekeeper Patty Milligan shows the bees in Northlands Urban Farm's apiary. >> MARI SASANO

Interested in beekeeping?

edmonton.ca/bees

Find beekeeping guidelines here:

http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/Urban_Beekeeping_Guidelines_FINAL_May_11_2015.pdf

Find bee information videos here:

http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/beekeeping-video-gallery.aspx

URBAN FARMING » BYLAWS



April and Aaron Au were inspired by their neighbour's front yard garden. >> KAREN MYKIETKA

Urban agriculture thrives

Gardeners can grow food anywhere on their property

LINDA WILKINSON

There was a time when every backyard had a garden and families enjoyed their own produce. We may have gotten away from the practice of gardening for a while, but now urban agriculture is making a comeback in a big way.

According to the City of Edmonton website, the definition of urban agriculture is "the cultivation, processing or distribution of food in and around cities. It can include activities such as vacant lot, community or rooftop gardens, urban farms, hydroponics, and aquaponics."

These options give Edmontonians many urban farming options for our short growing season: indoors, back and front yards, and even boulevards. But what about regulations and bylaws? Will you get a fine if you grow food in any or all of the aforementioned locations?

Hani Quan, the city's acting

senior planner, said there are currently no regulations or bylaws to prevent people from growing food anywhere on their property. And if a text amendment to the zoning bylaw is passed on Oct. 19, even more urban agriculture will be enabled and encouraged in Edmonton.

"One of the things that we are trying to do with the proposed amendment is create land use classes that reflect the kinds of urban agriculture that people are trying to do, like outdoor urban farms, indoor urban farms, and urban gardens," explained Quan. "These use classes fill an existing gap in the current regulations and create a clear distinction between urban agriculture activities and more traditional farming."

This is good news for gardeners. The city wants to encourage urban agriculture while ensuring there's compatibility between different land uses and while trying to minimize conflicts between neighbours.

If the zoning bylaw is passed, it will bring Edmontonians one step closer to *fresh*, Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy. The goal of *fresh* is to help Edmonton achieve the vision of "a resilient food and agriculture system that contributes to the local economy and the overall cultural, financial, social and environmental sustainability of the city."

With a probable green light on greener neighborhoods, gardeners throughout the city can rejoice and raise their fresh produce in celebration.

Do you want to garden but don't have the space? Check out three community gardens in the RCP distribution area.

For info on these or other community gardens visit: sustainablefoodedmonton.org

Alberta Avenue Community Garden
9210 118 Ave
Eastwood Community Garden
119 Ave and 86 St
Elmwood Park
12505 75 St

URBAN FARMING » OPINION

A sustainable form of food

Resources are necessary for urban farming to be accessible to everyone

MARI SASANO

Encouraging residents to think about how to grow their own food is one of the goals of *fresh*, the City of Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy, created in 2012. Producing food within the city creates self-sufficiency and sustainability. The strategy looks at a number of different factors, including small-scale commercial farms and other potential agricultural projects.

For us, that means community, rooftop and backyard gardens, as well as public orchards and food forests in parks and other public areas.

There are many practical reasons to grow your own fruit and vegetables. Food security—the availability of safe, healthy and culturally appropriate food—is vital for a healthy community. In our area, we have good access to grocery stores: the Save On Foods on 112 Avenue and 82 Street, Safeway on 118 Avenue and 81 Street, plus the Italian Centre Shop in Little Italy and Chinatown are close by. A few corner and convenience stores are also available.

On top of that, having a reliable local source of food is vital: it contributes more to the local economy, produces a smaller ecological footprint and less waste, and

creates an attractive and vibrant community. On a philosophical level, there is an intrinsic value to gardening. It connects you to the land and makes you aware of the biological processes that bring food to our table. It makes us appreciate the value of our food. Gardeners often share harvests, which then brings neighbours together and allows any excess produce to go to those who need it.

It is always preferable to grow and eat food from your own garden. Homegrown veggies are cheap, fresh, and tasty. Store-bought tomatoes have only a shadow of the flavour of a garden-grown tomato, and a strawberry picked straight off the vine may as well be a completely different species from the woody flavourless ones shipped off-season from Chile. A packet of seeds costs only a few dollars, but may produce an entire season's worth of vegetables. Not bad for just digging a hole in the ground.

But it's not always that easy. Cost is an obstacle for starting a garden, as is time and knowledge. Community gardens are under-used, unless there is a wide network of dedicated and organized gardeners and gardeners-in-training. Remember, plants are living things. Urban farming becomes an expensive, back-breaking, time-

consuming hobby. If we are to be serious about growing our own food, there must be resources to support the startup and mentorship for maintenance so that farming doesn't become just another pastime for foodies, but a meaningful way for ordinary people to feed themselves.

On top of that, people need to gain skills in the kitchen—not just for cooking, but also for planning affordable, fast, and delicious meals. Former Edmontonian author Leanne Brown wrote *GOOD AND CHEAP*, a free cookbook of recipes that people can make on a social assistance budget with simple, widely available ingredients. The book speaks to the necessity of nutrition and cooking for lower-income families.

The only food more economical than homemade is fast food, which is unhealthy and costs more in the end. Like gardening, cooking from scratch takes time and knowledge, but a simple cookbook and some guidance from an experienced cook would go a long way. But it costs money to make money, and it costs money to save it too.

