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COUNCIL SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT to streetscape vision of 118 Ave revitalization

DAWN FREEMAN

At the City Council's Community Services Committee meeting held February 5, it was agreed that the \$5 million needed to begin the Streetscape revitalization of 118 Ave will be included in the 2008 budget, and that there is support from both city administration and council for the full \$35 million needed over the next 5 years to complete the project.

Both Mayor Mandel, 8 councillors and a number of city management people were present at the meeting at which four 118 Avenue area community and business members eloquently spoke.

Kacy Moran, a resident and volunteer with the Avenue Initiative, spoke passionately about the plan to transform the 118 Avenue area, emphasizing that the Streetscape project is critical in the revitalization of its commercial strip and surrounding neighbourhoods. She ended her speech with a strong message to Council.

"The city made a commitment to our neighborhoods. By supporting this

first crucial step, it will send a strong message to Edmontonians that City Hall stands by its visions and its word. It will also go a long way to re-establishing credibility with the five communities involved in the Avenue Initiative. City Hall stands at a fork in the road. I believe the decisions made here will also affect its relationship with any other neighborhood that may be targeted for revitalization in future."

David Stockberger, resident, Norm Aldi, President of Eastwood Community League and Peter Rausch, executive director of the Alberta Avenue Business Association were the other three speakers.

In an interview given



CONCEPTUAL SKETCH OF WHAT THE AVENUE COULD LOOK LIKE

to NAIT students, Mayor Mandel stated that Council would find the money for the 118 Ave Streetscape vision. Council members are excited to see the positive things already occurring in the

Avenue area and are impressed with both the community's commitment and enthusiasm.

"The community has, in fact, far surpassed expectations held of them by Council, city management and myself," says

Judy Allan, the City's Avenue Revitalization Coordinator.

The \$5 million that will be included in the 2008 budget will still need to be approved by Council at the time of the Budget sitting.

Playing to a Brazilian beat

Capoeira a fun way to learn self-confidence along with kicks and tricks

RYAN DORWARD

Watch out Edmonton, because the kids are learning some new kicks and tricks! Kids from the Norwood area are learning the traditional Brazilian art of

Capoeira, a game that combines martial arts, dance, gymnastics and music.

"I like learning all the moves and getting exercise," says 11-year-old Kayla, who has been training Capoeira since September. Easily moving from a cartwheel to a spinning kick, she adds, "it's hard, but I like it". Austin, who came for his first class today agreed. "It was exciting! I learned some new kicks, and it was not so difficult."

Capoeira began hundreds of years ago, practiced in Brazil by slaves who were taken from their homelands in Africa. Over the centuries it has been used as a means of liberation, expression and self-defense, and has evolved into a complex art form. Capoeira

comes to Norwood via Brazilian instructor Reni Ferreira.

"Reni is amazing, he really gives the kids something special," says Norwood parent Michelle Machan. "I have never seen my son become so enthusiastic about an activity. Now he has a yearning to improve. I've seen his self esteem go up! Its just fantastic how the group is welcoming to kids of all levels."

Each class starts with a warm up and Reni slowly builds the kids up, challenging them with different movements and combinations. By the end of the class the kids are always smiling, doing something new and having fun. "It's the best thing since sliced pie!" says Machan.

When the training is done, the kids move into a Roda, a circle, where the game of Capoeira is played to the beat of soulful Afro-Brazilian rhythms. The capoeiristas enter the circle two at a time to use their kicks, defenses and acrobatic movements together. Surrounded by their peers, it's an exciting moment to test their skills and confidence.

"The Roda is an experience," says Machan. "There is



THE MASTER AND HIS STUDENTS. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, CLOCKWISE: MARK MACHAN, RENI FERREIRA, AUSTIN HWANG, ERIC LAO, PATRICK PHUNG, AND KAYLA THOMPSON.

a great deal of encouragement from all levels in the game."

Every Saturday, the kids are invited to join the adults for a Roda at the Capoeira Academy on Jasper Avenue, where the kids participate in an energetic atmosphere, playing Capoeira to music performed live by the senior students. Mark Machan, one of the kids from Norwood, enjoys playing with the adults. He says it's fun to join in and that the older students always play nicely with him.

The kids' classes were started by CREA (Capoeira

Regional Edmonton Association) as part of their community outreach program. In Brazil, Capoeira is often used as a tool to help give direction and growth to urban youth, and continuing in this tradition, CREA is offering free classes every Thursday at the Boys' and Girls' Club at 9425 109A Avenue. The classes run from 3:30-4:30 and are open to all kids over the age of 7. If you would like to know more about Capoeira in Edmonton, visit www.capoeiraedmonton.ca or phone 709-3500.

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Coming home to friends & gardening

KAREN MYKIETKA
Managing Editor

After six months of wandering, I'm back in the 'hood – on a different street, but in the same neighbourhood. We became homeless at the end of August when our first house sold and our "new" house wasn't ready. On one hand it was exhilarating to not be weighed down by mortgage and utilities payments; on the other, not knowing where we'd be from one week to the next was a little nerve wracking, especially for a very planned and organized person like myself.

We crammed the majority of our belongings into our new garage, taking with us only what would fit in our van and trailer including our two preschool children. My home office (aka Rat Creek office) turned into a laptop, a satchel full of files and a cell phone. Thank God for free internet service at the library and technology like wireless modems!

Living for six months in constant upheaval and flux with the added stress of home construction wasn't easy, yet it was a time of abundance. We are blessed by the many great people in our lives. Many friends and even acquaintances offered to help out with places to stay, or lend us things we needed.

Our family had the pleasure of house sitting a friend's acreage just north of the city for a month which gave us both adventure and rest. If all people had such great social networks, there would be much fewer homeless people on our streets.

People are more important than things. I think most of us would probably agree with that, but often our actions do not support our beliefs. We spend all our time working so we can

buy more things. Or we think life would be better if only we had such and such. But, you know, we really don't need the majority of things we already have. Three-quarters of my stuff has been in storage for six months and I've survived fine without it. I think I'll now

appreciate some of my belongings more, and other things I may decide I can truly do without and pass them on to someone else.

One thing I know I'll

be missing is the two beautiful mature trees I had on my previous property. My new home doesn't have a twig on it. A friend said I was lucky in that I had a blank canvas on which to landscape and plan my garden. Gardening takes a lot of time and requires patience. Two things I'm lack-

ing! At my last house I rushed into doing things because I wanted a finished yard. After a year or two I realized it wasn't quite what I wanted.

It's good to think ahead and make plans before jumping into landscaping – know what you want and need. I want a place to relax and grow a few vegetables. My children need a safe place to play which, in this day and age, means six foot high fences. But I also want a space where neighbours will stop and visit; where I can see the goings on of the neighbourhood (because I am curious!).

I envisioned my veranda and front yard being such a place so I had the chain link fence that was there torn down. I look forward to meeting neighbours, forging new friendships and of course hanging out with old friends. And if any of you avid gardeners out there want to share your wisdom or talent, I'd take anything you have to offer.

I look forward to meeting neighbours, forging new friendships and of course hanging out with old friends.

LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Alberta Avenue Community,

On behalf of Edmonton Crossroads Community Church the staff and guests of the Warming Centre would like to say thank you. The community kindness and support expressed has been overwhelming.

On many occasions people have rang the bell, handed staff a bag of sugar, home made cookies, or a can of coffee and left without giving a name or accepting a thank you. We are very grateful and proud to be part of a community with such an unconditional heart of generosity and kindness.

We would like to acknowledge an especially generous member of our community. Dutch Delicious Bakery is donating all the bread we use throughout the week. This is an amazing gift as we are caring for an average of 350 guests per week at the warming centre, as well as being open for several drop-ins throughout the week. The young couple who own this bakery are a great example of the heart of Edmontonians.

Again on behalf of the staff, and most especially our guests who have nowhere to go and no voice, we say thank you and may God bless you.

Edmonton Crossroads Community Church.

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474.5546**

Warming centre found to be in violation of zoning

DAWN FREEMAN

The warming centre run from the basement of the Salvation Army's Edmonton Central Community Church (E3C) has been found by the City to be in violation of zoning, after several neighbourhood residents complained people were staying overnight in the facility.

Despite the fact the church was always very clear it would be open through the night, the zoning violation was not noticed until complaints were received. The Edmonton Housing Trust Fund, who help fund the centre, stated they felt E3C was meeting the terms of its funding.

The centre has until March 15 to comply with its zoning restrictions. Captain Jaster, of EC3, plans to appeal the decision. Even if their appeal is denied it will give the centre another 30 days – enough time in his opinion to finish off most of the winter season.

Captain Jaster is happy to receive the attention, which he feels will bring the City's atten-

tion to the homeless problem. In his mind, EC3 is trying to be part of the solution, and have not done anything wrong.

The residents who complained disagree. They feel crime, particularly drugs and prostitution, has increased since the warming centre began back in November last year.

