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COMING IN FROM THE COLD

NEW WARMING CENTRE OPENS ON 95 STREET JUST IN TIME FOR COLD WEATHER

DAWN FREEMAN

The early snow and remembrances of last winter got Captain Murray Jaster and his wife Captain Annetta Jaster thinking. They are co-pastors at the Salvation Army's Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (EC3) located at 11661 95 St and know full well the extra stress winter weather places on people who live on the streets.

"We have been offering a Friday night street ministry since last October in the 118 Avenue area and as we built relationships with people we noticed a definite need for some kind of warming centre in this part of the city," says Murray. "There is just no where for people on the Avenue to go when it gets cold."

One of the church's volunteers connected with PAAFE and with the Boyle St Co-op to talk about opening a warming centre in the basement of the church and they jumped at the idea. Applications for funding from the Edmonton Housing Trust Fund have been put in, but the pastors of EC3 didn't want to wait.

"We decided to go ahead and open now even though we don't have the funding yet. In the meantime the church will

pay for it; we have faith that it will be okay," says Murray.

The warming centre was opened on November 2, and funding should be in place by mid-December, although it won't pay for all the ongoing expenses – the church is planning to cover the shortfall themselves. The centre has two paid staff members; both are active members of the EC3 congregation as well as being trained and experienced in working with the homeless. It is open seven nights a week, from 11 p.m to 6 a.m.

On the first night it was open, 11 people came. Since then the word has been spreading, and with the snow and the cold temperatures, the number has grown every night. The maximum the centre has had so far is 35, well within fire

personal items are offered if available. Staff talk to everyone and will make referrals or phone calls to other agencies if requested or needed. There are no mattresses or cots though, as the centre does not have the facilities to be a shelter – meaning that people are not allowed to sleep there. This means that staff have to be on constant vigil.

"People do fall asleep once they are in the warm, safe environment we offer; we have to be on guard for this and go around waking people up. Sometimes that makes them unhappy – who likes to be woken up? – but we're not a shelter," says Jaster. "Mostly people are very appreciative just to be somewhere out of the cold."

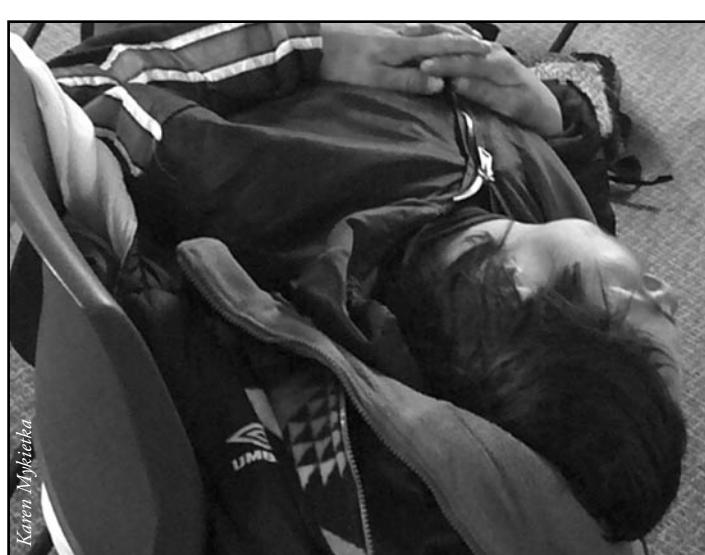
So far there has been little trouble. Only a few people have been asked to leave for being too drunk or belligerent, but security at the church has definitely had to be tightened up. More people are loitering outside the church and trying to get in even when the centre is closed.

"They are welcome to join us to worship," says Jaster, "and if we can accommodate them we will, but we do lock the doors when we are holding specific group sessions."

Response from the community has been positive so



COMING IN OUT OF THE COLD FOR A CUP OF HOT COFFEE
– A LUXURY WHEN YOU'RE HOMELESS AND LIVING ON THE STREETS.



A HOMELESS FELLOW RESTING AT THE SALVATION ARMY WARMING CENTRE.

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A WARM PLACE TO SPEND THE NIGHT – UNFORTUNATELY SLEEPING IS NOT ALLOWED.

Who is out in the cold tonight?

Over 2,600 people were counted as homeless in the city during a 24-hour canvass of on-the-street sampling, visits to inner-city drop-in centres, temporary employment agencies, bottle depots, and at social service agency sites that provide assistance to the homeless. This is close to a 20% increase in 2004 figures.

The exact number of homeless counted was 2,618, with 1,774 (68 per cent) recorded as absolute homeless (having no housing options) and 844 (32 per cent) recorded as sheltered homeless (living in emergency accommodations).

There were 79 families counted, encompassing 151 children under the age of 17 years.

Of the total number of homeless counted, 90 per cent were singles. The numbers recorded in October 2004 resulted in 2,192 total homeless persons with 120 families counted, encompassing 276 children under the age of 17 years. Singles represented 80 per cent of the total.

Turnaway numbers at shelters and treatment centres on the day of the count ballooned almost two-and-a-half times from 2004 figures.

Figures taken from the Out In The Cold – A count of homeless persons in Edmonton, the survey results of the Oct. 17, 2006 homeless count, released recently by the Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing.

PHONE 780.479.6285

EMAIL info@ratcreek.orgWEB www.ratcreek.org

MANAGING EDITOR Karen Mykietka

EDITOR Dawn Freeman

GRAPHIC DESIGN Leanne McBean

ADVERTISING

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the Rat Creek Press Association is to highlight community news, activities, and recreational opportunities as well as local residents and businesses to support the growth of a strong, vibrant, well-connected community.

OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

Norwood Neighbourhood Association
Spruce Avenue Community League
Elmwood Park Community League
Alberta Avenue Business Association
PAAFE - Prostitution Awareness & Action Foundation of Edmonton

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We are what we are... and what you make us

KAREN MYKETKA
Managing Editor

It seems like every month Dawn Freeman, the editor, and I circle back to the core question of "what is the Rat Creek Press?" Any number of things may trigger us to reflect on the identity of the paper – from tough editorial decisions to financial crises to criticism.

The Rat Creek Press isn't what it used to be – it is far from the joint organizational newsletter that started in 1999. We completed our first year as a non-profit society in August. This past year has been an exciting and exhausting time of growth and change.

The paper got a new professional look thanks to local graphic designer Michelle Hayduk. Then came business cards, a business phone number and a website.

We started a Law & Order column and continued on with great features. Over 50 different people contributed articles to the paper including a few Grant McEwan journalism students. We had a student intern for six weeks. We partnered with the Alberta Avenue Business Association on the 2005 Avenue Business and Community Directory. The work of the RCP team was recognized in a story on CBC Radio's Edmonton AM show and we received a 2006 Alberta Solicitor General Crime Prevention Award.

All of that happened amidst loss of production team members and chang-

ing designers. And it all happened with volunteers. The value of our volunteer hours last year was over \$60,000!!!

"The Rat Creek Press is a one-of-a-kind paper," said Linda Goyette, an Edmonton writer and former journalist, at our Annual General Meeting in November. She liked the strong writing, firm commitment to the community, good story ideas and local advertising. Goyette was very impressed that this quality paper was produced by volunteers.

The Rat Creek Press IS a unique newspaper. We have significantly more editorial than advertising. Almost 100% of the editorial is local (local writers writing about local stories). The paper is independent, in that it is not controlled by any one company or group, rather it is governed by a board

**At the same time,
we need you to realize
that this is YOUR
community paper. It is
what you make it.**

open to the whole community. And our editorial team is open to the whole community as well.

Is there room for improvement? Always. Gord Nielsen of

SEE Magazine gave us great feedback on our design and we made changes. Linda Goyette had other great suggestions, many of which were not new, but their implementation is limited by lack of volunteers. We'd love to have a number of regular columns in the paper but we need committed people to take these on.

The Rat Creek Press has also been criticized. We received a couple of comments directly, but most we hear through the

community grapevine: Too many articles on prostitution, not enough coverage on certain neighbourhoods, a specific event not being covered, unreliable delivery, only one point-of-view, too socialist. We appreciate and welcome feedback, so please start a dialogue with us.

At the same time, we need you to realize that this is YOUR community paper. It is what you make it. We are volunteers; there is only so much we can reasonably do. In order for something to get printed in the paper, we need to know about it, then we need to find someone to cover or write about it, lastly we need the space to print it (space is determined by finances). If you feel something is lacking, make a suggestion; but until someone comes forward to do it, it may remain a suggestion.

As for objectivity, we try to ensure all our news stories are balanced; however, time constraints often prohibit us from seeking out comments from people with differing perspectives or opinions. We need YOU to send your thoughts in letters to the editor or opinion-editorials. Or better yet, contact us about current issues before we publish articles so we have quotes from the community.

Our content reflects the writers we have. And of course, no one is completely objective. We all have certain interests, beliefs, ideas and philosophies. This influences what a writer chooses to write about and how they cover the topic. What we print is influenced by the mission and goals set out for the paper. If you would like to have more input into the content, design or management of the paper, you're welcome to join our board or editorial team.

