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The endless battle over liquor stores

KAREN MYKIETKA

Carrie Thuesen feels like she has made a career of fighting liquor stores – and she’s tired of it. “I’m almost worn out. An incredible amount of people’s time and energy has gone into fighting a liquor store in this location,” says the Cromdale resident. Thuesen and other residents have been battling for almost eight years to stop a liquor store from establishing itself in the Save-On Foods business area at 112 Ave and 82 St. “It’s all volunteer time,” she adds, “We don’t get paid for it. But the liquor store, it’s part of their business. They hire lawyers.”

Why sacrifice so much personal time to stop a liquor store? Thuesen says she does it for her child and the other children in the neighbourhood, “We have a playground here [Sheriff Robertson Park]. It should be a safe place for kids to play.” She talks about broken glass in the sand and drunks scaring kids out of the park. “We have people who drink in the ravine [Kinnard Ravine]. A liquor store here just makes it all the easier for them to get their liquor. I can just see it getting worse.”

The regulations

In 1993, the Alberta Government privatized the liquor business. Since then, community residents have been fighting a losing battle over the proliferation of liquor stores in their neighbourhoods. The number of liquor stores in Edmonton has increased from 42 in 1993 to 251 in 2007.

Three factors limit liquor store location. One, the zoning has to allow it. Two, it has to be 100 metres from a playground, school or community facility. In our area this is about one city

block going east-west (e.g. from 92 St to 93 St). And three, it has to be a minimum 500 metres from another liquor store (this bylaw began April 2007).

The ongoing battle

Over the last three years, as local residents have turned out to talk about vision and revitalization for the Avenue area, a common theme has been the desire to reduce the number of liquor stores, pawn shops, and adult-video stores. This was even made a goal of the Avenue Initiative Revitalization Strategy.

Taking the city bylaws and our current zoning into consideration, there are two areas in our community available to liquor stores; the stretch on 118 Avenue between 86 Street and 91 Street and 112 Avenue east of 92 Street to the Save-on Foods at 82 St. Liquor stores are currently being fought in both these areas.

In October, Parkdale-Cromdale Community League won the right to a new Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) hearing from the Court of Queen’s Bench. They claimed they did not receive notice of the appeal hearing for the Wine & Spirits Mart wanting to open at 8108 112 Avenue. Robert Noce, legal counsel for the property owner, made convincing argument during the appeal, at which no community members were present, and the SDAB granted the development permit. The liquor store company is in discussions with the league to drop its opposition, but if no agreement is reached, both parties will be back before the SDAB in December.

Another group of community leaders will be before the SDAB on November 29



L TO R: CHRISTY MORIN (THE CARROT), CHRIS BASUALDO (ALBERTA AVE COMMUNITY LEAGUE), NORM ALDI (EASTWOOD COMMUNITY LEAGUE) STAND IN FRONT OF THE OLD DQ, THE PROPOSED SITE OF A NEW LIQUOR STORE ON THE AVE.

appealing the N&N Liquor Store that is applying to open in the old Dairy Queen location at 9023 118 Avenue. This location used to be zone CNC which didn’t allow liquor stores. In September 2007, the Avenue Initiative rezoning plan was passed by City Council changing the zoning to CB2. “Many other parts of 118 Avenue already had this zoning,” says Judy Allan, Avenue Initiative coordinator, “Zoning was changed to allow for developments of up to four stories and a greater diversity of business uses.”

What does discretionary mean?

Unfortunately, CB2 also allows liquor stores as a discretionary use. “We knew it was discre-

tionary,” says Peter Rausch, Executive Director of the Alberta Avenue Business Association, “but we felt the benefit of mixed-use and increased development outweighed the potential of a liquor store coming in.”

Mark Garrett, manager of the City’s Development and Compliance Branch, explained that if a use (such as a liquor store) is permitted under the zoning and meets the regulations, then the development officer is obligated to grant the permit. But when a use is discretionary, the development officer will consider the land uses (physical) implications for surrounding properties, the area development plans and any policy statements from City Council. The appeal board may

be more willing to refuse a permit based on the community’s objections. The SDAB ruling on this matter will show how much credence they can or are willing to give to community opposition and the stated goals of the Avenue Initiative.

The story isn’t over yet

Watch for an update on these liquor store appeals in the January issue. In the meantime, please send us your thoughts on, or experiences with our area liquor stores. Do you use them? Do you have any problems or concerns with our current stores? What do you think of the proposed liquor store for the old Dairy Queen? The Save-On area? Send feedback to editor@ratcreek.org or call 479-6285.

The Rat Creek Press wishes you a Merry Christmas and a safe new year.

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How does your liquor store rate?

Go to the back page for an exclusive inside report by undercover RCP agents Snark and Snip.

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

OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS
Alberta Lottery Fund
Norwood Neighbourhood Association
Spruce Avenue Community League
Eastwood Community League
Elmwood Park Community League
Alberta Avenue Business Association
PAAFE - Prostitution Awareness &
Action Foundation of Edmonton

Clarification

The Rat Creek Press would like to clarify information mentioned in our November issue article *Interested in selling your house?* on p10.

According to the Alberta Real Estate Board the amount of the commission and the split with the buyers agent are negotiated on each sale between the agent and the home owner. It is contrary to the competition act to establish a standard fee or commission within a market or general area. However, an individual company (ie a brokerage) can establish a set fee schedule for their business which must be used by all the agents in that brokerage. Your agent can advise you if that is the situation in which he works.

We apologise if the original information given was confusing to anyone. This article was about houses as an investment and no disrespect to real estate agents was intended

So long and thanks for all the dish

EDITORIAL

WITH DAWN FREEMAN

Did you notice that I stole the title for this my last editorial? Well, I did change it a little so the estate of Douglas Adams can't sue me. I've always loved that series, but I digress...

This is my final issue as editor of the *Rat Creek Press*, or as we like to affectionately call it, the little paper that could. It's time to move on to different things, but it's so hard to leave as well.

I began working on the

paper with Karen in 2004. At first I just wrote a few articles, then added editing other people's stories into the mix. Karen and I worked together on planning

stories, themes and layout. We went from putting out an issue every two months to doing one every month, doubling our workload. Last September Karen supposedly cut back and I took on even more of the regular issue details. Of course that

still left Karen with a bunch of duties including the advertising – anyone interested in a job?

But I digress again...and that is kind of the way I think about my time as editor of the *Rat Creek*: an opportunity to be diverted, to explore different stories and subjects, to learn about different people and places. To hear the news, the gossip, and the words: "this is off the record, but..."

I want to give my thanks to everyone who ever did anything for this paper. The *Rat Creek* would not survive without your contributions and I appreciate all your talents. The paper and the people involved in it have been a huge part of my life for some time and it is hard to say goodbye.

Although I am not going to disappear completely; I intend to still remain involved to help the paper continue and flourish – perhaps on the board, definitely at editorial meetings and as a volunteer writer.

And when you see me around, I still expect the dish.

To hear the news, the gossip, and the words: "this is off the record, but..."

Glenrose building new energy centre

Glenrose Energy Centre increases capacity to supply expanding Royal Alex

DAWN FREEMAN

It is an exciting time as Capital Health prepares for the fall 2008 opening of the new Lois Hole Hospital for Women and a new Centre for Cardiac Services housed in the Robbins Pavilion at the Royal Alexandra Hospital site.

In order to prepare for these facilities, the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital is beginning expansion of its Energy Centre.

"The Energy Centre has supplied energy (heat in the form of steam) to the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, the Royal Alexandra Hospital, and the Norwood facility since the RAH was built," says Lee Richardson, Director of Site Operations at the Glenrose. "This expansion is necessary to provide heat to the new facilities."

The steam is produced in boilers at 750 kPa (110 psi). The boilers burn natural gas and operate at approximately 82% efficiency. The Energy Centre currently has a steam generation capacity of 90,100 kg/hr (200,000 lb/hr). The expansion will add another 34,000 kg/hr (75,000 lb/hr), representing a 37.5% increase in capacity.

Richardson attended a Spruce Avenue Community League meeting in March 2007 to explain about the expansion and to answer any questions. The work began in October and will be completed by November 2008. The impact will be minimal to residents; however there will be occasional truck traffic delivering materials along 102 St.

"The league has no objec-

tion to the expansion and it will not create any additional noise after it becomes operational," says Verna Stainthorp, Spruce Ave League secretary treasurer.

The Glenrose is committed to maintaining open lines of communication with residents

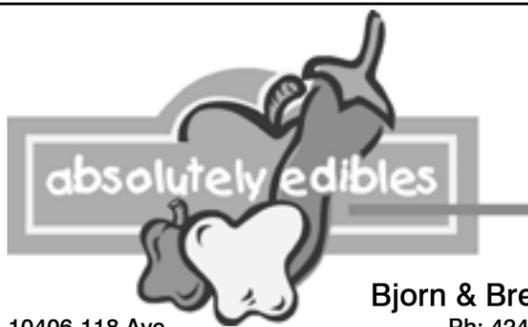
in the neighborhoods surrounding its Rehabilitation Hospital. Please do not hesitate to contact Lee Richardson, Director of Site Operations at the Glenrose with any questions or concerns at 735-6043, or by email at Lee.Richardson@capitalhealth.ca.