Get a free PDF of *GOOD AND CHEAP* here, as well as links to online bookstores that stock the paper version: www.leannebrown.com/#what-is-good-and-cheap.



Sunflowers thrive in one gardener's plot at the Alberta Avenue Community Garden. >> TALEA MEDYNSKI



The plots at the Alberta Avenue Community garden are all full and lush, ripe with food for harvesting. The garden has grown to 42 rented plots plus some community plots with fruit trees and bushes. Interest continues to grow with new inquiries every season. Garden organizer, Gerard Forget, is contemplating how to expand further. >> KAREN MYKIETKA

EDITORIAL » LITERARY

Do you have what it takes to slam?

Competitive performance poetry coming to Kaleido

RUSTI L LEHAY

Maybe you have what it takes to slam. Not doors. Anyone can do that. If you can collect words, string them together with images, add geopolitical circumstances to make the context appealing to a varied audience, and are comfortable standing in front of a microphone in a competitive poetic environment, then consider yourself ready.

Poetry slams may be described as the art of com-

petitive performance poetry. Various sources on the Internet say it was invented by a Chicago construction worker in the 1980s.

On Sept. 12, 15 poets will receive a limited amount of time to impress four Edmonton area judges. While judges are randomly selected from the audience for established slams, this annual event enlists other Edmonton area poets.

Performers are encouraged to employ all the techniques of storytelling, theatre, standup comedy, song-

writing and hot vivid poetry to snag points from the judges from 0.0 (terrible) to 10.0 (perfect!). Judges are looking for performance style, riveting content, and delivery. Two points are given to first-time slammers to help even out the playing field against experienced slammers.

Please send your contact information and wish to register for the Kaleido 2015 Poetry Slam to lit@rat-creek.org. There are four spots left.

STOP/START

MORGAN SMITH (2014 winner and poem excerpt)

I am asleep.
The moment before conception.
Stretched out unfolded and unending.
I am the snake that was eating its own tail before atoms ever heard the pin drop or looked to the door when it opened.
I am an airless gasp extended infinitesimally until it sighs out the alpha and the omega and and every word you ever wrote and every word you haven't learned and every word that will not be known.
I am creation when—skin still wet—it slips back into its oblivion bath, no ripples, a delicate interlacing of droplets, quivering surface tension gently yielding to the other.
I am ecstasy.
I am everything.
I am nothing.

SEVENTEEN THINGS YOU LEFT ME WITH WHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP ENDED

MARINA REID HALE (2014 winner and poem excerpt)

Twelve
A skinny waist
Because
As it turns out
The very best weight loss plan is heartbreak

Eleven
A lingering sense of unimportance
A pervasive feeling of profound unworth
Just a tiny little thing

Always creeping in the corners of my vision
Whispering words of "not good enough"
In a voice that sounds like yours

Ten
Months of therapy
I don't want to talk about it

DOGWOOD TREES IN SPRING

LIAM COADY (2014 winner and poem excerpt)

You entered the world like dogwood trees in spring
Turning my granite limbs into stems of sunflowers
Redefined my perspective of love
Love is not a stranger with a bow and arrow
But is a fine-fingered seamstress
Weaving her string around my crooked ankles
Which would explain why I feel tendencies to fall face forward.
When we first met, I was a tripping hazard
I plummeted
Cracked the stone of a man I hid behind
And shot forth a fountain
That led to a riverbed
That carried a rose-colored seedling down my channel
It landed on your shores
Planted and grew into my cherry blossom tree
From my strongest branch you hung your swing
swaying with the wind
The rope tied tight and gentle around my wrist

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BUSINESS » THE LEMONADE STAND

Oops! An unintentional Zeigarnik!

The power of using a cliffhanger technique in business

HENRI YAUCK

Somehow, in submitting last month's Lemonade Stand article, I pressed the wrong button and the last quarter of the article didn't make it in. Some of you may have been wondering what happened. Well, I guess you could say the human part of modern technology happened.

For those of you who were wondering what was to come next, you experienced the Zeigarnik effect.

A psychologist named Bluma Zeigarnik noticed study participants who didn't get to complete a task remembered more about the task than those who completed it.

In other words, we have a tendency to remember incomplete or interrupted tasks or activities more than completed

ones. It seems we are hard-wired to want to complete an activity and are disturbed if we can't finish what we start. The incomplete sequence seems to stick in our mind and doesn't want to let go.

The novelist Charles Dickens used this exact same process in many of his works. His stories were published in short monographs. These serialized works were later published as novels. His cliffhangers created such anticipation that his American readership would wait at New York docks for the latest installment to arrive by ship from Britain. They were almost desperate to find out what happened next.

Today, producers of soap operas use this cliffhanger technique to keep their audience coming back for more.

Now for the rest of last month's article

You may remember I talked about beer-fed pigs, \$100 hot-dogs, and an entrepreneur who floated on a lawn chair using helium-filled balloons to grab audience attention. You may remember that I said pricing and unusual associations could help establish value for our product, enticing consumers to choose our business over our competitor's business.

In a certain way, we have all been wired to believe if it costs a lot, it has to be better. More often than not, this proves to be true. It can be the tipping point for making a decision to shop at a certain place or not. I know this from first-hand experience. Some time ago, I bought a package of three dress shirts at a great price in a men's store that

had many items on sale. The prices in general seemed lower than average.