And one last thing...please don't forget positive feedback is greatly needed as well – it is often the only payment we get for the hours we have volunteered! Thanks to Scott McKeen, columnist for the *Edmonton Journal*, for his recent feedback: "I poured through the edition of RCP you provided. Love it. Love it. Love it. The layout is clean, the story topics are fab' and some of the design is very cool. It has a really nice feel to it."

Ideas for columns

We would love to have regular columns in the paper but required committed volunteer writers to take it on.

**Interested?
Have other ideas?
Call us.**

479.6285

- Civic issues
- Local history
- Gardening
- Crime prevention
- Restaurant reviews
- Arts & entertainment
- Home renovation
- Culture

Areas where we need help:

- Community League news
- Local business
- Community notices & events
- Birth announcements & obituaries
- Website updating
- Comments

CAP cleans house in Alberta Avenue

JIM MAXWELL

A group of 22 people and two city police gathered in front of 11331 93 St on the afternoon of November 8 to hear news that the nightmare was about to end.

Neighbours had been plagued by the disruptive behaviour of the residents of this drug house for several months. Instead of being resigned to their lives or moving out, people on the block met together to rid their neighbourhood of this problem house.

Stories were told of the negative impact this house and its residents had had on the block and one resident spoke of a bloodied man who had broken into their house. Even as people talked in front of a camera

a prostitute came out to work her corner on 95 St.

CAP leaders had met with the landlord, Pedro Brito, the day before to hammer out an agreement with the neighbourhood. Brito is one of six people charged in what's believed to be Alberta's largest ever mortgage-fraud case, which is before the courts. In the end Brito agreed to the following terms which were read at the press conference:

"I have listened to the stories from the community and acknowledge my responsibility to address the condition of the properties that I own or manage and to ensure that the tenants of those properties are neither a threat nor a nuisance to the rest of the neighbourhood. I would like to make the following

three commitments regarding the following properties:

9267 – 110a Avenue

I have begun the process to enter into the Crime Free Multi-Housing program and commit to continue working with the EPS to make this a crime free building. This will be completed before December 31, 2006.

11432 – 87 Street

I have already begun renovations on this property and commit to completing the repairs to the satisfaction of the Capital Health Authority by December 31, 2006.

11331 – 93 Street

I have committed to renovating the exterior with stucco by December 31, 2006 and that the interior renovations

will be completed to the satisfaction of the Capital Health Authority and the Safety Codes Act by January 31, 2007. At that time I would invite the community to attend an open house so that they can see that I am a man of my word and that I take pride in the work that I do.

I have already been in contact with the police about dealing with criminal activity and will continue working with CAP to evict tenants that engage in criminal activity."

The 93 St house was vacated on November 19. An open house will be held in February 2007 at which time renovations will be completed and the house will be ready for law-abiding occupants.

Community members voice concerns over proposed new fire hall location

DAWN FREEMAN
& KAREN MYKETKA

About 40 people in total came out to meetings held at the Parkdale/Cromdale and Alberta Avenue Community Leagues in October and November to hear about the proposed new fire hall planned for 112 Avenue between 90 and 91 Streets.

The No. 5 Fire hall on 101 Street is too old, too small, and has structural issues that preclude it from being renovated. A computer model of calls determined that the ideal new location would be on Norwood Boulevard, between 95 Street and the LRT station.

After looking at a number of sites, the city bought the old Brooklyn Cafe at 112 Avenue and 91 Street last June as well as the two houses adjacent to the property. This was done quickly and quietly so as not to drive up the prices.

The station will face south with an easy egress on all roadways. 112 Avenue (a service road) between 90 and 91 Streets is slated for closure to accommodate the building. Two sets of emergency lights on either side of the sta-

tion will be installed for traffic control. The proposed fire hall will also house an EMS bay with one ambulance.

From January to October 2006, Fire hall No. 5 responded to 1200 calls or four a day. Thirty movements a day are projected for the new site not counting fire/ambulance responses or foot traffic.

The Deputy Chief of Fire Rescue, John Lamb and the Deputy Chief of EMS, Dale Weiss, are very happy with the proposal.

"Our deployment model suggests this new location will help us with our goal of responding to a call in four minutes or less," says Lamb of Fire Rescue. Weiss of EMS agrees. The new location, he says, will help them achieve their goal of a response



in nine minutes or less, 90% of the time – currently they only achieve this 67% of the time.

Both agree that a fire station is a very positive addition to the community.



PROPOSED FIRE STATION ON 112 AVE BETWEEN 90 AND 91 STREETS.

meetings were about noise and traffic congestion on Norwood Boulevard, especially on game days, and some property owners were worried about property values decreasing.

At the Alberta Avenue meeting two weeks after the Parkdale one, some of these concerns were addressed. According to the City assessor, a fire station does not negatively impact property values, and the City's Transportation Department doesn't believe

the movement of EMS or fire trucks will be hampered by the 12-15 major events a year held at the Stadium.

Many community members at the meetings also voiced

their opinion that it doesn't really matter what they think; the fire station is a 'done deal', regardless of their concerns. City officials were quick to refute that, saying the proposal is still in process and ultimately Council has the final decision.

Anyone strongly concerned about the fire hall plans should go to the council meeting and speak, or call your city councillor (Ed Gibbons or Janice Melnychuk) for more information.

On the bright side, if the proposed fire hall does go ahead, the building will be one of the first of its kind in Alberta. The design is based on LEED principles (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). It will not be any taller than the residences around it and will be bricked and sided to fit into the neighbourhood. A glass front on the bay will provide a bright presence on the boulevard and landscaping and the mature trees will be kept.



PROPOSED FIRE HALL DESIGN BY ROCKLIFF PIERZCHAJLO ARCHITECTS.

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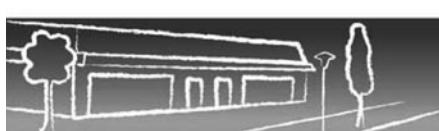
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meetings

Streetscape
(1st Monday) Dec. 4th, Feb. 5th

Development and Revitalization
(1st Wednesday) Dec. 6th, Feb. 7th

Beautification and Cleanliness/Programs
(2nd Wednesday) Dec. 13th Jan. 10th

Safety
(3rd Tuesday) Jan. 26th

PLEASE CALL JUDY AT 496 - 1913
OR EMAIL AT judy.allan@edmonton.ca If you would like to join a Working Group or receive regular Avenue Initiative Updates.

WATCH FOR A COMPLETE AVENUE INITIATIVE UPDATE COMING TO YOU MID JANUARY IN A SPECIAL EDITION OF THE RAT CREEK PRESS.

Avenue Initiative

Revitalization Strategy

I would like to thank all the people who have participated in the Avenue Initiative over the past year. A lot has been accomplished over the past 12 months, including a major clean up of the community, a first class arts festival and a safety fair. 130 people have attended both Open Houses. There is a strong momentum for change in the area and it could not be done with the commitment of community members. It is your commitment and willingness to share your time and talents that makes this community the great place it is. I would like to wish everyone a very HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON and look forward to great things in the year to come.

Thank you
Judy Allan
Avenue Initiative Coordinator

No time to cook?

Bypass the pizza and try Szechuan

KAREN MYKETKA

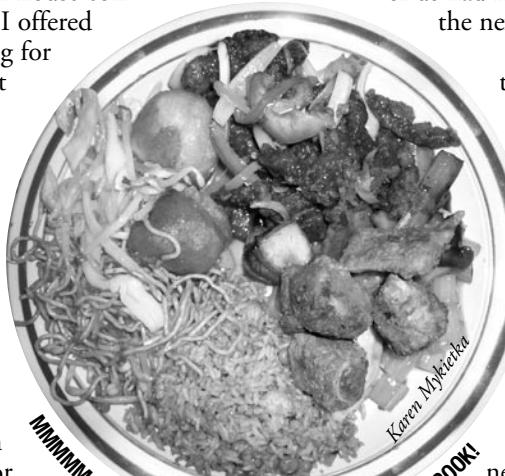
As is so often the case in my life, I was too busy to cook supper. I left my two children with Dawn and her family because my husband and I had to meet with our house contractor. I offered to spring for take-out since it was the supper hour. Our families had to eat, and we had research to do for the paper – a new restaurant on the Avenue to check out.

We ordered a "Dinner for four" (which was a choice of 4 dishes and spring rolls and chicken fried rice) plus a tofu dish for Dawn and a Hot & Sour soup for her husband from the recently opened Szechuan Garden Restaurant. We were a little surprised when told it would be 45 minutes, but then

concluded it was probably a good sign – it meant our food was being cooked fresh. The food was hot and tasty and well-liked by everyone. Best of all we fed two families of four for about \$50 and both of us had leftovers for the next day!

I also had the opportunity to dine in (on yet another night I didn't have time to cook!).

The restaurant is bright, clean and newly painted, sporting new tables and chairs as well as numerous booster seats and a highchair. The owners, Jing Mai and Feng Li, came to Edmonton from China 12 years ago. While this is the first restaurant they've owned, they've been working in restaurants for years. In fact much of their family is in the restaurant business; a cousin operates the Szechuan Village restaurant just



MMMM, A PLATE FULL OF FOOD I DIDN'T HAVE TO COOK!

