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## Work begins on pumped up new rec centre

MARI SASANO

Local and provincial dignitaries wielded shovels as ground was broken to begin the renovation and addition to the Commonwealth Recreation Centre June 10.

Additions include an aquatic centre, field house, fitness centre, and new offices for the Edmonton Eskimos.

Eskimos chairman Doug Goss is excited about the contribution that the new facility will make to the club, as well as to surrounding communities.

"We don't just play our games here; we live in this community," he says. "We believe in being a good neighbour," citing the franchise's \$1.5 million purchase of turf at Clarke Stadium, where the Eskies hold their training camp and host amateur and high school sports. As well, they have previously donated \$50 000 towards the revitalization of Giovanni Caboto Park in McCauley.

Also in attendance were Premier Ed Stelmach and several of his MLAs including Culture and Community

Spirit Minister Lindsay Blackett and Cindy Ady, Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Representing the City of Edmonton, Mayor Stephen Mandel offered his warm congratulations and a \$300 million commitment to continue developing recreation centres such as this across the city.

"This is a commitment we need to make because we have to have facilities in each of our communities for our children to enjoy, our families to enjoy and act as anchors to ensure our communities are solid," says Mandel. The centre is just one part of a plan for the area, which includes a new transit centre and housing.

"This project we hope will help to reinvigorate much of the area we're in, with opportunities throughout this part of the city with various types of housing, not just affordable housing, but all kinds of interesting, dynamic and creative of housing that we would like to promote. We need to be proactive and encourage people to invest in this area."

Councillor Ed Gibbons

has already been fielding phone calls about the project, most positive. The main concern so far is where current users of the existing facility will go.

"The fact is, it's started. When you look at what they have planned, they are finally going to have the right number of machines.

We have waited for this for a long time. It will be a great improvement."

Evelyn Ehrman, director of the Commonwealth Fitness Centre, encourages patrons to use other city rec centres during construction.

"As of September 1, we unfortunately have to close due to construction. We want to encourage our existing users to

go to other facilities, Eastglen or the Kinsmen. Your passes will be honoured there and at any of the other facilities across the city."

The first phase of the new development, including a new Eskimos locker room and field house, is scheduled to be com-

pleted by 2010, in time for Edmonton's Grey Cup.

"It'll be the best tailgate party you'll ever see in 2010," promises Doug Goss.

The remainder of the construction will be completed in 2012.



COMMONWEALTH GROUNDBREAKING

## Pupusas: A food worth celebrating



MARI SASANO

Perhaps, if you have ever eaten at a Salvadorean restaurant like El Rancho or Acajutla, you have

savoured the pupusa. It is a simple thing, corn dough filled with meat or cheese, grilled, and served with a pickled cabbage and salsa. They are addi-

tively delicious, though, and sometimes it seems like you just can't get enough.

The pupusa is definitely a food worth celebrating, and that is exactly what the Salvadorean Society of Edmonton does every summer at its annual Pupusa Festival, held this year on July 25 behind the Alberta Avenue Community Hall (9210 118 Ave.).

"We are not represented at the Heritage Festival—there is a lot of work, and the expenses are too high—so we looked at something more feasible," says Gladys Molina, who is a board member of the Salvadorean Society. The Heritage Fest's loss is our gain, though:

"In Toronto they have a big event, the Pupusa Festival, and in El Salvador there is a Pupusa Day in April, so we

decided to make one here in honour of our national dish."

The event starts at noon and goes until 8 pm, which gives people ample opportunity to sample the food and culture of El Salvador, not just pupusas but pan con pavo, which is a traditionally-made turkey, served on a bun. There are tamales, enchiladas, cassava served with meat on top with cabbage and salsa, and semita, which is a traditional pineapple cake. There will also be live music, a singing contest, games and activities for kids, and of course, a pupusa eating contest. But it is the leisurely eating of pupusas with friends that has the top billing.

"Yes! Pupusas can be found in every little town, on the corner of every street. On Sunday, people will eat them

for supper. But you can eat them for breakfast, lunch and supper!"

Festival goers can also see how they are made, which is in itself a rather interesting process, and a tradition that Molina is very proud of:

"It is all run by volunteers, but we had to gather all the skilled pupuseras—the ladies who know how to make them. Each is made by hand, and we have to prepare the filling, made from side pork, which takes a long time. Corn flour is dissolved in water to make the dough, we grab some and put some filling in and work it with our hands."

"First, we learn how to make tortillas, then we learn to make pupusas. We need to pass it onto the younger generation."

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### Calling all writers!

If you are interested in writing for the Rat Creek Press, please come to our monthly editorial meeting on July 7, at 7 pm at the Carrot Cafe. Bring your ideas: August's theme is Diversity, and September is Seniors.

### 10th anniversary submissions

The Rat Creek Press turns 10 this year! To celebrate we are printing a special Tenth Anniversary issue in October, and we invite all residents to write your memories or stories to share. Send submissions to the editor at editor@ratcreek.org by September 1.

**EDITORIAL**  
WITH MARI SASANO

# Food is fundamental

We talk about food for the soul, food for thought—but without food for the stomach, there would be none of that!

There is probably nothing more important, on a basic survival level, in our lives as food. It literally keeps us going in every way: it affects our health, our mood, and our socialization. We need to nourish our bodies, give them energy and nutrients to move and grow. Eat the wrong things, however, and we can feel it! And anyone who has diabetic or digestive disorders can tell you that it can be a matter of life and death.

But there's so much more to food than just filling us up. We use food to get closer to our family and friends. "Let's have dinner!" is a declaration of

friendship. Cooking for that special someone is an act of seduction. We eat at parties, at weddings, at funerals—food is part of virtually every celebration, and a source of great pleasure.

And at the same time, there's something fundamental about food that affects not just us, but the entire planet. To have good food, we must have healthy soil, clean water, and a diverse ecosystem. It's ironic that too much pesticide kill off bees, which are so important to pollinating some important food crops. It's estimated that bees are worth billions of dollars in terms of the work that they do to make sure we have fresh fruit and vegetables.

We're extremely lucky to

have as much food around us as here in Canada. Food is relatively plentiful and affordable, and as a society we are very generous with our food. Edmonton, for example, is the home to Canada's first Food Bank, a concept that is as compassionate as it is practical: food is a commodity with a limited life span. Holding onto surplus food doesn't make sense—it needs to be eaten as much as we need to eat.

And in Alberta, there is so much to choose from. Thankfully, there are so many creative chefs and cooks who are taking on the project of eating locally—not a difficult task considering all the wonderful farms in Alberta producing some of the world's best meats, grains, and produce. Some of it can be grown right in our own backyards!

Eating locally in north central Edmonton has a different meaning, too: supporting local businesses. A night of dining in our area can be a wonderful surprise, and there is so much to choose from!

Southeast Asian, Caribbean, African, Salvadorean, and Portugese, places rate among my favourite spots, beating out other res-

taurants anywhere else in the city. Not to mention the best pizza in town—I'm looking at you, Tony's Pizza Palace!

So please enjoy this month's food-themed issue of the *Rat Creek Press*. Think about the bounty we have, right in our own neighbourhoods, think about what it means every time we go to the grocery store: where does our food come from? What is the impact of eating this food? Food for thought, indeed!

**“It's estimated that bees are worth billions of dollars in terms of the work that they do to make sure we have fresh fruit and vegetables.”**



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## City asks residents for help in investigating Cromdale Hotel situation

MARI SASANO

Representatives from the City of Edmonton led an information session Eastwood Community Hall on the closed Cromdale Hotel property for concerned residents on Thursday June 18.

“We’ve become aware of a significant concern amongst community residents with the Cromdale Hotel building and so we’re in the process of gathering information from a variety of sources, not just from this meeting, to determine the scope of the problem, if there are any violations here, and if so what is the appropriate response,” says John Wilson, Director of Complaints and Investigation at the City.

This is a step in a process that began in April, when the City asked the department to look into the Cromdale situation. So far, response has been very strong, according to Wilson, and Councilor Ed Gibbons reports already getting a number of letters and emails on the subject.

While other information is being supplied through law enforcement, residents are being asked to contact the City for details on the conditions of the hotel, which is located on the south-west corner of 118th Avenue and 82 Street. First-hand accounts of areas littered with needles or incidents of drug dealing, with dates if possible, are required. Complainants may also be asked to participate in hearings, if the City chooses to hold one. While the mayor has had discussions with the property owner, Complaints and Investigations feels that it’s premature to contact them at this point.

Chris Hayduk of CRUD (Community Response to Urban Disorder) left the meet-



CROMDALE HOTEL

ing with an entire pad of forms to distribute to those with concerns.

“I think the meeting was excellent, there was a good show of community support, there’s a lot of people out here. I applaud the City for putting it together and I think we’re going to give them what they need to deal with the issues the best way they can—hopefully, that’s demolition.”

While Wilson is reluctant to guarantee demolition or any other action following the investigation, residents generally feel this is a good step, including Anne Olson who manages the Wee Book Inn, which is located on the same block as the derelict hotel.

“It’s given me more information on how to put in complaints on it, and I’ve taken some forms to give out to people,” she says.

“Our parking lot backs onto the hotel parking lot and customers routinely have to step over needles and condoms and they’ve had their cars

broken into. Now I have a way to report these things.”

“I would like to see it reopened or torn down. I go back a long way in this neighbourhood. When I was in high school, my girlfriends and I used to meet at the Cromdale Café for chips and pop. I’ve managed a store next to it for 30 years. We don’t want to leave the location. There’s been a bookstore on the corner of 82nd and 118th Avenue, even before we got there. There’s been a bookstore there for 40 years.”

Ed Gibbons also has vision for the property.

“I’d like to see affordable housing, commercial on the main floor and residents on top. Eyes on the street. We want something, not the crummy old hotel. We could have something really outstanding.”

