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# Safer communities through use of civil law

## Private Members Bill could serve to “fill in the gaps” in current legislation

FRANK PARKER

On March 5 a public briefing by Calgary-area MLA Art Johnston was held to get public input into a private members’ bill that he is sponsoring – *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*. Mr. Johnston’s proposal is modeled on similar legislation now in effect in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia, and recently introduced in the Yukon Territory. The aim of the legislation is to protect communities from disruptive or illegal activities by holding property owners and tenants accountable.

### What’s the process?

The proposal involves the creation of a “Public Safety Agency” under the Solicitor General’s Department. This agency would receive complaints from the public about disruptive activities in neighbourhoods. Since the agency would be operating under civil, rather than criminal law, its agents would be much freer to investigate and to gather information.

If the complaint is jus-

tified, the evidence is presented to the tenants and the home owner, and they are given 14 days to cease the disruptive or illegal behaviour. Should they fail to, the evidence is presented to the Court of Queen’s Bench who could issue a closure order to the property owner. In Manitoba non-compliance fines of up to \$500.00 per day can also be levied.

### How does this differ?

Western criminal law operates on the important principle of “innocent until proven guilty.” Thus the police are restricted in the way in which they can gain evidence, and must be able to prove that a person has committed a crime “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Because the proposed public safety agency would operate under civil rather than criminal law, it would have a much freer hand in gaining evidence and prosecuting offenders – much as municipal bylaw enforcement officers do now. Enforcement and prosecution would be based on “balance of probabilities” rather than “beyond reasonable doubt.”

Since the intention is primarily corrective rather than punitive, it is hoped that most disruptive behaviour can be nipped in the bud before it becomes a serious criminal matter. The idea is that communities can become much more directly involved in self-policing, rather than always having to rely on over-stretched police forces. Of course the process would see the new agency working in conjunction with local police, bylaw and public health officials, but would serve to fill in the gaps in existing legislation.

### Will it work?

According to Mr. Johnston, the legislation has been very successful in Manitoba, where it has resulted in the permanent closure of over 150 drug and prostitution houses since it was enacted several years ago. Less visible are the numerous successful informal interventions that have served to head off activities before they got out of hand. Other jurisdictions also seem to be enthusiastic about their legislation.

A major problem that I see is that the legislation, as currently drafted, only targets rental situations, and not owner-occupied properties. While rental properties may well represent the majority of problems in some neighbourhoods, I’m sure we can all think of examples of disruptive (or even illegal) activities in owner-occupied properties. A second problem is that this is only a private members’ bill – one among many that is vying for a limited number of spaces on the Government’s legislative agenda.

### What can we do?

While Mr. Johnston seems to be confident that this bill will receive wide caucus support, and thus stands a good chance of passing, I don’t think we as citizens should take that as a foregone conclusion. To that end I will be writing to my MLA, the Premier, the Minister of Justice, and the Solicitor General, asking them to give full support and high priority to this bill. I will also be asking them to broaden the legislation to include owner-occupied properties. I think this is an important piece of legislation, and I would urge readers to do the same!

## Spring Splash!



Karen Mykietka

GALA, COLE AND THORIN ENJOY THE WILD WETNESS OF THE SPRING MELT. IT MIGHT BE FUN FOR THE KIDS BUT THE FLOODED SIDEWALKS ARE OFTEN IMPASSABLE FOR PEDESTRIANS WHEN MELTED AND ARE TREACHEROUS ICE RINKS WHEN FROZEN.

## Large item pick up and graffiti removal are back!

Trucks and volunteers needed to make these events a success

KAREN MYKIETKA

On Saturday, May 5th volunteers will spend the day cleaning up the neighbourhood. As last spring, the Avenue Initiative Beautification & Programs Working Group has organized a community clean up in conjunction with the City’s Big Bin Event.

The Avenue clean up will start with a pancake breakfast for volunteers, and then teams will set out to paint over graffiti on

who can help lift large items. We also need people to help with the breakfast and painting.

To volunteer, report items for pick up or report graffiti on 118 Ave call 278-4812 or Judy Allen at 496-1913.

### Capital City Clean Up Big Bin Events

Throughout the summer, large roll off bins will be placed in 12 city locations over 12 weekends.

These free events allow residents to dispose of large items too big to put out with their household garbage.

These events do not accept household hazardous waste or yard waste. Residents are encouraged to take these items to an Eco Station.

Commercial and business items are not accepted.

In 2006, over 770 tonnes of material was collected around the city – 76 tonnes at the Alberta Avenue site. The events helped to reduce improper disposal of materials in the river valley, parks and neighbourhoods.

Be sure to visit [www.edmonton.ca/capitalcitycleanup](http://www.edmonton.ca/capitalcitycleanup) and click on “Big Bin Events” from the menu on the left side for all the 2007 locations and dates.



Tracey Cornetta

ONE OF MANY TRUCKLOADS BROUGHT TO THE BIG BIN EVENT IN 2006.

buildings along 118 Ave while others set out in trucks to scour the alleys for discarded items. Residents who are able to haul their own garbage can bring it to Alberta Avenue League parking lot at 93 St and 118 Ave.

The breadth and success of the clean up depends on the number of people who volunteer. What we need the most are people with trucks and others

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

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# Clean up that mess!

DAWN FREEMAN

For those of you with children, I don't have to tell you about cleaning up, and more importantly, about teaching your children to clean up after themselves. From as young an age as possible, we are talking to our kids about putting toys away after they are played with, about bringing garbage to the garbage can and dishes to the sink. We get them to run and get a cloth to wipe up a spill, and bite our tongue and still our hands when they spread the juice instead of soaking it up.

It's all part of the learning process of keeping your surroundings clean and tidy, and it's an important process too. No parent wants to be the only one cleaning and picking up the house and no one wants to live in a messy, dirty house. We spend the time teaching our children to do the chores so that, eventually, the responsibility of

keeping the house clean is spread around the occupants. Many hands make light work is a cliché for a reason.

Sometimes I see the earth as one big house, with all the people as its occupants.

Keeping our planet clean and tidy, just like keeping our house that way, seems to me to be a given. Just like our home gets dirty if we don't clear the garbage, clean the dishes or wash the floor, the planet is also going to get dirty if we ignore the leftovers of living. Like our home will become dangerous if we allow old food to become moldy, or vermin to live in our rooms, our planet will become dangerous to people's health if we allow poisonous waste products to lie around.

So much information and so many opinions are given in books and magazines, on television and radio, and on the Internet; it is hard to know who is right or what to do about keeping the earth clean and safe. It can be overwhelming to hear about global warming, toxic spills, endangered animals and polluted water supplies. After all, what can I

do about these large, world-scale problems?

I can't make big business change their emission controls; I don't know how to create a more fuel-efficient car; I can't afford to install solar

panels on my roof and go off the grid; I don't want to grow all my own food and never drink coffee again; but I do care, and I've come to realize there are things I can do.

I can recycle and I can

compost. I can ride my bike, walk or bus when I am able. I can buy locally grown food when possible. I can think twice before replacing something just because I want the newer model. I can buy used clothes and furniture, and I can donate my unwanted items instead of tossing them. I can shop responsibly by not buying from companies that harm people or the environment through their business practices. I can educate myself on the opinions and the science. I can support environmental organizations through donations or volunteering.

I am teaching my children every bit counts towards the total goal; clearing their plate, or picking up 10 toys all helps our house and our family. I am teaching myself, as well as them that if we all do a small part towards keeping our earth clean, then we can have hope the planet, our home, will still be healthy, clean and beautiful for many more years to come.

Keeping our planet clean and tidy, just like keeping our house that way, seems to me to be a given.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: Sally Ann Warming Shelter

Here's the 3 things that really make me very mad about this warming shelter:

1) It is not properly zoned to be an over night warming shelter. Never was. Even when council approved it and gave funding to the Sally Ann to run it they never complied with zoning. Does City council just not care about its own rules when public relations are involved or just when Alberta Avenue is involved?

2) Whyte Avenue was booed and lambasted for shipping their homeless residents around the city a month or two ago. Guess where these upstanding business owners ship them? A block north of me or 10 blocks south of me in Boyle. If the warming shelter was dealing with the homeless in Alberta Avenue that would be one thing but to ship in homeless people, intoxicated people, and people from the back of ETS Security cars a block from my wife's bus stop is unacceptable. Share the Welfare Edmonton.

3) A question to Councillor Janice Melnychuk who is Head of the City's Neighbourhood Revitalization Portfolio and Board Member for the 118th Avenue Revitalization Initiative. My question to you is when you voted in favour of this improperly zoned homeless shelter did you think that your action would of more benefit to the Beautification and Cleanliness Committee or to the Safe Streets Committee? Honestly, I ask you.