GRAPHIC DRAWINGS OF THE NEW GLENROSE ENERGY CENTRE SCHEDULED TO BE FINISHED IN NOVEMBER 2008.



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Words From Council

WITH ED GIBBONS
Councillor, Ward 3

I am pleased to be writing once again as Councillor for Ward 3. Let me start by offering my heartfelt thanks for entrusting me as one of your representatives on City Council.

It has been busy back at work since election day, representing northeast Edmonton. With your support, I am reinvigorated about the next term's opportunities and challenges.

During the election campaign, I heard much talk about Alberta Avenue. Interest in this major thoroughfare extends beyond our ward. Alberta Avenue's revitalization is the fastest of any such projects in Edmonton. Indeed, the project's two-and-a-half-year timespan will start showing visible results in the next year.

Phase one will involve the beautification of sidewalks from 83 to 87 Streets, costing around \$1 million from the 2007 budget. Building on the first phase, a further proposed injection of about \$7 million from the 2008 budget will enhance more sidewalks as well as start water, sewer and street works.

As the revitalization of

Alberta Avenue continues, we will attract new families to the area. New and growing businesses will tap into an underserved market. It is a matter of time before the rest of Edmonton sees what we have known all along: a proud neighbourhood built on strong families, a vibrant commercial sector and an enviable quality of living. At the end of the day, people will feel even better about living here.

Norwood and Parkdale are starting to feel a difference too, attracting new residential developments and dynamic businesses to the neighbourhood. You can see how residents are feeling safe to venture out of their homes and workplaces.

I am here to serve you. You have a say in what happens in Ward 3. Feel free to contact our office at 496-8138 or ed.gibbons@edmonton.ca, and let us know how we can help.

Local resident achieves Canadian crowning glory

GORDON VICKRUCK

Local resident Austin Mardon recently received one of the highest Canadian civilian accolades – he was admitted as a member to the Order of Canada. Established in 1967 by HRH Elizabeth II, the Order recognizes a lifetime of distinguished service in or to a particular community, group or field of activity.

Mardon never hesitates to use his personal story as an example to others living with mental illness. In 1992, he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Undaunted, he channeled his energies into writing and scientific research. It was at this time that he also became active as a

mental health advocate, speaking out about issues affecting people who live with mental illness. Stressing the benefits

great number of individuals to reclaim their place in society. Over the years, he has become not only a spokesperson, but also a champion who serves as a mentor and a beacon of hope for thousands of other Canadians.

One of the most significant challenges that Mardon confronts is keeping stress to a minimum. Although he would like to be doing far more as an adult educator, he must limit his engagements to prevent a resultant worsening of his condition. Nonetheless, doing what he can brings enormous satisfaction. His parting words of encouragement; "When you

give, you get back a lot more." Some information taken from www.canada.gc.ca



AUSTIN MARDON RECEIVES HIS MEDAL FROM HER EXCELLENCY, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MICHAËLLE JEAN, GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

and the importance of medication as a way to regain control over one's life, he has helped a

Facts about schizophrenia:

- It can affect anyone at anytime but typically strikes people in their late adolescence or early adulthood.
- One percent of the general population has schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is the single most disabling disease of young people.
- There are no certain causes or precursors to this illness although genetics does seem to be a factor.
- The effect of the condition can include delusions, hallucinations and flattening of personality.
- Depression is often an accompanying mental state, causing 40% of sufferers to attempt suicide.
- When untreated, schizophrenia can lead to many misunderstood or misinterpreted social behaviours resulting in ostracism or even incarceration. A grossly disproportionate number of people with mental illness are homeless or in jail.
- Although there is no cure for schizophrenia, with medication and a balanced lifestyle, one can lead a healthy life.

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avenue initiative revitalization



In The New Year, Think About Joining a Working Group

Groups meet on a monthly basis to implement the Avenue Initiative. To get involved call Judy at 496-1913 or email judy.allan@edmonton.ca

1) Streetscape-- 1st Tuesday of the month

Working on details of the streetscape that is scheduled to begin in spring '08.

2) Development and Revitalization-- 1st Wednesday of the month

Responsible for planning and zoning issues.

3) Beautification & Cleanliness-- 2nd Wednesday of the month

Works on special events, community clean ups and beautification projects.

4) Safe Streets-- 3rd Tuesday of the month

Works with EPS, Bylaw & Safe Housing to create a safe community.

Delicious food isn't the only thing on the menu

Flavour Budzzz Catering turns out skilled employees along with their food fare

BUSINESS Spotlight

WITH KAREN MYKIETKA

"Flavour Budzzz is the best catering company in Edmonton," says Ken Foster, General Manager of Train Canada. And it's right here on 118 Avenue.

Foster and two other Train employees were at the Flavour Budzzz new menu launch in November sampling the new offerings. He stumbled upon the company about a year ago when he ran into a delivery person in his building elevator. His company spends around \$1000 a week on catering, feed-



ROXANNE SAUCIER AND HERMAN GOIGNER, GRADUATES OF THE FLAVOUR BUDZZZ TRAINING PROGRAM ARE BUSY MAKING RASPBERRY SQUARES.

ing anywhere between 12 to 30 people a day at their training centre. Not satisfied with their current caterer, they decided

Recipe from Chef Renate Mexican Cheese Muffins

Makes about 12 (4 inch) muffins
Preheat oven to 350
Have all ingredients at room temperature

Sift before measuring:
1 cups of all purpose flour
Resift with:
3 tsp baking powder
1 tbsp sugar
1 tsp salt

Stir into sifted ingredients until all the particles of cheese have been separated 1 cup of grated cheddar (or any other cheese).

Combine and beat well:
1 egg
1 cup of milk
3 tbsp of melted butter
2-4 tbsp of finely diced jalapeno pepper (depending on how spicy you like your food)

Mix all ingredients lightly. Fill muffin pans 2/3 full. Bake 20-25 minutes. Enjoy hot from the oven.



to give this new one a try. "They are all we use now," says Foster who's full of praises, "The food is delicious. The servings are generous. The presentation and service are fantastic." He's a loyal and satisfied customer who believes they're getting the best value their money can buy.

Sous-chef Kaley Thompson, a NAIT apprenticeship student, has been working at Flavour Budzzz for the past nine months. She loves doing her training in the field rather than the classroom and is excited to be working with Chef Renate Bishop who joined Flavour Budzzz a few months ago as Kitchen Manager. Bishop, a red seal chef who previously worked at the Sidetrack Café, launched a revamped menu in November. She says, "The menu focuses on home-cooked comfort foods like stews, lasagna, chili, and roast beef." New on the menu are different flavours of lasagna, Carrot Ginger soup and sausage rolls. The Carrot Coffeehouse patrons have been privy to fabulous hummus and house-baked pita chips, scrumptious desserts and yummy cinnamon buns courtesy of Flavour Budzzz.

This profitable company doing \$250,000 worth of catering annually is concerned about more than the bottom line. "Flavour Budzzz is a social enterprise," say Doug Thompson, program manager for DECSA (Distinctive

Employment and Counselling Services of Alberta). The business was started by DECSA in 2003 to train individuals with chronic mental illness for part-time employment. With funding from both the provincial and federal governments, Flavour Budzzz is able to except 25 clients into a 12 month commercial cooking and catering training program. To date, 122 individuals have enrolled and 54 have completed the training program. The business received a 2007 Award of Excellence from the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Many of the graduates stay on as employees like Betty Lucyk, age 60, and Steven Campbell, age 32, who were working at the menu launch. Betty, who has been with Flavour Budzzz for four years, never cooked much before entering the program. Now she cooks for a living 12 to 16 hours a week making \$10 an hour. "I love it and intend to keep doing it forever," she says. Well at least until she's ready to retire. Steven says he too enjoys the work, but it might not be his long-term career.

The clients, whether they are trainees or employees, only work three to four hours shifts and are paired with a job coach. The job coach under the direction of the chefs plans the daily work load and makes assignments based on learning needs and skills of clients. Then, they teach clients or supervise their work as needed. It is their



JAMIE, A JOB COACH, AND CHEF RENATE SHOW OFF TWO FOOD TRAYS READY TO GO

job to know the clients and what they can handle. They watch for stress and make adjustments as necessary.

Job coaches continue to monitor clients once they have completed the training and are placed in a job elsewhere – ten have found jobs in the community. Many of them prefer to stay on at Flavour Budzzz because of it's a safe and supportive work environment. "The clients aren't comfortable in a fast-paced environment," says Bishop.