Karen Mykietka

10 blocks down the Avenue.

The Szechuan Garden provides many great dining choices: order from their pre-chosen dinner menu or pick a deluxe dinner; create your own meal from their numerous dish options; or stop in and take your pick from their smorg. Receive free (all day) delivery on orders over \$17 within 8 km or a 10% discount on pick-up orders over \$15. If you haven't received their menu flyer in the mail, stop by and pick one up as it has a coupon for \$5 off dine-in. And keep that menu handy for the next time you don't want to, or have time to, cook a meal.

Szechuan Garden Restaurant

8907 118 Ave 479-8938
Mon-Thurs 11am to 12am
Fri & Sat 11 am to 2am
Sun & Holidays 11am to 10pm

Smorgs:

Lunch 11:30 am – 2:30 pm
Monday Special \$5.95
Tuesday to Sunday \$6.95

Dinner 4:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Monday – Thursday \$9.50
Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays \$10.50

KARA-Lot Second Hand Store moves to Eastwood

KAREN MYKETKA

After 13 years in the Fort Road Business District, KARA-Lot Second Hand Store was forced to move. The building they occupied is slated to be torn down to make room for high density housing. Their new location is still on Fort Road, but further south at 120 Avenue in Eastwood.

The new location opened in September and is brighter and more open.

Parking is available in front of the building (on the west side of Fort Road) until 3:30 pm, as well as on the side along 121 Avenue and a few spaces in the back. The store sells clothing, household items, books and toys.

Anita Cochrane, who has been managing the store since 1999, says their prices are probably lower than most other second hand stores. They reduce prices when they have a lot of merchandise and have regular sales. All clothing is half price on the last Friday and Saturday of every month, as well, the first Tuesday of

the month is Senior's Day and everything is half priced for seniors. And to help out with Christmas shopping, everything in the store is half priced on December 22 & 23.

While the store has two full-time and two part-time



LYDIA IS SORTING THROUGH DONATIONS AT KARA-LOT SECOND HAND STORE WHERE SHE HAS BEEN VOLUNTEERING SINCE IT OPENED 13 YEARS AGO.

staff, it wouldn't be able to operate without its volunteers. Cochrane says they have a core of 15 volunteers, two of whom are over 80 years old! Because of the many seniors that volunteer at KARA-Lot, an elevator was installed in their new location. Lydia started volunteering because she was bored after retiring. Thirteen years later, she is still there because she enjoys the work and meeting new people.

Donations are welcome and greatly appreciated. They accept donations during store hours only but due to space limitations cannot

accept large furniture items. The most needed clothing items are men's and ladies extra-large sizes and children's coats for all seasons.

The KARA Foundation purchased the building at 12034 Fort Road to house their fund-raising project. The proceeds from the store support the KARA Family Resource Centre, a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the healthy development of children by empowering families.

KARA Family Resource Centre

www.kara-frc.ca
6717 132 Ave, Ph: 478-5396

KARA-Lot Second Hand Store
12034 Fort Road,
Ph: 472-0610

Hours:
10 am to 5 pm from Monday to Saturday

Half-price Christmas sale
December 22 & 23

Getting the right spirit (or wine or liqueur) for the season

The old Cromdale Liquor store is not just for beer anymore.

DAWN FREEMAN

Ever since Spirits Liquor Mart purchased the Cromdale Hotel and liquor store in July 2006, hopes for an improvement on the site have been high. While the future of the Cromdale Hotel is still under discussion, the staff at the liquor store has been working hard to upgrade their stock and their image.

"We have increased the selection in everything," says Dona Landry, Regional Manager for Spirits Liquor. "We even carry Dom Perignon now. And if we get a lot of customer requests for a particular product we can bring it in."

Spirits carry many wines from around the world as well as a first class selection of Canadian ones including Jackson-Triggs and the esteemed VQA label. They offer a comprehensive selection of coolers and high-end and imported beer. There are top-shelf brands of all kinds of spirits including Grey Goose vodka, Beefeater gin, and Glenfiddich whiskey, as well as the more relaxed-in-price range, and a specific brand of rye, rum and vodka

is permanently on sale. There is even a liqueur section now.

"We have tried to bring in top stock rather than go with the low end brands," says Landry. "We want people to know we are not just a beer store anymore."

Alongside the new stock are other improvements to the store. The back stockroom has been completely renovated, as well, the ample parking lot has been repaved and there are more renovations planned for the spring. Panhandlers are not tolerated on the premises and customer and staff safety is a number one priority.

"We are open to customer service," says store manager Ed Potratz. "Our staff are trained and everything is better than it was. If you have questions, just ask."

Spirits Liquor is a Sherwood Park company started 15 years ago by 3 local entrepreneurs. They now also have stores in Morinville, Spruce Grove, Edson and Edmonton. Spirits is offering a 10% discount off anything in their Cromdale store with the coupon featured in this paper. The coupon must be presented at the time of purchase.

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Present This Ad At Time Of Purchase and Receive 10% Off.

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Rancher saves historic meat shop

Easyford Cattle Company takes over Central Alberta Meats

KAREN MYKETKA

Central Alberta Meats, which has been around since 1953, was about to close up shop until Dan Walton of the Easyford Cattle Company Ltd. stepped in at the last minute, buying the business in October. Well known for its quality products, Central Alberta



DAN WALTON, NEW OWNER OF CENTRAL ALBERTA MEAT SHOP ON FORT RD, NOW RENAMED EASYFORD MEATS.

Meats has many loyal customers who have been buying locally raised meats and homemade sausages for years, even decades!

The quality products and service will continue at the meat shop that will now operate under the name Easyford Meats, assures Walton. He adds, "We still have many of the meat cutters and butchers who have been working here for over 20 years." The shop sells farm-direct beef and pork,

free range chicken and turkey as well as Alberta lamb; they plan to add bison, elk and free range eggs in the future. While the products are not certified organic, Walton says they are "raised the old fashioned way" and are as natural as possible, e.g. chemical and antibiotic free.

Stop by the store and select from available cuts, ask for custom cuts or even place a bulk order. Easyford Meats provides free delivery on orders over \$50. Walton is working on a website where customers will be able to place their orders online.

Easyford Cattle Company is a ranch near Drayton Valley operated by Walton's wife, Shirley McConnell. McConnell grew up on a farm in the area, and at the age of 18 bought some property to start to build up her own ranch. Meat and poultry from the ranch is sold at farmers' markets around Alberta.

Easyford Meats

12165 Fort Road Ph: 479-1714

Hours:
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Which of These Costly Home-seller Mistakes Will You Make When You Sell Your Home?

EDMONTON - A new report has just been released which reveals 7 costly mistakes that most homeowners make when selling their home, and a 9 Step System that can help you sell your home fast and for the most amount of money.

This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today's market. The fact of the matter is that fully three quarters of homesellers don't get what

they want for their home and become disillusioned and - worse - financially disadvantaged when they put their home on the market.

As this report uncovers, most homesellers make 7 deadly mistakes that cost them literally thousands of dollars. The good news is that each and every one of these mistakes is entirely preventable.

In answer to this issue, industry insiders have prepared a free special report entitled "The 9 Step System

to Get Your Home Sold Fast and For Top Dollar."

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your free copy of this report, call 1-866-815-9646 and enter ID#4900. You can call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call NOW to find out how you can get the most money for your home.

This report courtesy of Donna Straus, Realty Executive Challenge. Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

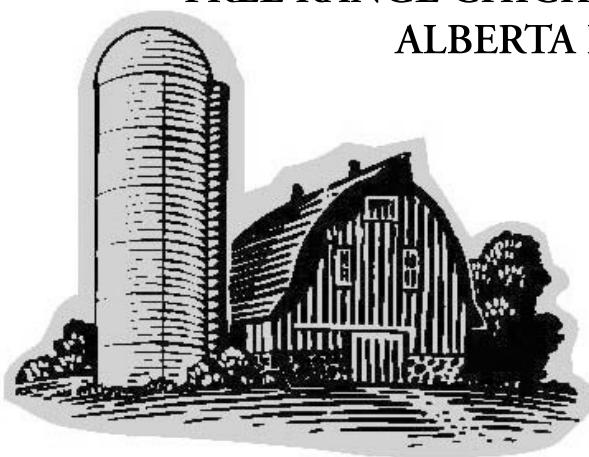
The Easyford Cattle Company Ltd. has purchased Central Alberta Meats at 12165 Fort Road.

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Prospero

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**SHALL DROWN THE TEARS
THE WIND**

MACBETH

**EVERYTHING HAS CONSEQUENCES
WHAT'S DONE CANNOT BE UNDONE**

Arts on the Ave presents Theatre Prospero's production of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

**ONE NIGHT ONLY
7:30 pm Tuesday December 5
Alberta Avenue Community Centre, 9210 - 118 Ave**

Tickets at the door (cash only)
Families with 2 or more members new to theatre: \$15
Adults: \$12 Students \$8

Audience members may come at 5:30 pm and take small but important parts in the play!