Unofficial police statements suggest reported crimes were up in the general vicinity for the first month the centre was open, but numbers have returned to their previous level since the New Year.

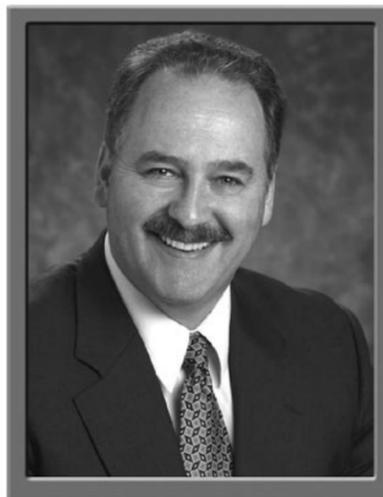
Many other residents are supportive of the centre and feel there is a definite need for it in this community.

Captain Jaster plans to open another warming centre in the Alberta Avenue area next winter, this time in a place correctly zoned for overnight stays.

If you have an opinion about the warming centre, either for or against, we want to hear it. Send your comments to editor@ratcreek.org or mail them to us by April 15. Maximum 200 words please.

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Brian Mason, MLA
Edmonton Highlands-Norwood



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Lighting up the alleyways of the Avenue

DAWN FREEMAN

A combined effort by the mayor and city managers, the police chief, and the business associations of Old Strathcona, Alberta Avenue and Downtown has resulted in the planned spring addition of lights to the alleyway in these areas.

Starting in March, and hoping to be completed by May, 45 lights will be installed at selected locations in the north and south alleyway of 118 Ave, stretching from NAIT to Northlands. Whyte Ave will receive 80 lights and Downtown 40.

“Many new lights will be going up on existing poles, and in some cases we will be upgrading existing lights,” says Gord Cebryk of the cities Transportation Dept.

“The main focus is to target crime and safety issues.”

To that end, the city has liaised with police to mark out the best possible locations for the new lights – dark spots that can allow criminal or unsafe behaviour to happen undetected.

Peter Rausch from the Alberta Avenue Business Association is very pleased.

“We look forward to this as another step towards creating a crime-free Avenue.”

Laneway lighting is an issue that came up in a report from EPS to the Edmonton Police Commission in June 2006. Although the report dealt specifically with Whyte Avenue, the areas of 118 Ave and Downtown were also recognized as having similar problems.

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News Briefs

KAREN MYKIETKA

If you don't have the time or interest in reading through the daily newspaper but like to know what is happening in your community, check out ratcreek.org/news. News relevant to our community is posted regularly, including links to Edmonton Journal articles. Help us out by being the eyes and ears on the street and contact us with community news at info@ratcreek.org or 479-6285.

Senior and long-time resident dies in fire

In the early hours of February 7, 81-year-old Alex Moysa perished in a home fire that may have started from a cigarette. The WWII veteran had resided at 89 St and 112 Ave for over three decades. He lived alone and had no children. Read the Edmonton Journal article at www.ratcreek.org/news.

Mandel insists 118 Avenue a priority project

Mayor Stephen Mandel is confident the \$35 million Alberta Avenue Revitalization Initiative will proceed even though the funding for the project isn't all secured yet. The work which will taken place from 2008 to 2012 will include road repair, improved lighting, commercial investment and beautification. A community-investment fund of \$150,000 will start providing seed money this summer to residents to help pay for projects that improve the area. Read the

Edmonton Journal article at www.ratcreek.org/news.

Clean up order upheld on local junk yard

Neighbours have been making bylaw complaints about Colin Baker's property on the 113 block of 92 St for years. The yard is overrun with junk and the house was condemned and slated for demolition until Mr. Baker successfully got an injunction. His latest clean up order, which he also appealed, has been upheld. Find a link to Scott McKeen's thoughts at ratcreek.org/news.

Scott McKeen on affordable housing

'Us vs. Them' is formula for sterile city: Low-income housing no cause for 'elitist' alarm. Read the Edmonton Journal article at www.ratcreek.org/news.

EICHs Director received housing award

George Kelly, executive director of the Edmonton Inner City Housing Society (EICHs) received a ROOPH (Recognize Outstanding Organizations, People and Housing) award on February 6 from the Edmonton Housing Trust Fund. EICHs works to bring safe, long-term housing to low-income people in the inner city. Read the Edmonton Journal article at www.ratcreek.org/news. And watch for a feature on "Housing" in the June issue of the Rat Creek Press. Send us your opinions, ideas and stories

on housing issues, affordable housing, homelessness, etc



GEORGE KELLY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EDMONTON INNER CITY HOUSING SOCIETY (EICHs) RECEIVED A ROOPH (RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS, PEOPLE AND HOUSING).

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Avenue Initiative

Revitalization Strategy

Mark Your Calendar

May 5

Large Item Pick Up and Graffiti Removal Eastwood Community League, 9-4pm

The Community will be coming together to put on the 2nd annual Large Item Clean Up and Graffiti Removal. We will be kicking off the day with a Pancake Breakfast then hitting the streets with paintbrushes and the back alleys with trucks. If you have two hands, and/or a truck we need you! Please call Judy at 496-1913 to volunteer.

May 12

Mothers Day Gardening Event Eastwood community League, 11-3pm

An afternoon of gardening workshops, composting, bedding plants sale and perennial swap, and children's Mother Day craft. An afternoon you won't want to miss!

June 9

Avenue Goes to the Dogs Alberta Ave Community League, 10-4pm

If you are a dog owner or lover you won't want to miss this day. Plans are currently underway for a day full of fun for dogs, people, and kids!

Do you have a problem house on your block? A neighbour who keeps an untidy yard? Do you suspect that drugs are being sold? What should you do? REPORT IT!

Drug Houses: 423-4567

Untidy Yards, Snow not shoveled: 496-3100

General Crime: 423-4567.

One of the best ways to create a safe community is to get to know your neighbours. Consider becoming a BLOCK CAPTAIN and hosting a Block Party to get to know your neighbours. We are currently developing a resource package that will provide you with all the information. Call 496-1913 or email judy.allan@edmonton.ca and one will be sent to you soon.

Do you have an idea that would help revitalize your community? A new grant is available for the communities of Alberta Avenue, Eastwood, Parkdale Cromdale, Spruce Avenue and Westwood to bring your ideas to life. Applications should be available at the end of March. Ideas can be big or small. Start getting creative!!

To get involved in an Avenue Initiative Working Group call:
Judy at 496 - 1913 or e-mail judy.allan@edmonton.ca

Leather-hides and leather-bound

Two unique and long standing businesses on the Ave

PETER RAUSCH

I'd like to highlight two long-standing businesses on Alberta Avenue. Anne Olson is the store manager of the Wee Book Inn, which has been serving the reading needs for this area for over 28 years, as well as being the home to two special cats. Anne is passionate about books and reading. She is proud that her store sells over 100,000 books each year!

The Wee Book Inn on 118 Ave is one of four located throughout Edmonton. Their goal is to provide the best selection of the newest books ranging from first time writers to best selling authors. Their shelves are filled with adventure, westerns, thrillers, romance and classic books as well as a good selection of non-fiction titles, such as do-it-yourself, reference (for students), hobbies and more. They also have a great

selection of non-fiction titles, such as do-it-yourself, reference (for students), hobbies and more. They also have a great

Anne about your book needs, and to see the beautiful cats!

items, as well as in the making of traditional Aboriginal outfits, drums and medicine bags.

John noted that there are few tanners in Canada, so he has to buy his cow, pig, deer, elk, moose and lamb hides from throughout Europe, and



ROCKET (LEFT) AND POCKET (RIGHT) AT THE WEE BOOK INN



BUCKSKIN FUR & LEATHER

Now let's go from leather bound to leather skin. John Senkinson is the owner of Buckskin Fur & Leather, a store that has been operating in this area for 20 years. His selection of over 100 quality hides attracts professional upholsters, seamstresses, artists, hobbyist and do-it-yourself customers from throughout Western Canada. The hides are used in saddle making, re-upholstering furniture, custom designed handbags and other fashion

North and South America, to offer quality and variety in his inventory. His store does not carry any exotic hides.

If you haven't been in his store, you are invited to drop in and browse. John always has a pot of coffee on for his customers.

Wee Book Inn
8101 - 118 Avenue
474-7888
Monday to Sunday
7:00 am to Midnight

Buckskin Fur & Leather
8815 - 118 Avenue
477-9254
Monday to Saturday
10:00 am to 6:00 pm

selection of children's books.

Their policy of buy, sell or trade is not only for books, but extends to their selection of DVD's and CD's as well. Anne is also willing to help residents that want to set up a book club at their homes. Pop in sometime to talk to

selection of over 100 quality hides attracts professional upholsters, seamstresses, artists, hobbyist and do-it-yourself customers from throughout Western Canada. The hides are used in saddle making, re-upholstering furniture, custom designed handbags and other fashion

Dancin', walking with giants, and THAT play!