Signed,  
Not wanting to live in the poor inner city ghetto that we are portrayed to be.  
Chris Hayes, Alberta Avenue

Isn't it funny how the old saying 20% of people do the work while the other 80% complain about it applies to most things! I guess from that opening you can tell I speak PRO to the warming shelter. Not only as a concerned Edmontonian, but also as a resident within the community it's based out of. And I guess I would have a little bit of authority on the issue of homelessness because I currently work in the field, and used to be homeless in Edmonton myself. So, if this message is getting out to anyone: WE NEED THE SHELTERS.

Ok I see the problem, the zoning is all wrong. But are we not the ones who make, change and enforce the laws? Can we not come up with some kind of a special permit or something? And when I say we I am talking about us who hate to see crime increase, us that are fed up with the long waits at hospitals, us that have to deal with the rampant addiction problems within our communities, us that are troubled by the constant discoveries of bodies outside the city! I believe I am speaking for the majority of people, and some of the residents who might have even complained as well, when I say that we have problems here, there, and everywhere in this city. The direction we should take a look at going is to open more community-based shelters. To provide grass roots care for the people that, yes, abuse and hurt society. Let's look at breaking the cycles! Try some radical things if we have to. Lets stop looking at city hall and the Alberta government for all the answers and let's start getting it done!

Shane Pelletier  
Parkdale Resident

It was wonderful to read the *Rat Creek Press* this month; you did a great job writing "The Blight on the Block", and following through with articles about Constable Wadden and the police patrol. I hope that the neighborhood realizes that with persistence they can get rid of these drug houses. Our druggies moved out about a week ago, they were evicted actually, and sold drugs till the very last hour until Constable Wadden disrupted their fun. Things have been so lovely and quiet since, yet, we have many houses for rent in the neighborhood so I'm keeping my fingers crossed that good people move in. The drug house is empty and the owner has been cleaning; I heard that Capital Health might have looked at the property. Who knows, maybe the property was salvageable and will be sold. Anything is possible.

I am still putting together a letter to e-mail to Mike Boyd thanking him for his well-trained police force. The sad part of the drug scenario is that the dealers can be made to move, yet, they just move into another house in our neighborhood and the cycle continues. It is very sad that these dealers walk away from their destruction with not even a slap on the hands. The owner is left to deal with the condemned house and the neighborhood with their devalued property. I hope that the drug laws will become more stringent so that neighborhoods like ours have a chance to better themselves. We'll see. Thanks for making the drug issue your cause in the March edition. I'll keep you posted on what happens to the house.

"Mary" (not her real name)  
Alberta Avenue Resident



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## ATB awards \$1,000 to the Rat Creek Press

Cheryl Walker, Operations Analyst for Alberta Treasury Branch won the ATB Community Star quarterly grand prize draw of \$1,000 in support of the good work of the Rat Creek Press Association. A talented team of editors, writers, designers and board members, including Cheryl, volunteer approximately 300 hours each month to produce the Rat Creek Press. ATB is proud to support associates like Cheryl Walker who contribute to the well-being of their communities.

THANKS CHERYL AND ATB!! WE HAVE A LOT TO DO ON A SHOE STRING BUDGET AND THIS REALLY HELPS.

### A beautiful day for a hay ride



Family day events were a great success at Spruce Avenue's annual festival. Lots of free beef on a bun was eaten, and everyone enjoyed the hayrides and the skating too. Thanks to all the volunteers who made possible!

### Drug house update



This long-time blight on an Alberta Avenue street, as mentioned in last month's *Rat Creek Press*, was finally boarded up, just days after the paper came out. Approximately two weeks later, a fire broke out, possibly in the front room, of the house. Luckily neighbours saw the smoke and called the Fire Dept. before the fire grew too big. According to neighbours the fire is currently under investigation.

## St. Patrick School will house francophone school and other groups

KAREN MYKIETKA

The Edmonton Catholic School District announced the Francophone Regional Authority will be leasing half of the St. Patrick School this September.

The new Ecole francophone du Nord Elementary will open in September of 2007 to approximately 80 to 100 students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 and will be the third public school for the Francophone Regional Authority and the second in Edmonton. With the opening of this school, the Authority will have nine Catholic schools and three public schools across North Central Alberta.

"The Francophone Authority grew by 401 students or 21% in September so

we needed to find additional space for our increasing enrolment and also to better serve students in north-central Edmonton," said Henri Lemire, Superintendent of the Greater North Central Francophone Regional Authority. "This new site will also include a morning and afternoon ABC Headstart Program," said Lemire.

In June 2003, despite the protests of the community, St. Patrick Elementary school at 120 Ave & 95 St was closed by the Catholic board due to declining enrolment. The Edmonton Islamic School leased the

building for three years. Most of the remaining space in St. Patrick School is



ST. PATRICK SCHOOL TO BE FILLED WITH FRANCOPHONE STUDENTS, DAYCARE, ARTS GROUPS AND MORE

leased to various other groups including the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a daycare, an artist and a dance group.

## Who says you can't fight City Hall?

The little neighborhood with the big heart is working hard to stay that way

ANGIE KLEIN

Concerned residents of Spruce Avenue are fighting to have a discretionary permit pulled on a development that would put a tri-plex on a single-family lot. Laurie Coté and her family have collected a series of fabulous photos clearly showing the already congested traffic problems on our neighborhood

streets, and a committee is heading down to the subdivision development appeal board to argue the decision based on this, and other very valid points. The area is zoned for duplex development, and higher density housing than that would only further contribute to our traffic woes. If we let developments like this start to be built in our neighborhoods,

it may set precedents that open the gates to other developments, changing the face of our communities forever. For more information on how you can get involved, contact Laurie @ 474-5354.



# avenue initiative revitalization

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



avenue initiative  
revitalization

### Graffiti Removal/Large Item Clean Up Day!

May 5, 2007 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Eastwood Community League

It's that time of year again, Spring Clean Up! We start the day meeting up at Eastwood Community League, then get into teams and head out to conquer graffiti or pick up large items in our neighborhoods. The City will be providing large bins at Alberta Avenue Community League to discard large items, furniture, appliances etc. **Volunteers are needed** to help haul items so bring your trucks and help our neighborhood look it's best! To volunteer or need a large item picked up, call 278-4812 or 496-1913

### Those Bloomin' Back Alleys! Gardening Show

May 12, 2007 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Alberta Avenue Community League

Spring is in the air and everyone wants to get their hands in the soil. The University of Alberta's Horticulturalist, **Gayle Rankin**, is giving a keynote workshop on "How to make those Back Alleys Bloom". As well, the "Urban Farmer" will be going to provide two great workshops on, "Growing Food in Small Spaces" and, "Edible Landscapes". There will be contests, refreshments and other great workshops, composting, flower arranging, aboriginal gardening and many more. Fun Planting for kids too! A great event for the whole family. For more info call 496-1913

### Public Meeting

April 16, 2007 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Alberta Avenue Community League

The proposed plan and zoning changes, for 118th Ave and adjoining blocks will be presented by City of Edmonton Planning and Development. Your input is needed. For more info call 496-1913.

### Streetscape Open House

May 9, 2007 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Eastwood Community League

Drop in from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. to view the proposed streetscape plan. The street scape includes: trees, pedestrian lighting, new sidewalks, parking, and narrowing of the entrances into the community. **YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT TO US!**



# Myhre's family makes beautiful music

A cornerstone business on the Avenue turns 40 (but still acts 20!)

PETER RAUSCH

For three generations the Myhers family has been passionate about playing, repairing and selling stringed instruments and since opening their doors on April 1, 1967, Myhre's Music has grown to become the premier stringed instrument music store in Western Canada.

Alfie (the dad) and Byron Myhre (the son) attribute their store's success to ensuring that they match the right instrument to the right customer. You can't help but notice though, the enthusiasm and joy they have when talking about music or any instrument – that seems to be another key. The family's effort is supported by an equally and exceptionally talented staff that share their passion and skill.

Walk into the store and you will see an incredible array of violins, cellos, bass violins, guitars, dobros, violas, and banjos, enough to meet the needs of professional musicians as well as novices. There's even a sitar! The selection of instruments includes both new and used instruments and Myhre's offer trade-ins for their customers. And if you don't see

it on the shelf, they are more than willing to place a special order (like for all those left handed players out there!)



THE RANGE OF INSTRUMENTS AT MYHRE'S MUSIC IS EXTENSIVE

There is also a wide selection of instructional books and sheet music for both the beginner and professional alike, and pop into the store if you are thinking about lessons; Myhres have an extensive referral list of some of the best music teachers in Edmonton.

Besides selling musical instruments, the Myhres are noted as gifted craftsmen in repairing or restoring any stringed instrument, and their workshop is always kept busy. The most challenging project to date was to rebuild an 18th Century Giuseppe Testore violin, valued at \$60,000.

Their customers include loyal professional musicians who play everything from blues, folk and bluegrass, to

strings in orchestras throughout Western Canada. One of their longtime customers noted that "this is one of the last real music stores."

