



RAT CREEK PRESS

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Blanket exercise teaches Canada's history

Many people grew up in ignorance of our dark settlement past



Knowledge keeper Jessica Saker, second from the left, was part of the blanket exercise on Jan. 28. | Aydan Dunnigan-Vickruck

PATRICIA DUNNIGAN

A blanket represents comfort, safety, and security. How brilliant then, that Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, and educators chose it as a symbol of the land when they developed the blanket exercise workshop to teach Canada's settlement history.

On Jan. 28, the RCP board hosted the workshop, followed by a traditional feast, at Eastwood Hall. Our policy manual states that all programs will be developed in keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation action plans. The blanket exercise was chosen as a leadership development initiative to help achieve this goal.

The paper's distribution area in seven inner-city communities is home to one of the province's highest urban Indigenous populations. Board members chose this interactive historical workshop to help staff and writers to better reflect our

population in the stories we tell, and to advance reconciliation in our communities.

The workshop covered more than 500 years in 90 minutes and aimed to foster understanding about our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Participants came into the circle holding a blanket they brought to represent the land. The facilitator instructed everyone to spread them side-by-side on the floor in the centre.

Métis facilitators, led by Lori Calkins, guided the process and assumed the role of European explorers and settlers. Cree knowledge keepers, Jennifer Saker and Doreen Wabasca, received the protocol bundle and opened the circle with prayer and a smudge, using tobacco and white sage. Their role was to acknowledge the sacredness of the learning circle through prayer, smudging, and offering silent support to power and intensify the

experience.

Participants walked on a blanket and into the role of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. By reading scrolls and carrying cards that determined our outcome, participants walked through situations that included pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization, and resistance.

The exercise concluded with a talking circle and our group was encouraged to share from a feeling and knowledge perspective. Many people talked about the ignorance they had grown up with.

"I believed everything I was taught in school about my history, but none of what I learned today was ever on the curriculum," said Muriel Wright, RCP board member.

Theresa Nielsen, a participant, said her family lived close by a reserve and she had no idea of the history or that children were being taken from their homes and placed into residential schools. "It's over-

whelming to think I spent my entire life within a few miles of a place where this outrage was happening and was oblivious to the reality."

Calkins said, "When people ask, 'Why can't they just get over it?' the answer is they can't because it's still happening. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Women and Girls is now exposing another horrendous reality. The colonial principles are woven into the Indian Act; we face systemic barriers everyday. Reconciliation is a long and painful process. We don't have to leave here today carrying a burden of guilt that isn't ours. What we do need is to address racism when it surfaces in our families, communities, and institutions."

Patricia is an avid reader who developed a love of writing over her career as an educator and consultant. She published an illustrated memoir, *Twisted Sisters: Synchronicity and Intuition in June, 2018.*

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Neighbours getting to know neighbours

Speed Neighbouring at Eastwood Hall helps build community

KATE WILSON

Two relative strangers sitting at a table over refreshments can typically go no further than small talk, perhaps some light gossip. Not so at the Speed Neighbouring event in Eastwood last month on Feb. 13.

One to two minutes in, and participants were sharing aspects of their lives, their aspirations, and what's meaningful to them.

"I definitely heard a lot of laughs around the tables, and witnessed complete strangers sharing life stories. It was awesome," says Lenn Wheatley, Eastwood Community League president.

Wheatley says he had been thinking about the importance of relationships in a community, and how the community league could help foster mean-

ingful connections.

"Community events are meant to connect neighbours together, not just collect people together into the same space to watch a performance, whatever that may be," he explains.

After Wheatley graduated from university and left behind the sense of community there, he found fewer occasions to meet people. At a local event such as a band or play, the cultural boost is always good, he says, but the chance to find new acquaintances or possible friendship is lacking.

"There are not always opportunities at different kinds of social events, other than a brief nod, smile or handshake," he explains.

So he wanted to "flip that idea on its head."

"I thought of this event . . . to speak to a missing piece that can be present at a community festival or happening; literally

meeting other human beings and starting new relationships with fellow neighbours."

At Eastwood's Speed Neighbouring ice-breaker, participants sat at a table with one or two others. Some were acquainted, while others had never met before. They had three to five minutes to pick out and answer pre-prepared questions, in categories that included "my favourite things" and "going deeper."

Very quickly, the 'speed dating' style lead to genuine conversations.

Rahul Sharma, who was invited by Wheatley to help with the event, was glad he came.

"I got something out of it. It gave me food for thought," says Sharma. "I'd come again."

Kim McCall, also invited to help out, was thrilled she not only met some of her neighbours, but also got invited to be

part of the garden committee.

"I'm elated. So excited," she says of her new volunteer opportunity. "And I got into some conversations with people I don't think I would have met."

The free family event was a success to build on, says Wheatley.

"Everybody who came met at least three new people, and throughout the night, there were 25 table conversations between neighbours," he explains.

As a bonus, participants who learned more about each other also happen to be neighbours. So it was also building community.

"Speed Neighbouring connects neighbours together, and this is really at the core of why the Eastwood Community Centre exists," says Wheatley.

Eastwood Community League is planning future

neighbour-meet-neighbour events, such as coffeehouse concert nights and summertime block parties.

Stay tuned for future Speed Neighbouring events at eastwoodcommunity.org.

Kate took up the reporter's pad and pen while living in northern Alberta. The writing bug stuck, and the next 20 years were spent covering everything from local politics to community happenings. She lives in Alberta Avenue with her daughter.

EASTWOOD COMMUNITY HALL

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780.477.2354
info@eastwoodhub.org



Eastwood resident Tom Bagoole (left) shares some thoughts with Katherine Jones (right) while Kim McCall (middle) looks on. | Kate Wilson

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ABOUT US

We are a non-profit community newspaper serving Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue, and Westwood. Published on Treaty 6 Territory. The opinions expressed in the paper are those of the people named as authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect those of the board or staff.

GOALS

Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

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Our writers vary from trained journalists to community residents with varying backgrounds. We strive to be a place where individuals can learn new skills and acquire experience—whether in writing, editing, photography, or illustration. We welcome letters, unsolicited submissions, and story ideas.

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CIRCULATION

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DELIVERY

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RATCREEK.ORG

I love my RCP

Celebrating winter with a Danish concept

Parkdale Cromdale League invites people to enjoy community

TALEA MEDYNSKI

In February, Edmontonians experienced a cold snap, with frigid temperatures and the accompanying windchill leading many people to stay indoors. Well, except for a few hardy souls who ventured outdoors for Parkdale Cromdale Community League's Hygge 101 event on Feb. 1.

Organizer Sarah De Lano explains, "[The event] was just something we came up with to get out of winter. I happened across a book about hygge. It's how to be in community, be unplugged, be connected to nature. Enjoy all that it is to live in a nordic area and celebrate our northern identity."

De Lano says the event was

a very loose interpretation of hygge. This Danish concept is all about being cozy, content, and fostering a sense of well-being. This idea is perfect for winter, so I was intrigued and decided to attend.

I skipped the walk through Kinnaird Ravine, although a brisk winter walk is part of hygge. When I arrived at the hall, the small lounge was set up with electric fireplaces, lights, board games, and colouring supplies. There was even live music, a welcome addition.

Better yet, there were snacks: mulled wine (warm wine with spices and oranges), porridge with assorted toppings, and elderberry juice. I took some mulled wine and porridge and settled in to visit and colour my spring-themed rabbit picture.

As De Lano says, hygge is about "[being] in the moment and enjoying the company you're with. It's like hibernating, but you've got other people in the den."

There was no specific format or activities people were expected to do. In fact, attendees mostly socialized.

"I wasn't sure what to expect, but it felt very relaxed and warm, with a nice group of people. I've never been in charge of an event and felt so relaxed. Nobody seemed to be in a rush to get out of there," says De Lano.

Even though I didn't know many people there, everyone was welcome and it was a welcoming atmosphere. When I returned home, I even set up a cozy corner of the living room, complete with lights, an arm-

chair, blankets, and access to books.

Edmonton is a northern city, so we're pros at keeping ourselves busy during the winter with local festivals, winter sports, and socializing. But winter can also be isolating. People tend to stay indoors, away from the cold and from each other. Cabin fever can set in. It can be depressing when it's cold and dark for so long, so it really is important to do things that make you feel good.

Parkdale Cromdale Community League is holding two more hygge events on March 1 and March 29. These days will have the same sorts of activities, but with a bonus.