The clients aren't the only ones who love working for this social enterprise. Chef Bishop

says, "It's so rewarding working here. I've been a chef for many years and have worked in many different places...This is the most rewarding by far."

Ken Foster didn't find out about the company's social goals until after placing his first order, "...that made our decision to use Flavour Budzzz more gratifying." He shares his gratitude with others by delivering any leftovers to the needy in the inner city whenever possible.

Flavour Budzzz Catering
9142 118 Ave, Ph: 378-0586
flavourbudzzz@decsa.com

Social Enterprises

A business whose profits go to worthy social causes.

Definitions:

Social enterprises are businesses operated by non-profits, with the dual purpose of generating income by selling a product or service in the marketplace and creating a social, environmental or cultural value. www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca

A social enterprise is an organization or venture that advances its social mission through entrepreneurial earned income strategies. www.csen.ca

Types:

Employment development enterprises
Mission-based businesses
Ancillary or asset-based businesses

Local examples:

Flavour Budzzz
Camel Boys Cafe
The Carrot Community Arts
Coffeehouse
Kids in the Hall
Women Building Futures

Social Enterprise Fund

The City of Edmonton has given \$1.8 million to start an endowment fund to finance socially beneficial businesses that might not qualify for loans from banks. The fund will be run under The Edmonton Community Foundation, who is also one of the investors. Bob Ward, Executive Director of the fund, expects to have the application details ready by February 2008. For more info go to www.ecfoundation.org or call 426-0015 – in February.

More than just coffee and samosas

Camel Boys Cafe helps immigrants & supports projects abroad

BUSINESS Spotlight

WITH DAWN FREEMAN

The colour of the walls brings to mind the shifting sands of the desert and the name, according to owner Mohamed Maie, is a symbolic reminder of the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Somali people. Camel Boys Cafe is the latest addition to a growing African business community on the Avenue.

But the cafe does more than just serve coffee and delicious traditional Somali food. Partially funded by the international not-for-profit group, Tools For Humanity (www.tools4humanity.org), Maie considers Camel Boys also to be a social enterprise.

"We want to carry on the oral tradition of Somalian society by being a place where



MOHAMED MAIE, OWNER, CAMEL BOYS CAFE

people can meet and share information about travel, jobs, and family news," says Maie

The cafe will also serve as a model for similar endeavours back in Somalia as well as help raise money to aid Tools For Humanity projects both here and in Somalia; most recently they sent money to help fund a school for blind children.

Maie, who is also involved with Tools For Humanity as well as the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, says he deliberately chose 118 Avenue as the site for the cafe. "This area is growing and we want to be part of the vibrant mosaic that the Avenue is becoming."

As well, there is an ever-increasing population of Somali and other African peoples living and working in the area. Maie is working closely with the Alberta Ave Business Association and sees perhaps a future African corridor on 118 Ave – just like

Little Italy or Chinatown is in other parts of the city.

"Our people support their own stores. More stores bring more people and that increases the safety and the vibrancy of the community."

Camel Boys Cafe boasts the finest samosas in Edmonton, made by Sharifa Nasir, who will manage Camel Boys along with her own store, Sharifa's Samosa House (10879 97 St). Sharifa's cooking is distinguished by her halal menu and nutritional and delicious use of fresh herbs and spices, perfect for people looking to taste Somali, Djibouti and East African cuisine. They also have computers available for use at the cost of \$1 per half hour.

Camel Boys Cafe
9315 118 Ave
Ph. 477-3599
Hours: Monday to Sunday
10am – 10pm



SHARIFA NASIR, MANAGER, IS THE CREATOR OF THE FAMOUS SAMOSAS AVAILABLE AT CAMEL BOYS.

Making room for Millie

Adoption from Avenue Goes to the Dogs event comes up trumps

LINDA MAUDE

Living just a block or two away, even if I hadn't been previously aware of it, I would have been drawn to the carnival-like atmosphere of the "Avenue's Gone To the Dogs" event on 93rd St and 118th Avenue, organized by the Avenue Revitalization Initiative in June.

I've always loved dogs, however, shift work and other considerations such as my two cats, Tosca and Musetta, have made me hesitate to take the step to get one. My biggest issue was that this was their house too, and I had no idea how they would react.

I strongly believe that if you are going to bring an animal into your life, you must be aware of the possible consequences and be very sure that you are willing to make the commitment required to give them a happy, healthy and fulfilled life. So as I headed towards the "party" in full swing down the end of the block, I had absolutely no intention of adopting a dog.

There's something special about spending a whole day with dozens of dogs! I loved it. They were everywhere, milling around, leaping in paddling pools, visiting with each other, playing, having occasional disagreements undoubtedly, but the pervading feeling was excitement and joy. That's dogs for you!

Set up around the perimeter, were several Animal Rescue groups who had brought dogs available for adoption. There were two pens in particular



MILLIE AT HER NEW HOME, WITH HER FAVORITE TOY.

full of adorable puppies that attracted a lot of attention. For me, though, I felt most for the

adult dogs. They had histories that had often affected their behavior and trust in human beings and other dogs.

Be very careful what you wish for! I kept walking past one particular table where a quiet, shy white dog peeked out longingly. The other dogs milled about her, but she was obviously too afraid to be part of the pack for any length of time.

Nothing wrong with giving the dog a pat and comforting her – right? So, I did. I did it multiple times as I wandered around exploring the various tables, displays and groups of dogs. And she was watching for me, I could tell, her face full of expectation and thankfulness.

No problem. I couldn't take her. The cats, right? But I had made a fatal strategic error – I had shown how much I loved her to the humans there.

Cats? No problem, they enthusiastically countered! Not only cats, but children too! Work? Doggy day-care would

take care of that commitment.

I said yes. I said it on the condition that the cats coped. I brought her home and we are now a family. Yes, there have been challenges. Tosca and Musetta were mortified initially, but with careful boundary setting by myself with both the dog and cats, I have never witnessed even a hiss.

And Millie? She has been slowly integrated into our lives as she became capable of coping with the challenges of sharing our space. She now sleeps in the bedroom in a soft crate with lovely squishy blankets and the door open. She is untethered and such a good girl. She would love to play chase with the cats, but they are not quite ready, so it is still not allowed.

It has been a challenge to fit the time commitment into my busy life. I am involved in several volunteer activities, plus work at two different jobs. But, as with all things we really want, I made the space, and it has changed all of our lives. The cats get a little less time alone with me, but I keep certain things for them alone so they know they

are special still. I get a lot more exercise – Millie is an Alaskan husky cross (the vet informs me that she is also part greyhound!).

Millie has changed steadily. She loves the dog park and is making friends with many people and dogs. She no longer automatically cowers when she meets people and actually runs up to say hello to strangers. Stealing other dogs' toys to make them chase her is the best game of all! She has a favorite squeaky soft ball that she carries around in the house, even taking it to bed with her. She is happiness personified and it rubs off on everyone she meets.

My life will never be the same, but it has never been better!

Millie is just one successful story from "The Avenue's Gone To The Dogs". We're sure there are many other dogs out there settling into new homes and bringing joy to their new families.

Did you adopt a dog from this event? We'd love to share your story with our community. Send your dog tale to editor@ratcreek.org.

Go to www.ratcreek.org and download our new ad rate sheet!

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Happy Holidays Highlands-Norwood!



My office staff and I would like to extend warm greetings to you and yours this holiday. Please have a safe and happy season, and I look forward serving you again in 2008!

6519 - 112 Avenue.
Your MLA, Brian Mason.
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www.brianmason.ca
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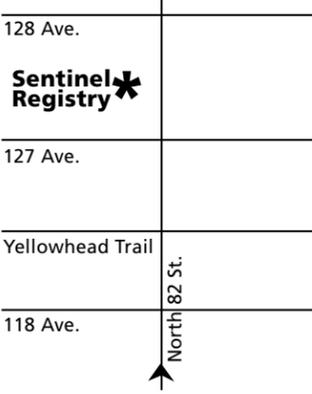
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The 12 YUMMY SHOPS For CHRISTMAS

At the first shop for Christmas Budapest Delicatessen sold to me
1 sheep manuray cheese

At the second shop for Christmas Balkan Style
Sausage Deli & Barbeque House
sold to me 2 jars of stuffed peppers

At the third shop for Christmas Popular Bakery
sold to me 3 cream puff pastries

At the fourth shop for Christmas Kasoa Tropical Food
sold to me 4 mango nectar juices

At the fifth shop for Christmas Polonia Sausage &
Deli sold to me 5 chorizo links

At the sixth shop for Christmas Paraiso Tropical
Latin American Imports sold to me 6 empanadas

At the seventh shop for Christmas Cheerio Liquor
sold to me a \$7.00 bottle of red wine

At the eighth shop for Christmas Charcuteria Micaelense
sold to me 8(00) gr. of mussels

At the ninth shop for Christmas Albert's Donair &
Shawermah sold to me 9 grape leaf dolmades

At the tenth shop for Christmas Polish Food & Gift
Centre sold to me 10 slices zamojski cheese

At the eleventh shop for Christmas La Favorite Pastry Shop
sold to me 11 shortbread cookies

At the twelfth shop for Christmas Handy Bakery
sold to me 12 multigrain buns

12 multigrain buns
11 shortbread cookies
10 slices of zamojski
9 rolled up grape leaves
8 hundred grams of mussels
7 dollars worth of red wine
6 frozen empanadas
5 chorizo links
4 mango nectars
3 cream puffs
2 jars of pickles

And a wheel of manuray for my family and me.