Community members who wish to share information should contact Complaints and Investigations at 780-496-5216.

## Only Bylaw-approved Cans Acceptable for Collection

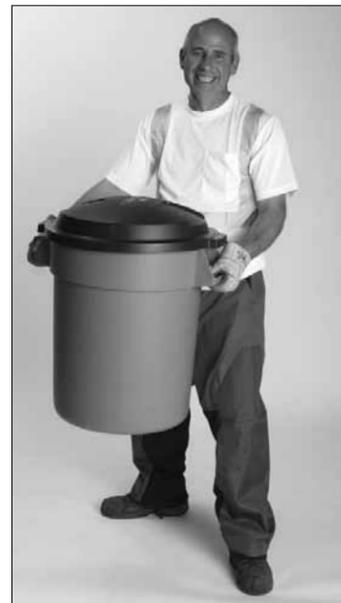
Awkward, oversized garbage cans are a safety hazard for waste collectors, and Darryl MacMillan is glad to see the last of them.

MacMillan, a refuse collector for seven years, has struggled with his share of enormous, overweight cans. He is grateful that residents have traded them for more manageable ones of less than 100 litres (as specified in the Waste Management Bylaw #13777) through the City of Edmonton’s exchange program that ran last fall and winter.

“It’s awesome,” says MacMillan. “People tend to overfill the oversized cans and then we can’t pick them up. We end up peeling the bags from the top and that is a safety concern because we don’t know what’s in them.”

Oversized cans almost always have wheels, which pose other problems, and not just because they encourage residents to load them up even more. “The wheels would come off once in a while and smack you in the chops because that was the only way to grab the can,” he says.

Not all of them have disappeared, however. MacMillan still sees a few oversized as he does his route. However, even those are disappearing. Waste collectors no longer empty them and bylaw enforcement officers may issue fines to offenders. Residents are encouraged to carefully check the volume of any garbage can they’re buying at the store. Containers larger than 100 litres that have swivelling handles and wheels will no longer be collected.



## Keep Your Collector Safe!

**Collectors pick up an average of 7,000 – 11,000 kgs of garbage each working day. Residents can help prevent injuries to collectors by preparing their waste properly and insuring that collectors have easy and safe access to garbage and recyclable:**

- Buy and use bylaw compliant garbage cans – under 100 litres in size with fixed handles – or garbage bags.
- Package sharp objects: ensure all broken glass, nails, sheet metal scraps, and other sharps are safely packaged in puncture-proof containers and marked as such.
- Each filled garbage can or bag should be lighter than 20kgs (44 lbs). Make sure your waste is easy to access – not hidden or hard to reach in a garbage stand.
- Keep your garbage and blue bags away from parked cars so collectors can easily see and access them.

## Northern Light Theatre’s Performance Camps gives kids a chance to play

MARI SASANO

Parents of kids interested in theatre have an opportunity to enroll them in Northern Light Theatre’s Performance Camps for young people in August. Younger kids between 6 and 9 can take a week from August 4 through 7 at the Wandering in Wonderland Playmakers Camp, while teens age 10 to 16 are invited to attend the Teen Camp from August 10 to 21.

Northern Light Theatre is located at 11516 103 St., in the Spruce Avenue neighbourhood. Maralyn Ryan, the instructor for both programs, is delighted to bring her experience as an

actor, director, and educator to the area.

“It’s an idyllic location. It’s a camp atmosphere, with the grassy area and a playground. It’s not like school, it’s working in a professional theatre with the lights, stage and theatre seats. It’s really exciting for the kids. But once we’re in classes, it’s pretty busy!”

Young people from across Edmonton will work with Ryan on this year’s play, *Alice in Wonderland*, working on acting skills and learning how to work together to tell the story. Participants in the Teen Camp will also have an opportunity to present a play at the end

of the process at the Varscona Theatre during the Fringe. It’s a great chance to really get to understand what it’s like to be a professional actor, some of whom get bitten by the bug and pursue further studies.

“A lot of children who I taught, I keep in touch with. I just directed *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* at the Mayfield with John Kirkpatrick—I can still remember that kid at age 12, casting him in the lead role in *The Pied Piper!*”

But becoming an actor is only part of what Ryan wants to teach her students.

“They develop the ability to work with other people, to be

tolerant, to support each other and embrace who they are.

Acceptance is the main thing when you’re working in an ensemble, which means no bullying, no hurtful criticism. And it encourages them to be imaginative, to learn problem solving, and how to listen, believe it or not! I tell them that acting is 99% listening and reacting, to take their time and be patient. In fact, if they learn anything, it’s to be a better friend—a better person, period.”

And for Ryan, who has decades of experience teaching young people as the founder of St. Albert Children’s Theatre, an instructor at the Citadel

Theatre School and director, also manages to sneak in a few history lessons, too: past camps have introduced old favourites with an Alberta twist, such as an aboriginal fur-trader *Beauty and the Beast*. Ryan hopes that learning about different kinds of people and cultures through theatre will give young people an experience that they can take through their lives.

“I want to use theatre as a way of healing and bringing people together. For me, it’s a great opportunity to work with young artists. It’s miraculous to see them learning to express themselves. I feel so honoured!”

## We Believe in 118 boosts neighbourhood businesses, safety

MARI SASANO

Those of us who live in the Alberta Avenue area are proud of the changes that are happening. And now there's a way to show how we feel about Alberta Avenue with "We Believe in 118." That's the name of a new initiative put together by the Alberta Avenue Neighbourhood Empowerment Team.

The program launched May 27 with a personal visit to all businesses from 97 Street to Gretzky Drive by representatives of NET, the Alberta Avenue Business Association, and the Edmonton Police. Kris Andreychuk of NET distributed window stickers and explained the purpose of the program:

"We Believe in 118 is a

way of celebrating what's currently happening in terms of social infrastructure in the 118th Avenue community," he says. "At the same time, it's an opportunity to engage the business community and increase partnership with NET, and an innovative way to reduce crime."

The stickers are a way to show community spirit, but there is also another component that will build a safer community, says Andreychuk.

"It's basically a PR program, but the tangible thing that comes out of it is the Block Captain program. We're going to try and find a business owner on each block who'll be responsible for communication and empower them with the tools to stay in close contact with NET

and just work collaboratively to work for the common goal of having a safer street."

There are many places on the Avenue that are great destinations for everyone in Edmonton, and it's the goal of We Believe in 118 to show that we are working together to create a positive environment for everyone who comes down.

"We want people to know that this is a safe place to live, and for the community itself, to highlight the vibrancy of the Avenue, the multiple partnerships with CRUD and Safe Streets and the Carrot, the community leagues and schools."

Andreychuk himself is proud of the community's efforts, and knows that this campaign will work in tandem with

the many other initiatives that are already taking place.

"Being quite new to this NET team, I've been blown away by what people are doing

here."

Businesses interested in participating in the Block Captain program should contact: 780-944-8402.



ROBYN FERLENKO OF MORE THAN CIGARS STICKERS THE WINDOW AS PART OF WE BELIEVE IN 118

## A Farmer's Market Experience on the Alberta Avenue

JAZZ WYATT

Super healthy looking potted basil and tomato plants, fresh fruits and local meat from Will-Dor Ranch were some of the second week's stars at the Alberta Avenue farmer's market. Bring your cash and support our local producers. They are worth it. Members of the Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association, our specialists from Will-Dor, assure us that their beef and pork are hormone-free, naturally raised, and inspected.

The farmer's market is what connects most of us with our past. I am sure everybody has a story of closer relationship to nature and its products, from a few decades ago. My story is a honey story, as my parents use to buy honey from bee-

keepers only thirty years ago. My biggest find at the farmer's market is quality honey – the way Gertrude and Werner Schmid make.

In my family, it was honey in the tea, honey in the yogurt (back then, one could buy plain yogurt only), honey was to be spread on toasted bread. Every summer my parents would buy two barrels of honey, different flavours each. The most required honeys on that market were the acacia one, the linden and the black forest ones. Those honeys required organized trips from the beekeeper's side: he would have to load the bee hives in his truck and move them to large areas of linden or acacia trees to be found only outside the cities, in the wild. That honey would have such a complex, savoury flavor and a

wonderful heavy texture. For me, it became a reference of what true honey is. Until now I was never able to buy honey like that from the supermarket. The way they sell it, it is so diluted and so sugary I might as well buy brown sugar.

What a joy to meet this German Canadian who keeps beehives and sells what I consider to be real honey. He sells honey in any quantities: from small containers to pails of honey, appropriate for customers like me, he can accommodate everybody. The only other place where I found this old fashioned European honey is the Polish store in the traffic circle on the Avenue, but their honey is imported and they sell it for three times the cost of Werner Schmid's.



FARMERS MARKET: ALBERTA VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

## BUSINESS NOTES

### 123 Thai makes way for Karmel Cafe and Restaurant

123 Thai Restaurant on 118th Avenue has closed, but another flavour has taken the space. Karmel Cafe and Restaurant will serve East African cuisine. -MS

### What's new on the menu at the Carrot Cafe

Visit the Carrot Community Coffeehouse during new extended hours on Thursdays, from 9 am to 4 pm. For food, wraps provided by the Quick Bite are now available for lunch, different kinds daily with vegetarian and meat options for \$4 and try a fruit smoothie made from preservative-free pureed fruit, dairy-free with crushed ice to cool you off for \$3.50. Have a seat at one of the new tables and chairs, relax and meet your neighbours!

If you are interested in volunteering at the Carrot, please contact Irene at 780-471-1580. -MS



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# Tapping into Earth Energy

AYDAN DUNNIGAN-VICKRUCK

How very silly of me. Blame it on that cute advertisement with the picture of a floor register on a back lawn (not to be taken literally, I find out). I assume that all you have to do to warm your house for free is to dig a deep hole in your back yard and then run a heating duct out to it. Presumably this works a lot better if you are over top of a volcano, but then there are other problems with that.