"We may make some bird feeders and hang them in Kinnaird Ravine," says De

Lano.

March 1 will likely be when participants make bird feeders, and March 29 is when participants will hang them in the ravine.

Skating on Sheriff Robertson pond may be another possibility on both days, so be sure to bring your skates as well as a thermos of tea, coffee, or hot chocolate for walking in the ravine.

"Overall, we're repeating the same idea of getting into the forest and coming back and warming up," says De Lano.

Visit parkdalecromdale.org for more information.

Talea is the Rat Creek Press editor. She loves sharing the stories of our diverse neighbourhoods.



Parkdale Cromdale's Hygge 101 featured an evening of colouring, board games, socializing, porridge, and mulled wine. | Talea Medynski

Seeking ideas for McCauley development

Non-profit organization is consulting local residents for Paskin Site

KAREN GINGRAS

As part of the city's commitment to end poverty in Edmonton, it has provided a series of lots along 95 Street near 106 Avenue (the Paskin Site) to the Edmonton Community Development Company (CDC), a non-profit organization.

The Edmonton CDC seeks development ideas from com-

munity members before building. While we heard that McCauley has "been consulted to death", we want to stay true to our principle of community engagement and deliver results aligned with community needs and priorities.

With that principle in mind, we recruited a few residents and business people in McCauley to join the McCauley concept development team. Over the

next couple of months, the team will create three to four sketches that the Edmonton CDC will present to local residents and business people for their feedback. Based on what the team learns through this process, a final concept will be created and shared with the community in June or July 2019 to gauge support for the design. Pros and cons of each sketch will be included.

Presuming the concept is finalized in July, the next steps may include a rezoning application, development permit, and building permit applications. Concurrently, the Edmonton CDC will be seeking financing for the development. We will keep you posted as the creative minds of the McCauley concept development team generate ideas about what to build on these empty lots.

Stay informed by visiting our website at www.Edmontoncdc.org.

Karen is the Director of Neighbourhood Development for the Edmonton Community Development Company and can be emailed at kgingras@edmontoncdc.org.

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Award-winning performer returns to her roots

Rethinking deeply held beliefs about the ideas of love

PATRICIA DUNNIGAN

She's back and she's hot!

Sara Vickruck returns to her roots with her collaborator Anais West in the SkirtsAfire headliner *Poly Queer Love Ballad* (PQLB), a slam poetry musical.

Vickruck, a graduate of the Victoria School for Performing and Visual Arts and MacEwan University's musical theatre program, is now a Vancouver resident and proud queer artist. In PQLB, the duo merge pop folk songs and spoken word in what one reviewer calls "a funny, intelligent and sexy" new musical.

Billed as a new take on the romantic comedy, PQLB is a girl-meets-girl love story with a twist—one of them is polyamorous (being in multiple, committed relationships).

According to Wikipedia, "Polyamory is the practice of, or desire for, intimate relationships with more than one partner, with the consent of all partners involved."

"After I moved to Vancouver and 'came out' as queer," says Vickruck over a vermicelli bowl at neighbourhood restaurant Pho King, "I became aware of a relationship style, polyamory, that was accepted and widely practiced in the queer community."

She continues, "This contradicted the norms I grew up with in Alberta. Monogamy was the only way of publicly living your intimate relationships. This norm was compounded by the influence of the Evangelical Christian church I belonged

to. Anything else was taboo and considered sinful. This new scene caused me to question my deeply held beliefs." When Vickruck met theatre artist Anais West, they were

inspired by this idea and by their own experiences in queer relationships. "In the process of writing non-monogamous love songs," Vickruck reflects, "I had to confront my own prejudices."

The result of this collaboration has been a stunning achievement. According to critics, *Poly Queer Love Ballad* might have been mired in its own gravitas, but, "through sharp and funny writing seamlessly integrated with tuneful songs, PQLB paints a compelling and convincing portrait of a couple attempting to live beyond conventional boundaries."

The storyline follows Nina, a bisexual polyamorous poet and Gabbie, a monogamous lesbian songwriter as they meet and fall madly in love. Then, as the first

blush starts to fade, they struggle with the tensions caused by their different perspectives on sex. It could be argued that the 80-minute piece has universal appeal: whether the issue is sex, religion, money, or power, there is no long-term intimate relationship without core differences that need navigating from time to time.

Polyamory has its own terminology. A cheat sheet is handed out before the play to help explain some of the unfamiliar jargon. By wandering into unknown territory, the dynamic combination of pop folk songs and slam poems caught the attention of audiences and critics alike.

Poly Queer Love Ballad won the Georgia Straight Critics' Choice Award and the Playwright Theatre Centre's New Play Prize at the 2018 Vancouver Fringe Festival. For more information, go to skirtsafire.com and polyqueerloveballad.com.

Patricia is an avid reader who developed a love of writing over her career as an educator and consultant. She published an illustrated memoir, *Twisted Sisters: Synchronicity and Intuition in June, 2018*.



Poly Queer Love Ballad explores polyamorous love. | Emily Cooper

to. Anything else was taboo and considered sinful. This new scene caused me to question my deeply held beliefs."

But despite polyamory being practiced in LBGTQ commu-

nicities, few theatre companies in Vancouver were producing plays about it, especially in the genre of musical theatre. Author Jacob Wren speculated that, "love songs are the propaganda for monogamy. Because we form our ideas about love from

listening to pop music, writing polyamorous love songs might change the way we understand love."

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5:00pm - 7:00pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

SHORT FILM: SHE SPEAKS
6:30pm - 7:30pm
CABARET THEATRE FRONT LOUNGE

A-LINE VARIETY SHOW 1
7:30pm - 9:45pm
CABARET THEATRE

FRIDAY MARCH 8

COEUR DE PIRATE LIVE AT THE WINSPEAR
8:00pm
WINSPEAR CENTRE

SATURDAY MARCH 9

THE KEY OF SHE AT THE NOOK
12:00pm - 2:00pm
THE NOOK CAFE

PEEP SHOW! fawn BY ASHLEIGH HICKS
3:00pm - 5:00pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

THE KEY OF SHE AT OTTO
5:30pm - 6:30pm
OTTO FOOD AND DRINK

STATUE & DEEP FRIED CURRIED PEROGIES
7:30pm - 9:45pm
CABARET THEATRE

SUNDAY MARCH 10

DEEP FRIED CURRIED PEROGIES & STATUE
1:30pm - 3:45pm
CABARET THEATRE

TUESDAY MARCH 12

DEEP FRIED CURRIED PEROGIES
7:30pm - 8:45pm
CABARET THEATRE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 13

POLY QUEER LOVE BALLAD & STATUE
7:30pm - 9:45pm
CABARET THEATRE

THURSDAY MARCH 14

THE KEY OF SHE AT OTTO
5:30pm - 6:30pm
OTTO FOOD AND DRINK

WORDS UNZIPPED
7:00pm - 8:30pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

SHORT FILM: SHE SPEAKS
8:00pm - 9:00pm
CABARET THEATRE FRONT LOUNGE

DEEP FRIED CURRIED PEROGIES
9:00pm - 10:15pm
CABARET THEATRE

FRIDAY MARCH 15

THE KEY OF SHE AT OTTO
5:30pm - 6:30pm
OTTO FOOD AND DRINK

SHORT FILM: SHE SPEAKS
6:30pm - 7:30pm
CABARET THEATRE FRONT LOUNGE

A-LINE VARIETY SHOW 2
7:30pm - 10:00pm
CABARET THEATRE

SATURDAY MARCH 16

YOGA IN THE ART
9:45am - 12:30pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

BELLYDANCING WORKSHOP
11:00am - 11:50am
BEDOUIN BEATS

THE KEY OF SHE AT THE CARROT
1:00pm - 3:00pm
THE CARROT

A PLACE FOR PROSE
2:00pm - 4:00pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

SKIRT DESIGN GALLERY (OPEN FOR VIEWING)
3:00pm - 5:00pm
CABARET THEATRE

PEEP SHOW! BALETI BY LEBOGANG DISELE
4:30pm - 5:45pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

THE KEY OF SHE AT OTTO
5:30pm - 6:30pm
OTTO FOOD AND DRINK

SHORT FILM: SHE SPEAKS
6:00pm - 7:00pm
CABARET THEATRE FRONT LOUNGE

DEEP FRIED CURRIED PEROGIES
7:00pm - 8:15pm
CABARET THEATRE

WOMEN'S CHOIR FESTIVAL
8:30pm - 9:45pm
ST. FAITH'S CHURCH

POLY QUEER LOVE BALLAD
8:30pm - 9:50pm
CABARET THEATRE

LATE NIGHT DANCE PARTY
10:00pm - 2:00am
CABARET THEATRE

SUNDAY MARCH 17

THE KEY OF SHE AT THE CARROT
12:00pm - 2:00pm
THE CARROT

POLY QUEER LOVE BALLAD
1:30pm - 2:50pm
CABARET THEATRE

THAT'S A THING?! LIVE PODCAST RECORDING
3:00pm - 4:00pm
NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY

VENUE INFORMATION

NINA HAGGERTY GALLERY
9225-118 Avenue
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CABARET THEATRE
Alberta Avenue Community League
9210-118 Avenue
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THE CARROT
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Escape winter weather with Cuban food

La Bodeguita de Cuba serves satisfying fare



STEPHEN STRAND

In the middle of an Edmonton winter, the desire to escape to warmer climates is contagious, but it's not always possible. So, other forms of escape are sought, even if it's just going out for dinner and drinks.