When Byron is not in the store, he is often touring as one of the members of the acclaimed bluegrass group "Jerusalem Ridge." He's amazed how bluegrass music has been received and grown over the past few years. Besides doing their own tours or playing at festivals, the band has also played con-

certs with a number of symphony orchestras.

As many forty year olds do, the store will going through a facelift this spring. The new storefront will bring a unique and creative look to the Ave – much like its owners already do.

## Myhre's Music

8735 – 118 Avenue

477-1586

info@myhresmusic.com

### Hours of operation:

Monday - Saturday 9:30 am - 5:30 pm

Open Thursday night until 7:30 pm



### New Logo for Avenue Initiative

Local painter, designer and Arts on the Ave member Lorraine Shulba has created the new look for the Avenue Initiative (see ad on p. 3). "My inspiration for the logo is the sculpture that was created at the Arts Alive! Festival last fall," Lorraine says. "It was such a great creation, and really said what we wanted to see in our neighbourhood."



THE ORIGINAL COMMUNITY CREATED ARTWORK THAT INSPIRED LORRAINE SHULBA'S NEW AVENUE INITIATIVE LOGO DESIGN.

Lorraine has lived in Elmwood Park for four and a half years and is excited to be part of the arts revolution happening on the Avenue.

"I like to be a part of the revitalization of the area. It's great to be involved and see that together, we can make change possible. It's great that we have strong leaders, community and support of the city of Edmonton to make change!"

Lorraine is also excited to see all the opportunities and changes that will be happening in the coming years.

"It's wonderful to see so many creative people that live in the area, and wonderful that we can come together to bring life into our community that has been seen in such a negative light."

Lorraine's art work can be seen at [www.lshulba.com](http://www.lshulba.com), and

her design work is at [www.littlebluebugstudios.com](http://www.littlebluebugstudios.com).

### Big Fat Northern Lights

Northern Light Theatre is ending their season with a play by award winning playwright and film maker Neil LaBute entitled *Fat Pig*. He is best known for films such as *The Wicker Man* (2006), *The Shape of Things* (2003) and *Possession* (2002). LaBute's 2004 play *Fat Pig* is the hilarious story of a romance between Tom, a fairly nice guy with a mediocre personality, and Helen, a vivacious, confident, and bracingly funny girl. But Helen is not just any girl; she's fat – not pleasantly plump, or big-boned, she's a big, big girl. This laugh studded theatrical gem runs from April 27 to May 6 at The Third Space (11516 103 Street). Call 471-1585 or go to [www.northerlighttheatre.com](http://www.northerlighttheatre.com) for more info.

### Tragedy on the Ave

Theatre Prospero and Arts on the Ave are bringing the greatest tragedy in the English language to the Alberta Ave Community Centre. That disturbed Dane Hamlet will be in the Hodson Hall (9210 - 118 Ave. Avespace 1) on May 11 and 12 at 8:00pm. Tickets are \$8.00 at the door. Bring your community membership for a discount. Call 477-2773 or go to [www.theatreprospero.ca](http://www.theatreprospero.ca) for more information.

### May Week Workers Art Exhibit

For a fifth year, the Edmonton May Week Labour Arts Festival will be sponsoring the very successful Workers' Art Show, this year to be held in the old Alberta Cycle building (9117 118 Ave).

This show consists of workers who are also visual artists. Submissions of all visual art, including photography, paintings, drawings, posters, prints, mixed media, sculpture and installation art are welcome.

The show is curated by Tom Gale, and the work will be displayed from April 27th through May 5th, 2007. To submit, please call Tom Gale at 433-0757. Deadline for submission is April 9, 2007.

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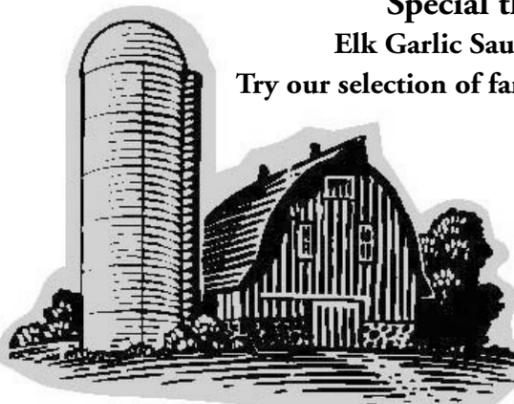
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## Which of These Costly Home-seller Mistakes Will You Make When You Sell Your Home?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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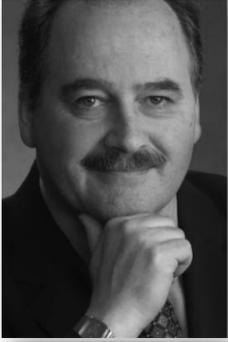
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# Making a living recycling other people's trash

KAREN MYKIETKA

We have numerous professional recyclers in our community. These self-employed people are performing a valuable environmental service while helping themselves earn a living. You probably know them as the community bottle pickers. I stopped and chatted with a couple of "bottle pickers" on 118 Avenue one sunny Saturday afternoon.

I saw one older bearded man on 118 Avenue checking the garbage cans as he slowly strolled along (I'll call him Fred). A couple blocks further, another man rested on a bench in front of the Eastwood



Community League, his bicycle and grocery cart beside him (I'll call him Charlie).

I'm sure many people assume bottle pickers are homeless and jobless vagabonds, but this is not necessarily the case. I spent about 30 minutes chatting with Charlie who indicated he had an apartment and often worked construction out of town. But while in town and between jobs, he often spends the days picking bottles and searching for treasures in other people's trash. "I'm just killing time waiting for a call to go to work," he says.

Charlie, who has been picking bottles on and off for many years, roams the area between 107 and 118 Avenues from Kingsway to the Cromdale. He'll

often spend six to eight hours riding his bike pulling a wagon, or like today moving a grocery cart at his side. On a good day he'll cash out with \$40 to \$50. Charlie advises to be savvy as to where you recycle your bottles if you want a fair deal. He counts all his bottles beforehand and stays away from bottle depots that consistently short change him. Friday and Saturday nights tend to be the most profitable.

As I conversed with Charlie,

Fred came by. Charlie greeted him and offered him a drink of Coke. "We bottle pickers help each other out," says Charlie, "today I have something and he doesn't, tomorrow maybe I won't have anything."

According to Charlie and

Fred, there are a lot of bottle pickers out nowadays. I say I'm surprised people still throw bottles in the garbage when you can get money for them. They say tons of people still throw bottles in the trash. Some people hand bottles to pickers when they go by, or leave bottles in the back lanes for them.

Charlie says he always unties bags, goes through them and then ties them back up so that he doesn't leave a mess. He often goes out in the evenings as that is when people are home from work and take their garbage out. Charlie shows me the light he uses to help in his search when it's dark. He says some bottle pickers will go all night but he tries not to go too late as some people

get upset if there is noise.

Charlie proudly shows me some of the "treasures" he's found. In his cart he has a small cooler, work boots, a power bar, a bag of razors, an electric shaver, hair clippers, a compass, and a sewing kit, not to mention bottles. Some things he keeps for himself, others things he sells or gives away. "I always try to give out something." He shares his sub sandwich with Fred, offering me some as well.

Before we part ways, Charlie insists I take something from him. I select the compass. You're right, Charlie, it just needed a little cleaning – and thanks, my six-year-old boy thinks it is pretty cool.

## Tip for dealing with alley pickers

Many of us have experience with "pickers" who are not as respectful as Charlie or people who do more than just check the trash, grabbing anything else they want or can make a buck on. Here's some advice:

If you recycle your bottles yourself, put a sign out where you leave your garage stating so. And make sure your bottles are not visible even inside your yard or they may disappear. Or have a fence with a gate that you can lock.

If you're too lazy – oops I mean busy – to bring your bottles to the depot, don't throw them in the garbage. Do your bit to help the environment and those looking for an honest way to make a few dollars and put the bottles in a box or clear bag in the alley for the pickers.

Remember it's not necessarily pickers who open and mess up your garbage. Sometimes wandering dogs and cats tear bags open, or kids being mischievous kick and tear bags. It's best to put your garbage bags in bins and/or wait until the night before garbage day to put them out.

# The language of the R's



KAREN MYKIETKA

The mobius loop, an international recycling symbol, can be found on many products. A mobius loop in a light background means that the product is recyclable. Without a qualifying statement, the symbol means that the entire product is recyclable and that more than one-third of the population in the area where it is distributed has convenient access to collection and drop-off facilities. If the product does not meet this 33 percent requirement, no claim should be made.

A light mobius loop on a dark background means the product contains recycled materials. Without a qualifying statement, the symbol will be interpreted to mean that the product is made from 100 percent post-consumer waste.

The symbol may also appear with the percentage of recycled content, as long as this figure refers to the entire item.

## Important Terms

**Recycled content** - refers to the proportion by weight of an item that consists of recycled materials.

**Post-consumer content** - materials or items generated by households, commercial and institutional facilities, which can no longer be used for their intended purpose.