Welcome to the first edition of Live from the Ave. This will be a column highlighting local entertainment and local artists. If you have anything you would like to contribute, or like to see in the column, please feel free to contact The Rat Creek Press.

O'Hoy There
March isn't green just because

the twenty-first is the first day of spring. March 17 is, of course, St. Paddy's day, a worldwide celebration of all things Irish. Edmonton's favorite Celtic band, Captain Tractor, boasts two members living in Norwood, and the band are playing a home town show at The Starlight Room (10030 102 Street) on Saturday, March 17.

Something's Up at the AACL
Come and get high at the Alberta Avenue Community League. Naturally high, that is. Every Sunday afternoon from one to four, the Edmonton Stilt

Walkers Association are holding stilt walking classes for all ages in the Hodson Hall. Even if you don't participate in the classes, you can still come by for a look. Be warned though, this is not a spectator sport - you just might find yourself walking with the giants! Check out their website at www.edmontonstiltwalkers.ca for more information about this and other workshops.

Theatre Prospero
Shakespeare on the Avenue? That's right; get ready for some classical theatre! Theatre Prospero are proud to announce

their on-going association with the Alberta Avenue Community League. The theatre company has recently rented office space in the building and is planning to use the big hall as a rehearsal and performance site. Executive Director Mark Henderson is very excited about the arrangement.

"The digs are nice; there is a great bakery across the street and the office even has a window! Also, it is cheaper than anywhere else in town."

Theatre prospero will be putting on a performance of Macbeth on March 10 (see P 9 for details), and Hamlet in May.

Arts on the Ave (AOTA)
Local arts group, Arts on the Ave, are making progress with

their project of putting fine art into the windows of empty buildings on the Avenue. Three local artists, Lorraine Shulba, Fasil Yennie, and Michelle Leavitt-Djonlic, have been chosen to create the paintings and AOTA are currently talking to landlords on the Avenue, trying to secure the windows. Keep an eye out in the spring for painters on the street. And make no mistake; this will NOT be like the window painting you used to see during Klondike Days!

Scott Peters is a freelance musician, theatre producer and designer, who has been working in the arts and culture industry for over twenty years. He lives in Norwood with his wife, two kids and a cat.

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Business Briefs

Eds Pizza
11749 95 St
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Mon-Sun, noon to late night.

Eds Pizza on 95 St has a new owner and a new outlook on food. As well as serving up several different kinds of delicious pizza by the slice, he is also offering donairs and subs. Open late, Eds is the perfect place to go for a late night snack, as well as for lunch or dinner.

Out of the Fire Studio has moved from its long time home on Fort Road to a larger location on Jasper Ave (12214 Jasper Avenue). The new gallery and show room will hold its grand opening on March 8.

Check out their website for store hours (www.outofthefirestudio.com).



David Eggen
 MLA, Edmonton-Calder

Don't hesitate to contact me

10212-127 Avenue call: 780-451-2345
 Edmonton, Alberta fax: 780-451-2344
 T5E 0B8

visit: www.NDPOpposition.ab.ca
 e-mail: edmonton.calder@assembly.ab.ca

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This report courtesy of Donna Straus, Royal LePage Arteam. Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

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 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
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EASTER CELEBRATION

We invite you to join us!

Service Times: 10:30 am

- March 18
Special Music & Drama
- March 25
Special Music & Drama
- April 1—Palm Sunday
- April 6—Good Friday
Communion
- April 8—Easter Sunday
Choir Production

Ph. 471-2250

10123 Princess Elizabeth Ave.
 on the traffic circle
 south of Boston Pizza

Christian Life Center

In which she shows her frugal side

the Gardening Diva

WITH CHERYL WALKER

Readers persist in asking TGD (the gardening diva) why they should grow flowers from seed. Readers, enough! Why ever not? Seeds are more economical (and TGD does admit to being a soupçon frugal), provide better variety and are much more interesting than the banal species found on offer at your local hardware store on HRH the Esteemed Victoria's birthday.

Therefore, off to your local hardware store, garden centre or, TGD's favourite, www.gardensnorth.com. Buy, buy, buy and rest assured that you are receiving excellent value for money.

Some overly fussy reader will be determined to complain about the need for planning and organization and themes in the garden. TGD says Bah! Honestly dear reader, TGD enjoys well-planned formal gardens. She likes English country gardens. She likes cutting gardens. But dear reader, you need

seeds to plant to make flowers. Enough said about themes. Buy seeds, dear readers.

Alas, there are limits to reckless abandon in gardening. Every gardener should consider the basics when purchasing flower seeds: the type, zone and the amount of sun required. Please dear reader, I implore you, look at the seed package. Determine the type: is the flower an annual (you will be blessed by its presence for only one year), a perennial (you and the plant will have many happy years to come), a biennial (it will spend two years with you) or a self-seeder (it will scatter itself all over your garden, irregardless of where you think it should stay).

Pay attention to the zone of the plant. Edmonton and its environs are Zone 3. Accordingly, Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 3 plants will thrive here. Zone 4 plants may survive, and Zone 5 plants, in extraordinarily protected locations, with much cossetting and petting may survive over winter. Zones 7-10 are simply too delicate for our environs, and are, at best, annuals.

Spend some time where the plant will live. How much

light does it have? After much trial and error, TGD has determined that one must be brutally honest about this, fudging simply does not work. Plants requiring full sun will need at least 8 hours of afternoon and early evening sun. Plants requiring part sun or part shade will be content with early morning sun, or later evening sun. Full shade plants will not tolerate sun.

Alas, the very best of flowers do require full sun. For those of you with north facing gardens, TGD is sad. She too shares this problem, and hopes that when we meet on that happy shore, we shall have full sun, and no slugs. Do look though; some flowers will live happily in full shade.

The observant among you will have noticed that TGD has provided no instructions about growing flowers from

seed. It is simply not possible to be general enough with the 500 words her editor has limited her to. As a rule of thumb, most seeds you purchase are warm germinators that will grow in the conditions indicated in last issue's tomato column. If you have specific questions, TGD will happily assist you in answering them. Please email her at thegardeningdiva@gmail.com.

Now dear readers, go forth and plant seeds to bloom!

TGD (aka Cheryl Walker) lives and gardens in Parkdale, with the très wonderful gardening diva husband and the non-gardening dogs. She believes that everyone should have a garden, and that hardware stores carry ugly, boring and overpriced flowers. Next month she shall dish on dirt.



Growing people –not just food

KIMBERLY FERLAND

During the Second World War a unique community movement began. Canadians began building gardens to offset the effects the war was having on the availability of food. Urban gardeners used any available space to grow vegetables for their families and neighbours.

The "Victory Garden Brigade" in Victoria began petitioning the government for support to create gardens. The idea was to supplement food so that more resources could be sent overseas to support the troops and bring victory sooner. Despite opposition, the gardens were eventually approved. These "victory" gardens grew out of adversity and sacrifice for others, and symbolized the determined self-reliance of a people at war.

The tradition of urban gardeners working together

to better their community through the idea of community gardens continues into today to flourish throughout many communities in cities across North America. Currently in Edmonton there are over fifty flourishing gardens providing food for many people throughout the city. These gardens are motivated not by the same

and a desire to see people learn and grow together. The access to fresh vegetables becomes almost secondary, although it is a great bonus!

These days, there is a different kind of adversity that we face in our community. An understanding of self-reliance, community and connection with nature has been buried in the worry and rush

suggest that something needs to be done differently to restore our community to the vision that many of us have for where we want to live and what we want for our families.

On Feb. 13 the first step was taken in learning what was involved in building a community garden in the Alberta Avenue area. People from several communities heard

a presentation about the process involved in building a community garden. A lot of planning, and many volunteer hours, are needed to build a successful garden. The first step is to understand why people want a community garden and to create a vision of what it would look like and how it would affect our community.

The dream behind a community garden is much more than growing vegetables. Susan Penstone of the Edmonton

Community Garden Network, who presented at the meeting, agrees.

"A community garden

is a place where people and community are grown, alongside vegetables or flowers. A garden is inclusive; everyone from all income levels is able to share knowledge, resources and work," says Penstone. "Seniors, families, youth, and children are all able to work together, on common ground, because anyone can dig in the dirt or pull carrots."

In a community garden, people can get outside into their neighbourhood, learn to play in the dirt and have an opportunity to reconnect with nature. It could become a hub of the community with activities such as gardening workshops, perennial swaps and community kitchens, as well as many learning opportunities growing from the connections made in the garden. The community would become more walkable, because as people get to know their neighbours and learn to take pride in their neighbourhood, petty crime will be discouraged. The activities centered around a community garden are limited only by imagination (and people to manage them of course!)

Each garden is as unique as the community who builds it and the Avenue is a very creative and unique community. There is still a lot of planning that needs to be done to realize the dream of a garden in our area. If you would like to be involved in a garden in our community please contact Kimberly at 474-8302.