The shirts looked great when I wore them and I even had the odd compliment. I felt proud of my bargain-hunting skills. But when I washed them, they didn't look so good. In fact, my wife's dishcloths looked much better! My pride was punctured. I proved to myself that low prices could mean poor quality.

In the second week of July, Irene and I had a special occasion to celebrate and decided to go out for dinner and some wine. We talked about places we had been and looked at a few ads. One restaurant had a \$100 plate dinner. Our reaction was that they must have extraordinary food. Can you guess where we went?

The price equals value wiring was validated again. We had an exceptional evening out.

The point behind both stories? Grab attention, connect with your audience, and help them perceive value. On the other hand, if you grab attention and don't build value, your audience will avoid you.

Today's technology-enabled communication makes using Zeigarnik much easier. Couple this with price/value perception and you have a winning combination.

If you would like to refresh your memory, August's Lemonade Stand article was called "The Right Kind of Promotion." Check your August copy of the *Rat Creek Press* or go online to read it at ratcreek.org/the-lemonade-stand.

BUSINESS » SHOP LOCAL

Go ahead and try this new café

Alberta Avenue's newest café serves up a selection of choices

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REBECCA LIPPIATT

Tucked in next to the Wee Book Inn is Alberta Avenue's newest restaurant, Go Café and Specialty Foods.

Light and airy inside, with plenty of seating and Telus Wi-Fi, it's a great place to start your day or do some work while you eat your lunch.

Breakfast options include eggs and various meats

such as ham or bacon. You can also have pastries with a coffee and then watch people go by from the window bar. Lunches include a variety of options, such as filling salads or sandwiches made with homemade bread. Finish off your meal with a cake or a pastry.

There are always daily specials, which include jollof rice (an African dish with a spice and tomato base), served with hot wings (two days a week). Owusu-Ntiamoah also makes a meat pie, a traditional Ghanaian dish, with tuna (also offered two days a week).

Specialty foods include snacks, drinks such as mango juice, yams, pam soup, nutmeg and other whole spices.

Owusu-Ntiamoah is happy to be on Alberta Avenue. "I want to add something new to the community," she said.



Georgina Owusu-Ntiamoah offers breakfast, pastries and coffee. >> REBECCA LIPPIATT

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Street photography walk Thursday, Sept 17. Meet on Alberta Ave patio at 6:30 pm.

RELATIONSHIPS » COMMITMENT

A love letter

Making the best of things while away from your loved one

STEPHEN STRAND

My wife is my best friend and the love of my life. She is my everything. She holds my heart and I hold hers. Our jobs take us away, separating us for days, weeks, or months at a time, with little more than notes of love and phone calls to remind us of our commitment.

She works in film and television, while I work in broadcasting; two industries notorious for inconsistencies in schedules, hours, and stability. We take what we are offered, happy with what we get. Leaving town on short notice is far too common. Being apart is far too common.

We trust each other. We trust we will be faithful and return home and love no other than each other. Love fills our hearts. Love for what we do and love for one another.

Our love for each other pushes us forward in our careers. Knowing that there is unconditional support propels us forward. We take the work we want, going wherever it takes us, without worry that the other will be upset. There is nothing holding us back. Our love holds us up, stands behind us, supporting us, taking us places that we would otherwise never have dreamed possible.

Sometimes the pain of being apart becomes too much. Speaking on the phone isn't enough, so we find ways to come home or go to wherever the other is, for however short, to be together.

We call each other each night we are apart. We speak about our days and take turns listen-