Give me credit for checking out my assumptions. I called the good folk at Geothermal Utilities to get the low down on this “energy from the ground up” routine. Out came Jake, a fine young gentleman who explained in detail the process they use to get heat from the earth.

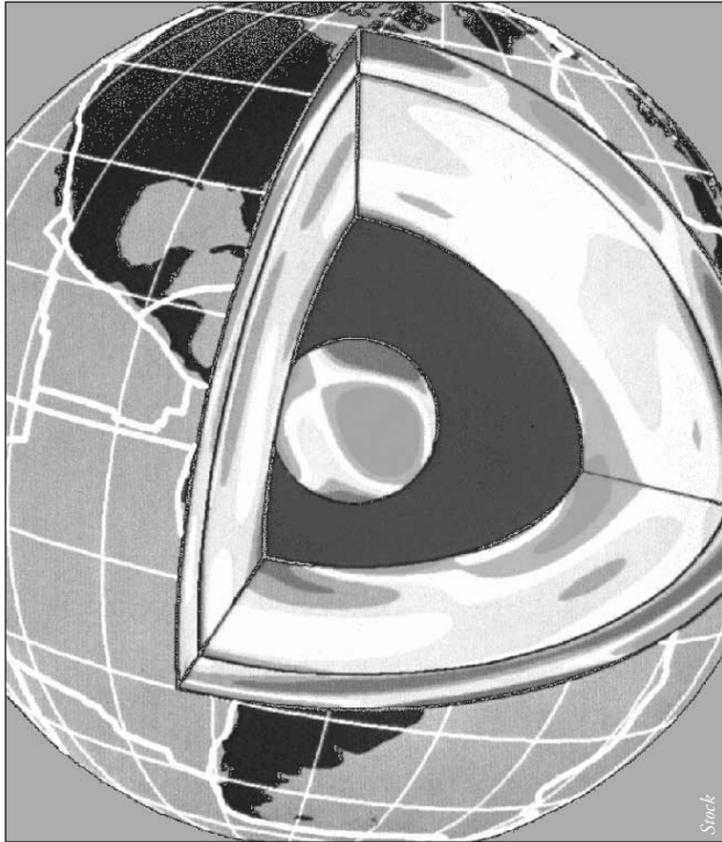
In the end, it wasn't nearly as easy – or dangerous – as I had envisioned, and involves a lot more technology than digging holes. This is the process, briefly, as I understood it, taking into account I don't absorb technical information all that well. (That is why I had my techie son along.) They drill a lot of holes (5-10), about 3” wide and they go down very deep (250’)

which, although not all the way to the earth's core, nonetheless deeper than you would want to attempt yourself as a summer fitness project. The holes are just large enough for two widths of plastic pipe, one feeding out of the house into the ground and the other the return pipe. They are joined at the bottom by a U-connector to make a continuous circuit.

“So why all the pipe?” I ask in bewilderment. It seems to me that a simple register vent in the lawn would be so much easier.

Jake is delighted to explain. “The temperature variance between surface temperature and 250’ below surface is about five degrees Celsius in the winter.”

I do some quick calculations in my head and figure that if the ground is frozen then the water coming back from down below isn't exactly going to be bath water warm.



That leads to my next question. “So how does water five degrees Celsius heat my house?”

Answer: “It doesn't.”

Next logical Question: “Uuuh?”

Answer: “The water goes through a heat pump which extracts the heat from the water and similar to the process used in your refrigerator or air conditioner.”

“But air conditioners make my house cold, not warm,” I protest.

At this point my son jumps in to help explain. “The air is blown through the blah, blah, blah and it cools the blah, blah, blah, and then it heats the blah, blah, blah and the house gets warm.”

“Of course.” I reply indignantly. “I know an air conditioner works. You plug it into the wall and turn the switch to one snowflake or two snowflakes.”

To which Jake responds: “Right. You both seem to have a handle on it.”

I am still really befuddled. “So does this actually make my house warm?”

According to Jake and numerous satisfied customers, all listed in his book with

colour pictures and diagrams, “Yes, it does.”

“Does it save me money?”

“Yes, it does.”

“How much?”

“Depends. It reduces your heating costs by up to 70%, enough so that you should be able to recover your investment in the system in 10 or more years. After that, it's money in the bank.”

Money in the bank. I like that idea. “But ten years, Jake. I'm old! Ten years from now and I could be warming myself deep down in the ground.”

“It is an investment,” replies Jake. “You have to think of the future. Long term this really makes sense.”

No doubt it does. Likely very good sense. Especially to someone younger and smarter than me. Take my son, for instance. It makes perfect sense to him.

“Can I do you up an estimate and give you a few more details?”

More details? No doubt a good idea, except at this moment I get distracted again by the picture of the register in the lawn. I wonder to myself if that could really work. I would certainly get warmed through the exercise digging.



ALBERTA



**Doug Elniski**  
MLA Edmonton Calder

## A Chance to Make a Difference

Sometimes you don't think about the basic things in life. A decent set of clothes can make a pretty remarkable first impression. For many people, it can be a way to feel confident about their appearance. For others, it is a way to land a great job opportunity.

Suit Yourself is a local, non-profit organization that collects and distributes lightly worn clothes to women who are looking to get into the workforce. Operating out of St. Basil's School, by appointment only, groups of volunteers are providing suits and other business attire (shoes, accessories, make up, etc.) that will help women in need get started.

Recently, I had the distinct pleasure of presenting Suit Yourself with a grant cheque from the Government of Alberta to help them further their efforts in the community. Suit Yourself puts 100 per cent of what they raise into the community, and is always in need of donations.

You can visit Suit Yourself online at [www.suityourself.org](http://www.suityourself.org) or phone the Edmonton-Calder Constituency Office for more details at 780-451-2345.

I would like to thank Suit Yourself for helping to make Edmonton-Calder such a great place to live.

Doug

## ARROW ROOFING



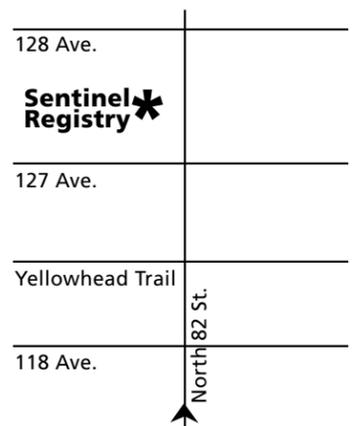
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## Back to sauce basics

DARLENE TAYLOR

I am lucky to live with a man who loves to cook! What fascinates me the most is his ability to go to a restaurant and decide that he liked the meal so much he analyses the sauce. Then voila—a few days later I have a gourmet meal with the newly created special sauce! Other than the challenge of figuring out how a sauce is made, Reg Taylor likes to save money. He too likes to control the ingredients because I am allergic to several foods and ingredients.

Sauces and dips that Reg creates include Worcester, barbecue, tomato sauce, a variety of curries, teriyaki (Japanese and Korean style), satays, and alfredo – just to name a few. The majority of ingredients come from Safeway but the search for a better deal and more precise ingredients include the Fiji shop on 118 Ave, the Italian Grocery on 95th Street and Lucky 97. All of Reg's sauces are refined to "easy to get" ingredients as he hates having to hunt down exotic items that are often listed in commercial and television recipes.

One recipe I managed to pry from Reg's cupboard is a basic one used in dips and coatings such as barbecue or steak sauces.

### Reg's Version of Worcester:

Makes 5 cups

1 cup soya sauce  
2 cups malt vinegar  
1 tbsp cayenne  
1 1/2 cup molasses  
1 cup brown sugar  
2 tbsp garlic powder  
1 tbsp white pepper

You can either use a blender to mix all the ingredients together if you need it in a rush but a better method (when our blender failed to function) is to put all the ingredients into a large sauce pan or pot and simmer for approximately an hour – to taste. Simmering the ingredients allows the flavors to blend and seems to taste better.



REG TAYLOR WHIPS UP A BATCH OF WORCESTER SAUCE

## Trolling for sweets: La Favorite and Handy Bakery taste best to Rat Creek panel

HARVEY VOOGD

One of the treats of living in this area is the variety of baked goods available. Marie Butler, Craig Stump-Allen and Sheryl Boisvert recently gathered to serve as the *Rat Creek Press* pastry tasting panel. Their assignment was to sample a variety of pastries from Handy and Popular bakeries, La Favorite Pastry shop and the Polish Food centre. and they all earn their pastry-judging credibility in their own kitchens.

Marie bakes banana bread, chocolate brownies and muffins. According to Marie, "Baking is nurturing to my soul and we all need a little bit of mothering."

"Knowing what is in my baking is very important to me and a big reason I bake," says Craig. His baking ranges from bread and cookies to muffins.

Sheryl has won several baking contests. Most recently at Norquest College, out of 15 entries, her Toblerone cheesecake was the unanimous choice of the judges.

"I like seeing people's reactions to what I bake, especially if it is favourable," says Sheryl. "I really got into baking when I was on maternity leave."

Each bakery was asked to recommend 3 or 4 of their best pastries. Entries purchased ranged from pastries, tarts, sweet buns to a doughnut.

The panel's decisions were made on taste, texture and visual appeal.

The first choice was the Chocolate Tower pastry from La Favorite located at 11401 95 Street. It was described as "heavenly" with a rich, yet light taste and not too sweet. It had a great crunchy and creamy texture

and superb artistic presentation. It was a joy to look at it. However, the Chocolate Tower pastry was also the most expensive treat. Everything at La Favorite was at least twice, if not three times, more expensive than the other places.