'OUR URBAN EDEN' FROM THE FALL OF 2005. THIS NOW DEFUNCT COMMUNITY GARDEN WAS LOCATED ON BELLAMY HILL AND HAS SINCE BEEN RELOCATED.

cause as the victory gardens, but for the same purpose; they are developed because of a commitment to community,

of working and living in a society that has lost its way. I don't think it will come as a surprise to anyone when I

The art of growing many apples on just one tree

DAWN FREEMAN

Henry Stainthorp has just 3 apple trees, but reaps over 8 varieties of apples from them. His crab-apple tree only has one branch that produces crab-apples left. And he once convinced pear to grow alongside his apples – on the same tree! Confused? Henry is a master-grafter; a person who can almost magically make a branch from one tree grow and prosper on another.

How does he do it? Henry shrugs modestly. It's 'fool-proof and 'not very hard'. Of course, Henry has been perfecting his technique for 30 years, so it's all second nature to him. Although, as he has been getting good results from the very beginning, perhaps he was also born with 10 green fingers.

Grafting is the taking of a twig from one kind of tree and attaching it to another. Any

kind of stone fruit tree can be grafted to another stone tree, and any kind of seed fruit tree can be grafted to another kind of seed. Henry once grafted and successfully grew a pear branch on one of his apple trees.

"It lasted about 4 years before succumbing to a disease and dying – the pear branch that is. I chopped it off in time and the apple tree it grew on was unharmed".

Henry's technique is so successful he is now grafting onto grafts. The first tree he added branches to was a crabapple.

"I went a bit gung-ho and spliced too many of the same kind of apple onto the tree. So then I got too many apples all ripening at the same time," he says. "Now I'm trying to even it out by adding on some different kinds of apples."

That is the beauty of having a variety of apples all growing on the same tree;

apples all season long. Henry has apples from August all the way through the season. And because he has so many kinds, he never gets tired of them (and neither do his neighbours I bet!)

Here is the patent-pending, fool-proof, easy as pie guaranteed Henry Stainthorp grafting apple tree branches technique.

Any kind of apple tree or crab-apple tree (except for the jelly crab-apple kind) can become a mother tree for grafting onto. If you don't already have one in your yard you can buy one, but will need to wait two to three years for it to become established enough to handle grafting.

In the spring, just when the buds are starting to grow, take a twig from the tree you want. It should have at least 4 buds on it. Taper the end that is going onto the tree. Choose the branch that is going to be

grafted. Trim some off, then make an incision in the cut end. Place the twig in the incision and seal with pruning tar.

That's it! It will take a couple of years before your grafted

branch will grow fruit, but you will be able to see if it has 'taken' that same year. Eventually the twig will grow to match the size of the branch it was grafted on, and you'll hardly notice the difference between the old and the new. Make sure you water them well in the fall before the winter hits, and water once a week

in the summer heat.

If you find it's not as easy as Henry makes it sound, contact him at the Spruce Avenue Community League. Otherwise, enjoy your apples!



A NEWLY GRAFTED BRANCH ON ONE OF HENRY'S APPLE TREES STARTS TO FLOWER.



Slugging through the summer

RENÉ LADSOUS

If you are like me, last year you had to contend with many slimy creatures bent on enjoying the fruits of your labour in the vegetable garden before you had a chance to even pick the early comers. It is not fair that earthworms – our friends – should have enemies in the soil itself, but not slugs! I tried spraying the plants with soapy water and watering with dishwater, but with limited success. So this year I intend to take action; I've done a bit of research and discovered there ARE ways to get rid of those pesky crawlers.

Firstly, of course, there is the traditional beer in an aluminum pie plate at ground level. It seems slugs are also sloshes that can drink until they drown – literally. Place one such trap approximately every 10 feet to solve the problem, and if any survive due to abstinence, you can always pluck them out and put them in a container with soapy water. I must admit, however, I can see a better use of the liquid (the beer, that is to say!).

Now, if you don't mind donning rubber gloves and plucking the slugs out by hand, there does exist a very simple solution. We all have old pieces of wood lying around, and slugs love darkness and moisture. Place the boards strategically around and within your gardening compound, and check them every day. You will be amazed – mostly disgusted – by the number of those slimy things you will find.

On the more expensive side,

there is the copper barrier. Some very learned scientists actually spent time studying the problem (it seems slugs made it to university). After what one can imagine numerous trials and errors, it was discovered that slugs do not like copper. Those eminent scholars do not know exactly why, but they did what they do best, they "hypothesized": slugs can do more than generate anger, they can also generate an electric current and they don't like it. So copper strips buried halfway around your garden, the top bent outward, turns out to be a very effective barrier. You can even buy them for that specific purpose.

Now for those few who enjoyed a fireplace or a wood stove this past winter, one more reason to boast. Slugs are slimy and that turns out to be their Achilles' heel. Keep those ashes and spread them generously around your plants. When the slugs are on the attack, they will have to produce more of their slime, and since they have no self-control they will keep on producing it until they dehydrate completely. But don't forget to renew the ash cover after the rain. Now if you don't have a fireplace or a wood stove... remember those bon fires in the back yard?

For my part, I will keep on with the soapy water (dishes) and the pieces of wood (I bought a box of rubber gloves). I will spring a little money in copper flashing (probably cheaper than the specially made strips), but I will enjoy the brew while waiting for harvest time.

Building a better bean tent

DAWN FREEMAN

Last summer my kids and I read a book called *Vera's Baby Sister*, by Vera Rosenberry. In the book Vera, who is feeling a little left out by the arrival of her baby sister, and her Granddad make a bean tent so that Vera can have a place of her very own. It's great book and I would recommend it for children aged 4-7. The book gave my daughter the inspiration to build her very own bean tent in our yard, although she kindly agreed that her brother would be allowed to play in it to.

A bean tent, for those of you in the dark, is exactly as it sounds – a tent made out of beans, or probably any vine like plant would work. You simply create a frame in the shape of a teepee, and plant the seeds or seedlings at the base of each leg. As the plant grows it vines up the frame and eventually creates a leafy structure that can be used as a tent. Scarlet runner beans or pole beans are good ones to use as they grow fast, are leafy and produce delicious beans.

In the story, Vera and her granddad cut down some small

trees in a nearby wood; we pruned about 8 long branches off a tree at my in-laws place instead. Taking them home, we sunk them into the earth of one of our vegetable gardens and tied them together at the top, forming a circle about 4 feet in diameter, and about 5 feet high. PVC pipe or thin bits of lumber could also be used to make the frame. It's important to

Then it is time to plant. Vera's Granddad took beans that were going to be used in a soup to their garden. We used some bean seeds we had left over from the previous year. Plant 4-6 bean seeds around the base of each leg of the frame and remember to water them well until they start sprouting. As they grow, direct their little clingy tendrils up the frame.

In Vera's story, the tent became a shady and private place for her to call her own. Sadly for us we had used the wrong kind of beans – the kind that didn't grow more than a foot high. The kids enjoyed their mostly open to the sky tent anyway and we still had delicious beans to eat. Next time we will use the right kind of beans, and maybe add a few morning glories or hyacinth bean vines as well.

We moved at the end of summer and our new house does not have a vegetable garden. But we

are planning on a bean tent just the same. I don't mind digging a few rings in the back yard grass to put the sticks and seeds in. The centre will be softer and cleaner to sit in than our first one was on the dirt!



HERE'S A SMALL BEAN TENT. FOR ONE THAT KIDS CAN PLAY IN MAKE IT WITH A 4 FOOT BASE AND A LARGER OPENING FOR A DOOR.

have legs close enough together so that when the plants grow they meet in the middle of each gap, thereby creating the sides of the tent. Remember though, to make one space larger so that you have a door into the tent.

The blight on the block

Cleaning up our neighbourhood takes patience and persistence

DAWN FREEMAN

Is there a house on your street that doesn't seem quite right? Perhaps it is becoming run-down with garbage and junk strewn about. Or perhaps it has an extra-ordinary amount of visitors on foot or in cars or taxis that only stay for a few minutes. Are there suddenly more break-ins or burglaries around your area, and more seemingly intoxicated people stumbling up your street? You might have a drug house on your block, and be prepared: you're in for the long haul in getting rid of it.

Mary's Story

"I think it started in December. All of a sudden there were so many people coming and going. There were cars and taxis driving and parking then leaving again after 5 or 10 minutes. The house looked terrible and it had gone downhill so quickly," stated Mary* (not her real name), an Alberta Ave resident whose block is witnessing the havoc of a suspected drug house. "I called the police a number of times, but I wondered if they were doing anything."

Turns out the police were working on it, as the house was raided and arrests were made not long after. Mary witnessed approximately 30 people taken out of the house, including a number of minors and apparently the house was also used for storing stolen goods. The property was boarded up and looked to be condemned, but unfortunately a week later, there were signs of life again.