Path on the Avenue runs two ways

Stories from the Edmonton Crossroads Community Church

KIMBERLY FERLAND

The definition of "avenue" is "a means of access or approach." There are many things that can be accessed on 118 Ave. We all know the negatives: drugs, prostitution, gangs, homelessness and so on. When you look at the definition of "approach" it refers to "entering and exiting," and the 118 Avenue area has long been a place to both enter and exit a lifestyle that many people live in, but no one purposely chooses. We see with our eyes as we drive or walk along the Ave the hopelessness and brokenness of people, and wonder if there is hope for them and our community. There is.

Christine has lived and worked on 118 Ave. for a number of years. She came to Edmonton at the age of 15 after being kicked out of her foster home for bringing in drugs. She started working straight jobs, however after being fired from several for drinking she found that she could not get another one. She lost her place to live and ended up in a women's shelter, where she met a woman who introduced her to prostitution. She was glad for the opportunity to make money and get drugs and so began a five-year battle for survival.

Christine tried not to go out during the day because she didn't want children to see what she was doing and wanted

to be respectful to them. She was chased and followed by people, and once while talking to a male friend behind her house, both were dragged from the vehicle they were sitting in.

As her health broke down, Christine began seeking out doctors to help her. She eventually found one at Streetworks who always made her options known to her and encouraged her to quit doing drugs. She was in pain all the time, she was scared she was going to die, she was homeless again — she had no way to pay her bills unless she went back to work on the street. Then something happened: Christine met God while watching a

Christian native TV show and took the step to put her hope in Jesus instead of dope. She

entered an addictions treatment program and found

from the area she used to live and work as a prostitute.

Now Christine lives and spends her time in that same community, except it is all about giving back. Although she still deals with the effects of addictions and prostitution, she has found a place of hope in the community of the church and in recovery. She has found joy in her faith and relationship with God, and a sense of family and belonging.

Steve used to live at the Cromdale hotel, and saw the violence, grief and brokenness one equates with a life of addiction. He remembers some days walking back and forth between Mona Lisa's and the Cromdale as many as 15 times, looking for a way to get his next hoot. Steve eventually sobered up in George Spady detox and went to a local treat-

ment centre where he was able to take programs in life skills and anger management, and

was forced to make relationships if he wanted to succeed in the recovery program.

Susan sums up her time on the street as "sleep, be sick and be high." She left a good paying straight job to work as a bartender and things started to unravel from there. When her child was taken away, and the police showed up at her door because a relative had called in a concern, Susan was more than ready to go with them to the hospital. She was able to get into a rehab centre and get skills and tools to live life differently.

Steve and Susan are both involved in church and community. They credit the changes made in their lives to the hope and faith they have found in their relationship with God, the community they have formed because of the way they choose to live life differently today.

The Avenue provides access to many negative things, yet it also provides the opportunity for people to access hope through the supports and community that is found here. Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (ECC) is just one of the many churches and organizations who see the strength and hope in the Alberta Avenue community, and the people who live here.

No matter how far down a road, or avenue, a person is, there is always another way that can be taken.



Maria Pace Wynters

New light for a dark Christmas

PATRICIA DUNNIGAN

There is something about Christmas that raises expectations of how things should be or how they were in the ideal past: the perfect family gathering with no tantrums, the biggest, moistest and brownest turkey, the tallest tree and the year when all the gifts were perfect.

Ahh, "twas the night before Christmas," and all that jazz.

Our family, with six young adults, was as sentimental as the rest of them. We all loved the rush to get things



THE SKATES AND THE SNOWMAN ARE GENTLE AND GOOD REMINDERS.

done, the music, the traditions, the family gatherings and the food. Then one year we suffered a series of losses including a sudden death. Our daughter and son-in-law were expecting their first child, our first grandchild. The labour came early and after a long and exhausting delivery the baby's heart failed and a beautiful boy

how to face Christmas with this raw wound of grief.

The parents themselves came up with an idea two weeks later. They invited family members to come and help them decorate their tree. This was the deal: they would set up the tree and each person who accepted the invitation was to bring a hand made orna-

ment that would be judged according to its beauty, its creativity, its expression of the meaning of Christmas, and its care for the environment.

With less than a week for planning and design the ornaments were a bit rough that year. I remember a star cut from insulating material, a cardboard candy cane striped red and green with M-E-E-R-Y CHRISTMAS hastily inscribed with a felt marker, some garland fashioned with paper cutouts and 24 chocolate dipped cookies individually tied to the branches of the tree — the very same ones that the dog ate and threw up before dawn.

In the end who won the prize

didn't matter as much as the fact that the ice was broken and we found a way to bring in the season with a party that included love and support.

The tree trimming party became a tradition that lasted a decade. It moved from home to home as my other sons and daughters set up their houses and apartments and started

having families. The ornaments became more sophisticated when people had a year to come up with ideas. We discovered that we had crafty contributors, last minute designers and a couple of closet comics.

One of the funniest in my memory was the pizza box manger scene complete with angels, shepherds, animals, wise men, Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus, his tiny head made from an aspirin. Except for the aspirin all construction materials came from the packaging. The creator had enjoyed one drink too many before it was his turn to present and he had us doubled up with laughter the way he proudly described his masterpiece detail by tiny detail.

Over the years, people started adding stories — a coping strategy for those with less talent in the area of visual design.

This embellishment was endearing when a three or four year old stood in front of the ever growing group and described the angel, Santa or icicle she had made. It was entertaining when someone put time and



THE CLOWN AT THE TOP OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

Patricia Dunnigan

effort into their presentation. I learned later that it was also terrifying for some of the partners/spouses who had never done any public speaking.

Whoever hosted the party got to keep the decorations; I still hang a pair of handmade skates, a Santa with reindeer pulling his sled, and a snowman with a carrot nose and a pipe that requires re-gluing each year. And while others place angels or stars on their tree tops I carefully separate the curled orange pipe cleaner hair on my green-eyed clown with the big red smile knowing that I am probably the only person in the city boasting such a comical beacon on my tree.

Sadly, the tradition ended four years ago but in reality its end was timely. It had served the purpose of reminding us that there are seasons in life; seasons of laughter, loss, grief and new life. The young couple who created the tradition taught us the importance of finding a way to come together and have fun, even when our hearts are heavy.

Making beautiful things to save their lives

Fort Rd business gives Sri Lankan widows opportunity to sell wares

JILL SCHEYK

Two years ago, Pam Porodo was part of a volunteer crew working in a Sri Lankan displacement camp after the devastating 2004 tsunami.

In that camp was a 21-year-old woman, six months pregnant, who for some time had been hoarding medicine in a bag pinned inside her clothes. After being asked to speak with her, Porodo discovered she had lost her parents, husband and three-year-old child in the tsunami, and was planning her suicide.

Hours and tears passed. Finally Porodo left the camp with the medicine, but no plan.

"(The woman) gave me this beat up old plastic bag filled with about 40 different pills," Porodo says.

She had promised the woman a job and a way to support her family, and was determined not to come back empty-handed. The

next day, Porodo returned to the camp with beads, wire and other jewelry-making supplies. She paid the young woman to make her some necklaces.

Within a day, 14 women belonged to a program which had yet to be fully formed.

That program, of which Porodo is a director and trustee, is called Work for Widows (WFW), and has since expanded to help 149 women make a number of products, including necklaces. The women in the program are paid for their work with the money made from selling WFW products to retailers and individuals.

About 94 per cent of the wholesale price of a necklace goes to the wages paid to the widows. They give a lot of advances. The other six per cent goes toward the very low overhead costs.

"We don't even have (real) furniture in our office," says Porodo. The building, located on the main

road into Colombo, does have a few four-dollar lawn chairs and a donated table or two.

With the wages they earn in WFW, many women are moving from what Porodo describes as "slap-happy plastic and wood constructions" erected by disaster relief organizations to renting real wooden housing.

Porodo hopes to expand the program to accept more women and to train those women in creating jewelry, purses and other products. They currently have to be taught each new pattern, but she would like it if they didn't have to rely on the help of volunteers to make their living. The goal is to give the women self-sufficiency in case one day Work for Widows is no longer around.

She may have a leg up on that dream if Work for Widows' foray into the North American market goes well. As of May this year, the Out of the Fire pottery studio, run by Cindy Clarke of Edmonton, became the first North American retailer of WFW products.

Cindy Clarke's shoes might be black underneath all the clay clinging to them and her hands are brown too – evidence of a large pottery order headed for Red Deer. Clarke has worked hard on building her studio into a thriving business, and she plans to take that



NECKLACES MADE BY SRI LANKAN WIDOWS.

same dedication to her partnership with Work for Widows.

"It's exciting...it's also overwhelming," Clarke said. "They've given me the opportunity to sell this to North America. The other part of it is the responsibility, because if I don't do it right, the ladies (won't benefit.)"

She plans to set up a Work for Widows booth at a wholesale show in

February to get retailers for the products, which include beach wraps, gift bags and purses as well as jewelry.

For now, WFW products are available in the Out of the Fire Studio at 12205 Fort Road. Clark expects the North American branch of the WFW website, www.wfwshop.com, to be fully functional by the beginning of December, just in time for the Christmas season.