Walking into La Bodeguita de Cuba is an escape enough. Its light blue walls brighten the room, and the smell of food entices patrons to forget their problems. A Cuban flag is on the wall opposite the entrance, hanging behind a set of bongos and a guitar. On the walls are photos of Cuba, and Latin music videos play on the television.

A small bar in the alcove to the right of the entrance has

stools where people may wish to sit and drink. But with the smell of the food, how could you pass up sitting down at a table and partaking in a full meal?

My dinner partner and I started by ordering a few drinks. One was a Cuba libre (\$6.50), a cocktail made with lime juice, coke, and one ounce of Cuban rum. The Cuban mojito (\$6.50) was made with mint, lime juice, and an ounce of Cuban rum. The fresh mint at the bottom of the glass added a refreshing touch. My dinner partner also ordered a pineapple juice (\$3.75) to go with dinner.

For dinner, I ordered the fricasé de pollo (\$17.50). It was a quarter chicken, marinated with garlic gloves, onion, and bell peppers. It came with white rice, beans, and sweet plantains. The

chicken was cooked perfectly and was moist and lightly flavoured. It fell off the bone easily, which led to it being eaten by hand. The onions and bell peppers that topped the chicken tasted precisely how marinated onions and peppers should taste, which is flavourful without drawing much attention. The sweet plantains were fried, crispy on the outside, but soft and sweet on the inside. The plain white rice came in a dome-shaped portion, and tasted as you would expect. The beans, which were a little soupy and required a spoon to eat, had a nice flavour.

My dinner partner ordered the lechon asado (\$22), a slow roasted pork leg with Cuban mojo, moro rice, boiled yuca, and a side of salad. The Cuban

mojo had an ample amount of garlic, citrus, and oil marinade that infused itself into the meat. The roasted pork leg was served pulled apart and, like the chicken, was tender and moist. The mojo was the driving flavour of the pork, and each bite was satisfyingly delicious. The moro rice, a common Cuban dish, consisted of a black bean and rice medley and a surprisingly rich flavour. Between the two rice and bean dishes, this was my favourite. The boiled yuca was soft and tasty, and not overly starchy. The salad was a simple serving of tomatoes and cucumber.

The food was flavourful, the staff was friendly, and the atmosphere was pleasant. On top of that, the drinks and the Latin music helped us briefly forget

the freezing temperatures outside. I will eat here again.

Four out of five forks.

Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.

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 Sat: 6 pm-11 pm
 Sun: 11:30 am-8 pm
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From left to right: the Cuban mojito, Cuban libre, and pineapple juice are some of the drinks available. | Stephen Strand



The fricasé de pollo was a delicious chicken dish from La Bodeguita de Cuba. | Stephen Strand

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OPINION

Feminism 101: examining the concept

Considering the different experiences of different women

FRANKI HARROGATE

March 8 is International Women's Day, which generally brings a sharper focus on the global push for equality, as well as a focus on feminism.

But what does feminism mean? The idea of what constitutes feminism and what that means in the context of dismantling inequality is often either over-simplified or overlooked. Intertwined with the issue is the men's rights movement, which is, for the most part, extremely misogynistic and not actually supportive of men.

At its heart, feminism is founded in the equal treatment of all people, with a specific focus on the many ways women have historically been barred from accessing positions of power. However, this definition is incomplete because it fails to take into account the different experiences of different women, and the ways that many face multiple barriers at once. One example is the differences within the gender wage gap. This term refers to the

gap in pay between men and women in a given profession, who are doing the same jobs at the same levels of responsibility and with the same experience. According to the August 2018 fact sheet released by the Canadian Women's Foundation, women as a group generally make \$0.68 - \$0.87/hour for every dollar a man makes. Indigenous women make \$0.65/hour; racialized women (i.e., black women and women of colour) make \$0.67/hour; newcomer women make \$0.71; and disabled women make \$0.54/hour.

The different ways that multiple barriers impact people is the concept of intersectionality, a term coined in 1989 by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality centres on the multiple lived experiences of people, focusing primarily on the most marginalized. Some view intersectional perspectives as "identity politics", but since who we are is part of how we interact with the world and how the world responds, how we identify is important. How many news articles have you

read about access to abortion that quote at least two men (usually doctors or politicians), and one or two white women (one of whom is usually anti-choice)? The voices of those most impacted by issues of access, e.g., trans men and/or residents of rural or remote communities, are almost never included.

Intersectional feminism also looks at how everyone, including men, is harmed by toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity is the dominant societal perspective of what it means to be a man, based on certain traits: e.g., lack of emotion, strength, authority, muscular build. But when we take these traits in moderation, there's nothing inherently masculine about them. Society simply labels these traits masculine because they're considered desirable. However, these positive traits get pushed to extremes in an effort to define oneself as more masculine, and thus more deserving of respect. Significantly, toxic masculinity consistently requires that women be seen as lesser-than-

there is no greater insult among men, in general, than to be compared to a woman because this perspective requires women to be seen as inferior.

Toxic masculinity, and by extension, men's rights activists (MRAs), view power in our society as a zero-sum game. For someone to be powerful, another must be powerless. MRAs claim that feminism's push for equality is harmful to men, demonstrating the fallacy of their arguments. MRAs claim that women aren't oppressed and that women gain power through "gate-keeping" sex. This is yet more toxic masculinity: the idea that women's value is solely predicated upon their sexual appeal to men.

We must recognize that men, specifically cisgendered (someone whose identity and gender aligns with the gender they were born with), heterosexual, able-bodied white men, currently occupy an unfairly privileged position. In a nutshell: your life as a cishet (heterosexual and cisgender) able-bodied white man may be difficult; but being cishet, able-bodied, and

white will never be the things making it difficult.

When MRAs rail at the unfairness of things like child custody arrangements or lack of supports for men, they are railing against the same systemic barriers that feminists seek to dismantle. The difference is that feminism recognizes how systemic issues are continued and perpetrated by patriarchy and ongoing inequality. One way to move things forward is to seek out role models of positive masculinity, like LeVar Burton, Mr. Rogers, Terry Crews, or Bob Ross.

Look at your beliefs around gender roles: are you stuck in some patterns? What would you like to see or do instead?

Franki is an active volunteer and has recently completed a masters degree in counselling psychology. They and their partner live in Eastwood, which is a great place to raise two small humans.



Identity is important because it's how we interact with the world and how the world responds to us. | Pixabay

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OPINION

What safety means for different people

Continuing the conversation about safe spaces

FRANKI HARROGATE

What does the word “safety” evoke for you? Some universal elements might be: warm, inviting—a space to come in from the cold, where faces are friendly or at least unthreatening. At its heart, though, safety is about a lack of danger: a place where someone can let down their guard or tend to their needs. Sometimes, safety of that kind can mean that other people in the same space, at the same time, might offer a decreased likelihood of danger or injury.

Last month, RCP published an article about the loss of the local 7-Eleven. Its closure has resulted in a loss of safe space for many of the most vulnerable people in our area. It used to have an outdoor payphone, free air for tires, and accessible washrooms (for customers, at least). It also provided a lighted, public space that generally contained one or more potential witnesses, in case someone feared for their safety while out and about. While our community still has Sprucewood Library, it's not the same because it's not open at all hours.