**Pre-consumer content** - material left over from a manufacturing process that is not capable of being used or reused within the same plant.

**Reusable** - an item which can be reused for the same or different purpose in its original form, and without processing except for specific requirements such as cleaning and washing.



PARKDALE RECYCLING DEPOT AT 80 ST AND 117 AVE. RECYCLE BINS FOR CARDBOARD, NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, SHREDDED PAPER, JUNK MAIL, PAPER EGG CARTONS, WHITE HIGH GRADE PAPER, MILK CONTAINERS, TETRA PAKS, PHONE BOOKS, GLASS AND METAL CANS.

# Psst! Want some free stuff?

Giving and getting for free good for the planet as well as the person

LINDSAY CLERMONT

Spring is here, and that could only mean one thing: garage sale season. But this year instead of bartering with your neighbours on the cost of a record player covered with dust from years of shelf sitting, give it away instead.

Edmontonians are participating in a new form of recycling known as "Freecycle." Freecycle.org is a website with close to 4,000 communities and networks where people give and receive free goods and items which the owners have no use for. According to the Freecycle website, the program is a "grass-roots and nonprofit movement of people who give stuff away for free in their own towns."

The only requirements are that the items be free, legal,

and appropriate for all ages. However some listings, such as pet adoption, need to be verified by a moderator. With over 3 million freecycleers in over 75 countries, it is possible to find just about anything, anywhere, for no cost whatsoever.

"It's one of those situations where everybody wins. You win by getting people to take away stuff that you no longer need, want or desire. You win by getting free stuff," said Alberta Avenue Freecycler Charlene, who discovered the program two years ago after moving to the city. Although she now only checks the site between 2 and 3 times a week, Charlene said she was at one point almost addicted.

"I would check the site 2 or 3 times a day at first. It's unusual to come across something

[Freecycle] like that. It really caught my interest," she added.

Membership is free. Items are posted on networks corresponding to cities and communities, and a friendly email or post is all that is required to get what you're looking for. Each community or network is also moderated by a local volunteer. Everything being given and received is in "as is" condition, so freecycleers know what they're getting, according to the Freecycle website.

"It's amazing the variety of things to be found on there. You can get anything. You just have to be willing to politely ask for it. If they choose you as the recipient, show up. And maybe send them a thank you note afterwards," explained Charlene. She added that some people

may be reluctant to the idea of giving for free, as the whole concept is often "too good to be true." The one downside to Freecycle is the "no shows," or people who do not show

up. "They make me happy," she beamed. She has also passed on leftover paint, bedding, and other household furniture items.

Freecycle was first initiated in May 2003 in Tucson, AZ to "to promote waste reduction and to help desert landscape from being taken over by landfills," states Freecycle.org. The network originally began as a recycling service, with only 30 to 40 people and a handful of non-profit organizations



CHECKING THE FREecycle SITE 2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK KEEPS CHARLENE IN THE KNOW OF WHAT IS BEING OFFERED AND ASKED FOR.

involved. Since its creation, Freecycle has expanded globally and has helped increase environmental awareness.

To learn more about Freecycle and its Edmonton network, visit [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org).

# Vermicomposting

## Worm your way into environmentally friendly fertilizing

CINDY BURGESS

Now that the long hard winter is over, I'm thinking about gardening again and eco-friendly ways to encourage plant growth. When I was growing up, we always composted and used the material for garden fertilizer. We simply put our scraps in a big bucket and turned it once in awhile until the stuff decomposed. These days, many people are worm composting (a.k.a. vermicomposting), letting our slithery friends do the work of breaking vegetable matter down into compost. Vermicomposting is very simple and ideal for limited space, as you don't need much room to do it. Not only that, but it is so simple, it's an activity that your whole family can participate in and fun for your kids to help out with. In fact, my husband (an elementary school teacher) keeps a worm composter in his Grade 4 classroom and the kids participate in the process throughout the year.

Getting started is easy. First, find a large, sturdy opaque bin with a snug fitting lid and fill it about two-thirds

full with a bedding mix of dirt and peat. Exactly how large a bin you choose will depend on your needs, but it should not be more than 12 to 18 inches deep, and if you plan to move the bin outdoors in the summer it should be small enough to lift. Next, you'll want to put lots of holes in the lid. This allows air to get into the bin, and yes, these holes are two-way and would allow the worms out if they were so inclined. Don't worry though, soil is where worms feel most at home and that's where they'll stay because worms dislike light and will burrow deep enough to avoid it. Now you're ready to add the worms. The type of worms you are looking for are called "red wigglers" and they are available at various places around town. (For a location near you contact the Waste Management Hotline at 496-5678) Add about a pound of worms to the soil and moisten it, being careful not to add too much water, or the worms will drown. Finally, add some vegetable or fruit scraps to feed your new waste disposal workers. Your bin is now operational and ready for compost action.

When adding food, be sure to bury the scraps fully, or you will attract fruit flies. Also, be careful not to overfeed your worms. Under ideal conditions a pound of worms can eat half a pound of waste every



EASTWOOD RESIDENT KEN JOHNSTON DEMONSTRATES VEMICOMPOSTING TO HIS GRADE 4 CLASS.

day. Placing excessive food in the bin will lead to a build-up of waste and could result in unpleasant odours. The temperature should be maintained in the 15°C to 25°C range, so remember to store it indoors in the winter to avoid freezing

your wigglers. Be sure to avoid putting animal products in your bin: no bones, meat, milk, or cheese. Limit your composting material to vegetable and fruit peelings and scraps, clean eggshells, coffee and tea grounds and unbleached coffee filters and tea bags. Straw and shredded newspaper mixed in your soil/peat mixture is okay too, but is not vital to

light or a bright lamp. The worms will burrow deeper in the bin to avoid the light. After 20 minutes, scrape off the top layer of compost until you reach worms. Stop and give the worms more time to burrow still deeper and repeat the process until you've removed most of the compost. The worms will be concentrated in the bottom few inches of the bin and are ready for you to add fresh bedding of dirt and peat. The harvested compost can now be mixed in with your garden or house plant soil.

Worm composting is easy and rewarding. It takes little effort to set up and even less to maintain properly and the benefits are many. Composting means less waste going to the landfill, it gives you rich, natural and nutritious food for your plants, and it's an activity that families can do together that teaches personal responsibility and caring for the environment.

**"Composting with Worms":**  
Come to the John Janzen Backyard Composting Education Centre and learn just how easy it is to turn your kitchen scraps into compost with the help of these invertebrates.

Wednesday, Apr. 4, 2007, 7-8:30 p.m.  
course code: 235350 \$10  
John Janzen Nature Centre  
7000-143 St.  
(Corner of Fox Drive and Whitemud Drive)

the composter's functioning.

Every six months or so you ought to harvest the vermipost (worm compost) and replenish the supply of peat/dirt. First, take off the lid off and expose the bin contents to either sun-

## Confessions of the reluctant worm mama

ANNA MARIE SEWELL

I'd like to tell you it's true, what the worm-composting bin enthusiasts say – that once you get a bin and get to know the little guys, you'll be hooked on red wigglers. Obviously that happens for some. I have a great book, by the late Mary Appelhof, called *Worms Eat My Garbage*, wherein the author

enthusiases about the earthy delights of worm husbandry. And though it has been nearly two years since I took the City of Edmonton's "Master Composter/Recycler" course, I still

feel the glow of the presentation about worms. I can't remember the presenter's name, but his rowdy passion for worms was utterly captivating. I tell you, he spoke of them in the kind of tones usually reserved for those back-slappin', gut-bustin', kind of sports you invite to the backyard for a barbeque and some football.

So I'm a bit embarrassed to admit, I find my worm bin a bit...well, gross. Unappealing. It doesn't stink, so long as the ratio of garbage to bedding is okay; with a moisture level about like a wrung-out sponge, it smells like damp earth. When the lid's on, there's absolutely no odour at all. And I can handle taking a worm out, letting it wiggle on my hand to show curious visitors.

I've even weathered a couple of worm escapes. One morning, you might see a couple of them on the loose. Lift the lid, and the underside looks like a massive worm anti-war rally. The worms are protesting with all their might. Fortunately, calming them is as easy as adding bedding to a too-moist bin, or removing the offending material (in



IT'S A LITTLE KNOWN FACT THAT WORMS LIKE TO READ THE PAPER WHILE EATING BREAKFAST.

my first case, it was a coconut rind). Most recently, they rioted to demand more housing,

You see, red wigglers – the usual bin worms – are joyful procreators. I refer you to the above-mentioned book for the astonishing details of their sexual lives, though I caution you that, if too many people find out, it might cause an upsurge in discontent resulting in a shortage of therapists, advice columnists and Viagra...