LAMENT

Sharon E. Riley

The man standing there, with a silent prayer,
Said, "Sir, do you have a quarter to spare?"
The man that he asked stepped back with a sneer.
And barked out, "What do you want it for, beer?"
The first man shook his head in disgust,
And said, "Sir, why do you make such a fuss?
It's only a quarter I asked you for,
I didn't ask you for anything more."
He sidestepped the punch that was aimed at his face,
And tripped over his old untied shoelace.
He went down in a pile.
He scrambled back up.
He saw that punch coming, but he couldn't duck.
The punch landed squarely,
And he fell down dead.
The other man felt for his heartbeat in dread.
There was none. He turned and ran the other way,
And no one knows who he was to this day.



Maria Pace Wynters

Life at Christmas – full, or just busy?

FRANK PARKER

Every year at about this time we seem to be confronted with the sheer busyness of the season – Christmas concerts, Christmas parties, Christmas shopping, Christmas baking, Christmas decorating – the list goes on and on, especially for parents. And every year at the church I belong to (and no

doubt every other Christian assembly), we wonder just how much we should add to the burden with specifically Christian activities to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Jesus (without whom after all, the season has no real meaning) once said "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). I don't think, however, that he had in mind our current over-charged schedules when he talked about having a full life. So if a full life doesn't equate to a full calendar, what is it supposed to mean? If you read the obituary columns in

the paper, you might think a full life means somebody who has accomplished a lot, received public recognition, risen to high position, made lots of friends, or travelled extensively. When we read about young people who lived life to the full, it usually means they liked to party! I don't think that Jesus needed to go to all the trouble of coming to earth, being born as a baby, growing up and living as a man, and dying on a cross just to tell us that!

Fortunately, the kind of full life Jesus was talking about is not something that fits into a day-timer or an obituary column; it is much more profound.

The full life Jesus Christ offers is a life that knows where it has come from, why it is here, and where it is going. The birth of Christ tells us there is life beyond ourselves – there is a God who made us and loves us, and wants to be in relationship with us. The death of Christ on the cross

f So if a full life
doesn't equate to
a full calendar,
what is it
supposed
to mean?



tells us we can live life with real purpose, real relationship with God, and with each other; a life no longer held back and dragged under by the guilt of the past or even the present (aka sin). The resurrection of Christ from the dead shows us there is life beyond death – the relationship with God can be enjoyed forever. This is the real full life Jesus talked about, and the best part is that it is a gift, it is free, and all we have to do is ask!

So yes, at our church we will be adding a few more things to people's busy lives – neighbourhood Christmas carolling, and a special community concert. No doubt some of us will volunteer to serve dinner to the less fortunate, visit those in institutions, offer hospitality to our friends and neighbours, and take in the lonely and destitute. But most of all we will try to honour the birth of Christ by offering the hope of life – life to the full.

If you do nothing else this Christmas, why not take a few moments to reflect on the state of your life – is it full, or just busy?

Frank is an Elder at Bethel Gospel Chapel (95 St. & 115 Ave.), and lives in the Norwood area.

With the helping hand of God

From walking the street to helping others see His light

LINDSAY CLERMONT

Norma Chamut does not think that she should be alive today.

From the ages of 12 to 40, Norma lived on the streets of Edmonton working as a prostitute. Six and a half years ago she left it all after finding salvation and forgiveness in God. Today she lives to spread His message to the women working on the Avenue – the women who currently go through what she experienced for 28 years of her life.

Norma, now 45, began doing drugs at age 10. She did anything, from cocaine to morphine sulphate, from crack to Valium. She stopped going to school during junior high.

"My school was the school of hard knocks," she said with a laugh.

Her home was dysfunctional, she says. Her father left her mother, leaving her to raise six children alone. She believes although her mother worked very hard to sustain the family, something was missing that prevented Norma from having a normal childhood.

"There was so much dysfunction in my home that it was really hard to look for the norm," she said. Today, she still does not know what really drove her to the streets. She even found she liked her job as a prostitute.

"I was proud of what I did. I believed that I had a service out there. It was my job. I was diligent about my work," she said.

Norma doesn't know why she is alive today; she has walked the line between life and death, and clinically died four times in one night

due to a drug overdose.

"I'm not suicidal. I'm a lover of life. And when I died and came to in the hospital, it was like 'What the hell am I doing?'" she described.

After being released from the Misericordia Hospital, Norma placed a call to AADAC (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission). She then swallowed 40 Valium pills and hitched a ride to Henwood, an Edmonton treatment centre



NORMA AT THE FAMILY WORSHIP CENTRE

for adults looking to live a life clean of drugs and alcohol.

The Valium hit her hard, and as she lay on the floor of the bathroom in Henwood, dope sick and throwing up. Norma again asked for help.

"I was sick, and I just got on my knees and asked Him [God] into my life," she said. "He picked me up; I felt his breath on my face," she described, brushing her hand across her face, the way she had felt God touch her.

She then spent 19 days in Henwood coping with drug detoxification.

Norma knows that without

the help of God, she would not be alive today. "When we give our whole life to Him and really learn to trust Him, it's amazing what He does for us," she said. "He knows the hairs on my head. How can I not trust him?"

Today, Norma leads a happy life. She loves to laugh, and shares that laughter with her 16-year-old daughter Rebecca, with whom she was separated from for eight years. She also has a 25-year-old daughter, Louise, and a 14-year-old son. Norma manages an apartment building in Parkdale, which she calls home despite the troubles brought to the building by addicts and prostitutes.

"The Lord brought me here for a reason, and I've wanted to move nine million times because it's very stressful. But He says, 'Not yet,'" she explained.

She attends the Family Worship Centre, and is a board member for PAAFE (Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton), which fights against the sexual exploitation of women. She spreads her message of faith to women on the street.

"I help the girls recognize that they're worthy enough of the help that's there. [On the street] you're looked at as a throw away person. But none of them are throw away people. They all have beautiful gifts and talents. I stand before God for each one of them out there."

Norma does not claim to be a councillor or a mentor. She helps those who want to be helped. "I'm not a councillor, I'm not a case manager. I'm not any of those things. I am what I am today because of my choices to stay clean," she said.

She may not ask to be looked up to, but there is someone that Norma, herself, does admire.

"Oprah is an earth angel," she said with a smile.



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

Volunteer Your Help This Christmas Season

As the Christmas season arrives and the cold winter sets in, our thoughts naturally turn to family, religious reflections, and caring to remember those less fortunate. This year, it seems that we again come up short, despite millions of taxpayer dollars spent in Edmonton alone, to help the homeless. Shelters are still overcrowded turning dozens away each night. Many will recall the emergency measures that the city took in past winters in providing Red Cross blankets for 40 people to sleep on a cold concrete LRT station floor, or turning out emergency fire equipment in a more recent winter, just to free up space for 40 blankets on another cold floor.

Obviously, more could and should have been done over the past 13 years of Liberal shelter funding mismanagement. The solution for homeless people is obvious: independent living \$300 per month homes, that most can pay for themselves, rather than \$1500 per month, taxpayer paid, shelter beds that are seemingly forever in short supply. Helpful, would be permanent youth and adult hostel accommodation much needed for major sporting events that could then be utilized for transient youth and adults who simply need affordable temporary accommodation as they visit or seek employment.

The challenge for our new government in Ottawa will be to complete housing and homeless commitments made by others and then to refocus efforts that truly will help those most in need with a hand up to independent living.

In this season of goodwill towards others, remember the less fortunate by volunteering and contributing this Christmas; at a local shelter or community Christmas dinner. Your time and effort will be rewarding to both, those in need and yourself.

Please join us for our Christmas Open House
9111-118 Ave. Thurs. Dec 21st 3-7pm

495-3261

www.petergoldring.ca



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Driving the beat

DAWN FREEMAN

"You have to always be respectful and polite with people because 99% of people you deal with are just wonderful, and then you have to be ready to take a life if necessary, and everything in between."

I am sitting in the front seat of an EPS vehicle – but don't worry, I haven't been arrested; I'm on a drive around with Constable Pat Tracy, the Community Liason Officer for the 118 Avenue area. He is telling me about the reality of being on patrol, whether on foot, bicycle, or in a car. Constable Tracy isn't a regular patrol officer; he is busy with other community-oriented tasks, but he is taking time to show me how it works, for this article.

In a patrol car there is one more consideration to take into account – typing. All EPS cars are equipped with a computer screen and keyboard. Calls to Dispatch are plugged into the system and either pop up on

the screen or are called through to the car if they are a high priority. After responding to an incident, officers need to input the details into the computer. Ever wonder what the police are doing when you see the car just sitting there? They could simply be writing up their notes.

"As with all kinds of businesses, we [the EPS] are continually trying to upgrade (the equipment), so we've had to learn to be computer literate," laughs Tracey. "I'm not a very good typist though."

We take a call regarding drug related activities behind the 7/11 on 118 Ave and 97 St; however there is no 7/11 at this location. Tracy calls Dispatch back to clarify. Dispatch gives him the name and number of the reportee and Tracy gives him a call. The caller says it was probably further west. We drive to behind the Mac's store on 118 Ave and 105 St and check around the back by the bins, but there is nothing there.