That said, a sense of safety is highly subjective, and what may

be safe for one person—interacting with police, for example—may feel threatening to someone else. PressProgress, The Institute for the Advancement

poverty is a personal failing, rather than the result of systemic barriers or significant gaps in service. Internalizing such views results in fear not only of pov-



Safe spaces should be accessible to everyone. | Pixabay

of Aboriginal Women, and Black Lives Matter Edmonton released a report last year showing that police disproportionately stop and investigate Indigenous women and young black men, a practice known as “carding.”

The perception of sanctuary or refuge varies greatly depending on our position in society. For someone who doesn't routinely encounter people living or working on the street, walking into the 7-Eleven may have been intimidating. It's important to note, however, that this is an issue of perception, not an actual lack of safety. As a society, we are generally taught that

erty, but of poor people themselves. Encountering homeless people, sex workers, and/or panhandlers may push people out of their comfort zones, but carries little to no risk.

People who are homeless, particularly if mental health issues are a factor, are actually more likely to be the victims of violence than to engage in violence themselves. Which brings us again to safe spaces, and what it means to have access to such places.

Do communities have a responsibility to provide universally accessible safe spaces in the absence of other alternatives? If so, what should such spaces

look like, and who (if anyone) should be given priority access?

Perhaps those most in need of safety should be given priority in designing such spaces. If city council were to fund working groups of unhoused/financially insecure people from each community in order to develop plans for safe spaces (including affordable community housing), communities could better meet the needs of residents. Each community could develop their spaces based on specific criteria while supporting cultural connection and increasing community engagement overall.

Such safe spaces would be universally accessible: not just for mobility, but including access to translators (including various dialects of sign language), unconditional acceptance, free food, places to nap, secular, play spaces for children, and wrap-around, comprehensive support services. It could also offer community engagement opportunities, as the flip side of needing a safe space becomes providing the safe space. Trauma-informed, culturally proficient program managers could work with community members to set out how to both create and maintain such safe spaces as

part of a general harm reduction strategy as well as supporting transitions to housing.

During the recent deep freeze in Edmonton, city council initially issued no directive to open the LRT stations to lessen the chances of anyone dying from exposure. While Edmonton has a number of shelter beds, organizational policies can create barriers: people barred due to intoxication; people experiencing harm from workers or other shelter residents; and the required separation from pets or loved ones. Social workers in our libraries are not a substitute for comprehensive, non-means-tested (universal and freely provided services), wrap-around services, particularly given our current system of patchwork agencies.

Safe spaces are far more difficult to find for Edmonton's most vulnerable—the people who need them the most. Building community includes understanding who in our community is in need, and using our means to provide supports.

Franki is an active volunteer and has recently completed a masters degree in counselling psychology. They and their partner live in Eastwood, which is a great place to raise two small humans.

Floss is the loofah of your smile!

Life is busy and finding time to floss every day is tough, but daily flossing is crucial to maintaining oral health. Not only does flossing remove harmful bacteria and strengthen gums, it also protects your smile and helps prevent cavities.

The cracks between your teeth are the perfect environment for bad breath and disease-causing tartar and plaque. Left unchecked, the gums can become inflamed, leading to gum disease and potentially even losing your teeth.

Here are some flossing tools to help make the process less of a chore.

Dental Floss

Dental floss is a thin thread which you can use between your teeth to help remove plaque and stuck food. Floss helps you reach the tough spots inaccessible by your toothbrush alone. While regular floss works great, advances in floss make keeping your teeth clean more fun. At our practice, floss comes in yummy flavours, such as strawberry, coconut, vanilla bean, orange, peppermint, and mint. Patients get a free floss with every dental checkup and cleaning.

Floss Picks

Floss picks are little plastic picks with a short floss string attached between them. Some people find it easier to get inside the mouth and maneuver between each tooth using floss sticks instead of regular floss. Floss picks are especially great for children, who often lack the dexterity necessary to use traditional floss effectively.

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2 Goyal CR, et al. *J Clin Dent*. (2013). Comparison of Two Interdental Devices on the Reduction of Plaque. Study conducted at BioSci Research Canada Ltd.; Mississauga, Ontario.

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A 2004 study found floss picks are just as effective at promoting gum health as traditional dental floss when used regularly and correctly.¹ In this study, researchers found similarly reduced plaque scores with no significant difference between those who used regular floss and those who used floss picks.

Water Flossers

Water flossers are a more recent invention, with Waterpik being the most recognizable brand. Water flossers, another interdental cleaning device, clean between the teeth and below the gum line. They use pulsating water to remove food debris and plaque. Clinical studies of Waterpik found it was “up to 50 per cent more effective for reducing gingivitis and up to 29 per cent more effective at removing plaque as compared to string floss.”^{2,3}

My Recommendation

Brush twice and floss at least once daily. Make flossing part of your regular routine and you'll notice a big difference next time you're in for your checkup and cleaning!

About Dr. William Chin

Dr. William Chin is a general dentist and the owner of Norwood Dental Centre. He is committed to providing caring, quality dental care that meets individual needs and budgets. Learn more about Norwood Dental Centre at www.norwood-dental.ca.

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OPINION

When food is just a click or a call away

Are we ordering more than just food online?

NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS

As life gets complex, people resort more to convenience, such as ordering food online. Besides the convenience of getting food delivered to your doorstep, you can experience food from different cultures. A big advantage is a clutter-free kitchen and beautiful nails—after all, haven't we chosen to skip cooking and washing the dishes?

While ordering online seems like manna from heaven, it doesn't come without cons. Let's have a peek at what ordering food offers residents living in the Parkdale Cromdale area.

"I love it!" says Nick, a student. "I always thought Indian food was the most flavourful until I ordered Mexican. Ordering food is like having a genie around," he laughs. "I order what I want and when I want. I go online, check out the

menu, and place a call."

"I don't get to save much, though," Nick admits ruefully. "Most of my money goes on rent and food. I can't avoid paying rent, but I could have probably saved at least 200 dollars each month if I had learned to cook."

Let's do the math of what it actually costs to make a burger yourself.

Bread: \$0.50

Tomato: \$0.67

Lettuce: \$0.25

Patty: \$1.50

Sauce: \$0.20

After taxes, the total cost is a little over \$3.20. It's unlikely you'll find a restaurant agreeing to deliver anything below \$5. Most of the time, there is a minimum delivery cost and people actually end up ordering more than what they would normally eat. So why order online?

"It becomes a sort of addiction," admit Kim and Joe, who

order food almost every other day. "Some restaurants offer discounts after a certain number of orders and then it becomes a never-ending habit."

And although most restaurants are stringent about following proper food preparation and hygiene guidelines, some don't. It's impossible to know the conditions in which the food is being prepared or what actually goes into the food unless we stand next to the chef.

"I have walked out of a restaurant because it was so shabby, only to realize that I had actually ordered from there several times," reflects Lucia, an airport staff member who orders food whenever she is on the graveyard shift. "After a hectic workday and a long commute, slaving away in the kitchen seems the least appealing thing. I was [so] carried away with the convenience factor that I obviously overlooked the health factor." She taps her tummy. "I have

gained 10 pounds ever since I started ordering food. Plus, you never know what was used to cook the food I ordered. Was it leftover oil, fresh or stale vegetables? You just never know!"

Game and movie nights were synonymous with online food ordering for Alex and Bryan, two brothers who just started working.

"It could be a burger, chicken, or pizza. And then fries or pop. A \$10 here, \$15 there and before long, we had spent lot of hard-earned money on just food." Alex grimaces. "We started cooking and that drastically improved our bank balances."

"And our body weight," Bryan chimes in. "The serving portions on the food ordered are large sometimes and when you are busy watching or playing, you just eat the whole meal instead of saving it for later."

Ordering food or preparing it yourself is a personal

choice. I would rather cook and know what goes into a meal, never mind stay healthy (and wealthy).

On your day off, why not prepare meals for the whole week? Make cooking enjoyable by listening to music, watching television, or chatting with family or a friend. That way, you get the best of both worlds—relaxing after a long workday plus eating out ...of your fridge.

Writing has always been Nazreena's biggest passion besides crocheting and breeding budgies. Having changed nine schools as a child in different countries, cultural tolerance and flexibility to adapt to diverse environments come naturally to her.