Second prize was awarded to Handy Bakery at 8660 118 Avenue, for its Custard Tart. Creamy with a hint of lemon and a lovely crust was the panel's verdict. They felt the tart had a nice colour, was appealing to look at, tasted sweet and delicious and was light on the stomach.

Third prize was also awarded to Handy Bakery for its Orange Tart. It was moist and light, with a very smooth texture and a wonderful citrus orange taste. The panel agreed, "This is a good bakery." Over all, your best buy for quality and price seems to be Handy Bakery.

And if you want to serve an award winning cheesecake at home, follow the directions, with this advice from Sheryl: "I like following recipes to a tee and I find this is important for baking."

### Sheryl Boisvert's Award-winning Toblerone Cheesecake

1 1/4 cups Oreo cookie crumbs  
1/4 cup melted butter  
2 (250g) packages softened cream cheese  
1 cup smooth peanut butter  
1 cup sugar  
2 (100g) Toblerone chocolate bars  
1 1/2 cups thawed Cool Whip or other whipped topping

#### Directions

Mix crumbs and butter; press firmly onto bottom of 9-inch springform pan. Refrigerate 10 minutes.

Beat cream cheese, peanut butter and sugar on medium speed until well blended.

Chop 1 chocolate bar and stir into cream cheese mixture. Gently stir in 1 cup of the whipped topping.

Spoon over crust, and refrigerate 3 hours.

Microwave remaining 1/2 cup whipped topping and chocolate bar on high for 1 minute. Stir until chocolate is melted and mixture is well blended; cool slightly.

Pour glaze over cake and refrigerate until ready to serve.



PASTRIES COURTESY OF LA FAVOURITE

## Food Bank fills the gaps for those in need

TAMARA STECYK

Edmonton's Food Bank is seeing the effects of the economy first-hand as shelves of food are emptying faster than being filled.

"Typically, our holiday campaign helps stock our warehouse until the late spring or early summer. It's not the case this year," said Marjorie Bencz, CM, the Food Bank's executive director.

The demand for hampers is on the rise.

"Right now we do have concerns as our client base is going up," said Bencz.

By the end of 2008,

the Food Bank was assisting 11,000 people per month with hampers. In January, it jumped to 14,000. About 40 per cent of the Food Bank's clients are children.

Edmonton's Food Bank is a year-round service and needs ongoing donations, not solely during the holiday season.

"We do large pushes in December but our reserves from the holiday food drives are done," said Bencz.

There are other events being planned to bring more food into the warehouse prior to the Servus Heritage Festival.

Edmontonians are

encouraged to visit Construction at Southgate Centre. Nine teams are building sculptures made of canned food, which will be on display daily at Southgate Centre from May 8 to 23. The event benefits Edmonton's Food Bank, the St. Albert Food Bank Society and the Strathcona Food Bank Association.

Local gardeners are encouraged to grow an extra row for Edmonton's Food Bank through the summer and fall months. Donations of fresh produce can be dropped off at the Food Bank at 11508 – 120 St., Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to

4:30 p.m. With the support of the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Community Garden Network and the Yellowhead Youth Centre, a garden is being planted and maintained at the Muttart Conservatory for the Food Bank.

The Food Bank is hosting a screening of *Affirming Life and Diversity: Rural Images and Voices on Food Sovereignty* as part of National Hunger Awareness Day on June 2. Thanks to TELAV: Audio Visual Solutions.

The single largest event for Edmonton's Food Bank is the Servus Heritage Festival Food Drive from August 1 to

3. The festival's theme this year is Come For a Perfect Day, with more than 60 pavilions representing over 75 cultures. Admission is free, but donations to the Food Bank are appreciated.

If you are wondering how to donate to the Food Bank between events, non-perishable items are accepted at major grocery stores and all City of Edmonton fire halls. Monetary donations can also be made on the website, [www.edmontonsfoodbank.com](http://www.edmontonsfoodbank.com), through Canada Helps. Thank you Edmonton for your ongoing and continued support.

# Foraging on 118th



MARI SASANO

I love food; there's nothing better than a home-cooked meal, and nothing more satisfying than being able to whip something brilliant by yourself in your own kitchen. Cooking gives me the a sense of control that I don't necessarily feel in other areas of my life. So of course, rather than do a restaurant review, I decided to check out the grocery shopping to see what kinds of ingredients are available within walking distance from my house. What an adventure!

I started at the Polish Foods and Gift shop at 101 St. The windows had the most incredible Polish kitsch in it. The store proper, though, is impressive: a deli (Head cheese! Trotters!), a few baked goods, confections, jars and jars of pickles and preserves, Polish CDs and movies, a few soccer jerseys. I bought a packet of, I think, chocolate covered cake with caramel, and a cute jar of pickled mushrooms.

Next stop, Kasoa Tropical. Here we have Caribbean things: frozen and dried meats and fish, spices, veggies like plantain, chilies and taro, and

beauty products. I bought some coconut cream and a pack of ginger mint candies.

Since I went on a Thursday, I checked out the farmer's market as well. It's looking better every time: a few veggies are available, and two vendors of meat. I got pork chops and a lemon Italian ice to cool off.

Paraiso Tropical was a friendly place: hot snacks are available, and the family who runs it is happy to offer their advice. For example, I held up a box of frozen pupusas and asked, "Are these good?" The young man said yes, but I'd have to defrost them before cooking, instead of just throwing them in the pan frozen like the instructions say. I left with the pupusas and a jar of dulce de leche.

Canadian Dollar Store and Grocery is like a super-thorough 7-11: packed to the rafters with canned food, dry snacks, a few frozen things and basic produce (onions, eggs, milk, etc.), an impressive number of slushie machines and really bizzaro random "gifts." I bought nothing, since I have a convenience store near my house where I can get emergency supplies like

milk. But I kept in mind that this might be a fun place to go another time.

On my way back, I stopped at Balkan Style, one of my favourites. The fellow there is extremely friendly and proud of his sausages. He makes them all himself, and on Saturdays he will roast a whole pig or lamb. Balkan Style has extra cred for supplying quite a few pavilions at Heritage Days, and when I tried to buy a few samples, he refused to let me pay and sent me home with a couple nice smoked pork sausages. Nice!

My final stop was United Halal on 95th. Almost empty, but pretty nice service. The gentleman there told me not to get lamb (he only had it frozen), but to try the goat, which the store gets weekly on Wednesdays directly from the farmer. So I bought a pound of goat for about \$5.

All in all, an interesting and varied shopping trip. There are good supplies of the basics, and so many options for different ethnic cooking and an incredible selection of animal proteins available only blocks away from home—now, if only I could get more fresh fruit and veggies...

## Fish and Chips with Beer Batter recipe – Appropriate for children, no matter what they think!

JAZZ WYATT

Fish and chips are an English traditional meal popular around the world. I tried to find a place in the proximity of my home to go for fish and chips on one weekend, and I didn't find any, so I pulled out an old recipe and set off to work to impress my kid and friends. My friends liked it, but my kid pictured in her drawing a food with alcohol; and she thought that might be not appropriate for her, however, this recipe will make an extra crispy batter that will melt in your mouth.

The following will serve two people:  
 2 fish fillets (cod, haddock, or any other fish)  
 1.5 l/ 2.75 pt vegetable oil  
 140 g/ 5 oz flour  
 50 g/ 1.75 oz corn starch  
 1 teaspoon of baking powder  
 1 egg  
 250 ml/ 9 fl oz beer  
 1 teaspoon of salt

We also need the following utensils:  
 saucepan, 2 bowls, whisk, slotted spoon, large fork, tray, some kitchen towel

Step 1: Add all oil into pan. Turn to medium heat. Let it heat until hot enough for frying, but it must be not smoking hot.

Step 2: Into a bowl add the flour, the corn starch, the salt, and finally, the baking powder. Mix them together until evenly combined and set it aside.

Step 3: In the second bowl, pour the beer and put in the whole egg and whisk them together well, until the egg and beer are evenly combined.

Step 4: Transfer the beer mixture into the bowl containing

the flour mixture and whisk well for a couple of minutes to ensure that it combines smoothly and is lump free. Then set it aside.

Step 5: Take the fillets and pat and dry using a piece of paper towel. This will help them fry better as any excess of water will only make the fish less crispy. Next, run your fingers along the surface of the fish to make sure there are no small bones remaining.

Step 6: Before cooking the fish is wise to check if the oil temperature is correct to fry. Test it by dropping some of the batter into the oil. If it fries immediately without burning, temperature is correct. Then dip fillet into batter and coat completely. Carefully place them into the frying oil and take care not to burn yourself. Only fry one fillet at a time so is not to overcrowd the pan. This will cause the temperature of oil to drop, making the batter less crispy and could also make the fillets stick together and lump.

Step 7: Let the fillet fry for 4-7 minutes, depending on its size and flip it at least one during this time to ensure it cooks evenly.

When the batter becomes a light, golden brown, remove it from the pan and transfer into a tray lined with paper (towel).

Repeat exactly the same frying process with the remaining fillet.

**TIP:**  
 Place the fish on a rag if you have one, as this will keep the batter crispier.

Now serve. Traditionally the fish was served with chips (french fries). Season with salt and pepper and serve it immediately.



FISH AND CHIPS WITH BEER BATTER; FISH GOT DRUNK

Marie, age 6

# Local wrestling outfit helps Alberta Avenue youngsters

TRACY COOPER-POSEY

The world of professional wrestling involves some of the physically biggest men and women — people who can easily intimidate others with their appearance. Even the names can be evocative: Andre the Giant, The Iron Sheik, Hulk Hogan, The Undertaker. Little kids and young teenagers tend to look up to them and to imitate them.

In early May, members of Edmonton's Monster Pro Wrestling gave a demonstration to twenty area youth at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre during their Youth Mania event.