A percentage of calls turn



out this way, says Tracy, but another reality of the job is safety. As he drives off, Tracy relates, "It happens enough that you always have to think about whether a call could be a setup. One of the more graphic stories I know is of a man who decided he wanted to kill a cop, so placed a 911 call about a break and enter. When the officer arrived at the door, he was greeted with a knife. Luckily he had his vest on, so he was all right." He stops at the end of the alley to type notes into the screen, then takes another call.

Officers log into their patrol car at the beginning of their shift and are assigned a sector, or area, to cover. They stay within that area unless a high priority call comes in – shots fired, someone is hurt, or a major collision. Calls

are rated by their priority – 0 being the highest – and run the gamut from car accidents, mischief, landlord/tenant problems, and barking dogs, to troubled or intoxicated persons, theft, drug related complaints and assaults.

The next call is to an apartment building in Eastwood, where there is a complaint about intoxicated people in the hallways of a building. Constable Tracy calls in his position and intention to leave his vehicle to Dispatch, then we go into the building to look around. He knocks on some doors and talks to a couple of occupants; the drunks are long gone, but he gets a description from one of the women who called it in. She also mentions to him that she thinks a house across the street deals crack; Tracy will pass this information onto the beat cops for this area. We leave the building and check around the back to make sure no-one is there. But he is limited in what he could do even if we do find someone.

"Even if I saw these people right now [the subjects that he has a description of from the apartment building], I can go up and talk to them, but that's it. I have no grounds for

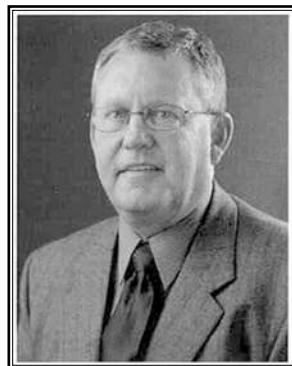
anything else. But I can get creative. Just like a parent can get creative to make life a little more challenging to their kids."

We get back into his patrol car and Tracy takes 5 minutes to type up his notes. He gets a phone call on his cell from a local resident that has been having trouble with the garage next door (see RCP July/Aug issue). Although Tracy doesn't know about the incident, he is willing to listen and to drive over to the garage to check it out for her.

After looking into the garage, it's time for me to go back to my regular car. Patrol Officers take the calls they are given by Dispatch; they don't get to pick and choose the way we did today, and it seems like the calls can go from mundane to high-charged at any moment. One last piece of advice from Constable Tracy:

"When you call 911 about something, don't go into the history [if any] behind the call, just tell them what's happening right now".

And don't be afraid to call; it's not a big deal and you're not disturbing anyone. When an officer is on patrol, it's their job to check things out for people. And to sit and type it up after.



Ed Gibbons City Councillor Caring for Communities

(780) 496-8138

ed.gibbons@edmonton.ca
City of Edmonton 2nd Floor, City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7
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THE CITY OF EDMONTON



Christmas at Christian Life Center



Sun. Dec. 3 @ 10:30 am
Vanguard College Choir with the Sounds of Christmas

Sun. Dec. 10 @ 10:30 am
Children's Christmas Drama

Sun. Dec. 24 @ 7:00 pm
Christmas Eve Candle Light Service

10123 Princess Elizabeth Avenue Edmonton, AB Ph. 471-2250

Maybe Christmas doesn't have to come from a store

Alternatives to commercial gift buying are just a donation away

DAWN FREEMAN

Try something different this Christmas. Instead of frantically trying to figure out the perfect gift for someone or wading through the sea of shoppers at the mall, think of donating as an alternative. What could be a better gift than the present of giving itself?

Let it be known in your gift-giving circle of family and close friends that this year you are doing it differently. Instead of giving them presents, this year you will be donating money or gifts or toys or your time in their name. Then on Christmas day you can give them a card with the story of whom their present helped. Even children can be included – one present for

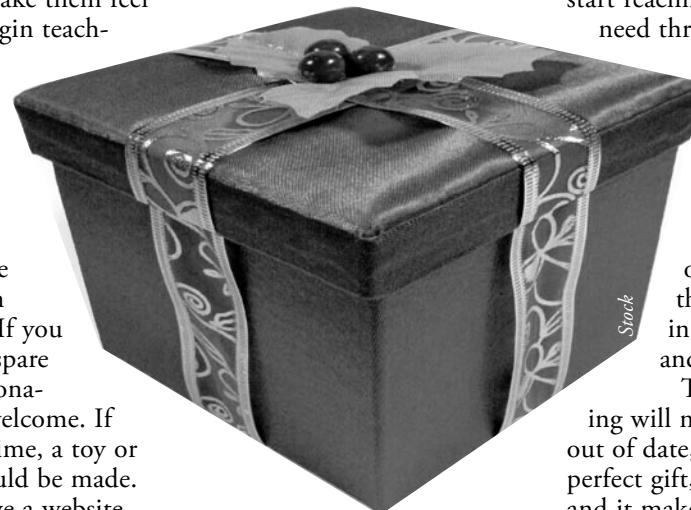
them and a picture or photo of the toy given to another in their name will make them feel great as well as begin teaching the lesson of charity. Secret Santa gifts at your workplace are another great place to donate in the name of.

It doesn't have to be hard or even time consuming. If you don't have much spare time, then cash donations are always welcome. If you have a little time, a toy or a care package could be made. Most agencies have a website with a list of what they need most. And if you find a lot of time on your hands, or a group of you want to do something

different together, then volunteer: serve Christmas dinner,

not have enough of anything. Christmas is a great time to start reaching out to those in need through the many helping agencies in the city. Check the sidebar for a list of places to start giving. Or search out one of the many other organizations that help people in our community and in our city.

The gift of giving will never grow old or out of date, it is always the perfect gift, it's easy to find and it makes everyone feel good. It's real, it's meaningful, and it does help, even if it is just a little. Isn't that the true spirit of Christmas?



deliver toys or wrap gifts, or put together food hampers.

Many people in our community and in our city do

around the city such as Bright Lights and Candy Cane lane.

The Mustard Seed Church: (www.mustard.ab.ca). Located at the corner of 96 Street & 106A Ave. Serve a meal or help out at their Family Gift Centre. Put together a care package for children or adults in need or donate toys. Go to website or call them for more details and for other ideas. Ph 421-XMAS.

CBC Turkey Drive: This runs from December 1 – 20, 2006 and donations of turkeys or money are accepted at CBC, City Centre Mall, or designated Safeway locations. Listen to CBC 740 AM, or call Edmonton's Food Bank 425-2133 for more details.

Bissell Centre: (www.bissellcentre.org). You can purchase a gift of a Bissell Centre service of your choice in the name of a friend, relative or colleague. They will mail them a Christmas card stating what has been given in their name and a Christmas greeting from you. You will receive a tax receipt for the value of the gift. Alternatively practical items can be donated

for the centre to package as gifts. Go to their website or call them for more details or other ideas.

The Salvation Army: (www.salvationarmy.ca) Volunteers collect donations at many places throughout the Christmas season or go to their website to donate on-line.

The Red Cross: (www.redcross.ca) or other overseas relief agencies welcome money donations to help people struggling in other parts of the world. The internet is a great way to find more information on these.

PAAFE (Prostitution Awareness Foundation of Edmonton): (www.paafe.org). Money donations go towards helping women at need and funding various programs.

Crafty Christmas corner

Glitter domes

What you need:

One jar with tight lid (any size, but smaller looks better).

One plastic figure (your choice) and any other plastic decorations to make a scene.

Glitter

Superglue

Ribbon and lace.

Glycerin or mineral oil to stabilize the water and make the glitter float slowly. Use about 1 teaspoon.

What you do:

Superglue the figure and decorations to the inside of the lid. Make sure you leave enough space around the edge for the jar to screw down in.

Fill your jar with water, but not all the way to the top. Leave enough room for the decorations and glitter.

Put the glitter in the jar. For every inch of water you need 1 teaspoon of glitter. Add glycerin or mineral oil.

Screw on the lid. For extra security you can glue the lid on.

Glue lace around the bottom edge of the lid to hide it. Put the ribbon over the glued lace.

Apple ornaments

What you need:

1 1/2 cups ground cinnamon

1 cup applesauce

1/4 cup white school glue

What you do:

Mix cinnamon, applesauce and glue together in a bowl. The dough should be as thick as cookie dough. Add a bit of water if the dough is too stiff.

Remove from bowl and knead. Put it back in the bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let sit for at least a half hour.

Remove the dough and knead again to make sure it's smooth. Flatten/roll the dough between waxed paper until it's between 1/4" and 1/8" thick.

Cut out desired shapes and use a straw to punch a hole for the ribbon to hang. The circle of dough will pull out with the straw.

Gently place the shapes on a non-stick cookie sheet.

Put in a low oven (200-225) to dry, turning often. Be careful that they don't burn.

Hang with yarn or ribbon.

When dried, cover in clear thin glue then sprinkle with glitter.

From the website www.homeschoolzone.com/craft.

places to Give at Christmas

Santas Anonymous:

(www.santasanonymous.ca).