"I saw a man pulling the boards off the windows, so I went over and asked him what he was doing. He said he needed some light in the house,"

said Mary. "Then he asked me if I was a neighbour. I walked away and around the block so he wouldn't know which house was mine – I'm scared for him to know where I live. He was there [in the house] before the police came and now it seems they have let him out. I don't know what's going on, or what to do next."

Three years and counting

Mary is only just started on what appears to be a long and arduous journey to cleaning up your own street. Sheryl, who lives about 7 blocks east of Mary, knows that full well. It has been three years since she and her family could use their back yard, due to the next-door neighbours.

"We have a young child who can't even play in her yard because of the house next door. They are crashing in and out, swearing and yelling, shooting up in the yard and they are not careful about where their needles end up. It's really unfair."

Sheryl and her husband have taken on the, what she with a forced laugh calls the 'part-time job', of trying to

get rid of the blight on her street, largely by themselves. They call by-law enforcement about broken windows, junked cars and garbage. She has a

times gets treated like a nag.

"We spent three weeks watching and writing down all the information we could; dates, times, descriptions of visitors, plate numbers, everything. We used binoculars sometimes, or drove around back in the car to get plate numbers from in the alley. Then we e-mailed this huge document to the Norwood

A neighbour who is a personal friend of Sheryl's, also helps with observation and information gathering – passing onto Sheryl what he sees. Another neighbour across the street recently became involved after a bloody and bruised woman stumbled out of the drug house and onto their doorstep asking for help.

Norwood Beats have told Sheryl a report has been passed on to their derelict housing officer and they are doing what they can. They tell her it takes time. They tell her to be patient, to write to the mayor, to get the media involved, to go to CAP (Community Action Project) and ask for their help in mobilizing the neighbours. But as of yet, EPS hasn't seemed to be able to do anything that sticks; the house has been raided three times in the last month, but seems to return to status quo within a few days each time.

The landlord doesn't seem to care about what his tenants are up to. When neighbours have tried to speak to him about the problems, he just yells at them, and tells them to mind their own business. EPS was called one time after witnesses saw him hitting and threatening his tenant. It makes Sheryl wonder how involved he is in the shady goings-on.

Sheryl is unsure what is going on from the EPS point-of-view, but from hers, the place is getting worse. And she's afraid it will take something major happening to shut it down for good.

In the meantime, she, her husband, and her neighbours will continue with what they



Norwood Beat cop on speed dial and she calls him a lot, although she says she some-

Beats (EPS), and we did get an e-mail reply thanking us for the information."

...continued on page 10

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Get that information to the right people

DAWN FREEMAN

Constable Rod Wadden wants you to know that he and his fellow Beat officers are working on it. And they get frustrated too.

"When you've got the information, got the search warrant, arrested the guy and then a few days later he's back in the neighbourhood again, it is frustrating, for us as well as you."

It takes time to shut down a drug house completely. Time to gather information, to get and execute the search warrant. Time to repeat steps one and two because drugs were not found the first time, or because the person is released and returns to continue their trade. Time to work with a cooperative landlord to help him or her navigate the court process to get problem tenants evicted. Time to deal with unscrupulous owners who don't care what is happening on their property, as long as they get their money.

But Constable Wadden assures us that he and his fellow Alberta Avenue Beat officers, along with all EPS members, are working hard. And he says they all welcome our information.

"I don't mind being

phoned at all. None of us [the Avenue Beat Team] do. It's part of my job after all. If we can shut down a drug house because we've received a dozen phone calls, then great!"

Wadden says they do cruise the blocks to see if they can spot problem houses, but the best tips come from residents. Just remember to be safe when collecting information and never confront a person whom you suspect is up to no good. Here's what information EPS are interested in:

WHO is coming to the house?

HOW many times, and what time of day and/or night?

WHAT do they look like; physical description, car make and colour, plate number?

WHAT activities do you see happening on the street or alley, or in the yard?

And don't forget that making a by-law complaint is another excellent way to get this property up on the radar. Is there garbage lying around? Wrecked cars or parts of cars parked in the yard? Broken windows or unshovelled sidewalks? Check out the City's website at www.edmonton.ca for more information about what constitutes a 'nuisance' property.

CONTACT INFO YOU NEED TO KNOW

To report crime and to give information, call the EPS Complaint Line at 423-4567.

To report a crime-in-progress, call Police/Emergency at 911.

To report prostitution or details about john's and their vehicles, call EPS at 421-2656.

To make a by-law complaint, call the City's Planning and Development at 496-3100.

To make a report of a derelict house, call the City's Derelict Housing at 496-6031

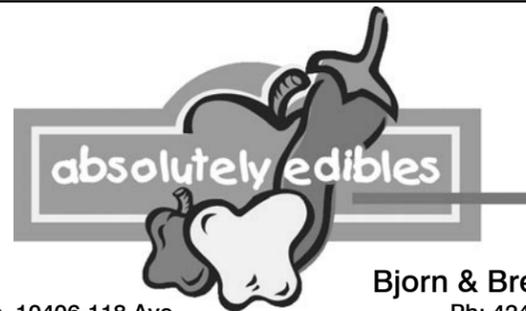
If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

Contact CAP (Community Action Project) at 474-8318 for help mobilizing a block.

Contact the Avenue Initiative Safe Streets Committee at 496-1913 for information on getting a block together (Block Party and Resource Kit).

By-law complaints can be made on-line at www.edmonton.ca.

Information about any criminal activity can be made on-line to EPS on their website at www.police.edmonton.ab.ca. Anonymous tips about any criminal activity can be made on-line at www.tipssubmit.com.



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Tickets at the door (cash only)
Students \$8 Adults \$10 Family \$20

(performance not appropriate for children under 7 years)

The blight on the block continued from page 9 . . .

are doing. After all, as Sheryl says, "what else can we do? We can't just sit here and pretend it isn't happening." She plans to approach the Community Action Project (CAP) to see if they can help further motivate and mobilize her street. And she will be continuing to call EPS – both the Beats and the Derelict Housing unit, as well as by-law to make reports.

The end will come

There is light at the end of the tunnel though. About a year ago another neighbourhood was mobilized and motivated to fight to remove a crack house on their block. And in the end, they emerged victorious, on not just one, but two fronts.

"What really got us [the neighbours] working together, after years of doing things alone, was Brad Goertz [CAP organizer]. He came to a neighbours meeting and really helped us decide who was going to deal with what. He kept us motivated too."

Laurel has just recently spoken at a Quasi-Judicial Standing Committee meeting with members of City Council. She and 11 neighbours were there to speak out against a homeowner on their block whose property is a junk yard and was fighting a long-standing by-law complaint. Edmonton Journal columnist Scott McKen wrote about the

homeowner and the appeal meeting on January 31 (see ratcreek.org/news for a link).

Laurel and her fellow actioners had the satisfaction of seeing the appeal turned down by the Council, just as they enjoyed watching the drug house go permanently out of business in November 2006. She is very proud of herself and the others on her block for sticking with it on both cases.

"It is really hard to get people motivated to make a stand. And even harder to keep them motivated and willing to put in the work over a long period of time. It takes a lot of time and energy, and people are busy!"

Laurel and her neighbours did the same kind of things that Sheryl, and now Mary, are doing; taking down information, calling the police over every little thing and getting the case file numbers, calling by-law, staying in touch and sharing knowledge with neighbours.

Connecting is Key

Patience, persistence, and connection are key to cleaning up your street. Sure, our legal systems are slow and our police understaffed, but eventually they work. The more information we supply, the more the police have to work with. And on those days when the police make us feel like we're the nuisance, we can say, 'hey, we're

trying to help, we're doing what has been asked of us as a community – looking out for our neighbourhood and passing on our suspicions'. And then we can forgive them for being human and frustrated too.

We can group together, we can make a network, because a group is more powerful than one person alone. And a group can support each other, share the 'part-time job' that fighting the crime on our street becomes. A group can make sure that no-one burns out before the job is done.

And when our own street is finally cleaned up, and we have a great network of neighbours all connected and comfortable with each other, maybe we could go one or two steps further. Teach other streets how to mobilize, other neighbours how to work together. Join to clean up the alleyways in between our streets. Lobby the city and the province for tougher laws on landlords who allow and even encourage criminal activities in their houses.

Imagine if any time there was a problem in the neighbourhood, the whole community came together to deal with it – informed, energized, connected, mobilized. Every block bringing their own expertise and connections to the table, every person willing to pitch in just a little bit. Everyone willing to talk and listen and come to a solution that benefits all.



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

Protecting Our Environment

Since taking office a year ago, the Conservative Government has acted decisively to implement the changes that Canadians elected them to make. Canadians have been telling the Government that the environment is one of their top concerns and so the Government is listening and taking action to address important environmental issues that for too long were neglected by our leaders.

The Conservative Government, in consultation with provinces and industry, is taking a focused approach built on priorities that include CO₂ sequestration, clean coal, clean oil sands production, and renewable energy.