Until next time...Happy Eating



Angie Klein

Politicians dish up their favorites

ANNE NIELD

David Eggen is the NDP
MLA for Edmonton-Calder.

"My grandparents came from Norway, so sometimes we still make lefsa, the Norwegian potato bread, during the holiday season. The ingredients for lefsa are straightforward, but it takes a little practice to get a nice thin pancake. Try different fillings for lefsa and roll it up. Anything from raspberry jam to curry tastes good with this flat bread. Or eat it plain or with a little sugar. Mmm...good."

Lefsa

- 5 cups mashed potatoes
- 1 lb butter
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 2 cups flour

Mix butter and mashed potatoes together. Cool mixture. Add salt, sugar and flour. Knead until dough sticks together. Roll paper thin and fry on both sides. Works best to use pastry cloth to roll together.



THE EGGEN FAMILY ON THEIR WAY TO MAKE LEFSA. FROM L-R: GENEVIEVE EGGEN (DAUGHTER), SOMBOON EGGEN (WIFE), DAVID EGGEN, AND AVA EGGEN (DAUGHTER).

Stephen Mandel won re-election to his second term as Mayor of Edmonton in October's civic election.

"Scotch Cakes are a Mandel family favourite for the holidays. This recipe came over on the boat from Scotland with some of Lynn's relatives many years ago. The cakes were made at X-mas time to share with family and friends and to give as gifts to other families. This is also a tradition in the Mandel home during the holidays and the favorite of the Mayor."

Scotch Cakes (Short Bread)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. butter
- 2 T. corn starch
- 1 cup fruit sugar
- 3 T. potato flour
- 2 T. rice flour
- 4 cups all purpose flour

Cream butter and sugar. Add dry ingredients that have been sifted together. Knead (you may have to add 1/2 cup more flour). Cut dough into 4 or 5 pieces and pat into cakes 1" thick. A cookie cutter can be used to press a design onto the cakes before baking. Bake at 300 degrees F. for 1 1/4 Hr. Serve by breaking off pieces into chunks.

Tony Caterina was elected to his first term on City Council, representing Ward 3, in October's civic election.

Councillor Tony Caterina's favourite X-mas recipe – Cicerchiata. Tony prefers his simply sugar coated and that's all. This is a traditional recipe.

Cicerchiata

- Ingredients:
- 3 cups all purpose flour
 - 4 extra large eggs
 - 1 tbsp. lemonrind (grated)
 - 4 cups vegetable oil
 - 1 cup honey
 - 2 cups whole hazelnuts
 - 4 squares (4 oz.) semi-sweet chocolate

Place flour in a large bowl, make a well. Add eggs and lemon rind, mix. Knead till dough is elastic, set aside for 30 minutes. Take a small amount of dough and roll into a long strip, cut short lengths to form small balls. In a deep fryer, cook dough pieces until golden. Bring honey to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Add chocolate, cook until melted. Remove from heat and add nuts. Coat balls in honey/chocolate/nut mixture. In a tube pan, pile honey coated balls around sides. Cool slightly and press balls together.

Ed Gibbons was re-elected to his third term on City Council, representing Ward 3, in October's civic election.

"This is a simple favourite of mine. It goes great with turkey and on turkey sandwiches. I usually make it on Thanksgiving and freeze the rest to use at Christmas. Friends rave about it."

Fresh Cranberry Sauce

Ingredients:

- 1 bag of fresh raw cranberries
- Sugar-free sweetener (usually 1 1/2 packets) or sugar to taste
- 1 half orange (peel on)

Put cranberries in a blender with the sweetener or sugar and blend. Add half orange with peel on and blend again. Chop to desired consistency and serve.

This can be frozen and used anytime you serve turkey.



Kim Krushell was elected to her second term on City Council, representing Ward 2, in October's civic election.

"This recipe has been in the family for some time, handed down from the Krushell grandmother. It had its start in the depression when eggs were in short supply, so the recipe uses no eggs. It has always been a favourite of the Krushell family and is always made for birthdays and other parties."

Chocolate Wacky Cake

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 tbsp. cocoa
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt

Stir all ingredients and make a hole in the middle. Add the following ingredients into the hole:

- 1 cup oil
- 2 tbsp. vinegar
- 3 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups warm water

Beat until smooth. Pour into a 9" x 13" pan and bake at 350 for 25 minutes.

The gift of giving

Potluck brings time and food to the table

KIMBERLEY FERLAND

I am sure that everyone has heard, and probably used the saying: "it is better to give than to receive." When our parents said that to us do you think that they really believed it? And did they honestly think that we, as children, were buying it? And what does giving mean exactly? Give what and how much and to whom?

Christmas is a time that challenges that saying to the utmost. The advertisements, store displays and manufacturers all seem to work together to convince us that it is good to give, but better to receive.

There is no end to the stories of overwhelmed parents feeling the strain of trying to create a "good" Christmas and exhausting themselves by giving. Is that what it means that it is better to give than to receive? The need to work extra hours to pay for gifts and no time to actually spend with the family they are working so hard for?

There is also the pull of giving to the less fortunate at Christmas. It is a sad but true reality that there are many in our community that are struggling just to make ends meet and this is the time of year that those who assist the poor are asking for help to make Christmas something to celebrate.

There are research studies stating that the act of giving and being generous contribute to feelings of

mental and physical well being and may contribute to long life. I wonder if the researchers talked to people before or after Christmas.

So, how to balance the siren song of the Christmas season with the reality of wanting to spend time and energy on relationships with family and friends? One of the time honored traditions in many families and groups is the practice of potluck.

The tradition of potluck is sometimes attributed to the Aboriginal practice of potlatch. Potlatch was a celebration and feast at which the host of the event would demonstrate their status by giving generous gifts to all the guests and even go so far as to destroy unclaimed goods, possibly to demonstrate how little material goods meant to them. Although I admire the sentiment my European heart quails at the waste!

Another possible origin of the word is a marrying of the two English words cooking pot and lucke. It seems to imply that you took your chances on what you would find in the pot and that it would be shared no matter what was available. The practice of giving, of sharing what you have with others is what potluck is all about.

This Christmas give yourself the gift of giving. Give yourself time to spend with friends and family. Give your children your energy, creativity, time and smiles. Give yourself permission to

simplify Christmas. Have a potluck and share time with friends and family rather than spending the whole day in the kitchen. Practice the gift of giving and choose an agency or individual to give to and if Christmas isn't the best time, give yourself permission to give on one of the other 364 days of the year.

Take the time to remember that it is better to give than to receive, especially to yourself.



C is for cookie, that's good enough for me

DAWN FREEMAN

Baking is a fabulous gift at Christmas time for lots of different people. Teachers, neighbours, friends with kids, friends without kids, block get togethers, BYO office parties; cookies work well for all these things and more.

Now you could go the easy route and buy some treats at the grocery store – hey we've all done that before. But if you have the time and some friends who like to bake too, why not try holding a cookie exchange party.

Once a year I go baking crazy for my annual Christmas cookie exchange party. The premise is simple: a group of friends and a lot of cookies equals fun times and good eats, plus about 10 dozen different cookies or baking to give away or take to parties.

A group of us started this annual cookie exchange a few years ago. We each bake a number of dozen cookies – one for each participant plus one to share at the party. Then we pick a day to meet, exchange and share our treats.

It's not so hard to bake 10 or so dozen of the same kind of cookie – depending on how fancy you want to get. I myself am a simple kind of girl so I tend to make simple one-step cookies – pecan snowballs, or chocolate apricot fudge. Some of the others in my group get a little trickier with biscotti and chocolate covered pretzels.

Pick up a bunch of pretty Christmas tins or boxes from your favorite dollar store or

supermarket to give the cookies in, and you're all done.

Last year my friend's cookies became numerous gifts for friends and neighbours. I mixed and matched different ones to make gift assortments and got many a stunned sidelong look of amazement (read: bewilderment) at my bakery skill. (Of course I told the truth when asked!)

And by resolutely rationing the remaining dozens (read: hiding them in the freezer from the family), we had delicious cookies in our house until at least New Years Eve.

Hey, I really did give a lot away. Really.