Started in 1955 by Jerry Forbes, General Manager of CHED radio. This charity has grown from a few thousand children in 1955, to over 25,000 in some years. They collect toys for children who otherwise might not receive any gifts at all. Most malls have a donation box or go to their depot, which is open 9-9 every day. This year they are located at the future home of Crosstown Motors 15520 123 Ave (SE corner 156 St/ Yellowhead Trail). Bus Route 121 during peak hours, Route #3 basic service, walk from 118 Ave.

The Christmas Bureau:

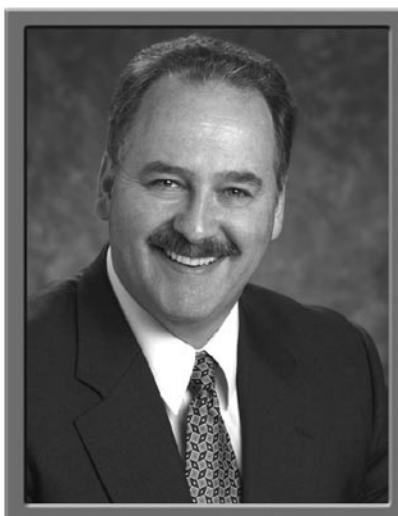
(www.christmasbureau.edmonton.ab.ca). Founded in 1940, this

is one of Edmonton's longest serving non-profit organizations. They raise over 1 million dollars annually to provide a festive meal for Edmonton's less fortunate. Cash can be donated or some people choose to raise funds and purchase a hamper, which they deliver to a deserving family directly. Ph 421-XMAS.

CBC Turkey Drive: This runs from December 1 – 20, 2006 and donations of turkeys or money are accepted at CBC, City Centre Mall, or designated Safeway locations. Listen to CBC 740 AM, or call Edmonton's Food Bank 425-2133 for more details.

Edmonton Food Bank: (www.edmontonsfoodbank.com). Donate money online or to their street address at 11508-120 Street. Donate food at major grocery stores and at various events

Brian Mason, MLA Edmonton Highlands-Norwood



"May peace be with you this Holiday Season and throughout the New Year!"

Please join me in celebrating the season at my constituency open house, Tuesday, December 12 from 4 to 7 pm.

Edmonton Highlands-Norwood Constituency Office

#100, 8930 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5H 1E9

Phone: 414-0682
Fax: 414-0684
e-mail: edmonton.highlandsnorwood@assembly.ab.ca
www.brianmason.ab.ca

Families First EDMONTON

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER FAMILIES

Take part in Families First Edmonton Community-Based Research Study

Help us find better ways to deliver services to families with low incomes. Families receive \$175.00 for their participation over five years. Your family is eligible if you meet ALL of the following:

- Receive Alberta Works Income Support for the past 6 months, OR Alberta Child Health Benefits OR use City of Edmonton Leisure Access Program OR live in Capital Region Housing;
- Have at least one child 12 years of age or younger;
- Live in north-east or north-central areas of Edmonton (east of 127 St. north of Yellowhead Trail, east of 121 St. south of Yellowhead Trail to the river).

FOR INFORMATION OR TO VOLUNTEER, please call 427-4966 (Rod) or 427-6053 (Tracy) between 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. or leave a message.

Spruce Avenue budding with community spirit

ANGIE KLEIN

Around 25 people braved the snowy roads on November 13 to hear Constables Maggie Morrison and Darren Bear host a Q&A on crime prevention and other related issues at the Spruce Avenue community league meeting. Concerns from local residents regarding drug activity, and what could be done to reduce that element from our neighborhood, were discussed.

David Despins of the local Neighborhood Watch, and guest Arlene Kemble, the central area Director from Neighborhood Watch, had many tips and information pamphlets to guide us in our fight for a safer community. Constable Darren Bear reminded residents the community plays a great role in helping to keep our streets safe.

"Everyone would like to have a cop on their block," he said when asked why there aren't more patrols in our area.

"We have to be diligent and keep hammering these guys, so if you see a drug deal in progress get a plate number or a description of the suspects."

Some residents are leery to call the police, but Constable Bear said, "If you see something or have a concern, let us know."

If you want to become involved with neighborhood watch, you can fill out an application at www.watch.edmonton.ab.ca or contact David Despins at 477-6716.

Our fine neighbors share a number of other passions and one of them is the ongoing project being planned to upgrade the Spruce Avenue school playground. This is a joint venture between Spruce Avenue school, St Basil's school, Spruce Avenue Community League and the City of Edmonton.

"I think this project is the first time that Edmonton Public Schools and the Catholic Schools have worked together; that is pretty excit-

ing!" said Laurie Coté, an active resident in the Spruce Avenue community.

Karen Gilson, who is heading the Community Parks Project committee, added "If you have a vision for the park project, share it with us, or make sure you fill out the survey that is going to be coming out."

The next meeting of this committee is December 5 at 1:00 pm in the Spruce Avenue School teachers' lounge. Give Karen a call at 477-3610 for more information.

And last, but certainly not least, is the Mature Neighborhoods Action Group. This is a diverse group of people from many communities working together with a common goal – to keep our older neighborhoods from being taken over with high density housing. This group is just beginning so expect more information in the months to come. To become involved in this worthwhile project contact Laurie Coté at 474-5354.

Azucar nightclub destroyed in suspicious fire

DAWN FREEMAN

In the early hours of Sunday November 12, the Parkdale latin nightclub Azucar (11733 78 St) burned to the ground in a fire suspected to have been deliberately set. Fire officials found a jerry can outside the business as well as other indications that lead them to suspect arson as the cause.

The intense fire took 12 fire trucks and almost 12 hours to get under control. Thankfully, the building was empty at the time of the fire and there were no injuries. Damage is pegged at \$1.5 million.

Manuel Echevarria opened Azucar in April 2004. The club offered live Latin music and top DJs as well as salsa and tango dancing lessons and was reported to be thriving.

onlineEXTRA

Read the Edmonton Journal article on this story. Go to www.ratcreek.org to find the link.



Be proactive - join Edmonton Neighborhood Watch

ARLENE KEMBLE
Central Director, Edmonton Neighbourhood Watch

Who we are:
The organization is a passive group, free of charge to join. We watch out for our neighbors with our eyes and ears, via windows, back or front yards. We do walk the streets.

What to do:

If you see anything suspicious, call EPS line 423-4567, and indicate you are calling on behalf of NHW. Call the line if you have a vehicle on your street that has been there for a couple of days or covered with snow. Everyone usually knows neighbors cars. Don't touch anything, because if it is stolen, sometimes EPS can get prints. Check if it is locked and if there are any keys or damage to the ignition area.

Become a member:

Call the NHW office @421-3428 or myself at 477-5606, and leave a message. If you have a computer you can download the application. When you become a member you will receive a package from the office, please read it.

Funding:

The organization is non-profit, so we have bingos at Castledowns and Kensington. Anyone wanting a little exercise, free lunch or supper, and to help us out by working at a bingo, please call the office or myself. Remember, Bingo halls are SMOKE FREE.



Wishing Everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

Best Wishes for 2007.

Councillor Janice Melnychuk

Ward 3 - NE Edmonton
2nd Floor City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton AB T5J 2R7

phone: 496-8333
email: janice.melnychuk@edmonton.ca

THE CITY OF EDMONTON

Seasons greetings from NOLAN DRUGS

The Management and Staff at Nolan Drugs would like to sincerely wish you and your family Seasons greetings and a happy and safe Holiday season. We hope that the upcoming year will bring you the best of health, happiness and prosperity.

Nolan Drugs has been serving the community for over 50 years. We sincerely thank you for your patronage and look forward to serving you for many more years to come. The New Year promises to bring many exciting enhancements at Nolan Drugs. In an effort to adapt to the changing needs of our esteemed clientele, we have renovated and expanded our pharmacy to better serve your healthcare requirements. We believe that our pharmacy's innovative design and services will enable us to continue to serve as a model community pharmacy - taking your health to new heights.

Our services include:

- *Prompt and Courteous service
- *Medication monitoring and follow-up
- *FREE prescription delivery
- *Pre-filled Insulin syringes
- *Safe Medication disposal
- *Full Service Post Office
- *Complete Prescription services
- *Home visits and Consultations
- *FREE blood pressure monitoring
- *Herbal products
- *Medical/incontinence supplies for homecare
- *Compliance packaging (dosette/bubble)

Store hours effective January 1, 2007:

Mon-Fri 9:00am - 6:00pm

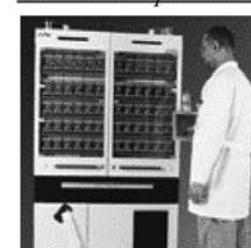
Sat 9:00am- 5:00pm

Sun/Holidays Closed

After hours emergency 477-2748



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Your prescriptions organized into clearly labeled packages that are:
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8901 118 Avenue

Tel: (780) 477-2748

Fax: (780) 479-4029

E-mail: nolandrugs@shaw.ca

www.arppharmacy.com

SPORTS

FREE PUBLIC SKATING SCHEDULE WINTER SEASON

September – December 2006

Clareview Arena

3804 139 Ave
Saturdays 11:45-12:45,
except Oct. 28;
Sundays 1:30-2:30,
except Sept. 24, Oct. 29, Dec. 24 & 31

Londonderry Arena

14520 66 St
Sundays 1:30-2:30; Wednesdays
1:30-2:30 Senior Skate only,
except Dec 12 & 19

Oliver Arena

10335 119 St
Tuesdays 6:15-7:15

Westwood Arena

12040 97 St
Sundays 3:15-4:15, except Dec.
24 & 31

FREE INDOOR SOCCER PROGRAM

Introduction to basic soccer skills. Soccer for Boys and Girls ages 2 to 12 years. For more information phone Tony at 420-0760. Saturdays, 10:30 am – 12:00 from Nov 4 to June 9 at Sacred Heart School Gym, 96 Street 108 Avenue – please enter at the East side entrance of the School.