MPW's Mark "Mr. Intensity" Posey, and the current MPW Tag Team Heavyweight Champions, Nite and TJ, appeared in costume. "There's always a big cheer when we appear," says Mark. "They've been anticipating the moment for a while."

Before starting, the wrestlers gave the "Don't try this at home" talk, then they put on a short performance of chain wrestling—moves demonstrated on a mat on the floor and answered questions from the group.

Monster Pro Wrestlers regularly go out into the community and do talks on subjects like playground wrestling, bul-

lying, self-esteem, drug abuse, and more.

"We've done a lot of role model talks," Mark explains. "And we chose the topics that suit the audience."

One topic that is a permanent part of these role model talks is playground wrestling. Kids want to imitate what they see at shows and on television. It's natural. So the wrestlers always explain why what they do in the ring shouldn't be tried at home.

Professional wrestling and community service seems like an odd combination, but Mark has a different take on it. "For many of us, these talks are a primary reason for a wrestler. It's a chance to be a positive influence in these kids' lives."

A large component of Monster Pro Wrestling's activities is community-based. "Probably more than most people realize," Mark says. "There's all the seats and meals we give away at the shows, to start." MPW has a Children's Ticket Program serves the disadvantaged and/or shut-in youth of the City of Edmonton and surrounding area. It provides them the opportunity to see live professional wrestling and be entertained for several hours in the care of others who share a passion for the show.

The ticket program has a supplement plan run in con-

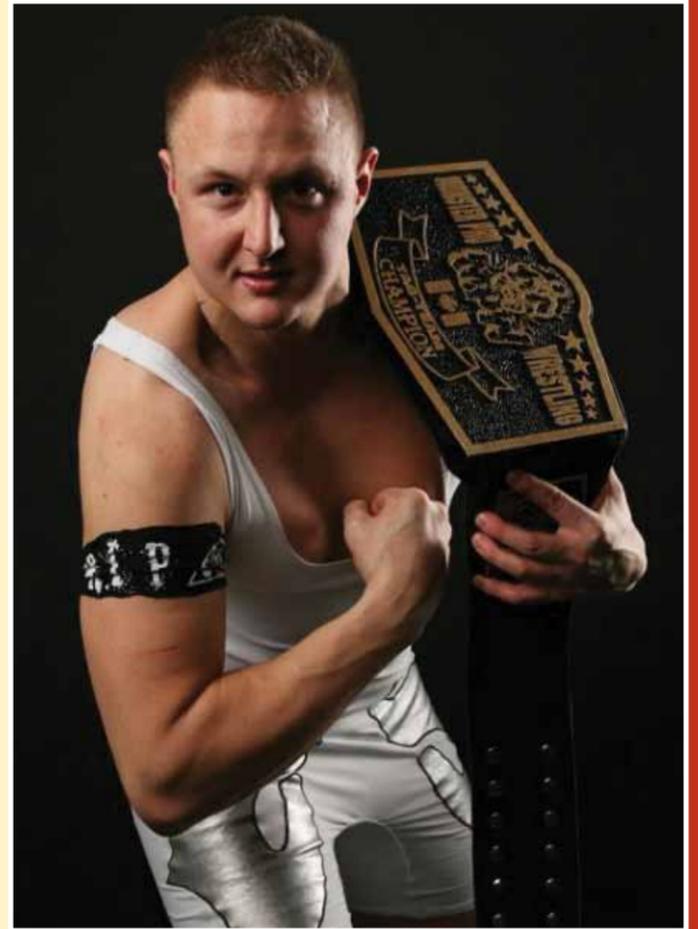
junction with Kids up Front, for local business and individuals to donate tickets, and all donations are tax deductible.

Monster Pro Wrestling began in August 2003, as a school to train new talent, and provide a place for veterans to stay in shape while on "off-time." Now, the outfit appears monthly at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre to a packed audience. Fans and reviewers alike have drawn parallels between Monster Pro Wrestling and the old Stampede Wrestling shows they remember so fondly.

A permanent part of the MPW roster is Sean "Massive Damage" Dunster, and Phil Lafon, who, apart from being Hall of Famers, who earned their reputation in the international promotions, are also MPW's wrestling school trainers.

MPW has also been able to have some of the legends of pro-wrestling become a part of their live shows. MPW has been proud to host international wrestling stars like Buff Bagwell, "Champaign" Gerry Morrow, the Stampede Wrestling legend, and Dan "The Beast" Severn of the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

Editorial notes: MPW site [www.monsterprowrestling.com](http://www.monsterprowrestling.com).



TJ, FROM MONSTER PRO



MR. INTENSITY, MONSTER PRO



NITE, FROM MONSTER PRO



## A New Fire Hall for Norwood

AYDAN DUNNIGAN-VICKRUCK

This time they have gone too far. Tell me, does Norwood really need another fire hall?

I had driven by 11227 95 St. a thousand times always with the intention of stopping in and checking into what madness was driving the inhabitants to fashion the most imaginative yard in Edmonton.

Halloween it was opening and closing coffins. Christmas it was dancing Santa Claus and reindeer. Summer is bird baths and butterfly garden and elves and gnomes. Now there is the "Codyville Fire Hall."

Today is the day. A beautiful hot sunny summer afternoon and I am riding by on my bike with my camera in tow. There he is, the creative genius himself sitting outside in this fanciful jungle, looking for all the world like a normal, neighbourly type handyman.

I take the big plunge, get off my bike, open the gate and enter into a miniature Disneyland. There are more creatures than I could have imagined tucked away in all the nooks and crannies.

I introduce myself as an intrepid *Rat Creek Press* reporter.

"Are you the person responsible for this fairy-land?"

"Rod Varty is the name."

"Rod, I have been obsessed with this question every time I drive by. What compels you to create this magic?"

"Lots of things," Rod replies serenely. "Grandkids and time mostly, and I have lots of both. And a tolerant wife. And then tack on a garage sale or two. And lots of imagination."

"That would explain it." I nod in agreement. "Except for one thing. Why a fire hall?"

"Oh, that. Well we had to have fire hall for our grandson's fire engine."

Of course! How elementary.

Almost on cue, grandson number 9 walks out and I request an audience with the fire chief and his new fire engine. He is more than happy to oblige and with a little assistance from Rod is maneuvering his way out through the yard onto the sidewalk. From there he is accompanied by grandson number 4(?). They attach a small trailer and begin their daily run up and down the street picking up garbage. Amazing.

"Have you always lived in this part of Edmonton?"

"Most of my life, but only six years in this house."

"What do you think of the neighbourhood?"

"Wonderful. Great neighbours. However you treat people is the way you will be treated. We have had next to no bad happen to us and a whole lot of good. Besides, I am of the opinion that you don't not do something for fear of it getting broke. And there are a lot of things in this yard that could break."

Definitely an understatement.

"One more comment. Your paper has been in the habit of printing articles about bad landlords. I think they should run some about good landlords. Our landlords here have been real gems. Never raised the rent. Always prompt at fixing things. Couldn't ask for more."

I suspect they think the Vartys are pretty special tenants as well.



**dog talk**  
WITH DARLENE TAYLOR  
OWNER OF K9 BEHAVE

## Numbly In my tumbly

I pity the new dog owner as they try to decide what to feed their new pet. There are so many choices including raw, dry, moist, home cooked, scraps and everything in between. Everyone seems to sell dog food too – veterinarians, groomers, pet stores and grocery stores. Add to this the countless shelves of treats.

Nutrition requirements are different for puppies, adults, senior, large breed, certain breeds and working dogs. For dogs with any sort of allergies or health concerns the veterinarian is the best source of advice.

Some basic guidelines are:

Does your dog look healthy with a shiny coat? Is it dull and shedding profusely? When the dog approaches, can you hardly wait to get your hands on that beautiful coat, or is the dog unappealing?

Does your dog have curves? When looking from above along his back does the dog have dips after the shoulders and where the waist should be. From the side is the profile shapely? If you adjust the food intake and quantity of exercise are you able to control the dog's weight?

Is the dog's "output" of a medium-hard consistency most of the time? Does the dog have diarrhea or strain on each visit outdoors? Is the smell offensive? Is the dog coprophagic (eating output)? If the dog passes a lot of offensive gas it is probably "carbohydrates... with corn and soy high on the list of potential

culprits." (Cheryl S. Smith, Dogs In Canada, April 2009)

Is the dog happy? Is the dog lethargic and lazy (relevant to his age) or is he active and playful? Does he struggle with every breath especially in a slow walk?

The answers to these questions could indicate a change in what you feed your dog.

Kibble – the convenience food out of a bag. Look at first five ingredients listed on the side of the bag and consider what the food is formulated for – e.g. active, senior, large breed. If the top ingredients are chemicals you may want to look further. Check the manufacturer website periodically to be aware of any recalls or change in formulations which may affect your animal. Kibble can double as training treats. Common allergens are beef, chicken, wheat, corn, soy and dairy products commonly found in kibble.

Moist – another convenience food. Often used for a dog that doesn't drink water or have teeth. It is sometimes mixed with kibble/dry food. As with kibble check formulations, ingredients and manufacturer

website.

Raw – akin to a home-made diet you will need to do your research to pick the best combination. Some buy chicken parts and bones while others shop for a slightly more convenient option of ground meat and bone frozen and ready to serve. Supplements are easily controlled and added to the specific requirements of the animal.

Wash your hands and work area often, just as you would with meat and vegetables you feed your family.

Do your research. Check multiple reliable sources. Remember if there is a problem, don't just blame the food – consider the "other" treats, toys and objects the dog consumes. Consult with veterinarians and breeders. Look at your dog!