The point is: worms are fascinating. Worm bins are a neat, relatively easy-to-manage, practical way to recycle your kitchen waste. Our bin is simply one of those lidded plastic tubs widely available for well under \$10. We bed them in hand-shredded old newspapers, and they can handle

all the same food wastes as a garden composter – no meat, no grease – although, like us, they have preferences. Mine, as noted above, don't like coconut. They do like coffee grounds.

So, as I sit enjoying my morning paper and cup of coffee, knowing they in their bin enjoy yesterday's news with their java, why don't I feel all chummy with them? I don't know, I can just tell you they still give me the creeps. And yet, despite that gut reaction, it's okay having them around. I stand a little in awe of their vigour and efficiency.

Pretty soon now, it will be time to renovate their home. Muck it out, that is. I'll have a nice heap of well-processed, clean and rich fertilizer for my garden and/or houseplants. I'll also have enough extra worms on hand to share, and would be happy to show you some basics of worm wrangling.

If you don't have the space for an outdoor composter, or you want to start small scale, or you (or your kids) are interested in connecting hands-on to the ecological, indigenous concept that says "We are all related," I recommend trying out a bin full of worms. I want to reassure you that falling in love with them isn't necessary, or inevitable. And, you won't be alone as you learn. You can contact me through the Rat Creek Press, and I'll be happy to answer questions (but, no, I won't come to your house to help you round them up if yours ever escape!). There is also help available through the City of Edmonton Waste Management Hotline, 496-5678.

## The 4 R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover

<http://www.atl.ec.gc.ca/udo/reuse.html>

Most of our garbage is sent to landfills, dumps or municipal incinerators. But with more and more people producing more and more waste, landfills are filling up faster than we can find new sites for them. And landfills create new types of waste. As garbage decomposes, moisture filters through it producing a toxic liquid known as leachate. Modern landfills are designed to reduce the amount of moisture that reaches the garbage, and many have a system to collect and treat the leachate.

Decomposing garbage also produces two greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide and methane, an invisible, odorless, and highly flammable gas. At some big landfill sites in Canada, methane is now being collected and burned to produce energy.

Water and oxygen are required to break down garbage. But water and oxygen are in short supply deep in a landfill, so decomposition takes place very slowly. In fact, when researchers cored down into a landfill in the United States, they discovered newspapers over 30 years old still in readable condition!

Incinerations are sometimes used to burn solid waste under controlled condition. They reduce the stress on landfills, but they create other environmental problems. The ashes must be disposed of, either at a landfill, or, if they are toxic, at a hazardous waste facility. Burning garbage also produces acid gases, carbon dioxide and toxic chemicals that must be treated with expensive air pollution control equipment to avoid

contributing to acid rain, ozone depletion and air pollution.

Recycling is just one way to reduce wastes. To be really effective, we have to incorporate the 4Rs of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover into our daily routine.

Reducing the amount of waste we produce is by far the most effective way to battle the flow of garbage into the landfill. Packaging makes up about half our garbage by volume, one-third by weight.

- When you shop, try to find products that have little or no packaging.

### What we cannot Reduce we should try to Reuse.

- Repair your old radio rather than buying a new one.
- Use jars, tins, and plastic containers to store leftovers, bulk foods and household items.
- Buy durable, good quality products that will last.

Materials and packaging that cannot be reused should be recycled at home, work and school. You can contribute to recycling by purchasing recycled and recyclable products.

- At the store, ask yourself these questions: can this product or its packaging be reused or recycled? Was it produced from recycled materials? Whenever possible, choose products that meet these criteria.

Finally, Recover energy from wastes that cannot be used for something else. This fourth R is difficult to put into practice by individuals, and is geared more toward industry.

# Consciously car reduced

## One family's story of shifting gears to a walking speed

PATTY JESSOME

Anna Marie Sewell and Doug Barrett have joined a growing number of people who've ditched their car keys in favour of their boots, bicycles and an occasional ride on the bus. The family, (including two year old daughter) has been bicycling, walking and using transit for years now and finds the experience of living carless (or car reduced) freeing, a convenience some would find nearly impossible to live without.

"It's delightful to live my life without being auto dependant. We enjoy being consciously car reduced," says Sewell. "It's actually nice to make plans without the car being the centre of the plan."

The couple's choice to live carless also centres around the expense associated with owning a car. "The care and feeding of a car is costly," Sewell says. She cites insurance, high gas prices and repairs as some of the reasons why her fam-

ily would rather walk or take the bus than own a car.

"There's also the environmental impact, especially in this country where one person to a car is the norm. It speaks volumes about our society."



For this couple though, needing or aspiring to own a working car is not high on their priority list. Their daily basics are within walking distance in their Norwood neighbourhood, located

Kingsway Garden Mall with her two-year-old in tow. If she has to venture a little distance from home, she hops on the bus. And when the whole family goes out together they use Barrett's favourite mode of transportation, bicycles, towing their little one in a bike buggy. As an avid cyclist, Barrett rides his bike to work regularly when commuting for his home-based consulting business.

"I started bicycling when I was seven and I haven't broke the habit yet," he laughs.

As far as he's concerned it's a win-win situation. He finds the benefits of biking exhilarating and enjoys the exercise he gets because of it.

The couple admits that they do have a car they keep insurance on but they keep it parked.

"We have it just in case we decide we need to buy one that works some day," says Barrett.

For this family, it's safe to say that won't be anytime soon.

There are times though when a car is necessary, after all, there're groceries to buy and out of town relatives to visit. When those trips come up they have a few options.

"We sometimes rent a car," says Barrett. "Or we borrow a car from one of our friends."

just north of downtown.

"Walking is a great way to get to know your neighbourhood. It's fun and we make an adventure of it whenever we go out," Sewell says about the benefits of not driving.

She can walk to the Italian Centre, China Town and

**Interested in going carless? Check out these websites:**

**Car Sharing Co-op of Edmonton**  
[www.web.net/~cce/index.html](http://www.web.net/~cce/index.html)

**Car Free Cities**  
[www.carfree.com](http://www.carfree.com)

**The environmental guide to cars and trucks**  
[www.greencars.com/indexplus.html](http://www.greencars.com/indexplus.html)

**What does driving really cost?**  
[www.oasisdesign.net/transport/cars/cost.htm](http://www.oasisdesign.net/transport/cars/cost.htm)

### Check out earth day celebrations

April 22 from 12 pm to 6 pm at Hawrelak Park

All Vegetarian food.

Live Entertainment.

Demonstrations, Talks, Exhibits, Music.

Cost: \$2 members and \$3 non-members

### Environment Canada incentive and rebate programs

[www.incentivesandrebates.ca](http://www.incentivesandrebates.ca)  
 Car Heaven – Cash in your 1995 or older vehicle for six months free bus passes; bike voucher or \$1000 GMC credit

Transit pass tax credit – Save those bus pass receipts and claim a credit on your taxes

EcoEnergy Retrofit – Grants to make energy efficiency improvements to your home

### What you can do Taking action for a cleaner and healthier environment

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/eco/>

### 10 most effective ways to help conserve nature and improve our quality of life

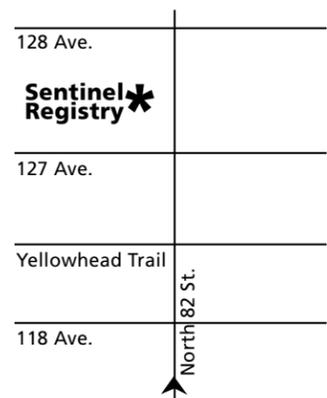
- Reduce home energy by 10%
- Eat meat-free meals once a week
- Buy a fuel efficient, low-polluting car
- Choose an energy efficient home and appliances
- Stop using pesticides
- Walk, bike or take transit to regular destinations

- Prepare your meals with locally produced food
- Choose a home close to regular destinations
- Support alternatives to the car
- Get involved, stay informed

Choose at least three of the actions and stick with them! You might be surprised at how easy it is to do. You can make a difference. For more information on these actions go to the Suzuki Nature Challenge <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/WOL/Challenge/>

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# Knobs and tubes in your floor? You've got electrical wiring

## HOMEGROWN RENOS

WITH JIM MAXWELL

Many of the houses in the north central area were built around the time of the First World War. That is one of the attractions of this area. However, it can mean certain challenges for the homeowner when doing renovations: bad wiring, no ground wires, and lack of plug-in receptacles. It is recorded that the Edmonton Electric Light Company started operations in 1891 with 700 lamps. House requirement for electricity was very low compared to today since many of our electrical appliances had either not been invented or were not readily available.

### More receptacles needed

Depending on how long you have

been in your house there may be an issue in your basement – the size of your breaker panel. Today's electrical code requires a minimum 100 amp service and many new houses are going to 200 amp. In the 1950s, 60 amp was adequate. Look around at your television, computers, radios, electric stoves, and other appliances. How many of you have octopuses because there is either not an available receptacle close by, or there are already two other things plugged in? Many mortgage companies and banks will not approve loans if the house does not have 100 amp service, and insurance companies also have some say.