With the introduction of the *Clean Air Act*, the Government has created Canada's first integrated and comprehensive approach to tackle air pollution and green house gas emissions.

In addition, the Government recently committed \$2 billion to ecoEnergy, an initiative aimed at addressing important sources of emissions and air pollutants, promoting the use of less energy and the use of cleaner energy.

The initiative includes three main programs. First, the ecoEnergy Technology Initiative will commit \$230 million for clean energy technology that will ensure Canada is a leader in environmentally sound technological advancements.

Second, the ecoEnergy Renewables Initiative will invest \$1.5 billion towards increasing Canada's renewable energy supplies.

And finally, the ecoENERGY Efficiency Initiative will allow Homeowners and small business owners to access \$300 million in financial and other support measures for efficiency improvements to homes and businesses.

In addition, the Conservative Government has set aside a further \$1.5 billion for the Eco-Trust Initiative to assist all provinces in funding projects that will result in cleaner air and lower green house gas emissions.

Rather than simply talking about environmental issues, the Conservative Government is taking real action that will protect our air, land and water for future generations.

What do you think?

495-3261

www.petergoldring.ca

Stories of dreams fulfilled

Big Enough Dreams by Debbie Marshall and Yvonne DuBourdieu

Available at Greenwoods and Audreys bookstores \$25

BOOK REVIEW

WITH GORDON VICKRUK

Take a collection of Alberta's finest authors, poets, and playwrights, sit them down with 31 adults with DD (Developmental Disabilities) and what do you come up with? An Edmonton best seller! Who'd have thought?

Prominent writers such as Todd Babiak, Linda Goyette, Myrna Kostash, Gloria Sawai, Curtis Gillespie, and Cheryl Mahaffy were gathered together by editor Debbie Marshall to profile the lives and dreams of people who are often overlooked or marginalized in our society. Debbie's efforts, as well as those of photographer and filmmaker Yvonne DuBourdieu, were supported by the Edmonton Learning Community and Persons with Developmental Disabilities – a department with the Ministry of Seniors.

Big Enough Dreams expresses the dreams, desires, and ambitions that are as much a part of the lives of people with a developmental delay (mental handicap) as they are of the general population. For Dan, success means living on his own and maintaining a paper route. John is also fascinated with newspapers so he publishes his own. Tanya has her picture taken with her lifelong idol, Luciano Pavarotti. Matthew gets up early each day with the responsibility for farm chores, including feeding, training and riding the dozen or so stable horses.

What is so special about these lives and lifestyles? Nothing really. People with disabilities are just like you and I, with all the frustrations and feelings that the rest of us have had to come to terms with. That's the point of the book. *Big Enough Dreams* gives a face to a

segment of the populace that is often seen only in terms or labels and prejudices. In the forward to the book, Debbie Marshall addresses these attitudes with questions; "How often do people still avert their eyes when an intellectually challenged person is accompanied onto a bus by a caregiver? Or how many times do people stop and speak to the man who lives independently in the supported-living apartment in their neighbourhood? Uncomfortable about a physical or intellectual condition we don't understand, put off by physical ticks or a drooping mouth, we smile, nod, and move on as quickly as possible. Our fears of the unpredictable, the mentally different, lead us to symbolically and sometimes literally, cross to the other side of the street."

So these stories are special because for many of us, this will be the first time that we will see the whole person behind the disability. And the stories are special because each of the dreams related in the book came perilously close to never having happened. In a world stacked against people who have limitations, people who are different and who cannot fend for themselves, none of the individuals in this book would have realized their dreams if there had not been someone on the outside pulling for them. Whether a parent or sibling, teacher or support staff, someone had to step alongside to advocate, support and believe in these dreams that are

oh so very vulnerable: a married couple shares the insurmountable challenges of trying to raise a family on government assistance; a young woman is only able to get out into the community because of the assistance of a paid staff member; a young man has a job he loves because the employer is especially sensitive to the needs

and abilities of people with disabilities.

It has been said that the maturity of a civilization is reflected in how it cares for that segment of the population that cannot care for themselves.

Supporting

people with disabilities is a community effort. For those of us living within the readership of this paper, this is not simply abstract social theory. Our communities are reflective of all walks of life, young and old, able-bodied and disabled, wealthy and poor, second and third generation Canadians and new immigrants, those with their own homes and those living on the street, those with steady incomes and those salvaging scrap or bottles for a living. We could not all live together in these communities that we call home if there were not extensive social programs in place. Just like the people in the book, for each of us to achieve our dreams, we need the support of others to believe in us and share our vision.



A recipe for any season

DAWN FREEMAN

In honour of St Patrick's Day, here is a recipe for traditional Irish Soda Bread, taken from Dublin's official St Patrick's Festival website (www.stpatricksdays.ie).

Irish Soda Bread

One hundred fifty years ago it was common to make bread using baking soda rather than yeast in parts of rural Ireland. That's where Irish soda bread gets its name. The practice of using baking soda started out of necessity. Yeast won't make dough rise unless the baker uses "strong" flour, which was scarce in parts of Ireland. Baking soda, however, could be counted on to leaven bread. The baking soda has to be combined with something acidic in order to do its magic; in this case, buttermilk. So, not only is this a historic and tasty recipe; it's pretty foolproof, too.



Ingredients:

- 2 cups white flour
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 tbsp. butter, chilled
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk or plain yogurt

Directions:

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, combine the dry ingredients.

Cut in the butter until it is pea-sized. Stir in the raisins and buttermilk or yogurt. Turn the dough onto a floured surface, knead 1 minute, and shape into a disk.

Cut an "X" in the top and bake on a greased baking sheet for 45 to 50 minutes.

Makes one 8-inch-wide loaf.

Do you have a recipe that you wish to share? Perhaps it is a family recipe handed down through the generations, a special treat for a holiday occasion, one that you found in a book, or even one you just created on your own! The Rat Creek Press wants your recipes and the story behind them to share with our community. Send your submissions to editor@ratcreek.org.

Norwood Neighbourhood Association reviews a full and vibrant 2006

VALERIE PARR
President Norwood Neighbourhood Association (NNA)

Well, look at that, it's March already. Let's face it; an article about a year in review would be, for certain, expected in January. But isn't that just like a new year? One minute we're ringing it in and the next it's March.

The Norwood Neighbourhood Association had quite an active year starting in February with our major fundraising activity, the casino. With the help of other community groups and volunteers, some from outside the commu-

nity, we were able to add to our funding coffer. Through this we are able to continue to support local groups and organizations in their endeavours to make our community more cohesive, safe and culturally appreciative. People helping people to make the Norwood community shine!

In 2006 NNA was very happy to support the following:

Heart of the City Festival occurred on a very cold June weekend, however the musicians and artisans were not deterred and went on with a show that met with positive reviews. This festival will be expanding in 2007.

Norwood Elementary

School Parent Council approached NNA for funding, and after some discussion the Board agreed that we would like to see funds go to the school field trip program. It provides the children an opportunity for hands on/experiential learning outside of the school environment, which is always a wonderful way to learn.

Rat Creek Press, our most appreciated community newspaper, which is currently seeking alternate funding sources. RCP plays an important role in our community and provides a wealth of information, from articles to advertisements, that is all relevant to

our vibrant community.

Arts Alive! 2006, the first annual arts celebration on 118 Avenue. Arts on the Avenue, a very positive, energetic, and committed group, presented an exciting proposal with a clear vision that all could see. Again, the celebration had to deal with a cold October weekend, but for a first time event the organizers and artists should be very proud of themselves for what they accomplished. We look forward to this year's event.

Outside of our funding efforts in March, we had a Volunteer Appreciation gathering. We understand the importance of recognizing the talent and efforts of people, those from within our community and those who live outside, whom have volunteered with the NNA. It also provides a relaxed atmosphere where we can get to know each other better and share stories.

On July 1, we once again held our Canada Day

Celebration. This is a popular event in the community, especially for the kids. It is an event that requires a great deal of organizing by the Board and help from volunteers, but every year it comes together and is always a success.

Norwood Neighbourhood Association is a small, vibrant organization working hard to add to all the positive events happening in our area. We are always interested in expanding our Board, and invite any community member to attend our monthly meetings. We meet at 7 pm for an hour and a half on the second Wednesday of every month at the Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, 9516 – 114 Avenue. Just press the bell high up on the right side of the door to be let in. Don't be put off by the word "meeting"; we are a small group of relaxed people simply wanting to make a difference. If this sounds like you as well, come and check us out.

Are you sure you should be eating that? Locking the door on your PC

THE EDIBLE ADVENTURES OF GASTROBOY

WITH BRAD GOERTZ

I was in a bike gang growing up in Calgary. We terrorized dogs and made regular runs to the local Mac's convenience store for sugar treats. We supported our habit by taking garbage to the alley and shovelling sidewalks.

Now there was only so much trash to haul in the early eighties, and so one day we found ourselves hiding behind a honeysuckle hedge with a

piece of fishing line tied to an old wallet sitting in the street, knees skinned and no quarters in our pockets.