*Darlene Taylor, K9 Behave  
780-915-0213, k9behave@pre-plus.onza.net*

*Note: Further to June 2008 article Doggy Dooley septic systems are available from Pet Supply House 1-800-268-3716 www.petsupplyhouse.com*



QUALITY PET FOOD IS WORTH A SIT-STAY

## Goddess of the Universe

*Written one wintry night watching the planet Venus*

A pearl of heaven arisen  
Teardrops of dew in a sea of Cerulean  
Grayed by a sorrowful depth  
A halo of stars to shine eternal  
And for her the largest star doth shine.

And for her forehead the largest star doth twinkle  
Above the softness of her shoulders  
A dawn hue brightens the contours of her face  
As the Child of Creation sleeps  
Until she becomes the Eve of Morning.

The essence of her soul reclined in mourning  
For all that was lost  
From the days of Yesteryear  
The face of the mirror of the Yet to Be lay broken  
Vast and Void from the images of tomorrow.

And in the furlough of her Morning Noon  
She will awaken as a newborn  
Quickened with the rhapsody of life  
To gaze in awesome wonder  
At the face of her newborn soul  
Through the mirror of the Yet to Be.

In the twilight of her Evening Moon  
She shall blossom like the lilies  
In the cleavage of the hills  
Shades of lavender and the pureness of snow  
Sparkling with the essence of dew  
Moonbeams shall bow with dancing fingers of light  
To pay her homage  
As the grey fronds of night o'erwhelm her.

The days of Yesteryear are many  
She grows frail and thin  
But still the eyes of Cerulean blue  
Light up with her smile  
And the stars shine around her head  
As the grey fronds of night o'erwhelm her  
The mirror of the Yet to Be still lies open.

- Sharon Riley

## EDMONTON



# Got BIG Junk?

## Get rid of it!

Bylaw Enforcement Officers are carefully checking Edmonton neighbourhoods this month for untidy private properties. Avoid the fine of \$250, and clean up your yard today!

As you rummage through your storage, and find things you no longer need, remember to throw it out safely.

If you are loading up a vehicle to go to the dump, make sure the load is secure. Debris falling off your car or truck creates litter and can put other drivers in danger.

Haul large items to one of Edmonton's Big Bin events. Twelve weekend events will be held in various locations throughout the City for residents to drop off items such as old couches, chairs, mattresses, and appliances free of charge. Computers and other electronics are accepted for recycling. Take household hazardous waste like paint, varnish or batteries to an ECO Station.

If you put your extra garbage out for collection, remember that you need to use a legal size garbage can so waste collectors do not get hurt. Garbage cans must be smaller than 100 litres (approximately 75 cm in height and 45 cm in diameter) and must weigh less than 20 kilograms (44 lbs).

For more information contact 311  
or visit [www.edmonton.ca](http://www.edmonton.ca)





**LAW AND ORDER**  
WITH CST. ANDREW LARSON

## Johns Beware!!

Prostitution has been a long standing problem on 118 Avenue and 95 Street for as long as I have been a police officer. For many members of the community, I'm sure they can tell you it has been a problem here for even longer than that. Despite the successes this community has had over the past few years—reducing crime, beautifying the area and creating the positive atmosphere it is—the problem of prostitution continues to plague the community. Crime statistics is one measure of safety, but the perception or feeling of safety is the other. If people don't feel safe in their community, then we are not successful. And how do you feel safe in your community when there are prostitutes standing at the corner?

Some interesting research has been released from Sweden where they have almost no prostitution. It wasn't always that way; a few years ago Sweden was rampant with prostitution. What the federal government did was change that laws and made prostitution legal, but being a john illegal. The police then focused on arresting and charging johns and soon enough the market dried up. Like a recession, when the market dries up, people lose their jobs and they have to look for a new way to make a living. With no johns, prostitutes will have to do something else.

Recently the Alberta government gave the police a new tool to battle prostitution. In October 2006, Bill 206 was legislated giving police in Alberta the authority to seize vehicles from individuals charged with a prostitution-related offence, i.e. "communicating for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute." That vehicle is held until the subject's court date or the Solicitor General gives permission to release it. For those that we arrest for soliciting a prostitute, this is the punishment that seems to upset the john the most.

Johns come in all shapes and sizes. I have arrested many "regular," hard working, tax-paying people for soliciting a prostitute on 118 Avenue and 95 Street and I can advise you that a person arrested for this can see their world will turn upside down very quickly. They will face a punishment of being charged with a very embarrassing criminal offence, their wives and children will find out, their vehicle will be seized for a long period of time and they will face fines in the thousands of dollars. For those with a professional career, often employers will not hire an individual with a solicitation conviction on their criminal record and possibly fire a current employee if they are made aware of the incident. The john's marriage

(most johns are middle aged men with families) will likely end and they will end up broke and devastated.

We are going to be cracking down on john activity this summer. We have bumped up our number of undercover stings and enforcement of both johns and prostitutes. During the week of June 1st to 7th for example, EPS Vice Unit and 118 Avenue Beats arrested and charged 14 prostitutes and 10 johns. Of those 10 johns, 8 of the subjects had been driving and their vehicles were seized. These stings are something we do often and we will be doing them all summer long. I would like those men who were considering soliciting a prostitute to think about that prior to engaging in that activity.

For those community members who want to assist us in tackling this problem, please call our Report a John Line at 780-421-2656 or report it online on the EPS website. When doing so, we place that information you report on our EPS information system and follow-up with the registered owner of the vehicle. Like everything else, we need the community to assist us battling this problem and this community is truly special on how active and engaged they are in battling the problems that affect it. Have a great summer and keep up the great work!



**DON'T LET JOHNS GET AWAY WITH IT. REPORT LICENSE PLATES AND DESCRIPTIONS TO THE REPORT-A-JOHN LINE AT 780-421-2656**

## KARA-LOT SECOND HAND STORE



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**Canada Day July 1st**  
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**Tues. July 7**  
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**Fri. July 24**  
**& Sat. July 25**  
50% off all clothing

*The Avenue Initiative is a community based revitalization of 118th Ave from Nait to Northlands. The community has come together to work with the City to develop a council approved strategy that will create a safe, walkable community for everyone.*



**For information call**  
**Judy Allan 496-1913**  
**www.avenueinitiative.ca**

## avenue initiative revitalization



### Many thanks!

Thanks to everyone who volunteered this spring...on the Bloomin' Garden Show, Avenue Goes to the Dogs and the Large Item Pick Up!  
All your work is what makes the community special!

**Construction on phase 2 of the Streetscape Improvements is well underway. All businesses along the Avenue remain open...please support the Businesses along the avenue during construction!**

Eastwood Fest and Street Dance Celebration is August 15th.  
If you're interested in volunteering email [judy.allan@edmonton.ca](mailto:judy.allan@edmonton.ca) or call 780-496-1913.

# A House Sparrow's paradise not as idyllic as it seems

## AN AVENUE HOMESTEADER WITH CARISSA HALTON

When I received Mom's call, I was reveling in my backyard that overnight had become—on casual observation—a bird sanctuary.

"Carissa? Just got off the internet. I was trying to identify the birds that have started eating at my feeder and it turns out that most of them are House Sparrows..." (Pause) "It's awful. They seem so sweet, but you have got to read some of these anecdotes."

She went on to describe a bird that could kindly be called a bully. The one site dedicated to propagation of Mountain Blue Birds describes them as follows:

"You might think they're cute (some blue birders refer to them as "rats with wings"), but they attack and kill adult bluebirds, sometimes trapping and decapitating them in the nestbox and building their own nest on top of the corpse. They destroy eggs and young. At a minimum, they often harass native birds (especially more timid species like chickadees) into abandoning nestboxes."

The site went on to show some pretty graphic photos of "the circle of life."

When I went to identify my birds, it turns out my bird sanctuary is made up of House Sparrows and the odd magpie. Here I thought I was helping my urban landscape 'return to its roots'. I want to encourage a natural, balanced habitat consisting of plants AND animals. Have I instead been helping one of the bullies of Birdland Edmonton get easy food and

further propagate itself to the great expense of other species?

In addition, I noticed they're eating my spinach and peas!

What do I want to do? I want to increase the number of birds in my yard. They eat insects, often will eat weed seeds, and enhance my morning coffee ritual.

John Janzen Nature Centre assured me that in Edmonton there are other species that compete with the House Sparrow, such as the native Finch, which help control their numbers. However, the Wild Bird General Store hotline confirmed that the House Sparrow here in Edmonton has been harmful to native species such as house wrens, chickadees, and tree swallows. The gentleman recommended that birdhouses be monitored well to ensure house sparrows were not allowed to propagate.

"If unchecked, a breeding pair can grow to over 2,000 birds in two to three years." (Bird Barrier America, Inc.)

After researching this, I've decided that I want other species of birds at my feeder but I don't want to further encourage the House Sparrows. Here are some things that I'm going to try:

- Change to feed without millet or cracked corn- instead switch to black oil sunflower thistle and safflower.



- Buy a Magic Halo for the feeder.

- Buy vertical feeders without perches; the man I spoke to at the Wild Bird General Store said these were the only thing to work for him.

If none of the above work, I'll remove the feeder.

One positive through this process is that I've discovered the helpful House Wren. Birder Diane Porter, in a 2005 article from Bird Watcher's Digest, writes, "Observers whose patience exceeds mine have counted over 1000 feedings to a house wren brood in one day." These feedings consist of aphids, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and moths. Since the Wren only needs a 1" diameter hole for its house, one doesn't have to worry about Sparrows invading, as they need at least a 1 and 1/8" hole.

As for an update on my square foot gardens, my veggies are growing and the sparrows and I are harvesting spinach. I now have a bobble head owl overseeing the squares, just until the peas grow larger and my spinach bolts!