PECAN SNOWBALLS

Ingredients:

- 2 cups butter, softened
- 4 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 cups sifted flour
- 3 to 4 cups finely chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1 cup sifted powdered sugar

Method: Cream butter, vanilla and sugar until fluffy. Sift together and add flour and salt. Mix well. Mix in nuts. Shape into 1 inch balls, place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 20 minutes at 325°C and cool before rolling in powdered sugar.



Politicians dish up... CONTINUED

Brian Mason is the MLA for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood and the Leader of the NDP Opposition in the Legislature.

"This is one of my favourites because it blends a traditional pasta dish with less common spices to create a delicious fusion of flavours. It's my signature dish and a dish that I like to make for special dinner parties with friends."

Chicken Curry Pasta

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp each paprika and ginger

- 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts, slivered
- 1-1/4 cups chicken stock
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1/3 cup plain yogurt
- tsp salt
- tsp pepper
- 4 cups penne
- cup chopped fresh coriander or parsley
- cup chopped peanuts or almonds, toasted (see tip below)

1. In large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat; cook garlic and onion for 2 minutes or until softened. Add curry powder, paprika and ginger; cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add chicken; cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until lightly browned.

2. Stir in 1 cup of the stock; cook for 1 minute or until evaporated. Add remaining stock and tomato paste; bring to boil. Reduce heat and sprinkle with raisins; simmer for 5 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink inside. Remove from heat; stir in yogurt, salt and pepper.

3. Meanwhile, in large pot of boiling salted water, cook penne for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender but firm; drain well. Toss with sauce; arrange on warmed serving platter. Garnish with coriander and peanuts. Makes 4 servings.

TIP: To toast peanuts or almonds, cook in small skillet over medium-low heat for 3 – 5 minutes or until golden.

The Rat Creek Press would like to thank all these hard working politicians who shared their favorite holiday recipes with us. Bon Appetit!

The hungry side of the law

After a hard day's (or night's) work, everyone's hungry and our boys and girls in blue are no exception. The Rat Creek Press was able to interrogate three of our busy District 1, Downtown Division EPS members to dish up their favorite Christmas recipe. Thanks guys!

DAWN FREEMAN

Wild Rice Broccoli Casserole

Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb. grated cheddar cheese
 - 2 heads broccoli (about 2 lbs)
 - 1 pkg Uncle Ben's Wild
 - 2 cans mushroom soup
- Cook rice as directed. Cook broccoli until crunchy. Mix soup and cheese. Butter casserole dish. Alternate layers: cheese/soup mix, broccoli and rice. Sprinkle with additional cheese. Cook at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Delicious!

Submitted by Sgt. Randy Loxterkamp, EPS District 1, Downtown Division



Apple Pancakes

1. Slice 4 apples and arrange on the bottom of a 9x12 baking dish
2. Add 3T of butter or margarine to the pan and put pan in oven until butter melts
3. Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl, combine the following: – 6 eggs – 1 1/2 c. milk (375mL) – 3 T. sugar (45mL) – 1t vanilla (5mL) – salt and cinnamon
4. Pour mixture over apples and bake for 20 minutes, at 425 degrees Fahrenheit or until brown around edges. It should grow. *Submitted by Community Liaison Constable Mike Russell, EPS, District 1, Downtown Division, who said: "This is the way I start my Christmas morning every year. Yummy!"*

Waldorf Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups cranberries coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 cups diced unpeeled apples and grapes
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon orange rind

Mix berries and sugar together in a bowl and let sit for 1 hour. Mix apples, grapes, raisins and nuts and add to berries and sugar. Blend mayonnaise and sour cream with orange rind and mix with fruit mixture just before serving. *Submitted by Staff Sgt. Jerry Nash, EPS, District 1, Downtown Division*

Chill out! Get a grip on holiday stress

PATRICIA DUNNIGAN

The kick-off to the holiday season starts earlier and increases in volume each year. And I mean volume! As of November 9 I had received: 47 flyers, 9 catalogues, 15 charity solicitations, and 8 craft sale notices.

The holidays represent the best and the worst of times to me. I love the fun, the family gatherings, the extra time to play with kids and the meaningful rituals and traditions. What I hate is the commercialism, and the shopping. Which leaves me with a dilemma: I have an elderly mother, six adult sons and daughters with partners, two step children living at home, 13 grandchildren and a dog. Oh! I forgot about Gordon my husband.

I have always tried to give thoughtful gifts but this year in late September I felt my stomach drop when I realized that I had to start making lists and get out shopping. So, I did what I do every year, I panicked. Then I asked myself, "Am I doing this because I want to or because I feel obligated?" Of course I want to; gift giving is fun. So, how to do it without the stress?

My memory kicked in to the one year that I escaped. It was the first Christmas after my separation from my first husband and I knew it would be tough. My six were either in their teens or early twenties, all except one were single and working, and there was only one grandchild. Instead of buying and wrapping gifts I invited them to a pre-Christmas ski trip. The rates were affordable and we had a great time. What I distinctly remember was going up to a bank teller on December 20, the day before we left, and having her ask me with a pitch to her voice bordering on hysterics,

"There are only a few days left, are you ready yet?" "You bet", I answered smugly, "No shopping, nothing but play this year." And in that moment I felt that this great weight had been lifted from my shoulders and I could breathe freely. Actually I felt giddy.

Well that was 1990 and this is 2007 and things are much different now. There is however, a lesson for me in this. I can still follow the principle of looking for creative solutions and maybe you can too. Here

are a couple of ideas.

Step 1. Identify the things about the season that you like most.

Step 2. Then identify what things you like the least and cause stress.

Step 3. Talk to those with whom you live or share the season about their wishes.

If we could avoid what we don't enjoy and add more of what satisfies us then things would be simple. Most of us however live or celebrate with others. Many of us have workplace parties or practices that can't be avoided. You can still have enjoyment and maybe even serenity over the holidays if you take responsibility for what is important to you while still making the necessary compromises.

Each of you reading this will have different stressors. My Gordon can't figure me out; he lives for shopping. So he is a great asset in my plan. I'll talk to him about my gift list and budget, and while he shops I'll head over to the library and borrow my favou-

rite holiday "cult" movies: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Then I'll come home and make up a batch of butter tarts and entice everyone to join my little party.

Wishing you the best the season has to offer.



Common Holiday Stressors

- Death of a loved one
- Relocation away from family/friends
- Divorce or family breakup
- Loneliness and isolation
- Family history of addictions or violence that erupts at holiday time
- Poverty or over spending
- Fatigue
- Living up to expectations of others (my 16 year old wants a car, my kids want all the latest electronic gadgets)
- Continuing meaningless traditions (sending Christmas cards to 150 people, cooking a turkey even though you prefer vegetarian or steak)

Green it Up!

ANGIE KLEIN

Bringing greenery into the house has been a Christmas tradition in many countries for centuries and until the start of the 1800s it was these boughs that were used rather than the Christmas tree we all know today.

The puritans in Britain banned Christmas at one time, but Christian country folk tied up rough bundles of "holy" boughs of evergreen as a symbol of Christmas. Holly leaves symbolize Christ's crown of thorns and his drops of blood are signified by the reddest of the berries.

Pagans believed that evergreens in winter kept evil spirits away and this belief merged with Christian celebrations over the years into the tradition of hanging the greenery around the home.

The idea of mistletoe boughs soon followed. Hanging mistletoe in the home was originally done to ward off evil spirits and encourage the blossoms of a new spring. The Victorians hung it on doorways and ceilings. Festive rules were relaxed enough for the

odd "socially acceptable" kiss to take place, but every kiss meant a berry plucked and once the berries had gone, the kissing had to stop.

Scandinavian tradition was to bring in a Yule log, light it and sit beside the fire-drinking mead and watching the flames make light in the gloom of winter. This tradition made its way via the Vikings to Great Britain, and the rest, as they say, is history.

So grab a bottle of wine (I think it's hard to get mead these days) light up a fire, and gather around the Christmas tree with your loved ones. Make sure to hang some mistletoe (one with lots of berries for lots of kisses) and have your self a merry little Christmas!



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avenue initiative revitalization



I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making the second year of the Avenue Initiative a successful one. Thanks to the many dedicated volunteers this year there were amazing events and clean ups. There are new ethnic restaurants and businesses on the avenue, new facades and an incredible little coffee house that has both heart and soul. The Avenue is now zoned for new development; many new homes are being renovated and built. 2008 should see the beginning of a new streetscape. Thanks to the hard work of both community and business the Avenue is in the beginning stages of transformation. I look forward to another successful year in 2008!

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season!

Judy Allan

Avenue Initiative Coordinator



Welcome to the Teen Advisory Group! Come one, come all.

BRENDA LE

Recently I joined a program at the Sprucewood Library called the Teen Advisory Group. Abbreviated as TAG, the group is a program designed for teens aged 12-17 years old.