FREE COMMUNITY SWIMS

Alberta Avenue and Parkdale
Community league members can swim for free at Eastglen Pool (11410-86 St) on Sundays from 12-2 pm.

Call your league to buy a membership.

Spruce Avenue community league members can swim for free at the MacEwan Centre for Sport and Wellness (10700-104 Ave) Sundays from 2-5 pm.

For membership or more info call Ray at 474.5354 or Verna at 479.8019.

You must present your 2005-2006 community league member card at the pool.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ALBERTA AVENUE COMMUNITY LEAGUE

9210 118 Ave
Tuesday, December 12, 7pm
New bylaws to be adopted

NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

9702 111 Avenue: Ph 474-7611
www.ninahaggertyart.ca
Prints, Pottery and Paper
All new art by Nina artists
November 6 to December 29, 2006.

PROGRAMS AT CRYSTAL KIDS

8718 118 Avenue: Ph 479-5283
www.crystalkids.org

Parents and Tots drop-in

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 am – 12:45 pm
This is a free program.
Snacks are also provided.

Seniors drop-in

Wednesdays 11:30 am – 12:45 pm
This is a free program. Soup and coffee is provided.

PROGRAMS AT ST FAITH ANGLICAN

11725 93 St: Ph 477-5931
Please register for all programs.

Junior Chef Program

Learning to cook more than Mac & Cheese - and Without a Microwave!. For anyone from Grade 7 - 18 years. Thursday afternoons from 1 - 3 pm. Cost is \$2.00 per week. Registration required.

Senior Chef Program

Cooking together on Tuesday mornings from 10 am - 12 pm in smaller portions to prepare meals to take home. For people over 50 years old. Cost is \$2.00 per meal that you take home. Registration required.

Collective Kitchen

3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30 - 8:30 pm. Cooking together in quantity to prepare 3 or 4 nutritious meals to take home for yourself or your family for later use. Cost is \$2.00 per meal that you take home. Registration required.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Bethel Gospel Chapel
11461 95 St: Ph 477-3341
Sunday December 10th, 7:00 PM - Community Christmas Celebration – lots of Christmas singing!
Sunday December 24th, 10:30 AM - Special Christmas Eve service

Regular Sunday services at 9:30 (Communion) and 11:00 (Family Bible Hour)

Christian Life Centre

10123 Princess Elizabeth Dr, Ph 471-2250
Christmas eve candle light service, 7:00 pm

St. Alphonsus Catholic Parish

11828 85 St. Ph 474-5434
Christmas eve family mass, 8 pm
Christmas eve midnight mass.
Christmas day mass, 10:00 am
New Years day mass, 10:00 am

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

8715-118 Ave: Ph 477-8677
Christmas Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 9. 2006 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Christmas Eve service Dec. 24th at 7:30 pm Everyone is welcome.

Sunday services are held at 11:00 am Everyone is welcome.

St. Faith's Anglican Church

11725 – 93 St. Ph 477 – 5931
Christmas eve services

Holy Communion (BCP), 8:30 am

Holy Communion (BAS), 11 am
Family Service (Holy Communion), 7:30 pm
Holy Eucharist (BAS), 11 pm

LOCAL CHRISTMAS DINNERS

St. Faith's 11725 93 St

Friday, Dec 16, 5pm

Charisma Pentecostal Church

At Eastwood Hall 11803 86 St Friday, Dec 23, 5 pm

CHRISTMAS EVENTS AROUND THE CITY

Fort Edmonton Park

For tickets and information call 496-2925

• shopping at the Train Station Gift shop and Reeds gift shop, Saturdays and Sundays until December 17.

• **Celebrate Christmas as it was 100 years ago**, Saturdays and Sundays until December 17. Free tour and events.

• 1920 Carousel Rides. This is the first winter for the carousel featuring its hand-painted horses. Rides are \$2 per person.

• Christmas Reflections. Take a horse-drawn sleigh ride or a walking tour through 1885 Street, plus there are carols, crafts and Christmas ware to buy. Adults \$15.50, children \$10.50.

Valley Zoo

496-8787

Jingle Bell Zoo

Sunday, December 10 – event activities from 12:00 – 3:00 pm Join us at our ever popular Christmas celebration at the Valley Zoo. Create gifts, visit Santa and watch the elephants open presents. Regular zoo admission applies.

John Janzen Centre

496-8787

A Natural Christmas

Sunday, December 10 – Event activities from 1 – 4 pm Use objects from nature to create your own very special Christmas decoration and take home a candle you've hand-dipped. Regular admission applies.

Christmas Break at the Nature Centre

Dec 26, 27, 28 & 29. Snoeshowing (weather permitting), animal tracking and winter craft making. Drop in daily from 1 – 4 pm Regular admission applies.

John Walter Museum

496-8787

December 3, 1 – 4 pm Make Christmas pudding the old fashioned way.

fashioned way.

December 10, 1 – 4 pm Make Christmas ornaments the old fashioned way.

December 17, 1 – 4 pm Make Christmas baking the old fashioned way.

Candlelight Christmas with The McDades

December 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27 & 28; 7:30 – 9:30 pm December 23 & 26; 2 – 4 pm Tickets: Adults \$20, Children \$11, (not recommended for young children).

Muttart Conservatory

496-8787

• In the Show Pyramid, "Winter Wonderland" until Jan. 7 There'll be a giant topiary snowman within the beautiful display of poinsettias.

• Poinsettia Sunday Dec. 10, 11 am-5:30 pm

• Christmas at the Conservatory: Sundays, Dec. 3, 10 & 17, 1-4 pm Visit Santa and his elves, listen to Christmas music and make crafts. Regular admission applies.



Dawn Freeman

COMMUNITY LEAGUE INFORMATION:



Edmonton
Public Library

SPRUCEWOOD BRANCH

11555 - 95 Street Call 496-7099 to register

Fabulous Readers' Club

2 pm, Saturday, December 2, Grades 4 and up. If you love to read, play games, do great activities, and win prizes, then the Fabulous Readers' Club is for you! Join us every month as we check out some awesome books and have a great time too!

Christmas at the Library

2 pm, Saturday, December 9, An event for the whole family. Make decorations to put on our tree. Listen to Christmas stories and sing a carol or two while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies. Max: 15.

Dragons, Castles and Kings

2 pm, Saturday, January 6, Ages: 10 – 12 years. Practice your puppeteering skills and play a character in a reader's theatre that is sure to intrigue you. Max: 8



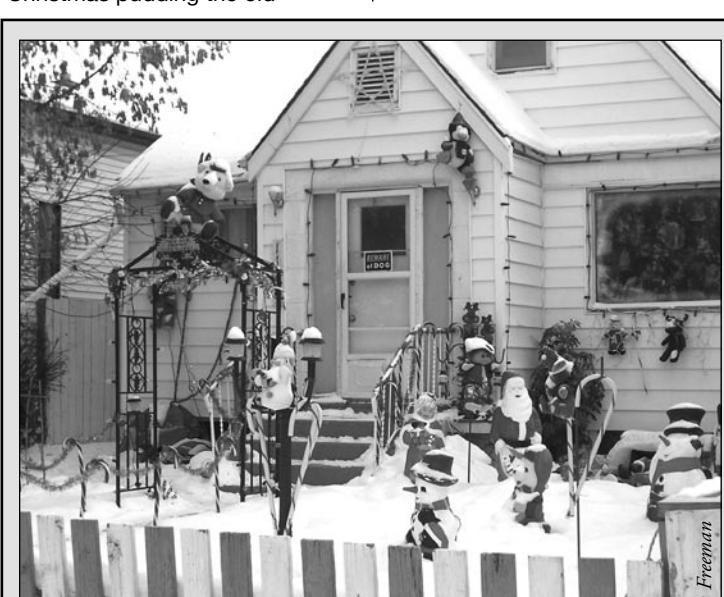
All welcome at

SOLID ROCK EVANGEL CHURCH

Sundays at 11 am
Wednesdays at 7 pm

Colosseum B&B Chapel
11827 – 85 Street

Pastor Stanley Burdett
Ph: 463-5950



BEGINNINGS OF A NEW CANDY CANE LANE? THIS HOUSE IN ALBERTA AVENUE IS READY FOR CHRISTMAS!

Need custom sewing or alterations?

Call Marion Swanson, a seamstress with 30 years experience, for quality work at a reasonable price.

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Industrial Machine available

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