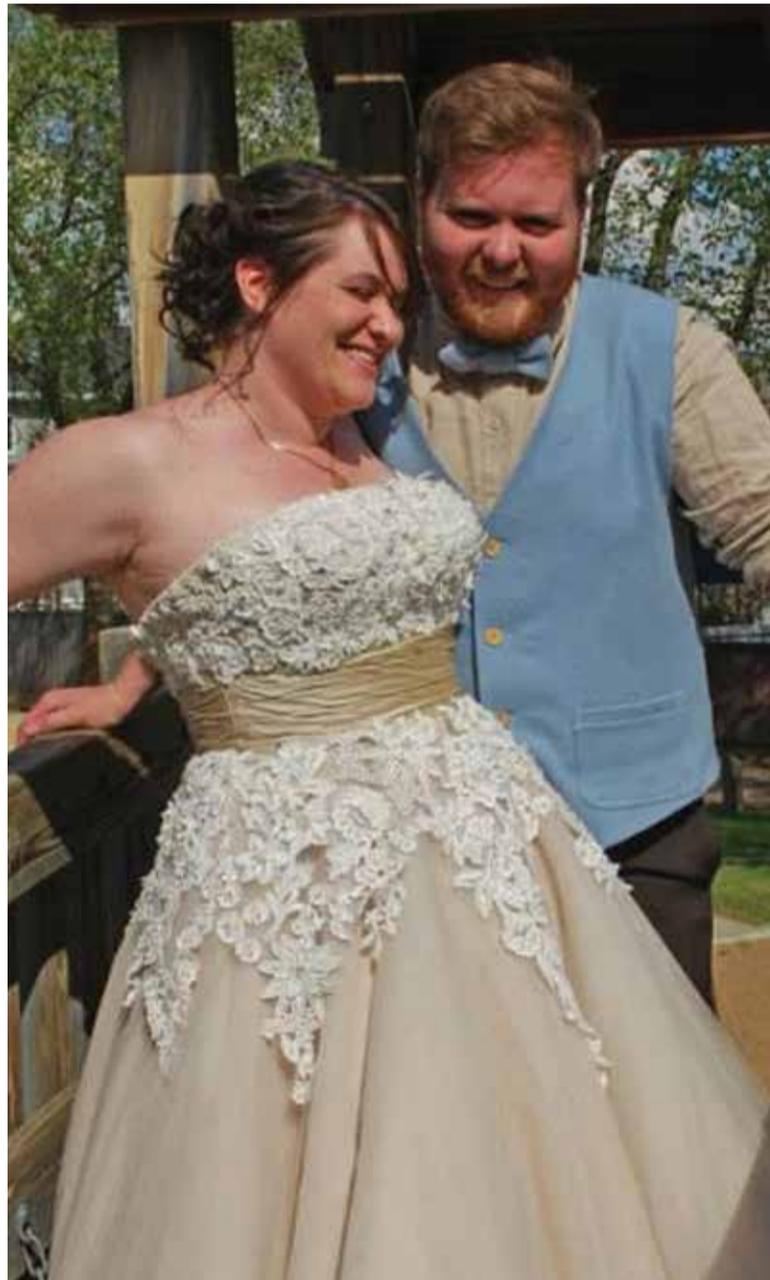
ing. When life has us down to the point of tears, and we are alone, we talk long into the night, consoling or being consoled. The first and often the only one I go to for consolation is my wife. When life has given us more than what we have asked for, and we are alone, we congratulate the one celebrating. Some nights we cannot contain our excitement. Often the only one I speak to about exciting news is my wife. She is always the first to hear my news.

There is no one else with who I would rather share my life. I cannot live without her, but I must.

Being apart often, we have learned to live our own lives, enjoying our own interests, and we have learned to intertwine our lives and interests. We enjoy the interests of the other, even if they are not interests of our own, so we can spend time together, even though that time is never enough.

Once together we are inseparable. The whole world is beautiful in our eyes. In the frozen city streets, we are warm; we do not feel the bite of wind on our cheeks, or the frost nipping at our fingers. The world is beautiful in the few short days or weeks that we are together.

We try to block out reminders of the times to come that we will be apart. We enjoy the time that we have, sleeping less than we should, so we can fit more into our days, to fill our minds with memories of happiness for when we are alone once again.



Stephen Strand, shown in a wedding photo with his wife, writes about his love and commitment.

>> SUPPLIED



Delton
Community Soccer

Last Call for Winter Registration
for those living in the communities of:
Alberta Ave, Cromdale/Parkdale, Delton,
Eastwood, Elmwood, Lauderdale,
McCauley, Spruce Ave, and Westwood.

Delton Hall 12325 88St
Sept. 19 11:00-2:00

Come Play With Us!

PLEASE BRING: cheque or cash for payment, cheques for volunteer deposits (2 bingo shifts per player to a maximum of 3 per family), and Alberta Health Care Card or Birth Certificate
Community League Memberships are available to purchase.

For More Info:
www.deltoncommunityleague.com or emsanorth.com/play/register/
Laura 780-982-5823

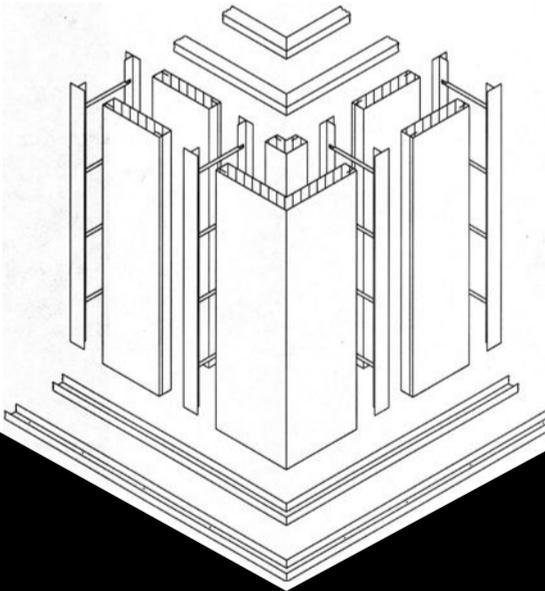
Street Photography Walk

Thursday, September 17

at 6:30 pm

Meet on the front patio at Alberta Avenue
(9210 118 Ave).

Wear your walking shoes, bring your camera, be ready to snap photos. RCP Photo editor, Rebecca Lippiatt, will be along to provide tips and answer questions.



DIY Builder:

If you are planning to build a more sustainable home or small commercial building – and if you are seeking to minimize your overall costs – then we are on the same page... and we need to talk!

To find out more on how to, call Don 780 471 1293
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Phone/Fax: (780) 471-1293 Email: efgreen@shaw.ca

E F Green (a div of 759972 Alberta Ltd.) General Contractor
Advocate for Sustainable Building Practices and Structures

Interested in the Alberta Ave Community Garden? Get on a waiting list for next year. Email gerard.forgette@gmail.com

BACK TO SCHOOL » RESIDENT PROFILE

You're never too old to pursue your dreams

Graduating student Josefine Singh kept a promise to herself

LINDA WILKINSON

It's September and students of all ages are going back to school. While some are just starting out, others, like Josefine Singh, are finishing their education and making plans for the future.