If you have suggestions or stories, share them on my blog at [www.avenuehomesteader.blogspot.com](http://www.avenuehomesteader.blogspot.com)



**PETER GOLDRING**  
Member of Parliament  
Edmonton East

## Proud To Be Canadian - Not Only On Canada Day

As the Member of Parliament for Edmonton East it has been my privilege to represent Edmonton East and Canada on the community and international stage. Whether it has been serving as an election monitor in Georgia, Ukraine, Haiti or Guyana, representing Canada at international conferences in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, or Greenland, or travelling with Canadian veterans returning to battlefield memories in Europe and Asia, I have always had a sense of what it means to be Canadian and projected this internationally.

It was that sense that led me to Parliament in the first place. As a businessman I had only a passing interest in politics, however being in Quebec City for the October 1995 referendum that almost saw Quebec vote to leave Canada changed all that. What I saw disturbed me and caused me to dedicate my future to working for Canada and Canadian unity.

Following the Quebec Referendum I organized the Western Canada Branch of the Special Committee For Canadian Unity, starting on a journey that would see me getting involved in party politics, then as a politician taking the unity message to Quebec and standing up against the separatists on behalf of Canada.

Throughout my time in public office I have emphasized how privileged Canadians are to have the country we do and we shouldn't take our freedoms and democratic institutions for granted. I have been present in Edmonton as new citizens are sworn in as Canadians, and seen the joy as people from all over the world adopt Canada as their new home and say "I want to be a Canadian." Those newcomers to this country understand the value of Canadian citizenship.

For me Canada Day is something to be celebrated every day, not just on July 1<sup>st</sup>. What do you think?

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## GOT COMMUNITY NEWS?!



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## Bicycle Safety



health  
& wellness  
WITH JENNA HOFF

Summer is upon us, that wonderful time of year when the flowers are blooming and the days are filled with warm sunshine. What better time to dig through your garage or garden shed, and pull out your trusty bicycle?

Not only is cycling great fun, but it offers a myriad of health benefits, such as improving flexibility, balance, and strength, and has a positive impact on heart health, circulation, and lung functioning. It is also a fantastic source of aerobic exercise, which is an

essential component of a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Before you head off on your great bicycling adventure, there are a few important things that you should know about bicycle safety.

**Wear a Helmet:** Your brain is one of your most valuable resources, and yet countless people suffer severe (and sometimes lifelong) traumatic brain injuries as a consequence of not wearing a helmet. Bicycle crashes can happen at the most unexpected times - and to the most experienced of cyclists, and wearing a helmet can make the difference between walking away unscathed and taking an unwanted trip to the emergency

room, or worse. It is important that your helmet fit properly; it will do little good if you crash your bike, and your helmet falls off before your head hits the ground! To make sure your helmet fits, try the following tricks: put on your helmet, and then nod your head quickly. The helmet should fit snugly, without wobbling. Next, with the helmet on, try to wiggle your eyebrows up and down. If you cannot do so, then your helmet is likely too tight for your head.

**Tune up:** Before you head out, evaluate your bicycle to ensure that everything is working properly. Is the chain on snugly, or is it falling off? Do the brakes work well? Do all screws appear to be tight, or is anything wobbly and falling off? Taking

a few minutes to check these things can go a long way to preventing unnecessary injury.

### Carry water and use sunscreen:

As with any time that you are outdoors, it is important to be proactive to avoid dehydration and sun burns. Slap on some sunscreen, put on your shades, wear a cool hat, and don't forget to bring a water bottle!

### Make Safety a priority:

Following basic safety guidelines can go a long way to ensuring your fun bicycle ride doesn't turn into a nightmare. Always obey all road or trail signs, and be constantly alert to traffic or other cyclists. Carry a cell phone with you, so that you can call for help if needed. Use proper arm signals when turning, so as to alert drivers of your intent.

Never go too fast for conditions; use caution when riding on park trails where you could suddenly encounter loose dirt or tree stumps. As well, some people with certain medical conditions should not engage in this activity; see your physician to determine if this is a safe activity for you!



# Pets and Plants

The Gardening Diva (TGD) and the tres wonderful gardening diva husband (TWGDH) are the mostly-proud owners of the non-gardening dogs. Given that the past was all about pets, TGD thought she might take a few moments to talk about her experiences gardening with pets.

## Good Fences Make Good Neighbours

TGD is, shall we say, disheartened, when the non-gardening dogs pursue non-garden friendly, but all too canine, tendencies in her yard. She can remember the need for a soothing gin and tonic on her front porch after her dog and a neighbour dog played a game of tag in her newly planted herb garden. If you have no fence, you have nothing to blame but gross foolishness, except when it comes to cats.

## The Feline Conundrum

For many years, TGD and TWGDH were blessed with a demon in a cat suit. Said demon was particularly effective at discouraging feline sorts of visitors. With the demon's departure, it must be said that the present two furry cat-shaped slugs are not so good at this. Truly dear readers, it is hard to reconcile feline leavings among your tender cucumber plants. If the area can be planted with evergreen type shrubs, that may help. Gravel may help. Buy a package of plastic forks; implant them in your garden with the tines up. Additionally, while she has never tried it, TGD has looked with wonder at a motion sensitive sprinkler system from Lee Valley.

## When the Grass Really is Greener at the Neighbours

Why does your grass look so awful? Dear reader, you have



a dog; therefore you have a chemical called nitrogen. Nitrogen is present in lawn fertilizers, but it is extremely concentrated in dog urine. Effectively, urine burns grass. Truly dear reader, TGD solved this by pulling out her front lawn and replacing it with gravel. For those of you who do not have 200 plus pounds of non-gardening dogs to contend with, it may be possible to simply water urine spots well, to dilute the nitrogen. Alternatively, TGD has heard of people training their dogs to do their business in one area of the yard. TGD and TWGDH tried this, to no avail. It resulted in hurt looks from the non-gardening dogs and the need for another Gin and Tonic.

## Of the Eating of Garden Produce, There Shall be No End

Sooner or later a dear reader asks TGD what to do about the pet that eats things out of the garden. Questions like this tend to send TGD running to the porch for another Gin

and Tonic. Alas, she can relate the great seed potato incident of 2007, the summer squash incident of 2008 – wherein non-gardening dog the large ate first the fruit off the plant, and then the plant itself – the

great grass eating incidents each and every summer, the great rhubarb crushing of 2009. Ah, yes dear reader, TGD has heard it all. Plant extra.

*TGD lives and gardens in Parkdale, with the tres wonderful gardening diva husband and the non-gardening dogs. She loves her pests, but wishes that they could be a wee bit easier on the horticultural aspect of her life.*



**Spruce Avenue  
Community League wishes  
everyone a great summer!**

**Meetings: Second Monday of the month at 7pm**  
**Hall address: 10240 115 Avenue Hall phone: 471-1932**  
**League boundaries: 97 St to 106 St from 111 Ave to 118 Ave**

**[www.spruceavenuecommunityleague.blogspot.com](http://www.spruceavenuecommunityleague.blogspot.com)**

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## Large Item Clean Up – June 14 2009



Steven Mitchos

THANKS ONCE MORE TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS THAT HELPED OUT AT THIS YEAR'S LARGE ITEM CLEAN UP. OVER 200 LARGE ITEMS WERE COLLECTED FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTS AND TAKEN TO THE CITY'S BIG BIN EVENT HELD THAT WEEKEND AT NORTHLANDS.



Your community is calling!

### Active. Healthy. Living well.

Isn't this what we all want for ourselves and our families? Even so, it's sometimes hard to make healthy choices.

#### How can you get involved?

You can participate in a phone survey and measurement clinic that is happening in your community between March 23 and July 31, 2009.



### The steps

- 1 Pick up the phone when we call you
- 2 Answer questions about your health and well-being
- 3 Go to our measurement clinic
- 4 Enjoy your reward

#### Got questions?

Contact Healthy Alberta Communities at [www.healthyalbertacommunities.com/survey\\_info.cfm](http://www.healthyalbertacommunities.com/survey_info.cfm) or phone (780) 492-1586



Healthy Alberta Communities is a project of the Centre for Health Promotion Studies at the University of Alberta and is funded by Alberta Health and Wellness.

## Avenue Bowling fundraiser for Arts on the Ave



AARON VANIMERE FINISHES THE HIGHEST SCORING GAME OF THE NIGHT



TEAM SPIRIT ON DISPLAY AT AVENUE & ALLEYS

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## ART & THEATRE

### THE CARROT'S VISUAL ARTISTS COLLECTIVE

2nd Wednesday of the month at 7pm at The Carrot (9351 118 Ave). Drop in, have a coffee, discuss visual art related topics. For more info contact: Michael Germann, mikalow@shaw.ca, 780-909-7027, www.meetup.com/Carrot-visual-artists-collective

### FINE AND DESIGN ARTS MARKET

Every 4th Saturday of the month (July 25), 1pm-4pm at The Carrot (9351 118 Ave)

## MUSIC

### PIANO LESSONS

Holistic and enjoyable music learning. Qualified teacher in your neighbourhood. Book now for the times you want! Call Anna, BMus at 780-479-1330

### PIANO LESSONS IN YOUR HOME

All levels; children and adult students welcome. Please call Connie Collingwood ARCT at 780-490-1922. Must live within the Rat Creek Press boundaries.

### PIANO LESSONS FOR BEGINNERS

5 to 9 years. In my home using the John Thompson series only. A low rate at \$50 a month, includes books. Taking bookings now for September 2009 start. Excellent references available. Call Sharon Riley at 780-479-4054 between 1pm-4pm or evenings.

### KEYNOTE MUSIC

Learn to play guitar, bass, piano. Over 10 years teaching experience. Call Reg Taylor at 780-915-1241.

## DROP-IN GROUPS & PROGRAMS

### SENIORS DROP-IN

Thursdays, from 12pm to 2pm at the Alberta Ave Community League (9210 118 Ave) Come visit with other neighbourhood seniors, play shuffleboard or have a game of cards and enjoy lunch together. Then peruse the farmers' market when it opens at 2pm.