Replacing a burned out receptacle you may find that there are places for three wires but only two wires in the receptacle box. Where's the third wire and why do you need it? The third wire is a bare copper wire and serves to protect a person in case there is a short in the appliance. Electricity will always take the shortest route to ground; in some cases that could be you, with dire consequences. If a wire is broken or disconnected in the electrical box or appliance the power wire can touch metal, which you

could be holding. Everything is live. The ground wire provides a shorter alternative route to ground. It takes the power back to the breaker panel and then along a thick copper braided wire to your water intake pipe that is in the ground, a much better route.

In older homes electric service was retrofitted, put in after the home was built. This means that you may not have to break into your wall to rewire. The hard work was done for you 50-60 years ago. The wire is connected only at your receptacle and where

someone turned the circuit breaker back on, or there could be a short causing a live wire or connection. If while working you feel your screwdriver or pliers vibrating, immediately stop, they are not vibrating, you are being electrocuted.

### You've got knobs and tubing

You may find either a round black tube containing a white and a black wire, or two black cloth-covered wires close to each other, but not necessarily. This is a live wire of a basic electrical circuit: a black wire leaves the electrical

panel, follows the floor joists eventually going to the switch or receptacle, leaves from the other side of the switch or receptacle to the next one and eventually joining back to the electrical panel. This type of wiring is called knob and tubing.

Two-part ceramic knobs were attached to joists or studs with long screws and the wire inserted between the two halves to be held in place. Where the wire had to go through the studs, a hole was drilled

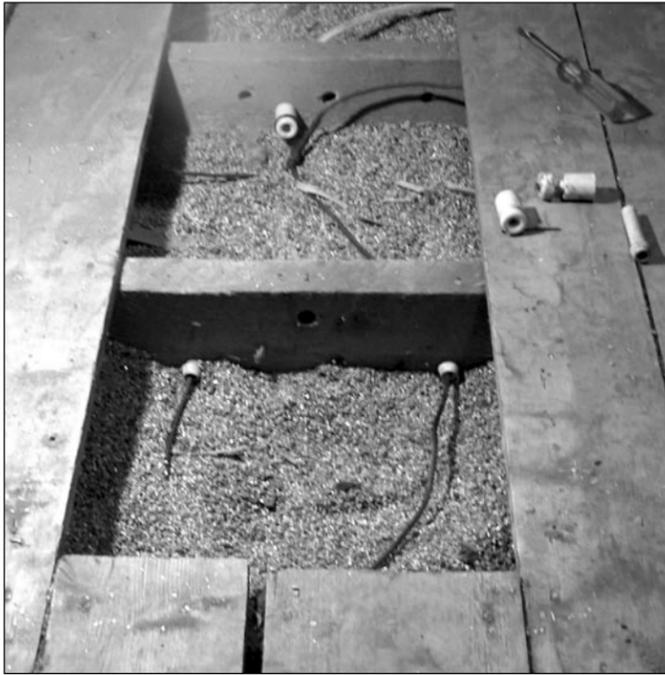
and a ceramic tube was inserted with the wire running through it; the tube prevented the insulation from being rubbed off.

This wire should be replaced with 14/2 general-purpose indoor cable. The '14/2' stands for 14 gauge, 2 wire (black-power, white-neutral) plus a bare copper ground wire. This is the standard cable for houses and is used for receptacles, lights, and switches.

Occasionally you will need 14/3 cable which has 3 wires (black-power, red-power, white-neutral) plus a bare copper ground wire. This is used for 3-way switches: a switch is located on each side of a room with the light in the middle, or switches at both the top and bottom of a staircase allowing power to the bulb to be turned on or off at either end.

*This article is meant for general information only. If in doubt, consult a professional electrician to insure compliance with all building and electrical codes.*

*Jim has lived in Norwood for five years. He has learned a lot about renovating since moving into his 1912 house, and undoubtedly will be learning more in the future.*

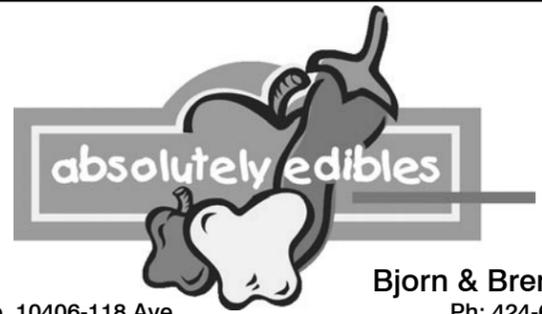


TRADITIONAL KNOB AND TUBING WIRING FROM A WWI-ERA HOUSE.

it leaves the wall cavity in either your basement or attic. Disconnect the wire and use it to pull the new cable through.

### Electricity can kill; don't mess around

Notice of warning. If you make a mistake while baking a cake or painting a wall, you may end up with wasted materials, a mess, or laughter. If you make a mistake at any time with electricity it can kill. Always use extreme caution when working with electricity! You may not get a second chance. As well you can damage sensitive electronics. Turn off the fuse or breaker when working on a circuit, and if in doubt turn off the main breaker. Test the circuit with a circuit tester. This is a small light attached to two wires that you can insert into a receptacle or touch connections. Test first with the power on to make sure the tester is working and you have a good connection. There may be electrical tape residue, corrosion, or dirt, which may not give the tester a good connection, but still allows power through. Even when absolutely sure the circuit is dead, treat it as though it is live; it may be possible that while you were working in one part of the house



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Member of Parliament  
Edmonton East

## Canadian Government Delivers on Health Care

Canadians have a right to expect that the health care they need will be there when they need it. Unfortunately, this expectation has for too long gone unmet.

So the Conservative Government of Canada has taken steps to reverse the strain the health care system has endured by investing \$348 million to improve the system through a number of important initiatives.

Most recently, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced \$2.6 million for a Paediatric Wait Time Guarantee pilot project. When fully implemented, this project will ensure that the best medical care is delivered as promptly as possible to our children across six areas of surgery – cardiac, cancer, neurosurgery, sight, spinal deformity and dental treatment requiring anaesthesia.

Another wait time guarantee pilot project recently put in place will improve access to prenatal care for First Nations women on reserves. In the past, these women had been unable to access care as early as is optimal during their pregnancy. The early intervention this project will encourage will improve overall health for mothers and life-long health and well-being for their children.

In Budget 2006, the Government committed \$260 million over five years to the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control and then last fall, created the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer to implement the strategy. This not-for-profit corporation will operate at arm's length from government and bring together cancer stakeholder organizations; patient, family and survivor groups; Aboriginal peoples; and governments. The coordinated national strategy will ensure that knowledge on cancer prevention and control is available quickly and delivered effectively to all those who need it.

In the coming year, the Conservative Government will implement numerous other health care programs that will address the problems left by the previous government. Canadians can finally feel confident that necessary improvements will be made to ensure the health care system delivers the care they need.

What do you think?

495-3261

[www.petergoldring.ca](http://www.petergoldring.ca)

# Easter EGGStravaganza!

DAWN FREEMAN

I love eggs. I loved them so much when I was a kid that I would eat them every day if I could convince my mother to make them for me. And it must be genetic because my son begs the same way most days too. So Easter is very dear to me for the egg reason; what better way to round off an ordinary egg meal than with a chocolate egg...or two.

Eggs, of course, have a long-standing relationship with Easter. Before becoming part of the Christian holiday though, they were associated with the Vernal or Spring Equinox as a symbol of fertility and of the rebirth of the earth after the winter. As well, many ancient civilizations believed that the egg was the symbol of life itself. In the Christian faith the egg symbolizes the resurrection or the rebirth of Christ; to some it is the symbol of the tomb in which Christ was laid to rest.

Easter eggs have been decorated, painted and given as gifts for centuries, but it was in the 18th century that the first chocolate egg was created. These days there are more different kinds of edible and non-edible Easter eggs than there are chickens to lay them, but if you feel like making your own gifts or treat this holiday, try these two ideas for size.

## Blown Eggs

A blown and decorated egg is an excellent gift for Easter that won't get eaten or go bad.

To blow the egg first pierce the fat end of a raw egg with a large needle, such as a quilting needle. Wiggle the needle



**THIS DECOUPAGED BLOWN EGG LOOKS LIKE A PROFESSIONAL HAS PAINTED IT**

to create a slightly larger hole. Pierce a hole in the opposite end of the egg. Insert the needle to pierce the yolk; this makes it easier to remove the egg. Use a baby's nose aspirator to "blow" the contents of the egg into a large bowl, or use your own breath. When the egg is empty,

run water into the eggshell, shake it to rinse the insides well, and pour it out. This is trickier than it sounds, and beware: the 'goop' factor is high!

When the egg is dry, decorate! You can use markers, paints, nail polish, or dyes. Transfers and decoupage are also a good way to beautify the shell. Varnish the finished egg to protect the art and to help strengthen the shell. It goes without saying that you will have to be very gentle with this project!