The difference between Singh and the average graduate is that Singh is a 70-year-old mother, grandmother and nurse who never gave up on her lifelong dream of becoming an artist.

"It was a long-term goal. I wanted to do [art] instead of nursing, but I didn't have an idea of how to live without money," explained Singh with a smile.

Singh, who has been a Parkdale resident for over 30 years, promised herself that she would get back to her goal of visual art once she retired. So after raising her family and working as a nurse for 40 years, Singh returned to school at the age of 65. Five years after taking one to two classes per semester, she will graduate from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension Visual Arts Certificate Program in 2016.

Singh's final requirement for graduation is an art exhibition at the Extension Gallery from Sept. 28 to Oct. 14. The exhibition, entitled *Reportage 2014*, will display 30 paintings of photos published in Edmonton newspapers as well as a German newspaper called *Fuerther Nachrichten*.

"Instead of family and stuff that is not really saying anything, I wanted to make a point. So I cut out pages with politicians, athletes and people in their environment," said Singh.

She chose photos from five categories: politicians, athletes,

musicians, artists, people in their environment, and people in war and conflict. The scenes show the emotions of a moment in time, but Singh has left the interpretation up to the viewer

own home and at her own pace. "I like the human form, and I like the facial expressions when you do it properly," said Singh.

What's next for Singh? She likes the idea of following in the



Parkdale artist Josefine Singh will soon graduate from University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension Visual Arts Certificate Program.

>>>JOSEPHINE SINGH

"as either the serenity or turmoil of life, the expected, the unexpected, the joy of living or victory, or the sadness or surrender."

Photojournalism has always interested Singh. She grew up in post-war Germany, and as a child, developed a deep connection with newspapers and photojournalism. Now as a senior, Singh has developed an additional interest in portraiture. It gives her the opportunity to paint from photographs in her

footsteps of some centenarian artists.

"We had to study painters [in art history] and somebody painted until she was 100," said Singh.

With that goal in mind, Singh looks forward to a new career after graduation. After all, she's only 70 and has proven she has the passion, drive and talent she will need to succeed.

REPORTAGE 2014

Extension Gallery at Enterprise Square Atrium (10230 Jasper Ave)

Sept. 28 to Oct. 14, 7 am to 11 pm daily. Public reception and artist meet and greet on Oct. 10 from 2-4 pm. Free admission. All are welcome to attend.



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A FREE NIGHT AT THE MOVIES. NEED WE SAY MORE?

As a special thank you to our neighbours and volunteers, we're holding a Northlands Community Movie Night in Borden Park on September 18. Just after the sun goes down at 7:30 p.m., we'll begin an outdoor screening of E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial.

Admission is free and we'll have the Northlands Food Truck and concessions available for purchase. Bring a blanket and your lawn chairs and don't miss your chance to see E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial in a beautiful park setting!



19 action-packed venues between 90 and 94 Streets! Download venue schedule kaleidofest.ca

TRAVEL » REFLECTION

Life lessons from a suitcase

What I learned about myself during a three month journey

RUSTI L LEHAY

After reading Lorna Crozier's poem "Packing for the Future" and misremembering her instructions, I realized I packed too many socks within one week of a three month journey. I took thin socks. She advised thick socks. Socks may seem like they take up no space, but they do.

It's twelve days before returning home, and I've learned many things. I can clutter up a space even when carrying less than 40 kilos of stuff (hyperbole). Lists keep me focused (simple truth).

I crave time alone and nervousness sends me to the bathroom before any new adventure. I'm afraid and do it anyway, often leaving two to three hours earlier just to stop the nerves.

I thought I might write poetry and dreamt of working on my novel. Mary Oliver aptly says, "Creative work needs solitude. It needs concentration, without interruptions. It needs the whole sky to fly in, and no eye watching until it comes to that certainty which it aspires to, but does not necessarily have at once. Privacy, then. A place apart."

Solitude does not happen in a country with so many distractions. Uninterrupted hours do not happen in a house with toddlers!

Back to how to be a tourist. Public service announcements warning tourists of pickpockets in a busy French train station have taught me that pickpockets exist outside of movies. Thankfully I have not been robbed. Mostly, I try not to behave like a tourist. Which brings me

to important advice I received.

On my first day out on London buses by myself, I walked out to find the 77 bus stop. The bus arrived from the right. It was the 77, so I got on and then realized what I'd done. This was a day of no mistakes, so I rode it to the end. I crossed the street, looking right first and then left to head to the stop for the right direction 77. I had a delightful chat with a bus signpost worker. When I climbed up to the top of the double-decker going to Waterloo Station, I had a hand-drawn map of things to see on foot and maybe the best advice, "Walk like you don't give a damn and act like you fit in. Avoid the googley-eyed tourist crap."

Touristing is hard work. I learned I do not like staying awake all night and fear it makes me old. Even worse, to do it on the cold hard ground with 80% drinking rabbel rousers stumbling by, 10% actual druids reverent for the truest meaning of the solstice, and 10% Hare Krishnas chanting all night at the Stonehenge summer solstice.