### STRETCH, DANCE & QIJONG

Summer combo workout stretching, dance & Qijong. 5 weeks. Call Astrid for details 477-0683.

### CARROT WRITERS' GROUP

Every Tuesdays at 7pm-9pm at The Carrot Community Arts Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Join us or call Irene at 780-471-1580.

### MOMS & TOTS

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30am-12:45pm at at Crystal Kids Youth Centre (8718 118 Ave).

### SENIORS DROP-IN

Wednesdays from 11:30am-12:45pm at Crystal Kids Youth Centre (8718 118 Ave).

### STITCH AND CHAT

Wednesdays, 7pm at The Carrot Community Arts CoffeeHouse (9351 118 Ave) Meet other fibre artists from the neighbourhood. Knit, crochet, cross-stitch, sew.

### BABES IN ARMS

Fridays, 10am to 12pm at The Carrot Community Arts CoffeeHouse (9351 118 Ave). Come and connect with other parents in the community. Call The Carrot at 780-471-1580 for more info.

### SALVATION ARMY

Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (EC3), 2nd floor, 11726 95 St, Ph 780-474-4324. Summer drop-in hours: Monday through Thursday 10am - 4pm.

### ST. FAITH'S

Community Collective Kitchen meets at St. Faith's Church on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. There is currently space. If you are interested, please call 780-477-5931.

### CRYSTAL KIDS YOUTH CENTRE

8718 118 Ave, Ph 780-479-5283 Youth program (ages 6-17): Mon to Thur 12pm-8pm, Fri 3pm-10pm, and Sat 1-5pm. The drop-in is closed July 6-10, Aug 21-23 and Aug 25-27.

## ENTERTAINMENT

### MONSTER PRO WRESTLING

Live event July 11 2009 doors open @ 6, bell 7:30 at Alberta Ave Community Center 9210 118 Ave tickets \$15 in advance \$20 at door for group rates call 780-233-6543

### THE CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEEHOUSE

9351 - 118 Avenue FRIDAYS: Live music,

7:30pm-9:30pm

\$5 cover charge

July 03 Amira Kanji

July 10 Carla Rugg

July 17 Will Cramer/Bullies

**SATURDAYS:** Open mic

7:30pm-9:30pm

Music, spoken word, comedy

## SPORTS & REC

### DROP-IN FAMILY SPORTS NIGHT

Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the Alberta Avenue field (119 Ave & 92 St) starting July 7. This is a family activity - parents are expected to stay and encouraged to participate. Children of all ages are welcome. We will be playing soccer or baseball.

### GREEN SHACK PROGRAM AT YOUR LOCAL PARK

Monday to Thursdays from 10am to 5:30pm and Friday from 1:30 to 5:30pm. Free drop-in for children age 6 to 12. Programs are still offered on rainy days and closed for a lunch break daily (check with playground leader). Stop by for exciting games, sports, crafts, music, drama and special events. The leader will ensure participants play safely but parents are responsible for their children at all times and must be available in the event of an emergency. Children under the age of 6 must be supervised by their parent or guardian at all times. Leaders are easily identifiable by their blue shirts and name tags. Leaders are required to pass a security clearance, be trained in First Aid and are certified specialists in FUN!

### FREE SWIM FOR ALBERTA AVE COMMUNITY LEAGUE MEMBERS

**INDOOR:** Sundays from 12pm to 2pm at Eastglen Pool (11410 68 Street). Call 780-496-7384 for full pool schedule or go to www.edmonton.ca and search Eastglen pool.

**OUTDOOR:** This summer show your 2008-09 league membership card and get free swimming at Borden Park & Oliver Pools on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 5pm to 7pm and Mill Creek Pool from 7:30pm to 9pm everyday of the week.

## VOLUNTEER

### VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Do you know what a Volunteer Driver is? It's a community member who can spare 3-4 hours once a month to drive a senior to appointments, banking and shopping. Gas reimbursed. Call Bev at 780-732-1221.

### NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Do you love art and people? Then the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts can use you! Come volunteer and show off your talents and passion. www.ninahaggertyart.ca or 780-474-7611

### THE CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEEHOUSE

Learn how to make lattes and other coffees, then hang out at a cool coffee shop for 3 or 4 hours and visit with the interesting people who stop in. Stop in at 9351 118 Ave, call 780-471-1580 or visit www.thecarrot.ca.

## NOTICES & UPCOMING EVENTS

### GOT TOO MANY APPLES?

Do you have an apple tree? Do you get more apples than you know what to do with? We can help you put those apples to good use. Call Joy at 471-1699.

### CRUD COMMUNITY WALKING GROUP

Meet Saturdays at 9am at Alberta Avenue hall parking lot (9210 118 Avenue). Walking is good for your health and good for your community. Create community safety with eyes on the street and get fit too! Contact CRUD at info@crudedmonton.org.

### CRUD COMMUNITY DOG-WALKING GROUP

Meet Mondays 6:30pm at St Alphonsus church (11828 85 St) or 6:45pm at The Carrot (9351 118 Ave), or 7:30pm at Nova Plaza (118 Ave and 89 St). Create community safety with eyes on the street by joining with other residents to take back the Avenue and keep your dog fit too! Contact CRUD at info@crudedmonton.org.

### CRUD FAMILY PARK CRAWL

Meet Sundays at 3pm - check www.crudedmonton.org for place to meet - park changes every

week! Join with communities families to use our parks for what they are designed for - play! Contact CRUD at info@crudedmonton.org.

### EATING MADE EASY: HEALTHY EATING FOR A HEALTHY YOU

Edmonton Meals on Wheels (11111 103 Ave) First Tuesday of the month from Noon to 12:45pm Monthly discussions about healthy eating with a registered dietician. First Tuesday of the month from Noon to 12:45pm July 7: Food - It's so Expensive! Yes, you can eat well on a budget & it's not hard! August 4: Living Alone? Find ways to bring the excitement back to cooking! Bring your own lunch or enjoy the meal of the day for only \$2.25. To register, or for more information, please call 780 429-2020

### CARROT GIFT CERTIFICATES

Buy your friends an original gift... Carrot gift certificates available at the Carrot and Tickets to Friday Night For Two at the Carrot Gift certificates for our evening performance.

## CHURCH SERVICES

### ST. ALPHONSUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

11828 - 85 St. 780-474-5434. Mass every Sunday at 10 a.m. Saturday mass at 4 p.m. Morning mass from Tuesday to Friday at 7:30 a.m.

### AVENUE VINEYARD

8718 118 Ave (Crystal Kids) Sundays, 10:30 am www.avenuevineyard.com

### ST ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN

8715 118 Ave, Ph 780-477-8677 Regular service, Sundays, 11 am

### SALVATION ARMY

Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (EC3) 2nd floor, 11726 95 St, Ph 780-474-4324 Sunday 3:00 pm and Wednesday 7:00 pm

### ST FAITH'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11725 - 93 St, 780 477-5931 Sundays 11 am Holy Communion & Christian Education for children



Edmonton Public Library

**SPRUCEWOOD BRANCH 11555 - 95 Street Call 780-496-7099 to register Go to www.epl.ca for more program details**

## Children & Teens

### Kaybridge Puppets Presents 'Max's Amazing Mysteries!'

2 p.m. Saturday, July 11, 2009 Ages: 6 - 12 years Oh no! Things are disappearing! There's lots of craziness and adventure when Detective Max and his friends are called in to uncover these strange mysteries.

### Edmonton Police Service K9 Unit

2 p.m. Monday, July 13, 2009 Ages: 5 - 12 years Some crime fighters have four legs. They are covered with fur and have a great sense of smell. These are the

dogs of the Edmonton Police Service K9 Unit. One dog and a handler will be coming to a library near you!

### Astum: Come, Let's Share the Beauty of Aboriginal Culture

2 p.m. Friday, July 17, 2009 Ages: Everyone Hear the mystical sounds of the Native Flute. See the colors and symbols of the Powwow Celebration. Feel the heartbeat that connects us all by becoming a part of the stories from the Sacred Circle of Life. Presenter Amanda Woodward is sharing the pride of her heritage.

### Marty Chan's Code Breaker Club

2 p.m. Thursday, July 23, 2009 Ages: 10 - 14 years Become a secret agent for a day. Kids will learn how to crack codes so they can solve a mysterious tangram message left by a missing agent. The only way to save the agent is to decode the message, but time is running out. Filled with puzzles, codes and stories, this session has a license to thrill.

Marty Chan is a young adult author and playwright. His novel, *The Mystery of the Graffiti Ghoul*, was the 2007 choice for Kids Read Edmonton. His most recent book is *True Story* with illustrations by Lorna Bennett.

He is planning to write a novel about the Code Breakers Club. One lucky "agent" may become a character in his new book.

### Claymation Workshop

2 p.m. Saturdays, July 25 to August 15, 2009 Ages: 8 - 14 years This workshop will introduce you to the basics of animating with clay. Create a character and make it come alive with stop-motion animation. Use basic material that you may already have at home. Participants are expected to come for each week of the session they register for.

### Teen Gaming

6:30 p.m. Fridays, July 3 to December 18, 2009 Ages: 12 - 17 years Come to the library to play some great games!

### English Conversation Circle (LACE Program)

10:30 a.m. Saturdays, June 13 to August 15, 2009 Free of Charge, Drop-In. Practice your English at the library. Drop in and join others who also want to speak in English. English Conversation Circle is part of Catholic Social Services' Learning and Community Enrichment (LACE) program. For more information contact Biviana from Catholic Social Services at 780-424-3545.

## Proud to Live In Ward 3



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## Hello Highlands-Norwood!

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**Saturday July 25th**

**10am-Noon**

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