## Chocolate Easter Eggs

Make your own chocolate eggs to share...or not! I found this recipe at [www.recipelink.com](http://www.recipelink.com).

1 cup unsalted butter, soft  
2 tsp. salt  
4 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 can sweetened condensed milk  
10 cups powdered sugar  
1 tsp. yellow food coloring  
1 pound semi-sweet chocolate  
Powdered sugar for dusting the surface for kneading the candy



**HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE EASTER EGGS LOOK JUST AS DELICIOUS AS ANY STORE-BOUGHT ONE**

Beat butter, salt and vanilla with an electric mixer until fluffy. Add condensed milk and beat in the sugar. Blend until stiff. Dust the surface of a breadboard or table top with the extra sugar. Knead until the candy is smooth. Set aside more than 2/3 of the mixture. To the remaining mixture add yellow food coloring. Blend in well. Divide yellow and white into 16 or 24 pieces. Shape yellow into balls, mold white around the yellow to form an egg shape. Dry at room temperature on paper towels for 24 hours. Melt the chocolate in double boiler or microwave until smooth. Dip eggs in chocolate (paraffin can also be melted in with the chocolate to give the chocolate a gloss). Once dipped, cool at room temperature. Refrigerate after cooling. When sliced, the candy will have a white outer shell with the center that appears to be egg yolks.

*Happy Easter everyone!*

All welcome at  
**SOLID ROCK  
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Wednesdays at 7 pm

Colosseum B&B Chapel  
11827 - 85 Street

Pastor Stanley Burdett  
Ph: 463-5950



# Turning old greeting cards into cute little gift boxes

KAREN MYKIETKA

Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, etc – we are receiving and giving cards all year long. Many of them have



folding in the sides of the front piece of card you can fold them slightly outward – not quite to the centre) so the lid will be larger than the bottom.

3. Using your ruler, make an "X" on the back of both card halves by drawing two lines that cross at the center of the card.

4. Fold the edges of each side of the paper over to the middle of the cross one by one to make a fold line (opening each fold before doing the next one).

5. Make 4 cuts along the fold

line up to the first pencil cross parallel to the long side of the card as shown in the diagram.

6. Fold each of the long sides up again and turn the flaps in to create a box.

7. Fold the centre flap up and over the box edges, tape, glue or staple the flaps to secure them. Repeat with the other side.

8. Repeat steps 3 to 6 with the other half of the card. The 2 boxes should fit together.

9. If you want to write a message in the box, you can cut a paper to fit inside, write your note and glue or tape it in.

**TIP:** Make sure if there is a note written on the card that you don't want others to read that you cover it over with a piece of paper or black it out!

**onlineEXTRA** Download the step by step instructions with photos from [www.rat-creek.org](http://www.rat-creek.org).

beautiful pictures or artwork. And cards are not cheap – an average price is probably \$5.00. Cards are paper products that use up our natural resources which impacts the environment, then often after only a quick reading, they are thrown into the trash adding to the mounds of paper in our landfills.

There are many craft ideas for reusing greeting cards but turning them into gift boxes in just a few minutes is one of the best and most useful I have encountered. I learned this great craft at the Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre Winter Festival last month. My children can't do it by themselves but they love having the little boxes to play with.

Use the boxes to give little gifts such as candies, chocolates, jewelry, money, gift cards, etc. It's a complete package – no wrapping or cards needed.

Here are instructions I've embellished from [www.kinder-art.com/recycle/cardbox.shtml](http://www.kinder-art.com/recycle/cardbox.shtml)

### What You Need:

An old greeting card—or two or three.

A ruler or straight edge.

A pencil.

A pair of scissors.

### What You Do:

1. First, get an old greeting card. It has to be a rectangular one – no funny shapes.

2. Next, rip it in half at the fold. Trim the back piece of the card so that it is slightly smaller than the front by cutting a 1/4 inch strip off the top and one side. (Or instead when you are



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Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

## In which she dishes on dirt and lectures on location

the Gardening Diva  
WITH CHERYL WALKER

The Gardening Diva (TGD) is amazed at those who insist on plunking their tender, fragile seedlings in lumpy, non-draining clay. These very silly readers hold TGD hostage and demand to know why the poor dears failed to thrive. Honestly dear reader, the black stuff we have in our neighbourhoods is not soil; it's clay. Throw pots with it or use it to fix your shoes, but this business of planting tender seedlings in it must stop. TGD must really put her foot down. Real gardens need real soil, and a good location.

### Location

Please dear reader: do remember that plants need sun. This means that all things considered, it is good to locate beds where the sun shines – generally the south or west side of your yard.

### Dirt

Dear reader, there is black stuff, and there is garden soil. The two are quite different. Real garden soil is mixed with organic stuff for nutrients and is well drained. Alas dear reader, there is generally no way to get the "real thing,"



except by the sweat of one's brow. TGD must confess that she is, most importantly, a lady. The très wonderful Gardening Diva husband does most of the work in bed preparation. TGD shall provide an overview of this laborious topic, but finds herself unable to render physical assistance. Good leaders do understand the importance of

delegating.

Let us assume that you are constructing a new bed. You have of course chosen a location with beaucoup sun. First dear reader, remove the grass that is growing. The très wonderful Gardening Diva husband does this with a flat bladed shovel. After the turf is removed, dig down about eight inches – generally the length of the spade. Begin adding to the soil. Plan on adding compost, peat moss, and possibly children's play sand. Add enough to have 3 inches of material on the top of the soil. For a 4 foot square bed you will require 60 L of peat moss, 60 L of compost and a good sized bag of sand.

Compost can be procured from the City of Edmonton, at the Clover Bar landfill. Bring a shovel and a vehicle to carry it away.

### Till

Mix your additives into the turned up dirt. Again, the très wonderful Gardening Diva husband does this. One can do this process by hand, but honestly dear reader; your local home renovation store has lots of cute rototillers that can accomplish this process for you.

Till deeply dear reader, and overlap your passes. After tilling, carefully pick out every weed. Leave even one, dear reader, and it will spread. Your soil is now ready to host your plants.

Now go forth – create real garden soil.

A reminder, gentle readers. If you have been growing tomatoes and flowers from seed, you will likely need to repot them into bigger pots. If you used peat

pots, do slash holes in the side of the pot, so that the roots have room to spread.

*TGD (aka Cheryl Walker) lives and gardens in Parkdale, with the très wonderful Gardening Diva husband and the non-gardening dogs. She believes that real garden soil is a joy to behold. Next month she shall tackle planting.*

## Keeping your machine in tip top shape...

TECHNO  
BABBLE  
WITH ROBIN STOCKS

Taking your computer to the gym will not keep it fit and running like the day you brought it home. All humour aside...

By default Windows likes to keep track of what has been going on on your machine and so Microsoft will stash these tracking files into numerous hidden folders on your machine. Here is a list of the folders that Windows will use to store these files:

- C:\temp
- C:\Windows\Temp
- C:\Documents and Settings\Username\Local Settings\Temp

Unless you are familiar with turning off hidden system folders you should not attempt to delete these files. Unfamiliarity with this operation could do serious damage to the operating system and possibly stop your machine from starting up.

Inside Windows there are two tools available to help keep your machine fit – the disk clean up and the disk defragmenter – which can be located by clicking on Start, then Accessories, then System Tools.

The Disk Cleanup tool allows the examination of your disk drive and suggests the removal of files not needed by Windows. Please note: if Office is installed, it is recommended to keep the original setup files listed for future updates to the installation.

The Disk Defragmenter tool analyzes your hard drive and recommends defragging your drive. Now you are probably wondering what "defragging my drive" is. The defragmenter tool reorganizes your folders and files so that the computer spends less time "jumping" around, thereby allowing your computer to run more efficiently.

I recommend running these two tools every four

months and an easy way to remember is to use the seasonal equinoxes as your reminder.

Here is a list of tools, I have tested on my machine and found helpful:

- Disk Max: <http://koshy-johnuk.blogspot.com/2007/02/kjohn-diskmax-v20.html> which I believe is the best freeware cleanup application.

- Tune-up Utilities 2007: <http://www.tune-up.com/products/tuneup-utilities/> and can be test driven free for 30 days.

- System Mechanic V7. <http://www.systemmechanic.com/>



com/ which can also be test driven free for 30 days.

Another concern is dust collecting inside the machine. It will slowly build up and make your machine run hot. Once a year, I recommend unplugging your machine, removing the side panel and spraying out your machine with compressed air. Tips! Do the cleaning outside and let your machine warm up to room temperature before starting it back up. Remember the closer your machine is to the floor, the more dust that will accumulate and the majority will be in the bottom of your machine.

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

### E-Recycling your Electronics

And, since this issue has a fea-

ture on the 3Rs, I thought I'd add a bit about what to do with your old computers and other electronics. Electronic waste is growing at three times the rate of other municipal waste. Computers, cellular phones, TVs, and other similar items can and should be donated or recycled. This keeps dangerous elements like lead and mercury out of landfills.