Ordering food or preparing it yourself is a personal choice. | Nazreena Anwar-Travas

Gig economy has benefits and drawbacks

Contractors must understand the implications of being self-employed

TEKLA LUCHENSKI

The emerging gig economy—consisting of a labour market characterized by short-term, freelance contracts, rather than permanent jobs—influences consumer habits and employer practices. For independent contractors, it offers alternatives to a diverse demographic by offering extra money on a flexible schedule.

Michelle Finley, manager of communications at SkipTheDishes, says that independently contracted couriers "come from a wide variety of backgrounds." She adds, "The flexible schedule is particularly attractive to students and people looking to earn additional money in the off-hours from their regular employment."

Toni O'Brien, a local Uber driver, is a busy mom who is

driving for extra money. After only 12 shifts, she says she likes "the experiences, and meeting all the wonderful people." She beams and says, "I'm pretty proud of my five-star rating. I didn't expect to be making as much money as I have. But I've done my due diligence and research to learn how to make more money."

As with most things, there is an art to doing well in the gig economy. With Uber, there is a factor called the "surge", where the fare adjusts according to demand. O'Brien and her customers can check current fares on the Uber app. In theory, O'Brien makes more money when demand is high. However, she has learned "not to chase the surge." She explains she has learned more about what is going on in the city, so that she can be more strategic. "I know now that I can stay

at home and watch the hockey game." When it ends, she drives to the game. That way, she misses the first wave of riders, when there are more drivers available (and thus lower fares), and arrives when drivers are in higher demand.

The surge contrasts with traditional taxi services, which have flat rates.

Finley would likely agree with O'Brien about the need for contractors to do their due diligence. Once approved, the new Skip independent contractor "undergoes a brief onboarding process. Skip doesn't provide training, but does have teams available to provide support and assistance."

Platforms such as SkipTheDishes and Uber do not pay benefits or guarantee work, since they are not employers. Finley points out, "Independently contracted cou-

riers are responsible for obtaining the necessary insurance required by the province or region that they drive in. Just as in any self-employed role, independently contracted couriers are responsible for managing the tax requirements specific to the province they operate in."

SkipTheDishes will not necessarily inform couriers of their responsibilities to manage tax considerations or to obtain proper insurance. If you ask about these issues, Skip will outline your obligations as an independent contractor. However, they are not obligated to be specific. They follow the law, but the law has not adapted to the emerging gig economy.

According to O'Brien, Uber has more stringent requirements, where independent contractors must provide a driver's abstract and proof of appropriate commercial insurance. Each

platform has its own policies.

There is no regulation for the gig economy per se, so it's important to understand the implications of being self-employed. Platforms are not obligated to inform independent contractors of their responsibilities (or of the many advantages) as, essentially, small business owners.

Enjoy the benefits of the gig economy, but follow O'Brien's advice: "You have to learn."

Tekla has lived in the Parkdale neighbourhood since 2013. Trained as a cultural anthropologist, she is a freelance writer, excited to contribute to The Rat Creek Press as a passionate observer of lifestyle and community expression.

The joy of cooking your own meals at home

Tips and tricks to make eating in a little easier

RCP CONTRIBUTORS



It's suppertime and your stomach is growling. It's so tempting to head to a restaurant or order in. This month, RCP contributors share their strategies and ideas for fixing meals at home.

I'm on a restricted diet, and cooking at home makes it easier to stay within the health guidelines. We buy meat in large pieces and freeze them. Staples such as pasta, flour, and sugar are available. We use a wide range of spices to make food more interesting. I make food in large batches and then freeze it in meal-sized portions.

We keep fresh vegetables around. I often steam them to preserve the nutrition. I love adding a simple béchamel sauce to broccoli or cauliflower, then bake it for about a half hour. This pairs well with plain roasted meats and chicken.

We make our own bread using a bread maker. Sam has recently come up with a wholesome bread recipe which adds Red River Cereal. We rarely eat out, but when we do it's a treat.

Chantal Figeat

We have children week on/week off. I have a set meal schedule so I don't have to think about meals everyday.

We always have a box of greens, a bag of coleslaw, cucumbers, carrots, and tomatoes on hand. Cheese, hamburger, and fish are other staples. Almost every meal has a plate of fresh veggies on the table. I buy meat on sale and freeze it in portions.

Rebecca Lippiatt

My mother grew up hungry in the Dirty '30s in Saskatchewan. Nothing went to waste in her kitchen. Soup was one of the ways she turned leftovers into meals for her six kids. I discovered various ingredient combinations work to the benefit of the palate, along with my mother's trick of rinsing out a mayonnaise jar to add creaminess.

Once at a function, I asked the host to save the brine from spicy pickled beans. Those were some of the best chicken soups we had for the next while as I would add two to three tablespoons in the soup to give it some mouth-puckering, tongue-zapping heat.

Rusti L. Lebay

There's more temptation to eat out with just the two of us at home now, but it gets expensive and it's not always as healthy as eating in. I love cooking and usually make big batches when I'm fixing pasta sauces, soups, or stews. I then squirrel them away in the freezer for easy reheats on busy nights.

My go-to meals are stir-fries, frittatas, and vegetarian stews. I have a range of favourite recipes I make regularly depending on our mood and the ingredients at hand. Aydan has mastered producing a beautiful loaf of whole grain bread in the bread maker with only ten minutes preparation.

Patricia Dunnigan

In the winter, when daylight is short and eating out takes preparation, I make a special trip to a green grocer or market once or twice a month and buy as many fruit and greens as I can afford. Then when I cook at home, I have colourful, tasty fresh food to offset the winter blues. It's the only time of year I splurge on a bunch of flowers, the inexpensive kind, to sit on the kitchen table. It brings some colour and positive notes into what can be a closed and wintry mood.

Kate Wilson



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You know, the bus driver: a political career

Brian Mason reflects on his political life and the private life to come

NADINE RIOPEL

Highlands-Norwood MLA Brian Mason will soon end a 20-year political career in central Edmonton.

As he puts it, “When the election happens, I’ll be done.”

Mason started his political engagement early, and remembers political discussions around the dinner table during his childhood. He even visited a relative in Ottawa who had been appointed to the Senate.

He participated in student politics at the University of Alberta. When he graduated during the recession of the early 1980s, he had student loans to pay, so he took a job as a bus driver for the City of Edmonton. Meanwhile, he became involved in the labour

movement and eventually decided to run for city council. But there was a problem.

“Lo and behold,” he recalls, “there was a law that if you worked for the city, you couldn’t run.”

Mason challenged this law in court, but lost and had to leave his job to run in 1989. On the doorsteps of his ward, he soon realized that although people didn’t know his name or face, they knew his story. Everyone had heard about the bus driver who fought the law, so Mason and his team quickly reframed their campaign, printing stickers to paste over all their signs with the slogan, “You know, the bus driver.”

It was a winning strategy and he stayed on council for about 11 years before becoming an NDP MLA in 2000. Since then,

he’s held a number of positions (including Opposition leader) and is currently the minister of transportation, but always as the MLA for the Highlands-Norwood riding.

Mason says that one big change he’s seen in politics over the years is the rise of social media. He sees it as a double-edged sword, offering a direct way to connect with people, but also creating a world where everything a candidate has ever done or said becomes permanent.

“Where there’s younger people [running], their whole adult life is documented. Careers can be destroyed before they even get started.”

When asked what advice he has for his successor in Highlands-Norwood and for anyone thinking of entering

politics, Mason doesn’t hesitate: “Never lose your connection with community.”

It’s easy, he says, to get swept away by special interests who want to wine and dine you, or to spend too much time in the legislature building or city hall. But it’s important to resist that, to visit community leagues, and to live life in the community. Some of his best conversations with constituents happened while he was grocery shopping.

There’s a lot he will miss about being in politics. Although he knows the legislature can be a strange place, with arcane rules, he reflects that, “I really do kind of love the place. I will miss it.”

He will also miss community activities, such as participating in Read In Week at local schools, and talking to elementary students about local

government.

Nevertheless, Mason has no doubt that this is the right time for him to leave.

“Eventually, you just have to say, ‘enough’s enough.’”

And what will he do next?

“Put my feet up for a year or so, figure out what I want to do next.”

After a long career of campaigning and governing and criticizing and leading, it’s time for Mason to start a new chapter. A slower one, perhaps, and more laid back, but also well earned.

Nadine is a professional facilitator and connector. She is also an enthusiastic member of the Spruce Avenue community, where she lives with her husband and young son.