My friend pinched off a honeysuckle blossom and put it in his mouth and we waited patiently for him to die. Our Moms had already told us that any berry that isn't a straw or a rasp is poisonous, so to us he might as well have drank bleach. But he didn't die, and that's how we hit upon a cheap fix for our sugar needs that would

tide us over until garbage day.

Some caution is required, however, when putting things in your mouth, and if it tastes bad, then it probably is. Make sure of what you are eating before you dust your family's plates with it. It is also a good idea to grow the plants and flowers yourself if you can. Flowers intended for decoration, like those for sale at a florist, are



DAY LILIES FOR LUNCH? HMMM....

often sprayed with chemicals that make them last longer and grow larger, and it's not the sort of stuff you want in your mouth.

Like any other vegetable or plant you cook with, flowers should be washed before putting them on the table and removing the bitter-tasting stamens, pistils and seeds will improve the flavour. And remember, our sense of taste is primarily affected by our sense of smell; a flower will 'taste' pretty much how it smells. (Get it? 'Pretty much?'

Flowers are 'pretty', ha ha ha).

Here is a short list of edible flowers and a list of medicinal plants passed on to me by Roberta Malin, a resident of Alberta Avenue who was taught by her mother about medicinal plants when she was growing up – particularly those discovered and developed by Canada's First Nations people.

Chrysanthemums are tasty in salad and their delicate peppery taste is nice in a stir-fry.

Lilacs should be out soon and are delicious blended into a batch of Pinocchio's vanilla ice cream.

Another peppery green is arugula. The peppery taste gets stronger with age, but the young leaves are very nice with salmon or lamb.

Hibiscus tastes like cranberries; fuchsia, day lilies, and roses are all edible, and don't forget the flowers on garlic and chives, which taste like a gentler version of the bulbs.

The common dandelion is good for many things; the young buds taste a bit like honey and the root is good in tea.

Chickweed tea (dried or fresh) eases menstrual cramps.

Peppermint or spearmint tea is good for an upset stomach or a hangover.

The inner part of willow bark chewed, or in tea is good for headache, aches and pains. It tastes awful, but think Buckley's – also made from plants.

Chamomile tea or onion seeped in honey is good for a sore throat.

Ever wonder what the secret ingredient is in that fancy French booze, Chartreuse? It's carnations.

GastroBoy, (aka Brad Goertz,) has sampled the world's food and beverages and always comes back for a good pyroghy. His super-power metabolism allows him to eat whatever he wishes without gaining a pound, and his super-secret Achilles' heel is Portuguese Octopus Stew – shhh, don't tell anyone! GastroBoy's hideout is located somewhere top-secret in Delton and is protected by deadly meme cream horns and European pastries.

TECHNO BABBLE

WITH ROBIN STOCKS

Security is one of the most important aspects of using a Microsoft based computer today especially since most of us are connected to the Internet. For the PC, I recommend a 5-phased approach:

1) Are you sure that the software on your computer is up to date? In the Start Menu, click on All Programs and select Windows Update. Choose Express Check that will automatically scan your system and recommend which updates you should install – in my opinion, all of them! Many times hardware updates are not automatically offered, so you could also run a Custom scan to see if there is optional software offered by Microsoft. Secunia Software Inspector is a free online scanner that will analyze what applications you have installed on your machine and suggest current versions with links to download.

2) Ensure you have an updated database for your anti-virus application running and that your machine is free from all known viruses. Perform an independent virus scan of your computer by using a second party online virus scan. I will usually do a check on my machine once a month to confirm that my machine is clean. My suggested online scanner (<http://housecall.trendmicro.com>) is from a company that makes PC-cillin and Trend Micro.

3) If your machine is hooked up to high speed Internet like Cable or ADSL (always connected), I highly recommend that you have a firewall application installed. Firewalls offer additional protection from random access to your system. Microsoft XP is the only operating system that currently has a built-in firewall, however, by default the XP firewall only stops incoming connections and not outgoing

connections. If you are running Microsoft XP, I recommend installing an additional firewall to further protect your system. Sygate & Zone Alarms (personal versions) are two user-friendly products that are free. For even more security, use a hardware router with firewall features along with your software. This is a box that plugs between your incoming internet line and computer.

4) If you regularly use the Internet, check your machine for spyware on a monthly basis. I like AD-Aware SE Personal & Spybot Search & Destroy and run both of these products on my machine once a month. If you are computer savvy, you should have no problem running these programs. Now, one might ask: "Why use both?" Each program has a different database for locating spyware on your system and used together offer a more comprehensive inspection of your computer.

5) Install a second party spam filter or turn on the spam filter from your email provider. Criminal organizations have migrated onto the Internet and one preferred method to fraudulently rip you off is to trick you out of your personal information by sending a fake email from your banking or credit institution. Two products I have tried and had great success with are Mailwasher & Spambayes.

For a more complete list of free software, visit my website (www.stoxservices.com). If you have questions or suggestions, visit my contact page or my Blog site (<http://stoxservices.blogspot.com>.)

Disclaimer: I do not get paid for mentioning any of the software above. I recommend them only as I have had success using them on my Microsoft XP Home & Professional machines. Try these products at your own risk.

Robin and his family have lived in Eastwood for five years. He has worked in the Information Technology field for 8 years, for companies such as IBM, DELL, the Alberta Motor Association, as well as for the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton.

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Imagine not having a safe, clean, warm bed to sleep in.

For hundreds of Edmonton women this is a reality. WEAC changes that.

With your support, ensure a healthy, safe and warm place for homeless women to lay their heads.

The Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC), supports women from all social backgrounds and provides them with a safe refuge from homelessness. It provides a place where they can turn their lives around, receive assistance in basic life needs, life skills and help to find a job.

The current 75 mattresses at WEAC are old and worn out. Your support of the women at WEAC will provide these women with safety and comfort as they begin to take charge of their lives.

Each mattress and cover costs \$188.24. It comes with a 10 year warranty, and is: Fire resistant, Stain / Tear resistant and Non-allergenic,

If you can help, call E4C @ 424-7543 ext:229 or rpearson@e4calberta.org



FREE PUBLIC SKATING SCHEDULE**WINTER SEASON**
January - March 07**Clareview Arena** 3804 139 Ave
Sundays 3:30 - 4:30 pm, except
Mar 11, 18, 25Thursdays 2:30 - 3:30 pm, except
Mar 29Saturdays 11:45 - 12:45 pm, except
Mar 11, 18, 25**Londonderry Arena** 14520 66 St
Sundays, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, except
Mar 25Fridays, 6:30 - 7:30 pm, except
Mar 30**Westwood Arena** 12040 97 St
Sundays 3:15 - 4:15 pm, except
Mar 25**Oliver Arena** 10335 119 St
Tuesdays 6:15 - 7:15 pm, except
Mar 27**Eastwood Community League Rink**
Public Skating Wed to Fri: 4 pm - 8 pm, Sat 2 pm - 9 pm, Sun 2 pm - 8 pm**Parkdale/Cromdale Community League Rink** Public Skating Mon-Fri: 5 pm - 6 pm; Shinny hockey 6 pm - 9 pm, Sat 12 pm - 6 pm, Sun 12 pm - 5 pm**Spruce Avenue Community League Rink** Public skating Mon, Tues, Thur, 6.30 pm - 9 pm; Fri 7 pm - 9 pm; Sat 2 pm - 9 pm; Sun 2 pm - 5 pm. Spruce Ave. also has a small side rink for young children.**FREE COMMUNITY SWIMS**
Alberta Avenue and Parkdale
Community league members can swim for free at Eastglen Pool (11410-86 St) on Sun. from 12-2 pm.

Call your league to buy a membership.

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

For membership or more info call Ray at 474.5354 or Verna at 479.8019. You must present your 2006-2007 community league member card at the pool.