The good news is many of the materials in these electronics can be recycled. Eco Stations accept all electronics, computers and computer accessories for

recycling at no charge. Clover Bar Landfill accepts TVs, computers and computer monitors for recycling at no charge if these are the only items in your load. For more information call the Waste Hotline at 496-

5678 or e-mail: [wasteman@edmonton.ca](mailto:wasteman@edmonton.ca).

Also you can consider giving your computer to a charitable organization like such as Computers for Schools – <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/cfs/>. For a list of charitable organizations go the City of Edmonton's Reuse & Recycling Directory at [www.edmonton.ca/waste](http://www.edmonton.ca/waste).

*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.*

### 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



Edmonton  
Public Library

### SPRUCEWOOD BRANCH

11555 - 95 Street Call 496-7099 to register

#### Spring Fling – Family Storytime

Sat April 14, 2:00 pm.  
Come and join us for a blooming good storytime, some fun crafts and activities too!

#### Fun for Ones

April 17 to May 8, 10:15 am.  
Tuesdays  
This program is designed to introduce one-year-olds and their caregivers to rhymes, songs and stories. Caregivers will sit on the floor with their children and do rhymes and finger games together.

Ages: 12 – 24 months  
Participation limit: 12

#### Rain, Rain, Go Away

Sat April 21, 2:00 pm.  
Come under the storytime umbrella for some stories about getting wet. Try your hand at a rainy day activity too.

#### Fabulous Readers' Club

Sat April 28, 2:00 pm and ongoing  
Teen Advisory Group  
Thursday April 19, 06:00 p.m.

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owned and operated by Darcy & Jessie Radies.. residents of Norwood community

## SPORTS

### 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.

### EASTER EVENTS

#### SWEET TREAT HIDE AND SEEK

John Janzen Nature Centre and Fort Edmonton Park  
7000-143 St.  
(Corner of Fox Drive and Whitemud Drive)  
Saturday, Apr. 7, noon-5 p.m.  
Visit two fantastic City of Edmonton Attractions for the price of one! We're celebrating Easter in style at the John Janzen Nature Centre and at Fort

Edmonton Park. After enjoying the festivities at the Fort, come to the Nature Centre and welcome spring. Play nature games, plant a seed for you to take home and visit with the animals that live at the Nature Centre. Cost: Fort Edmonton Park admission: \$19.75/family \$6.75/adult \$3.25/child

#### EASTER LILLIES

Friday-Sunday, Apr. 6-8, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
Muttart Conservatory, 9626-96A St.  
A quiet and reverent stroll through the Show Pyramid will showcase Easter Lillies. Spend an afternoon at your leisure.  
Cost: Included with regular admission.

#### ROSE MARGARET KING MERIT AWARDS

(application deadline May 15)  
For youth and mature students in financial need who have attended school in Edmonton at some point during their kindergarten through Grade 12 educational history. Priority is given to students who have attended an inner city school and in particular those who have attended

Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue and Westwood Community Leagues invite their members to register children for

## 2007 OUTDOOR SOCCER SEASON

### 2007 Outdoor Soccer registration requirements:

- Community League Membership
- Fees: U6 & U8-\$65 / U10-\$75/ U12-\$105/ U14-\$110/ U16 & U18-\$120
- Jersey deposit-\$75.00 for each child
- 2 volunteer deposit cheques \$100.00 each -per child registered (maximum of 4 volunteer commitments per family)
- includes 1 tournament/team & individual picture/banquet & award

Kidsport funding applications will be available- ask if your family qualifies

- This season's registration was a HUGE SUCCESS and we are hopeful for teams from each age group (except U18)
- NEW this year is the Little Kickers Soccer Program for 3-5 yr olds
- Soccer referees required for outdoor soccer -must be 12 yrs or older

Funding available for referee courses - this is a paid position- payment is per game.

### Any questions contact

Delton Soccer Director Sue Nozack 474-3491  
Alberta Avenue Trish Filevich 477-2773 ext 1  
Spruce Ave Verna Stainthorp 479-8019



### Leaders In Training - Get the Leading Edge!

Are you ready to meet new friends and discover the amazing leader within? The Leaders In Training (L.I.T.) program gives youth ages 13 - 17 years valuable leadership skills and work experience in a fun environment.

Gain valuable leadership experience through training and practical on-site volunteering. You will have the choice to volunteer in an assortment of programs run by the City of Edmonton, from summer camps to playground programs. Your volunteer commitment can be as little as two weeks or as much as seven weeks - the choice is yours.

To volunteer complete the application online at [www.edmonton.ca/youth](http://www.edmonton.ca/youth) or pick up an application at a City of Edmonton facility near you in Spring 2007.

For more information visit [www.edmonton.ca/youth](http://www.edmonton.ca/youth), e-mail [youth@edmonton.ca](mailto:youth@edmonton.ca), or call 944-7421.

## EVENTS

Alex Taylor School. For applications call 426-0015 ext. 111 or go to [www.dollarsforlearners.com](http://www.dollarsforlearners.com)

**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

**DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR READING, WRITING OR MATH SKILLS?**  
Call the Learning Centre at 429-0675.

#### CRYSTAL KIDS

8718 118 Avenue: Ph 479-5283  
[www.crystalkids.org](http://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 & FUN FOR TODDLERS:

Tuesdays, March 13 - April 24, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Tuesdays, May 15 - June 19, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
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 & FUN FOR PRESCHOOLERS:

Thursdays, March 15 - April 26, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Thursdays, May 10 - June 14, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
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.

**L.A.P.S.** - Literacy and Parenting Skills  
Wednesdays, March 14 - May 2, 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 in advance with the Early Start Program upon registration. Transportation is not available for this group.

#### PARKDALE-CROMDALE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

11335 85 St, 471-4410  
Thursday, April 26, 7pm

#### SPRUCE AVENUE COMMUNITY LEAGUE WEEKEND TO CLEAN UP

May 3-5  
Join us in our annual spring clean up!! Free bin for unwanted household items (no appliances or tires please). Canteen and bottle drive with all proceeds going to the park project. Garage sale tables available for only \$10.00. Call Verna @479-8019. Watch for the flyer in your mailbox!!!

#### SPORTS DIRECTOR NEEDED FOR SPRUCE AVENUE COMMUNITY LEAGUE!!

Contact Henry @479-8019 for details

#### RAT CREEK PRESS SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Spruce Ave Community League Hall, 10240 115 Ave  
Saturday April 21, 10 am

#### THEATRE PROSPERO AND ARTS ON THE AVE PRESENT:

Hamlet by William Shakespeare  
May 11 and 12 at 8:00pm  
Hodson Hall (Avespace 1), Alberta Avenue Community League, 9210 118 Ave  
Tickets are \$8.00 at the door. Bring your community membership for a discount. Call 477-2773 or go to [www.theatreprospero.ca](http://www.theatreprospero.ca) for more information.

#### MAY WEEK LABOUR ARTS FESTIVAL

April 27th through May 5th, 2007.  
Old Alberta Cycle building on 118 Ave  
The Edmonton May Week Labour Arts Festival brings together the labour movement, workers and artists to celebrate the achievements of people's struggles for social and economic justice through visual arts, music, film, poetry and theatre. Go to their website for more information: [www.mayweek.ab.ca](http://www.mayweek.ab.ca).

#### ALBERTA AVENUE COMMUNITY LEAGUE AND THE CITY OF EDMONTON CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

All programs will be at the Alberta Avenue Community League Hall @ 9210-118 Avenue. To register call 496-4999.

#### EASTER CHOCOLATE CREATIONS

Saturday, April 14th, 1-3 pm \$7  
6- 12 years  
Learn to make tasty chocolates while having loads of fun. You will leave with a hand-made gift box filled with chocolate treats!

#### MOTHER'S DAY SOAP MAKING

Saturday, May 5th, 1-3 pm \$7  
6-12 years  
Create the perfect gift for Mom. You will experience soap making first hand as you melt, pour, colour and scent your very own soaps to take home.

For more information visit Alberta Avenue's website at [www.aacl.shawbiz.ca](http://www.aacl.shawbiz.ca)

## A conversation between two Norwood residents

#1: "I'm so glad to see spring on its way."

#2: "Oh, me too, gets my blood pumping again and my energy returns."

#1: "Speaking of energy, I heard the Norwood Neighbourhood Association is having their Annual General Meeting soon."

#2: "So?"

#1: "Well, I've been thinking I'll use some of my extra energy and attend the meeting to see what NNA is up to. Care to join me?"

#2: "Sure, why not? Who knows maybe we'll decide to get involved in some way and make our neighbourhood a better place for all of us."

## Come One, Come All!

Norwood Neighbourhood Association

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, May 9 at 7:00 PM

at the Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre  
9516 - 114 Avenue

Please ring the bell high up on the right hand side of the door.

We look forward to your attendance, your ideas, your enthusiasm!

See you there!