The main purpose of TAG is to attract more teens to the library and to the library's teen programs. Each group member can chip in ideas during meetings and suggest activities that kids our age enjoy doing. Many drop-in teen game nights were created because of our suggestions. TAG meetings are roughly one hour long and held every two weeks or so. I always look forward to attending them, not only because they are fun, but also because of all the food. Every time I go I stuff myself with pizza, chips,

popcorn, pop and lots of yummy snacks.

In last year's TAG, we had a great time making a logo that represented our group. We even had the chance to use special logo-making CD software. In the end each member received a t-shirt with the logo on it. It was an enjoyable experience.

We also had a few game nights where TAG members and some drop-in teens played a lot of fun games. There were many board games that we could choose from to play, and a Dance Dance Revolution electronic system where we could challenge each other on our dance steps.



ONE OF THE LOGOS DESIGNED BY LAST YEARS TAG

The one night I will never forget was the Teen Board Game

night. Also suggested by the TAG, the board game night was the best part of the TAG. A volunteer from a board game club came to the library to show us how to play many exotic board games I had never seen or heard of. They could only be purchased from special stores and we had a lot of fun playing the board games.

After several meetings last year, we decided to elect a TAG president who could represent us. I was not able to attend the election so I

e-mailed the organizer and cast my vote online. He replied in thanks, telling me that my vote was recorded. Although I didn't go, I was told the candidates made interesting speeches and the reading of the anonymous votes was extremely exciting.

Well that was the previous TAG, and I must admit I had an amazing time. For this year's TAG, we have made some progress already! We are writing some articles for the *Rat Creek Press*, and I think it will be pretty cool to get published in a newspaper.

The Sprucewood Teen Advisory Group last year was a wonderful experience for me, and I look forward to taking part in making this year's Teen Advisory Group even better.

The end of the big software monopoly: Welcome to the new world of open source

Techno Babble

WITH ROBIN STOCKS

We are entering a crux in the age of software available for Intel compatible computers. The future of the world is heading towards General Public license <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html> Open Source applications and Operating Systems. There are multiple reasons behind the switch. The cost of software on machines is reaching three to four times the cost of hardware, viruses and spyware are virtually non-existent on Linux-based operating system and customization of Linux is available to any programmer or organization without paying licensing fees.

Microsoft's latest operating system, Vista, requires a dual processor and 2 gigs of memory

to run like XP on a single processor machine with 512 megabytes of RAM. Some computer analysts think that Vista is undercooked and should be left in the pot until the first quarter of 2008 when service pack one (SP1) is released. I am currently Beta testing SP1 on Vista Premium and noticed a considerable speed increase. Yet, there are still a number of faults that I would like to see improved. The current Windows Vista will set you back as follows: Home Basic - \$99, Home Premium - \$239, Home Upgrade - \$159, Vista Ultimate - \$399, and the Vista Ultimate upgrade \$259. Microsoft is not alone in charging the big dollars for big software packages. Adobe Photoshop is currently listed on their site for \$649usd or \$600cdn.

The number of Linux compatible installation distributions are growing monthly. Currently there are 180 installations

available (<http://www.linux.org/dist/list.html>). A couple of the installations have pulled out ahead of the pack: <http://www.ubuntu.com/>, <http://www.redhat.com/>, <http://mandriva.com/>, <http://www.suse.com/> (out of this list I have only tried Ubuntu). I had no trouble installing it on my older laptop, getting wireless up, and email running. A new build version comes out every 6 months, the next one will be out (Gusty Gibson) by the time this article hits the streets.

If you are interested in checking out Linux, I recommend downloading a image file, burn a CD and perform a live boot. Live CD is booting from the CD; it does not wipe or install anything on your machine and it will only run the operating system in your virtual memory. This is a great way to see if it is going to work with the hardware installed on your PC. Are you

running windows 2000 or XP and have a large hard drive that has multiple partitions? You can allow Linux to create something called dual boot, so when the machine starts up it will ask you which operating system you would like to start.

It is possible to create a virus to target Linux systems, however, the design of the system itself makes it very difficult to become infected. A single user could cause local damage to his or her files by running a virus on his or her system; however, this would be an isolated instance rather than something that could spread out of control. In addition, all Linux vendors offer on-line security updates. The general philosophy of the Linux community has been to address possible security issues before they become a problem.

Even Dell computers has chosen to pre-install Linux (Ubuntu) on their machines (sorry not available for order in Canada yet). A number of large school boards and companies are installing General Public Licence operating systems on their machines. A majority

of them are located overseas. Also check out the numerous applications that come with Ubuntu and their Windows counter parts: Microsoft office = Open Office, Adobe Photoshop = GIMP, Internet Explorer = Fire Fox. There are also 4800 other software packages available for installation.

My top five reasons to try Linux...

- 1 - Little to no viruses / spyware
- 2 - Cost Savings - Free
- 3 - No Blue Screens
- 4 - Security and Stability
- 5 - No need to reboot your machine for months.

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. If you have questions please visit Robin's website (www.stoxservices.com) or e-mail him at support@stoxservices.com.

Seasons Greetings from NOLAN DRUGS

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LAW AND ORDER

WITH DAWN FREEMAN

Christmas is a time of goodwill to all people, except there are always a few bah humbugs out there. Don't let them spoil your Christmas this year. Keep yourself and your things safe by playing it smart.

DO be fire safe this Christmas. Never burn candles unattended, always turn off your Christmas tree lights at night or when you go out, and make sure fireplaces are looked after properly and that chimneys are clean.

DON'T leave packages in plain view in your car after shopping – lock them out of sight in the trunk.

DO make sure you lock your vehicle and wind those windows up.

DO have a neighbour clear your mail and check your house if you are going away for the holidays.

DO follow proper food handling instructions when creating in the kitchen.

And as for the holiday tradition of a few drinks...please think!

DON'T take your car to that office party – just in case you have one too many.

DO use a designated driver; take turns and be responsible about it.

DO be a responsible host if giving a party and DON'T let a friend drive drunk.

DO call Operation Red Nose (421-4444) if you do drink to much to safely drive. If you want to volunteer to be a driver contact www.orn-edm.org or call 702-8000.

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

STRONG LEADERSHIP – LOWER TAXES

The Conservative Government in Ottawa is delivering another \$60 billion in tax relief over the next five years to hard-working Canadians and their families, including a further reduction to the GST (as we promised in the 2006 election).

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's Fall Economic Statement included reducing the GST to 5%.

That affects all Canadians positively, whether they are spending money on big ticket items such as a new house or vehicle, or just grabbing a quick snack at a mall food court. It means savings for everyone who has to heat their home in winter. It's more money in your pocket at the end of the day. As well the GST credit for low and modest income earners remains the same. A perhaps unintended bonus may be a decrease in the use of the penny, with more sales ending in multiples of five.

Cuts to personal income tax mean 385,000 lower income Canadians will no longer pay income tax. The tax relief is aimed at those with moderate incomes – 30% of it going to people with taxable incomes under \$38,000. The amount Canadians can earn without paying federal income tax will be increased to \$9,600 for 2007 and 2008, and \$10,100 for 2009.

For someone earning less than \$30,000 annually we have provided an average tax savings of \$510 each year.

Our Federal Conservative Government's tax relief package will bring the total tax burden of Canadians to the lowest level in nearly 50 years. Unemployment is at its lowest level in 33 years.

As well as tax relief, the Conservative Government has also reduced Canada's debt burden to its lowest level since the 1970s.

Our Federal Conservative Government in Ottawa promised Canadians tax relief and strong economic leadership. I think we've delivered on that promise. What do you think?

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

495-3261 www.petergoldring.ca

EPS Statistics in Downtown Division's District One from May 1, 2007 to present.

Number of Drug Houses reported to District One Members: 75

Number of Drug Houses closed by District One Members and Derelict Housing: 20

Traffic Enforcement Tickets issued: 868
Disorder Tickets issued (Drunk in public etc.): 132

Note: Sex Trade statistics are for the whole of Downtown Division, not just District 1.

Johns arrested and charged: 67
Pedestrian Johns (walk ups): 13
Vehicles towed: 54
Sex Trade Workers charged: 152

Have you seen pay phones being used for criminal activities?

Residents have frequently voiced complaints about illegal activities around pay phones and Telus' lack of response to these complaints. Councillor Ed Gibbons encourages you to make your pay phone complaints to the Citizen Action Centre by calling 496-8200 or emailing cacentre@edmonton.ca. Complaints will be logged and then high concern pay phones will be brought to Telus attention for remedial action.

Telus has already indicated that they will take action on the phone booth across the street from the Eastwood Community League at 86 Street. They will remove the booth leaving only a phone pedestal and full phone service will be limited to the hours between 6am and 9pm. After 9pm, only 911 access will be available.

Call Me 1st



Thinking of Selling?
Thinking of Buying?
Call Roxanne Litwyn
439-7000

Your neighbourhood Realtor
Serving Central Edmonton Since 1990

FREE MARKET EVALUATION

List of homes for sale
(some restrictions apply)



www.roxannehomes.com
Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

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 johns and their vehicles, call EPS at **421-2656**.