COMMUNITY LEAGUE INFORMATION:**Alberta Avenue**
9210-118 Avenue 477.2773
Meets 2nd Tue at 7pm
Hours: Wed 1pm-5pm**Delton**
12325-88 Street 477.3326
Call for meeting times**Eastwood**
11803-86 Street 477.2354
Meets 4th Wed at 7pm
Hours: MWF 10am-2pm**Elmwood Park**
12505-75 Street 479.1035
Call for meeting times**Parkdale Cromdale**
11335-85 Street 471.4410
Meets last Thu at 7pm
Hours: MWF 11am-2pm**Spruce Avenue**
10240-115 Avenue 471.1932
Meets 2nd Mon at 7pm**Westwood**
12139-105 Street 474.1979
Meets 1st Wed at 7pm**CAP - COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**Wednesday, March 21, 7pm
at Avenue Vineyard Church
2nd floor, 11726 - 95A St**SNOW-SHOVELLING HELP FOR SENIORS**

Need someone to clear the snow off your sidewalk? Find out who can do it at reasonable rates - call the City of Edmonton Citizen Action Centre at 496-8200 or Seniors Assoc of Greater Edmonton 423-5510 or Seniors Caring about Seniors 465-0311. Are you unemployed? Join OSP's Youth Employment Program for youth 16-30 who have a disability. Successful applicants will receive a living allowance while participating in the program. For info. Call 488-8122

LADIES, WE'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU! Join us 9:45 Thursday mornings for coffee, cake, chatter and the chance to discover and explore God's Word together. We meet at 11610 - 95A St. For more info: 455-0626 or 474-3893.**CRYSTAL KIDS**
8718 118 Avenue: Ph 479-5283
www.crystalkids.org**Parents and Tots drop-in**
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 am - 12:45 pm. This is a free program. Snacks are also provided.**Seniors drop-in**
Wednesdays 11:30 am - 12:45 pm. This is a free program. Soup and coffee is provided.**ST FAITHS ANGLICAN CHURCH**
11725 93 St: Ph 477-5931**Junior Chef Program** - Learning to cook more than Mac & Cheese - and Without a Microwave! For anyone from Grade 7 - 18 years. Thursday afternoons from 1 - 3 pm. Call 477 - 5931 to sign up. Cost is \$2.00 per week.**Senior Chef Program**
Cooking together on Tuesday mornings from 10 am - 12 pm in smaller portions to prepare meals to take home. If you are over 50 years old and interested, call 477 - 5931 for more information and to register. Cost is \$2.00 per meal that you take home.**COLLECTIVE KITCHEN**

3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30 - 8:30 pm. Cooking together in quantity to prepare 3 or 4 nutritious meals to take home for yourself or your family for later use. Call 477 - 5931 for more information and to sign up. Cost is \$2.00 per meal that you take home.

NORWOOD CHILD & FAMILY RESOURCE Centre. 9516 - 114 Avenue. Call 471-3737 to register for any of the groups.**Books For Babies**, in partnership with Centre for Family Literacy: Fridays, 2, 9, 16 & 23, 10:00 - 11:30 am - no lunch provided.**Books For Toddlers:**
Tuesdays, March 20 - May 1, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm lunch included
Children between the ages of 13 months - 2 years can attend this program with their parents or caregiver. We will explore books, play games, sing songs, and do crafts and many other fun activities. Lunch will be provided. If you need transportation please call Tina at 471-3737.**Books For Preschoolers:**
Thursdays, March 8 - April 19, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm lunch included
Children between the ages of 3 - 6 years old can attend this group with their parents or caregiver. We will read stories, tell stories, sing, dance, do crafts, play games and meet other families. Lunch is provided. If you need transportation please call Tina at 471-3737.**Literacy And Parenting Skills (L.A.P.S)**
Wednesdays, March 21 - May 16, 9:30 - 11:30 am
For parents who have children between the ages of 0 - 6. This group will provide support for parenting, community building, alternatives to TV, safe places for children, as well as learning reading and writing. Childcare is provided while parents are in-group and must be booked 2 weeks in advance with the Early Start Program upon registration. Transportation is not available for this group.**Rhymes that Bind**
April 11 - June 13, 2007
11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Lunch to follow group.**SPRING BREAK CLASSES****CITY ARTS CENTRE**
10943-84 Ave, Edmonton, AB T6G 0V5, Ph 496-6995
Looking for something fun to do this Spring Break? Try a class at the City Arts Centre: Art, Pottery classes, Make-up classes, Red Cross Babysitters certificate.**VALLEY ZOO**
13315 Buena Vista Road (87 Ave.), Ph 496-2925**Zoo Kids Camp**
Ages 6-10, Monday-Friday, Mar. 26-30, 9 am - 4 pm.**Monkey Troop**
Ages 4-5. Monday-Friday, Mar. 26-30, 9 am-noon**FORT EDMONTON PARK**
7000-143 St. (Corner of Fox Drive and Whitemud Drive), Ph 496-2925**Treasure Hunt**

Ages 6-12. Monday-Friday, Mar. 26-30, 9 am-4 pm.

JOHN JANZEN NATURE CENTRE

7000-143 St, Ph 496-2925

Mud Puddlers

Ages 4-5. Monday-Friday, Mar. 26-30, 9 am-noon.

THE ELDON AND ANNE FOOTE THEATRE SCHOOL SPRING BREAK CAMP 2007!The Citadel Theatre, 9828 - 101A Ave, Ph 428-2113
theatreschool@citadeltheatre.com
Ages 8-10 and 11-13, March 26 to 30, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**
Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts

The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts provides a studio where a collective of artists who have developmental disabilities can explore their creative potential and contribute to Edmonton's art community. Located in the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts is the Stollery Gallery which displays 8-10 exhibitions per year. When scheduling exhibitions, priority will be given to artists (or organizations representing them) who experience barriers to the conventional art world. These artists may be artists with disabilities, mental health issues, low-income or self-taught. Artists whose work has educational interest for the Centre will also be considered.

The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts accepts gallery proposals year-round, and will review submissions on February 28th and September 6th, 2007. All submissions must include the following:

- an artist's statement
- 15 examples of recent work (photographs, slides, CD, DVD or video)
- list of works with titles, media, date and dimensions
- Curriculum Vitae or Bio
- description of the proposed exhibition (including the title, theme, number of pieces, presentation of works, installation requirements such as frames, plinths, etc.)

Please do not send original artworks. Fax and email submissions will not be accepted. Please send proposals to:

The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts
Attn: Exhibition Programming Committee
9704 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5G 0B1Phone: (780) 474-7611 Fax: (780) 474-7601
e-mail: info@ninahaggertyart.ca www.ninahaggertyart.caEdmonton
Public Library**SPRUCEWOOD BRANCH**
11555 - 95 Street Call 496-7099 to register**Krabby Patties To Go**
Saturday, March 10, 2 pm. Ages 6-12. Participation limit: 15.
Have a fun-filled time at the Krusty Krab with Spongebob and his many friends.**Fabulous Readers' Club**
Saturday, March 31, and ongoing, 2 pm.**SPRING BREAK 2007 Fairytales For Boys**
Monday, March 26, 2 pm. Ages 5-12. Participation limit: 15.
Once upon a time there was a cool dude, an awesome motorcycle, and a smelly giant. The dude used his mighty sword to fight the giant and demanded payment in gold. Wait a minute! That's not how it ends! Enjoy stories and racing your airplane craft. Girls welcome too!**Fabulous Fractured Fairy Tales** Wednesday, March 28, 2 pm. Ages 6-12. Participation limit: 15. And they all lived happily ever after...or did they? Join us for an afternoon of twisted tales and crazy characters. Listen to fairy tales gone horribly wrong and try your hand at creating your own!**Capture the Kingdom**
Friday, March 30, 2 pm. Ages 6-

12. Participation limit: 12. Ready the troops! Unite the ranks to design flags and build life-size castles. Build your last defense against attacks from enemy kingdoms.

TEENS EVENTS Exploring the Mediums of Music
Mondays, March 5-19, 6:30 pm. Ages 12-17. Participation limit: 7
Melissa Majeau, local songstress, shares her approach and experiences as a songwriter/performer. Looking at the structure of the song and the lyrical content, the group will progress from listening to favorite pieces of music to learning to play and sing the songs as well.**Hemp Bracelets**
Saturday, March 17, 2 pm. Ages 12-17. Participation limit: 10.
Take a little hemp. Add a few beads. Make a beautiful bracelet for yourself or a friend.**Multiple Choice Made Easy**
Thursday, March 22, 6:30 pm. Ages 14-16. Participation limit: 20. Exams can be made easier to deal with. Learn some 'tricks' to attacking multiple choice questions. Apply your own logic and skills to increase your deductive powers.**2007 OUTDOOR SOCCER REGISTRATION**

Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue and Westwood Community Leagues invite their members to register their children for the up-coming outdoor soccer season.

Date Location TimeMarch 9th Spruce Ave Hall: 10240-115 Ave 6-8 pm
March 15th Delton Hall: 123 Ave and 88 St 6-8 pm
March 16th Alberta Avenue Hall: 118 Ave and 92 St 6-8 pm**Outdoor Soccer registration requirements:**

For ages 5 and up. Alberta Health Care card & Community League membership required. Fee NOT YET DETERMINED - check with the organizers. Jersey deposit - \$20.00 for each child. 2 bingo deposit cheques - \$100.00 each, per child registered (maximum of 4 bingo per family). Includes 1 tournament, team & individual picture, banquet and award. Kidsport funding applications will be available: ask if your family qualifies.

Soccer Program for 3-5 yr olds is also available - check with organizers for details.**Soccer referees required for outdoor soccer.** You must be 12 yrs or older. This is a paid position - payment is per game. Funding is available for referee courses.**Any questions contact:**Delton Soccer Director Sue Nozack 474-3491
Alberta Avenue Trish Filevich 477-2773 ext 1
Spruce Ave Verna Stainthorp 479-8019