But the people I met are connections I treasure. It is the human element that make the best memories.

I learn I am intrigued by a \$100 high tea at the Savoy, but cannot justify it when people are starving. The finer things in life to me are the mists rising under the sun over Wandsworth Common after a London downpour. Singing the Canadian version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with my wee niece and nephew. See Helaine Becker's fabulous book, *A Porcupine in a Pine Tree*. No partridges in this tree.

It delights me that my American-born nephew and niece with Canadian parents, now living in Britain, request repeatedly for Tante Lee to sing this Canadian content. I need to teach them "Four Strong Winds" before I journey home.

Ah home... I crave alone time so much that jetliners in the sky fill me with warmth. The idea of sitting still with strangers mesmerized by their electronics spells seven hours of downtime. The hermit side of me can co-habitate with family for three months and feel torn about going "home." It has been a delightful home here, with journeys into

France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and a final foray into Scotland. I like to travel slow and meander. I want to travel more.

There have been so many more gifts over the summer. The architecture in all the places I have seen made it into a few poems and I loved seeing parts of Europe I never guessed I would see. Yet Canada is my home and Alberta my home/birth province. I miss my library at Sprucewood, the Avenue, The Carrot, my sister and my skyline.

I will be home for Kaleido, walk the Avenue and immerse myself in my city again. I hope to see you there.



RCP writer Rusti Lehay at the Stonehenge summer solstice >> SUPPLIED

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The community calendar lists FREE events, programs and volunteer opportunities for the neighbourhoods of Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue and Westwood. Email your listing to info@ratcreek.org.

EVENTS

TIBETAN BAZAAR FESTIVAL

Sept. 19-20 at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre. Tibetan Bazaar is a celebration of Tibetan culture—attendees can shop the Tibetan market, sample delicious Tibetan food, enjoy exceptional entertainment, win door prizes and receive teachings from local Buddhist monk Kushok Lobsang Dhamchöe. Festival runs from 10 am - 5 pm both days. For more info, contact 780.479.0014.

CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY

On Tuesdays from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15, Bent Arrow is running a free Citizen's Police Academy at Parkdale School (11648 85 St). The academy covers many policing topics. Classes go from 6:30-9:30 pm. Call Sherry at 780-486-2543 to register. Classes will take place in the gym.

POLITICS 101

Voter information session. Lutz Room, Alberta Avenue Hall (9210-118 Avenue). Sept. 29, 6:30-8:30 pm. Registration at 6 pm. The session begins promptly at 6:30 pm. Find out how our federal elections work, whether you're on the voter registration list (and how to register, if necessary), how to ask candidates about issues, and much more! All ages - children welcome.

COFFEE WITH COPS

Join Cst. Thomsen to chat about neighbourhood concerns. Sept. 15 and Sept. 29 from 10-11:30 am at The Carrot (9351 118 Ave).

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY WALK

Sept. 17 at 6:30 pm. Meet on the front patio at Alberta Avenue Hall (9210 118 Ave).

MOVIE SCREENING

Watch "The Good Lie" about Sudanese refugees resettling in America. Oct. 17 at 6 pm at Alberta Avenue (9210 118 Ave).

TELL YOUR STORY, NEIGHBOUR

followed by the RCP AGM on Nov. 16 at Alberta Avenue Community League (9210 118 Ave).

ART & MUSIC

PIANO ON THE CORNER

Stop by any time this summer and play your favourite tune on the piano on the corner of 94 St and 118 Ave. Everyone welcome!

THE CARROT'S POETRY NIGHT

On Sept. 24 from 7:30-9pm, Dhalia Ross and Megan Dart will host poetry night. A wonderful time to share your work and enjoy a night out with an encouraging crowd.

JOIN EMCN'S GLOBAL SINGERS

Eat a delicious lunch, learn new songs and meet new people. Thursdays from 12-1 pm. Room 2-4, Mennonite Centre (11713 82 St).

NASHVILLE SONGWRITERS GROUP

Sept. 14 from 6:30-10 pm at the Carrot (9351 118 Ave). Subject to change. Please confirm your attendance by emailing Colleen at col_kside@hotmail.com

FAMILY ART WORKSHOPS

Dive into the wonderful world of art with FREE all-age workshops Tuesdays from 6:30-8 pm at Parkdale (11335 85 St). Watch for an October start date.

COMMUNITY ART NIGHT

Free workshop for adults starting Sept. 8. Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm at The Nina (9225 118 Ave).

FAMILY ART NIGHT

A variety of free art activities for school age children accompanied by adults, starting Sept. 23. Wednesdays from 6:30-8 pm at The Nina (9225 118 Ave).

MUSIC LESSONS BY CREART

Free group music lessons every Saturday from 9 am - 12 pm and violin lessons from 12-1 pm at Parkdale (11335 85 St). Sebastian 780.878.8265.

THE CARROT STAGE

9351 118 Ave, 780.471.1580, thecarrot.ca
The Carrot explodes Saturdays for open mic from 7-9:30 pm. Share original music, poetry or comedy.

Free admission for all ages. Open mic will be cancelled during Kaleido Festival weekend (Sept. 11-13).

PROGRAMS

LEGO AT THE LIBRARY

Calling all Lego lovers! Come to the library to design and build a Lego creation. Share your building tips and tricks with others. Ages 6-12. Sept. 19 at 2 pm at Highlands Library (6516 118 Ave).

FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

Are you learning English? Practise your English language skills, meet new friends and have some fun. We'll have conversations about many different topics, using materials from the library. A library staff member will lead the group. English speakers at all levels are welcome! Mondays from 7-8 pm, Sept. 14 to Dec. 14 at Sprucewood Library (11555 95 St).

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE (LACE Program)

Drop in and join others who also want to practice their English. English Conversation Circle is part of Catholic Social Services' Learning and Community Enrichment (LACE) program. Call 780.424.3545 for more information. Fridays at 10:30 am at Highlands Library (6516 118 Ave).

POP-UP MAKERSPACE

Robot challenges, Makey Makey hacks, DIY music, Art and 3-D design are just the beginning at this Pop-Up maker event. You're invited to drop in, hang out, bring friends, try things and make fun stuff. Sept. 2 from 6:30-7:30 pm at Highlands Library (6516 118 Ave). All ages.

PRAYERWORKS COLLECTIVE KITCHEN

Cook with friends, try new recipes, help your food budget. Second Wednesday of each month, 5:30-8 pm at St. Faith/St. Stephen Anglican Church (11725-93 St). Cost: 4 one serving meals \$3. Trish 780.464.5444.

ADULT READING & WRITING

A new program using mainly Aboriginal materials. Thursdays, 9:30 am to 12 pm at St. Faith/St. Stephen (11725 93 St).

SPORTS & REC

JUNIOR ROLLER DERBY

Fun. Fast. Fearless. Come roll with us. New season begins in October. For ages 8-17. www.juniorderby.me

FREE COMMUNITY ACCESS AT COMMONWEALTH REC CENTRE

Use any of the amenities at the rec centre on Saturdays from 5-7 pm with your community league membership.

FREE SPORTS EQUIPMENT

All kinds of sports equipment for kids in need. sportscentral.org or 780.477.1166.

SOCIAL

FATHER CLUB

A place for fathers to talk about guy stuff and do guy things. Supper and childcare included. Sept. 12 from 5:30-7:30 pm at Norwood Centre (9516 114 Ave). Register: 780.471.3737.

GROWING TOGETHER GROUP

A free drop-in group for pregnant women and women with babies up to 3 months old. Enjoy fun activities, meet other moms, and learn information about pregnancy, nutrition, baby care, and parenting. Free resources including milk coupons and prenatal vitamins, and great support for mother and baby. Tuesdays starting Sept. 8, 1:30-3 pm at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre (9516 114 Ave). For more information, call: 780.471.3737.

NFB FILM CLUB

Animated and documentary film from the National Film Board of Canada. Sept. 26 from 1:30-3:30 pm at Highlands Library (6516 118 Ave).

BOARD GAMES NIGHT

Games provided or bring your own games. Sept.

29 from 7-9 pm at The Carrot (9351 118 Ave). Sponsored by NNA.

PRAYERWORKS COMMON

Hot complimentary meals & warm friendship at St. Faith/St. Stephen (11725 93 St). Community meals resume Sept. 17. Thursday drop-in 10 am-2 pm. Friday community supper first three Fridays of the month, 5 pm. Saturday breakfasts 8:30-9:30 am. For more info, call 780.477.5931.

TWEEN LOUNGE

Join other kids in the program room to play video games, make a DIY project, meet friends or just hang out. Thursdays at 3:30 pm at Sprucewood Library (11555 95 St) and Fridays at 4 pm at Highlands Library (6516 118 Ave).

TEEN GAMING

Come to the library to play some great games! Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 pm at Sprucewood Library (11555 95 St).

PRE-SCHOOLERS

GIVE YOUR CHILD A HEAD START

Free preschool program for ages 3 ½ - 5 runs four half days a week at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre (9516-114 Ave). Free busing, nutritious snack, health and dental services, and a high quality child-focused program. Taking registrations for fall 2015: 780.471.3737.

NORWOOD CENTRE COME AND PLAY

Enjoy our free indoor play space and meet new friends in this unstructured group for parents and children. Snack included. Mondays from 10 am - 12 pm (9516 114 Ave).

BABES IN ARMS

A wonderful casual parent group every Friday morning from 10am-12pm at The Carrot (9351 118 Ave). Join us with your little carrot!

PROGRAMS AT SPRUCEWOOD LIBRARY

11555 95 ST, 780.496.7099
Family Storytime, Sundays 2:30 pm.
Baby Laptime (up to 12 months), Mondays, 10:30 am.
Sing, Sign, Laugh & Learn (for caregivers and children up to age 3), Tuesdays, 10:30 am and Wednesdays, 6:30 pm.

PROGRAMS AT HIGHLANDS LIBRARY

6516 118 AVE, 780.496.1806
Family Storytime, Mondays at 10:30 am.
Sing, Sign, Laugh & Learn (for caregivers and children up to age 3), Wednesdays and Thursdays 10:30 am.

VOLUNTEERS

RCP CASINO

Volunteers Needed. Thu & Fri, Feb. 4 & 5

KALEIDO FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL

Edmonton's 10th annual Kaleido Family Arts Festival is from Sept. 11-13 on Alberta Avenue! A radically open festival that reflects our city, Kaleido provides reclamation of the streets for the people. It is a transformative festival where audience becomes artists and where we use our environment in crazy and unique ways, using old spaces and new spaces to rebuild the city in old historic neighborhoods. It encourages neighbors and businesses to begin dialogue, creating an artistic occupation of the city. Endless possibilities reign!