To report drug houses or drug related activity, call EPS at **426-2889**.

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

If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-TIPS (84770)**, or go on-line to www.tipsubmit.com.

To make a by-law complaint, call the City's Planning and Development at **496-3100**. By-law complaints can be made on-line at www.edmonton.ca.

To report a derelict house, call the City's Derelict Housing dept. at **496-6031**.

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).

Family violence
Info Line
310-1818.

The Law & Order column and Cst. Mike Russell, our community liaison constable, are here to answer your questions and concerns regarding the police and crime & safety. Send your questions and topic suggestions to editor@ratcreek.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SEND US YOUR EVENTS & NOTICES - IT'S FREE!

Email editor@ratcreek.org or call 479-6285. Events & notices printed in the paper as deemed appropriate by the editorial team and as space permits.

ART & MUSIC

ARTISAN MARKET

Saturdays, 11am-3pm, The Carrot Arts Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave)
All creations are made in Edmonton by local artists and artisans. Jewellery, woodwork, textiles and more! If you are interested in selling your wares at the market, please contact Lorraine at 919-9627.

PIANO LESSONS IN YOUR HOME

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

FREE PIANO, GUITAR AND BAND LESSONS

For children and adults. Beginners welcome. Please call to register. Edmonton Urban Native Ministry Reverend Kim at 477-1769 or at hoosik@hotmail.com. Come out and have fun creating with different art mediums. Drop in at 9351 118 Ave on Thursday, November 29 between 7 to 10 pm. Everyone welcome. Snacks and beverages provided.

DROP-IN GROUPS & PROGRAMS

PLANET NORWOOD AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Learning, fun and a safe environment for ages 5-13. Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 3:30-6:00pm. Thur 12:00-6:00 pm. Youth night Fridays 6:00pm-8:00pm for kids age 9-13. Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre. Must register. Call 471-3737 or drop in at 9516-114 ave.

BABES IN ARMS PARENTING GROUP

The Carrot Community Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave), 10am-noon
Come and connect with other parents in the community. Call 471-1580 for more information.

EASTWOOD AFTER SCHOOL DROP-IN

Wednesdays, 4pm to 5:30pm at Eastwood Hall (11803 86 St) for kids age 6 to 12 years until Dec 12. A different theme each week. \$2 drop-in fee (\$1 for members).

PARKDALE AFTER SCHOOL DROP-IN

Mondays, 4pm to 6pm at Parkdale Hall (11335 85 St) for all ages until Dec 17. A variety of different activities. FREE!

EDMONTON URBAN NATIVE MINISTRY

Drop In from Tuesdays to Fridays, 10am – 4pm at St Andrews church (8715 118 Ave). Coffee and snacks are available.

SALVATION ARMY

Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (EC3)
11661 95 St, Ph 474-4324
Tue, Wed, Thur – noon to 4pm
Fri – 7:30-10:30pm

ST. FAITH'S

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

CRYSTAL KIDS YOUTH CENTRE

8718 118 Ave, Ph 479-5283
Seniors program: Wed, 11:30am-12:45pm. Moms and Tots program: Tues and Thur, 11:30am-12:45pm
Youth program (ages 6-17):
Mon, Tue, Wed – 3-8pm
Thur – 2:30- 8pm
Fri – 3-10pm,
Sat – 1-5pm

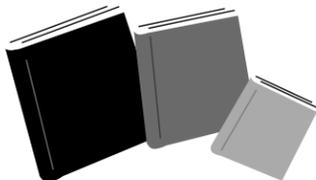
ENTERTAINMENT

LINE UP AT THE CARROT COFFEEHOUSE

9351 – 118 Avenue
Fridays, Live music or improv
Dec 7 Dave Von Bieker
Dec 14 Back Porch Swing
Dec 21 Carrot Christmas Carol
Sing a long
Jan 4 Improv at the Carrot – Jana O'Connor and Troupe \$5/cover
Jan 18 Dr Blu
Jan 25 Terry Morrison
Feb 1 Improv at the Carrot – Jana O'Connor and Troupe \$5/cover
Feb 8 Barry Westerlund
Saturday nights open mic
7:30pm-10:00pm

SPECIAL SHORT FICTION READING

Dec. 11, 12th and 13th at 7 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Grant MacEwan presents 3 readings by PROW 240 students. . .Here's your chance to hear the newest upcoming writers of short fiction strut their stuff. Listen as they take you with them into other worlds, times and places. Laugh, cry, think, be inspired or simply entertained for an evening – have a coffee and consider the possibilities.



NEW YEARS EVE PARTY AT 123 THAI

9420 118 Ave, Ph 479-1350
Live music and a DJ, dancing until 3am, free champagne at midnight and delicious food; what more could you want at a NYE party? Oh yes, door prizes! 1st: \$110, 2nd: \$60, 3rd: \$30. Tickets are \$30 single or \$50 a couple and seating is limited so get your tickets from 123 Thai today.

SPORTS & RECREATION

WINTER GREEN SHACK PROGRAM

Jan 2, 3 & 4 from 12pm to 4pm
Special winter program: games, crafts and exciting outdoor activities.

FREE PUBLIC SKATING

Oliver (10335 119 St) Tuesdays, 6:15-7:15pm, Dec 4, 11, 18
Russ Barnes (6725 121 Ave) Saturdays, 5-6pm, Dec 1, 8, 15, 22.
Westwood (12040 97 St) Sundays, 3:15-4:15pm, Dec 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.

COMMUNITY RINKS

Call for opening dates and skating times.
Delton 477-3326
Eastwood 477-2354
Parkdale 471-4410
Spruce Ave 471-1932

SPRUCE AVE FREE SWIM

Free swim for Spruce Ave community league members at Grant MacEwan pool, Sundays, 1-4pm. Show your current community league membership to get in.

ALBERTA AVE FREE SWIM

Free swim for Alberta Ave community league members at Eastglen pool, Sundays, 12-2pm. Show your current community league membership to get in.

FREE TAE KWON DO CLASSES

Mondays and Wednesdays, 6-6:45pm for beginners. New students must be aboriginal or metis. Call Reverend Kim at 477-1769 or at hoosik@hotmail.com for more info.

INDOOR SOCCER PROGRAM

Saturdays, 9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon at Sacred Heart School Gym (96 St. 108 Ave) For ages: 2 – 12 Years – girls and boys. Learn Basic Soccer Skills. For more information contact Tony (renowned FIFA soccer coach) 420-0760.

GIRLS GROUPS

Sparks (ages 5/6) and Brownies (ages 7/8) Mondays 6:30-7:30pm; Girl Guides (ages 9-12) Mondays 6:30-8:30pm at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 8715 118 Ave. Call Jean at 469-4487 for more details or to register.

VOLUNTEER

NNA NEEDS CASINO WORKERS

The Norwood Neighbourhood Association is looking for casino volunteers on February 12 and 13, 2008. Help the NNA continue to support community enrichment projects like the Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, Arts on the Avenue, and Rat Creek Press. Call Yoko at 424-0917 or email nna.org@hotmail.com to sign up for a shift.

CARROT COFFEEHOUSE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

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

SPRUCE AVENUE COMMUNITY RE-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Volunteers are needed! Please contact Laurie Cote at 474-5354 for more details.

LIKE TO WRITE? WANT TO TRY IT?

The *Rat Creek Press* is always looking for volunteer writers. Contact us at editor@ratcreek.org or 479-6285.

GOT TIME TO TYPE?

The *Rat Creek Press* would like someone to type out some historical articles from the *Rat Creek Press* archives. Contact info@ratcreek.org or call 479-6285.

NOTICES

CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE

St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 8715 118 Ave
Saturday, December 8, 11am – 2pm
All sorts of baked goods and crafts.

COMMUNITY BOOK CLUB

Come out and meet your neighbours, discuss a good book and have a great cup of coffee (or tea). The Carrot Community Book Club is meeting on December 12 at 7pm at the Carrot (9351 118 Ave). We will be reading and discussing the book *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman. For more information contact Kimberley at 474-8302 or Becky at 435-3499.

PLANNING ACADEMY

Curious about urban planning and want to get involved in the process? Register with the City of Edmonton's Planning Academy. Topics include land use planning, transportation, urban design and more. To find out locations and times visit www.edmonton.ca/planningacademy or call 496-7370.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL KIT

A graffiti removal kit is available for residents to borrow free of charge. Call Peter at the Alberta Ave. Business Association at 471-2602.

ADULT EDUCATION

Do you know an adult who wants to improve their reading, writing or math skills? Please tell them about The Learning Centre. We offer free tutoring and small group learning at Boyle Street Community Services. Call 429-0675 for information.