MLA Brian Mason meets Indigenous chiefs at Ben Calf Robe Society. | Supplied



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Local activist fights for people's rights

Glynnis Lieb had a long journey to get to Alberta

STEPHEN STRAND

Glynnis Lieb is a local activist who fights tirelessly and is a voice for the voiceless. She advocates for the rights of workers, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, the homeless, youth, women, and anyone who has been suppressed and disparaged.

Lieb was born on a little isolated island (an outport) in Newfoundland. She lived there until she was an adolescent, then moved with her mother to rural Manitoba until the end of high school. "Then into Winnipeg for university, because I was bound and determined that I was going to get out of that one-horse town," Lieb explains with a chuckle. "As soon as I could."

At the age of 13, under advisement from a guidance counselor, she determined that psychology was where she belonged. "I thought I was going to be a police officer, but he was like, 'No, I think you'd be better as a psychologist.' Because I found

people fascinating. So, I looked up what this meant and decided this was the path for me."

She earned one degree that led into a doctorate in personality and social psychology from the University of Manitoba. While in school, Lieb was working for social services and found a job ad for a two-to-three-year contract managing a project about people's experiences with Alberta's legal system. "I was looking from a psychological perspective at people's interaction with the legal system there, and I thought, 'I can't move to Alberta, but that is really interesting,'" Lieb says. Six weeks later, she sold her house and was en route to Edmonton. Eleven years later and she is still here.

"I was managing this project for the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, which is a national not-for-profit justice watchdog organization," explains Lieb.

It was a great job, but paid very little. So, she began looking for a side job. A friend of hers from Manitoba told her about Athabasca University. As luck

would have it, they were looking for somebody to teach psychology of criminal justice. It fit her perfectly, and she's been with Athabasca University ever since.

In 2010, the Edmonton chapter of the Learning Disabilities Association offered her an executive director position. Two years later, she fell into an opportunity to manage the legacy project for Lieutenant Governor Donald Ethell. "I ended up interviewing and getting this job, because he was a retired army colonel and he wanted to look at destigmatizing mental illness and addiction," explains Lieb. It turned into an amazing opportunity for Lieb to do advocacy and public education for the remainder of his term.

Two years later, she became a grant writer for Arts on the Ave, and then became heavily active with her union. "They are all really involved in different social activities and were using the union to do that. I just fell in love." Lieb got so involved with the union that she spent three years on the Provincial

Executive (governing body) for the union. It was also at this time that she began to be politically active.

From there, Lieb began doing outreach for the Alberta Federation of Labour. She also began teaching at MacEwan University and NorQuest College, on top of her teaching commitment at Athabasca University.

In 2015, she moved into Norwood because she was spending so much time at The Carrot Coffeehouse, due to her job with Arts on the Ave. She got involved with Norwood Neighbourhood Association and continued to be part of election campaigns on all levels.

Lieb says she believes in civil disobedience and the push back against those in power, keeping them in check. So, during last year's postal strike, she showed her support by picketing alongside the postal workers.

Her experiences helped lead Lieb to her current position with the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies & Services, which helps

the LGBTQ2S+ community in many capacities.

Her social activism began with the LGBTQ2S+ community in Winnipeg.

"I fell into the queer community in Winnipeg when I moved there. That was my home in Winnipeg," Lieb explains. "We were in Winnipeg trying to find places to have coffee nights and folks were getting kicked out of restaurants and getting their posters torn down. That was a community that really got me involved in learning how to stand up for other people and myself." She adds that once you start paying attention to people and taking an active interest, you begin to see the need for justice everywhere.

"It's on us all to look after each other."

Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.



Glynnis Lieb's activist work has helped many people. | Stephen Strand



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Child psychologist advocates play therapy

Dr. Jeanne Williams uses therapeutic play to help families and educators

AYDAN DUNNIGAN-VICKRUCK

Have toys, will travel.

Dr. Jeanne Williams gets around—to schools, playgrounds, living rooms, even to Jamaica. She goes anywhere she can engage children in play.

No, she is not a Toys R Us sales rep. She is a psychologist who uses play therapy to help children work through life challenges, as well as to empower families and educators to use therapeutic play at home and in school.

“It is really quite instinctual for children to act out their problems through play,” says Williams. “My office is, of course, filled with toys and as soon as a child comes in, they sit down and start playing with them. Typically the story that is acted out mirrors a concern, problem, or anxiety that is troubling them. With a little guidance, support, and encour-

agement, they can often resolve the problem and create their own solution through play.”

Play is the way children learn about the world and their place in it. Learning, growing, and changing is fun, especially when it is both mentally and physically challenging and includes social interaction. Through group interaction and problem solving, they learn self-confidence and where they fit into the world. For example, playing video games contributes much less to a child’s development than does playing sports, climbing a tree, or having a pajama party.

In Williams’ practice, a few special controls are added to play to enhance its healing and restorative power. First and foremost is the element of safety. Because children are coming from frightening or stressful situations, they must be supported to work through their issues without fear of cen-

sorship. Schoolyard play appropriately has a certain degree of risk. Children are allowed to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zone. In contrast, therapeutic play requires an environment of complete safety and acceptance.

“The toys are symbols. Play is one of the primary ways that children process or come to terms with their issues or challenges, whether it is trauma, or loss, or abuse. Or there may also be behavioural or personality disorders. Play is the natural language of children. It is instinctual. A child’s play expresses their feelings and their unconscious thoughts.”

She adds: “For the past two summers, I have been visiting Jamaica and working with staff at children’s clubs. These are some of the most violent and disenfranchised neighbourhoods in the world. However, when children are encouraged and supported in restorative

play, they are actually able to transcend their circumstances and process their trauma. Their behaviour changes.”

Williams’ interest in play therapy emerged as a natural extension of her work with families. She earned her masters degree in Denver, Colorado and then continued her studies at California Southern University. She recently completed a doctorate of psychology.

Williams and her husband David chose to settle in Alberta Ave seven years ago. “We have always enjoyed living in places where there is cultural and economic diversity and a strong sense of community. In 2011, we bought our home on 94 Street and have been thrilled living here ever since.”

The couple can also be seen regularly volunteering at community festivals and attending neighbourhood events. Since their move, Williams has assisted families and agencies

in understanding the role that play can have in bettering the lives of children.

“In addition to counselling from my office, I have led staff training at the Boys and Girls Club in McCauley, have worked with mothers at the shelter for abused women, and have occasionally been able to provide assistance to families on limited incomes at a reduced fee.”

Williams offers short presentations (20-60 minutes) at no cost for teachers, parents, or others who spend time with children. She offers longer training sessions for a fee (half a day, full day, or more). Reach her at drjeannewilliams@gmail.com, or at 780.757.8880.

Aydan is a social worker, blogger, tango dancer, outdoor enthusiast and co-parent with Patricia to eight children and 16 grandchildren. He’s also a resident of the hood and loving it.



Outdoor play is a great for exercise as well as gaining physical confidence. | Marcel Lajeunesse

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Tips for making a budget and saving money

Self-discipline and planning are essential for success

SHAREE ALUKO

Budgeting is a goal for many of us, but why is it so hard to make a budget and follow through with it? The main reasons are because it requires discipline and ongoing commitment.

The Oxford Dictionary defines budgeting as “An estimate of income and expenditure for a set period or the amount of money needed for a purpose.” A budget is logical because we have limited resources but unlimited wants. Budgeting helps to reduce debt load and enable an affordable lifestyle. The key factor is to differentiate your wants from your needs; this will help you stay on course and not overspend.

Start with planning. Take stock of your household inventory, then make a shopping list of what is needed before grocery shopping. Making a list and sticking to it is the first step.

Some items are worth buying in bulk, but be careful not to go overboard because perishable items spoil easily. Check expiration dates and set reasonable expectations with regards to how quickly you'll use the product. Frequent trips to the grocery store can cause a huge dent in your finances because people are tempted to buy more than what is needed on each visit, so strike a good balance.

Pay attention to prices and compare prices between stores. Look for discounts and coupons, but don't overindulge,

since buying too many sale items will defeat the purpose of having a budget. It is a good idea to plan and save to buy certain items during popular sale periods such as Boxing Day or Black Friday. However, spread out expenses and don't buy too many big-ticket items at once.

The same principle applies to clothes shopping. If the objective is to spend less, it is pointless to buy several pieces of clothing or shoes at once. Regardless of how many items you buy, there will still be other appealing ones. Shopping can be a treat or a feel-good experience, therefore limit the amount spent on each occasion.