KALEIDO FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteer with us: security, ushers, donation tube, info booth, green team, family zone, schlepers, Francophone assistant, drivers, set-up crew, strike crew, gallery attendants, technical support. Contact Brendan at kaleidovolunteers@gmail.com or come to The Carrot Community Arts Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave) and fill out an application form. Thank you community for making us 10 years old together!

12 FOOT 12 INSTALLATION CHALLENGE

It's Kaleido's 10th anniversary and this year's fun theme is "HOOPLA!" Kaleido is excited to present the 4th annual 12 FOOT 12 Installation Challenge. Create an innovative structure that fits within a 12x12x12 foot space down 118 Ave on the festival site from Sept. 11-12. For more info or to register, go to www.kaleidofest.ca or email kaleido.

installation@gmail.com

CALLING CREATIVE ART & DESIGN TEAMS FOR UNDER THE SEA

Test your IMAGINATION and street art installation skills for a chance to win the grand prize at Kaleido's 24 Hour Deck-Out A Lamppost Contest! Goal of this project theme is to create engaging, whimsical and vibrant imaginary world of Under the Sea along 118 Ave to delight festival visitors. For more info or to register for this contest, go to www.kaleidofest.ca or email kaleido.installation@gmail.com

SAND SCULPTURE HELPERS NEEDED AT KALEIDO

Do you like building sand sculptures at the beach, or just want to be part of the magic of sand sculpting? Kaleido is looking for sand sculpture helpers from Sept. 1-10 to help our professional sand sculptors before the festival. Interested? Contact Brendan at kaleidovolunteer@gmail.com

KALEIDO FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER DINNER

Our volunteer orientation dinner is on Sept. 8 from 6-8 pm at the Alberta Ave Community League (9210 118 Ave). Meet your team leads, learn more about your volunteer duties, and get info on the exciting new acts performing this year! Questions about volunteering? Email Brendan at kaleidovolunteers@gmail.com

SHARE YOUR ARTISTIC TALENTS

Join CreArt Edmonton—a social movement of free art spaces and education. Sebastian 780.878.8265.

VOLUNTEER AT THE CARROT

Be part of a great team by volunteering as a barista at the Carrot! Contact John at carrotassist@gmail.com. Volunteers can enjoy get-togethers throughout the year, as well as incentives & gifts.

NEED HELP?

CALL 211 or visit ab.211.ca

Community and social services information and referral.

CALL 311 or visit Edmonton.ca/311 or download the "Edmonton 311" app
Report concerns to the City of Edmonton or obtain information on City programs and services

CALL 780-423-4567 for Edmonton Police non-emergency complaints
Visit edmontonpolice.ca or download the EPS app

CALL 811
Health Link Alberta
24-7 health advice and information or visit MyHealth.Alberta.ca

OUTREACH

Are you struggling with homelessness, lack of income, or just need some help? See an outreach worker at the library: Abbottsfield every Tuesday, Highlands every Thursday, Sprucewood every Friday. Stanley A. Milner throughout the week.

SEX ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

Meeting info call 587.921.1397; text 780.394.3709; email recovery4wolf@gmail.com.

AL-ANON MEETING

Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Mondays at 10 am at St. Stephen (11725 93 St). Entrance is at back door by handicap access. 1.888.322.6902.

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Citizens for strong neighbourhoods

(formerly Crime Council)

We are a community of concerned citizens who are striving towards healthier and safer neighbourhoods. We work to empower, educate, and engage our fellow citizens to build a stronger, more cohesive community. Meetings are every third Thursday of the month. Contact judy.allan@edmonton.ca

Citizens for Safe Neighbourhoods
3rd Thursday of each month
September 17th

Area Development Group

New commercial developments, infill, non-market housing, derelict buildings, rooming houses, zoning, development permits—there is no shortage of topics for this group to discuss!

Residents interested in local development meet monthly to review and discuss permit applications and development issues. In 2015, the group is planning an information panel with a variety of city officials involved in the development process as well as some key actions to address issues. Join the conversation and action. Second Monday of the month. For details: judy.allan@edmonton.ca.

Development Group
2nd Monday of each month
September 14th

Meets every 2nd Monday of the Month 6:30 - 8:30 pm

avenueinitiative.ca



what's on

events on
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August - November 2015

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for more info:

Call Judy Allan
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judy.allan@edmonton.ca



Outdoor Movie Reel!

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FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL

Movie:
Inside Out

Friday Sept. 11
at 8:00pm

9210 118 Ave
behind the community centre

sponsored by Avenue Mayors' Community Board

Councillor Tony Caterina

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Janis Irwin

for Edmonton Griesbach

About Janis

- // An experienced teacher and leader
- // Hard-working and energetic
- // An active volunteer in our community

Janis will stand up for

- // Keeping good jobs here in Alberta and making life more affordable
- // Strong public health care
- // Expanding the CPP and supporting seniors

janisirwin.ca
janis.irwin@ndp.ca // 780.477.1343
 @JanisIrwin // ElectJanisIrwin
Paid for and authorized by the official agent for the candidate.