COMMUNITY MESSAGE BOARD

Need something to do in the evenings? Interested in finding out what is going on in your neighbourhood? Want to invite people to a community event? The Carrot Community Arts Coffee House has a new community message board. There is space to post upcoming community events, activities going on in the neighbourhood, and "freecycle" items. Come in, fill out a card or bring your poster and let your neighbours know what is going on.

CHRISTMAS MEALS & SERVICES

FREE CHRISTMAS DINNER

Wednesday, December 19. Doors open at 5pm. At Eastwood Community League 11803 – 86 Street. Hosted by Chrisma Church.

CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER

10123 Princess Eliz Ave
December 16th 10:30am Special Music Service featuring the choir, and the children's Christmas program
December 23rd 10:30am Christmas Communion Service
Christmas Eve 6:30pm Candle Light Service

SOLID ROCK EVANGEL CHURCH

11827 85 ST, 463-5950
Dec 19, 7pm, Christman hymn singing and sharing

ST. FAITHS ANGLICAN

11725 – 93 St, 477-5931
December 16th 11am – Advent Lessons and Carols Service
Christmas Eve 8pm – Family Service
11pm – Candlelight Service
Christmas Day 10am – Holy Communion

ST. ALPHONSUS CATHOLIC

11828 85 St, Ph 474-5434
Christmas Eve mass – 8pm and midnight
Christmas Day mass – 10am
New Years Day mass – 10am

ST ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN

8715 118 Ave, Ph 477-8677
Christmas Eve service – 7:30pm

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

11461 95 St, Ph 477-3341
Fri, December 7, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, Christmas carolling around the neighbourhood. Sun, December 16, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, Community Christmas Celebration at the chapel

GOT COMMUNITY NEWS?!

CALL US! 479-6285



Edmonton
Public Library

SPRUCEWOOD BRANCH

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

KIDS

Aboriginal Family Story Time
11:30 a.m. Fridays, September 7 to December 21
Presented by Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
Hey moms and dads! Bring your little ones and join us for an hour of Aboriginal songs and stories.

Fabulous Readers' Club

2 p.m. Saturday, December 1
If you love to read, play games, do great activities, and win prizes, then the Fabulous Readers' Club is for you! Join us every month as we check out some awesome books and have a great time too! Grades 4 and up

Veggietales Christmas

2 p.m. Saturday, December 15, ages: 5 – 12 years
Celebrate Christmas with your favorite vegetables: Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber.

TEENS

Terrific Teen Tuesdays
4 p.m. Tuesday, December 4. Starts again January 22 2008.
Ages: 8 – 14 years
Munchies provided
Chill out Tuesday afternoons and catch some awesome action in "the room" for you to choose from like 'Food on the Fly' cooking, Hip hop dance, Ductivity Duct tape art, and much, much more.

Teen Advisory Group

6:30 p.m. Friday, December 7, ages: 12 – 17 years
Make your voice heard! Join our Teen Advisory Group and you can suggest programs that the library should offer for teens and what books, music and movies we should order. Have fun, meet other teens, and gain valuable volunteer experience.

ADULTS

Stories from the Heart of the City – with Linda Goyette
1 p.m. Thursdays, October 4 to December 20, drop-in, free of charge. Do you live in Boyle-McCauley or Norwood or along the Avenue of Nations? Did you move here from somewhere else, or did you grow up here? Come and tell your story, and hear stories about interesting people who lived here over the years. Writer in Residence Linda Goyette will host this session for story-lovers of all ages.

Download 100s of free eaudiobooks with your library card. Play them on your IBM computer or WMA compatible digital player. Look for NetLibrary or eoverdrive under databases on the EOL website.

IS YOUR GROUP LOOKING FOR MEETING SPACE?

DO YOU NEED SPACE TO RUN A PROGRAM?

Parkdale-Cromdale Community League is looking for community-minded individuals or groups to use our hall.

E.g. Hip-hop dancing, self defense classes, music lessons, Pilates, kid's classes or something else you may have!

Hall address: 11335 - 85 Street

Amenities: 150 person capacity, full industrial kitchen, lounge, program room, game room with piano & ping pong table, portable dance bars, mirrors, new gym mats, outdoor playground and skating rink.

For more info call Laurie at 473-7499.

What's in Store? AGENTS SNARK AND SNIP, UNDERCOVER, ON REPORT

CHERYL WALKER
CATH JACKEL

After word hit that our community was the possible recipient of two more liquor stores, Agents Snark and Snip were tasked by the *Rat Creek Press* (RCP) to go and research the local stores we already have – which happens to be eight in the RCP delivery area.

We decided that no survey was complete without a few metrics, so we rated our liquor stores on selection and ambiance. There is a perception that cheap liquor abounds in our community, so we noted specifically what sort of cheap beer was on offer.

Now, a word about our metrics. We visited all the liquor stores between 11am and 2pm on Saturday November 10. The ratings are the average of two

reviewers. The comments are just that, comments on our individual perception of the store to give you a picture of what we thought of the store. You might not agree, and that's fine.

We measured the selection on the availability of certain varieties of alcohol. You may not agree that Glenlivet is good scotch, Bacardi makes a good rum, or Stella Artois is a beer worth drinking, but these brands are better quality, and still somewhat common. We also looked for Canadian wines, imported wines and wines in the \$20-\$30 range.

The ambiance rating is based on the general feel of the store including how well stock is organized, whether promotional materials were up-to-date, how clean and appealing the store was, how the staff was and whether it

was well lit and felt safe.

We were quite surprised, not by the worst stores as we were expecting that, but by the two excellent liquor stores we found. Neither Agent Snark or Snip knew about the existence of the Crowfoot Liquor Store in our neighbourhood (it is on the fringe on Gretzky Dr.). We were quite amazed at their selection of beer and wine and their very kind and helpful staff. Do consider, however, whether there is a Northlands or Rexall event on, as they rent their parking during events. The Parkdale Liquore Store, located in the strip just east of Safeway, came in second. It also had great selection but didn't rate quite as high in ambiance.

An enormous difference exists between these two highest rated stores and the two

lowest rated. Law's Liquor and the Liquor Store on 111th both had limited selection and were heavily stock with cheap products. The remaining four liquor stores all had similar overall ratings with mediocre selection and ambience. The Spirits/Cromdale has a split stock between high-end wine and cheap beer and mickeys.

Most of the stores are open until 10 or 11pm during the week and 11pm or midnight on Friday and Saturday nights. The Spirits Liquor/Cromdale has the longest and latest hours being open from 10am to 2am Monday to Saturday and 10am to 1am on Sunday. All the stores sell beer in singles and most also have coolers in singles. Cheap beer can be picked up for \$4.49 to \$4.95 for a 1.18L or \$4.36-\$7.99 for a 6 pack. We felt comfortable at

most of these stores in broad daylight, but would not likely venture forth after dark. The Cheerio Liquor Store made us feel like criminals in a jail. We had to be buzzed into this small, stale smelling store that had bars everywhere and a night wicket. At the Norwood Liquor Store Agents Snark and Snip had to hastily retire to our car to end the hassling we were receiving from a panhandler. The store is a little rundown and there was glass in the parking lot. The Spirits/Cromdale had a dirty parking lot and filthy, broken windows but was clean inside.

So now you know your liquor store choices. Happy (and responsible) drinking! For more details on each store check out our online EXTRA at www.ratcreek.org.

Liquor Stores in your area

Store & Address

Selection

Ambiance

out of 5

out of 5

Crowfoot Liquor Store and Wine Boutique
11836 Wayne Gretzky Drive



Parkdale Liquor Store
8012 118 ave,



Spirits Liquor Mart-Cromdale Liquor Store
11717 82 street



Cheerio Liquor Store
10138 111 ave,



Norwood Liquor Store
9608 118 ave.



Liquor Barn
11836 -103 street



Laws Liquor
10106 118 ave,



Liquor Store on 111
9611 111 ave.



★1★2★3 THAI

The Best Thai and Lao Cuisine in Edmonton

EAT-IN OR TAKE OUT

WE DO CATERING FOR SPECIAL FUNCTIONS, PRIVATE PARTIES, WEDDINGS, BIRTHDAYS, ETC.

Special Offer: \$5 OFF FOOD ORDERS OF \$25 OR MORE.

Limited to food items. Liquor and beverages not included. One coupon per group. Expires Dec 30/07.

9420 118 AVENUE 479-1350

HOURS

Tue-Fri 11am - 9pm

Sat 12pm - 9pm

Sun & Mon 4pm - 9pm

Holidays - closed

Jingle Jammin' at The Carrot!

A social art experience, free hot chocolate and nibbles. Bring an instrument, your voice, a few neighbours, and get ready to whoop it up Santa style!

Night hosted by Scott Peters, a musician with Captain Tractor!

Friday, December 21st, 7:30 - 10:00pm at the Carrot, all ages!

Please drop by! 9351-118ave 780-471-1580 www.thecarrot.ca