One way to help with budgeting is by tracking income and expenses by either using a

spreadsheet or mobile applications. Using cash may work for some people because they can keep the exact amount needed and allocate accordingly. Others may prefer using a debit or credit card because it might help them to spend less and reconcile what was spent.

Having separate accounts for saving money is another idea. For example, if you want to take a vacation in a year's time, decide on the cost and see how much you can comfortably save each month to arrive at your goal. Use other savings accounts for unexpected expenses, educational funds, or just about anything.

Minimize eating out or in-home delivery and prepare meals at home. You must sometimes

trade convenience to maintain a budget.

Keep receipts to return items. This may be helpful for impulsive buyers who overspend but later realize that they don't need or no longer want the items they bought.

While budgeting is good, don't be overly restrictive because it may not be sustainable in the long run. Consistency is key, so don't set yourself up for failure. However, if you fall off the budgeting bandwagon, pick yourself back up and keep going.

Sharee has a Masters in Business Administration and is passionate about sharing information.



Planning and keeping a budget are key factors to living within your means. | Pixabay

Remember the beautiful souls of genocide

Edmonton to hold commemoration of Rwandan genocide in April

NADINE UWIMANA

April is a month of remembrance for Rwandese people. In April 1994, up to one million Tutsi, including my parents and other family members, were murdered. I was only three months old when I was spared.

In Edmonton, the Memory Keepers Association (MKA) is preparing for the 25th commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi of Rwanda. Similar commemorations will be held across Canada in April.

Before I came to Canada in 2013, I wasn't committed to any commemoration events. Not because I didn't care, but because I couldn't acknowledge the value of gathering to remember.

Now that I'm Canadian, I see the importance of history. I'm learning about the history of Indigenous peoples and residential schools in books like *Residential Schools, With the Words and Images of Survivors* by school survivor Larry Loyie

(1933-2016). My roommate, Constance Brissenden, is one of the co-authors.

I learned from Larry's book that residential schools were

Truth and reconciliation efforts are ongoing in Alberta. They remind me of the importance of remembering. The history of my country of birth



Nadine Uwimana shares her testimony in April 2017 at the Rwandan genocide commemoration ceremony at Edmonton City Hall. | Didart med

a hidden history. Canadians either didn't know about them or were in denial. I am glad to know more because I have met people who still deny that these schools were a tragic history. The genocide in Rwanda is also sometimes denied.

is also remembered. Last year, I became involved with the MKA, a Rwandese association that organizes and coordinates the annual commemoration of the genocide and that keeps the truth alive.

Many Rwandese people began to arrive in Edmonton in 2002.

At the time, they commemorated privately within their families. In 2004, for the 10th commemoration of the genocide, some Rwandese people here prepared events and invited a guest speaker. These efforts grew, and in 2012, all Rwandese survivors in Edmonton decided to form an association to support commemoration events and all other projects regarding survivors. Memory Keepers Association was legally confirmed to work in Alberta in August 2014.

I decided to attend the commemoration events four years ago. As I heard the testimonies that were given, I began to feel engaged and part of the community. Two years later, I decided to share my testimony as a survivor.

That was my first time speaking about my story in public. It wasn't easy, but I felt like a heavy load of sorrow was lifted off my back. Sharing my story helped me to reach another level of self-examination. I was able to encourage other youth from my community to tell their sto-

ries and strive for a better future.

MKA continues to grow. Last November, I was honoured to be elected treasurer for MKA. I accepted the role without hesitation because I'm committed to help fellow survivors to reach our goals and keep working together.

The association is making a difference in the lives of survivors. Many Rwandese people have lost family members. Being part of MKA is more than being part of an association. To survivors, it's also like being part of a good family.

An unknown author wrote, "A beautiful soul is not forgotten." Through MKA, I can remember and commemorate the beautiful souls of my parents and others.

Nadine is a full-time student at Concordia University of Edmonton studying human resources management. She is researching "challenges experienced by African students, especially those who come from countries with conflicts."

Special General Meeting of the

NORWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

Monday, March 18, 7 pm

**Alberta Avenue
9210 118 Avenue**

Bylaw change proposed to expand our boundaries.

Current boundary:
Norwood Blvd to 118 Ave
from 89 St to 97 St

Proposed boundaries:
The neighbourhoods of Alberta Avenue,
Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue & Westwood

NORTHGATE
LIONS BINGO

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April 17-18 in the Lions Den
In the rear of the building
From 2:00pm to 8:00pm
Or Call 780-496-4888

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6:30 AM

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\$500 / \$1000

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Is Available

Good Friday
April 19, 2019

MARATHON
BINGO

First 100 Games
8:30 am - 4pm

2 Earlybirds 4 Bonanzas
1 Odd Even - Lucky Lion Game
& Free \$100 Cash Game

Second 100 Games
4:30 pm-Midnight

2 Earlybirds – 4 Bonanzas
1 Odd Even- Lucky Lion Game
& Free \$100 Cash Game

EDMONTON NORTHGATE LIONS
RECREATION CENTER 7524 – 139 AVE

FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

ESL & LANGUAGE

NEHIYAWE: CREE LANGUAGE LEARNING
Conversation circle by Canadian Native Friendship Centre. Mondays, 6-8 pm at Highlands Library.

PRACTICE ENGLISH
Conversation circle, Mondays, 7-8 pm at Sprucewood Library.

GLOBAL VOICES CHOIR
An informal way to practice English. Song books and light lunch provided. Thursdays, noon-1 pm at Mennonite Centre (no classes in August). More: Suzanne 780.423.9682.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE
Fridays, 10:30-11:30 am at Highlands Library. Part of Catholic Social Services LACE program. More: 780-424-3545.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)
More: Edmonton Mennonite Centre 780.424.7709 or info@emcn.ab.ca.

FOOD & SUPPORT

EDMONTON URBAN NATIVE MINISTRY
Drop-in Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 10:30 am and 3 pm for social, spiritual, and practical support, including computer access. Lunch Tuesdays and Fridays, noon-1:30 pm. Small food hamper every second Thursday. Meal provided after 4 pm Sunday service.

BENT ARROW TRADITIONAL HEALING SOCIETY
Various programs and services, including a soup & bannock lunch once a month. 11648 85 Street. 780.481.3451. www.bentarrow.ca.

PRAYERWORKS COMMUNITY
Hot meals & warm friendship at St. Faith's/ St. Stephen's Anglican Church hall. Thurs: serving 11 am-1 pm; open 10 am-1:30 pm. Fri: serving 5-6 pm; open 3:30-7 pm. Sat: serving 8:30-9:30 am; open 8-10 am. More: 780.477.5931.

COLLECTIVE KITCHENS
Cook with friends, try new recipes, help your food budget.
St. Faith/St. Stephen: 2nd Tuesday, 1-3:30 pm. Call ahead. Trish: 780.464.5444.
Parent Link: Second Wednesday, 11:30-2:30 pm. Call ahead: 780.474.2400
Parkdale hall: Last Sunday of the month, 1-4 pm. Check parkdalecromdale.org for details.
Alberta Avenue: Sunday, 1-4 pm. Check albertaave.org for details.

PARENTS & PRE-SCHOOLERS

PARENTS & TOTS PLAYGROUP
Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30 pm until March 26 at Parkdale Cromdale.

BABES IN ARMS
A wonderful casual parent meetup. Fridays, 10 am-noon at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

SING, SIGN, LAUGH & LEARN
Mondays and Tuesdays, 10:30-11:15 am at Sprucewood Library. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:15 am at Highlands Library. More: 780.496.7099.

BABY LAPTIME
Stories, songs, books, rhymes, & finger play for babies up to 12 months. Tuesdays, 10:15-10:45 am at Highlands Library.

FAMILY STORYTIME
Share stories, songs, and games. Wednesdays, 10:30-11 am at Sprucewood Library.

NORWOOD CHILD & FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE
Parent & family education, early childhood education, community events. 9516 114 Avenue. 780.471.3737. www.norwoodcentre.com.

PARENT LINK CENTRE
Information, support and a variety of free programs. 11666 95 St. 780.474.2400. Mon to Fri, 9 am-7 pm.

CHILDREN

DANCE CLASS
Fridays, 6-7 pm until March 8 at Parkdale Cromdale.

LEGO AT THE LIBRARY
Design and build a lego creation. Ages 6-12. Saturdays, 3-4 pm at Highlands Library.

GIRL GUIDES
Meetings on Mondays from September to June at St. Andrew's. More: 39thedmontonguiding@gmail.com or 1.800.565.8111 (answered locally).

TEEN LOUNGE JR.
Play video games, make a DIY project, meet friends. Thursdays, 3:30-5 pm at Sprucewood Library and 3:30-4:30 pm at Highlands Library.

YOUTH

EVIL GENIUS CLUB
Robot battles, Arduino hacks, DIY music, art, Minecraft, photography, 3-D design & printing are just the beginning. Fridays, 4-5 pm at Highlands Library.

TEEN LOUNGE
Play video games, make a DIY project, or just hang out. Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 pm at Sprucewood Library.

GLOBAL GIRLS
Build new relationships, develop self-confidence, and identify pathways to achieve goals. Every other Thursday, 3:15-5:30 pm at the Mennonite Centre for ages 16-22. Drop-in. More: 780.423.9691.

ADULTS

COFFEE WITH COPS
Join a roundtable conversation with EPS. First Wednesday of month from 10-11:00 am at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

AVENUE BOOK CLUB
Meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse. More: Lorraine 780.934.3209.

AVENUE WORD ADVENTURING
Join other writers in a positive environment to write, share, and discuss writing habits and goals. Drop-in on the third Thursday afternoon of the month, 1:30-3:30 pm, The Carrot Coffeehouse. More: Rusti @ lit@ratcreek.org.

SEATED MEDITATION
Restfulness for the body and mind. Led by Kate Wilson, 12 years exp of Zen-based meditation. Bring a cushion and mat or simply show up. Mondays, 6:30 pm, Eastwood hall. Membership required.

YOGA CLASS
Focus on senses, breathing techniques, and postures that build strength & flexibility. First & third Thurs of the month, 7-8 pm until May 16 at Parkdale Cromdale hall.

MEDITATION & SOUND BATH
Explore mental and physical exercises to relax and enjoy stillness more easily. First & third Thurs of the month, 8-9 pm until May 16 at Parkdale Cromdale hall.

GUIDED MEDITATION SITS
Perfect for beginners. Saturdays, 7 pm. All welcome, no charge. Land of Compassion Buddha Temple. 9352 106A Ave. 780.862.7392.

COFFEE FRIENDSHIP CLUB
Have coffee with individuals who are single, divorced, or widowed and looking to meet new people in the area. Wednesdays, 1-2 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

COMMUNITY ART NIGHT
Free art workshop for adults. Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm at the Nina. Register/info: 780.474.7611.

WELLBRIETY SUPPORT GROUP
Mondays, 7-9 pm at Canadian Native Friendship Centre, upstairs room #200.

TEEN LOUNGE JR.
Play video games, make a DIY project, meet friends. Thursdays, 3:30-5 pm at Sprucewood Library and 3:30-4:30 pm at Highlands Library.

AIR CADET SQUADRON
Youth program for ages 12-18. Aviation, drill, deportment, music, marksmanship, survival, physical fitness. Thursdays, 6:30-9:15 pm Sept to June. www.570squadron.com.

SENIORS

CENTRAL LIONS SENIORS ASSOCIATION
Programs, clubs, drop-in activities, fitness centre. 11113 113 St. 780.496.7369. www.centralions.org.

NORWOOD LEGION SENIORS GROUP
Cribbage, Wednesdays at 1 pm at NorwoodLegion.ca.

SENIORS BREAKFAST & SOCIAL (55+)
Join us for breakfast, visit, or play cards or billiards. Wednesdays, 11:30 am-12:45 pm (10:30-11:45 am during the summer) at Crystal Kids.

FAMILIES

DENE DRUMMING
Wednesdays, 1-3 pm at Canadian Native Friendship Centre, upstairs room #200.

TRADITIONAL ARTS & CRAFTS
For ages 12+. Wednesdays, 5-7 pm at Canadian Native Friendship Centre, upstairs room #200.

POP-UP MAKERSPACE
Makey Makey hack, DIY music, art, 3-D design, and more. First Wednesday of the month from 6:30-7:30 pm at Highlands Library.

HIP HOP SHOWCASE
Listen to sick beats and step up on our open stage for hip hop artists, rappers, spoken word, and poets. Rated PG. Third Wednesday of month, 7-9 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

TABLE TOP GAMES NIGHT
Choose from our selection of games or BYOG. Tables are free! Last Wednesday of the month, 4-9 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse. Hosted by Tim of GOBfest.

FAMILY ART NIGHT
A variety of free art activities for school age children accompanied by adults. Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 pm at The Nina.

MUSIC LESSONS BY CREART
Free group music lessons Saturdays at Parkdale-Cromdale hall from 10 am-noon. More: createdmonton@gmail.com or 587.336.5480.

FREE COMMUNITY REC ACCESS
At Commonwealth Stadium on Saturdays from 5-7 pm: Alberta Ave, Eastwood, Westwood. Sundays 1-3 pm: Alberta Ave, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue

OPEN MIC NIGHT
Open to performers of all stages and ages! Sip a latte and enjoy original music, poetry, comedy, and more at The Carrot's uniquely warm and personal open mic night. Saturdays, 6-10 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

LOCATIONS

Bent Arrow 11648 85 St Bethel Gospel 11461 95 St Cnd Native Friendship 11728 95 St Community Leagues - see page 12	Crystal Kids 8715 118 Ave Highlands Library 6710 118 Ave Mennonite Centre 11713 82 St Norwood Family Centre 9516 114 Ave Norwood Legion 11150 82 St	Sprucewood Library 11555 95 St St. Faith/St. Stephen Church 11725 93 St St. Andrew's Church 8715 118 Ave The Carrot Coffeehouse 9351 118 Ave The Nina 9225 118 Ave
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St. Stephen: 780.422.3240
Sunday Worship:
 8:30 am - Low Mass
 9:00 am - Morning Prayer
 9:30 am - High Mass
 7:00 pm - Evensong

St. Faith: 780.477.5931
Sunday Worship:
 9:00 am Friday Prayer

11:00 am Sunday Worship
 1st Sunday Common
 2nd Sunday Trad. Anglican
 3rd Sunday Aboriginal Form
 4th Sunday Trad. Anglican

AVENUE VINEYARD CHURCH

A friendly, informal, non-judgmental and safe place to grow spiritually. Traditional Christian values in a non-traditional way.
8718 118 Avenue
 (Crystal Kids Building)ave-nuevineyard.com
 Sundays at 10:30 am

AVENUE CHURCH

A community to belong in...a community to serve with.

11335 85 Street
 (Parkdale Hall)
 avenuechurch.ca

Sundays
 coffee fellowship - 9:30am
 10:00 am Service

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

A Bible-based, multi-ethnic fellowship.
11461 95 Street
 780.477.3341

Sunday Meetings:
 9:30 am - Lord's Supper
 11:00 am - Family Bible Hour

NORWOOD WESLEYAN CHURCH

Meeting needs with love and compassion
 11306 91 St
 10:00 am Sunday School
 11:00 am Sunday Service

EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCH

'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up'
 Eph. 4:32, 1 Th. 5:11a
12317-82 St.
780.474.4830

Sunday School 10:00 am
Sunday Worship 11:00 am
Wed. Study/Prayer 6:30 pm

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8715 118 Avenue
 780-477-8677

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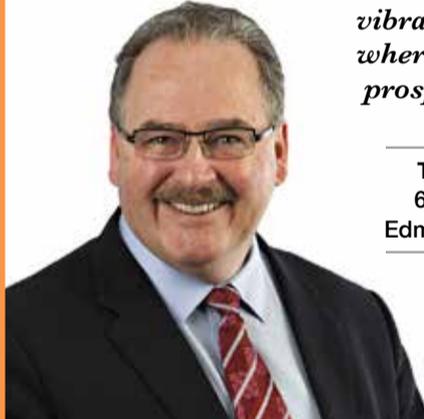
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Brian Mason, MLA

EDMONTON-HIGHLANDS-NORWOOD

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- ~ strengthen key services, like health care & education
- ~ promote a government that is fair and responsible to all of its citizens
- ~ develop strong and vibrant communities where everyone can prosper



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Follow me on Facebook & Twitter
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Randy Boissonnault MP/Député - Edmonton Centre



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 Fax: 780-442-1891

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