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What to do to avoid the flu

COMPILED BY KAREN MYKIETKA

You can do more than get a flu shot to reduce your chances of the flu this season. The symptoms of H1N1 (fever, headache, chills, nausea, sore muscles, runny nose) are the same as the seasonal flu. The problem is that it is very contagious, spread when the virus enters the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth.

To reduce chances of exposure:

Avoid close contact with people who are sick and who have symptoms of H1N1 flu.

Wash your hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly, for at least 15 seconds. Use alcohol-based sanitizers if handwashing is not convenient.

Try to not touch your face especially after shaking hands or touching hard surfaces like counters and door handles or other surfaces. Keep such surfaces clean.

Do not share personal items or drinks.

Cough or sneeze into your sleeve rather than your hand.

Simple steps to help prevent virus growth in your system:

Eat a healthy balanced diet and drink plenty of water. Eating processed and refined food can greatly depress our immunity.

Gargle twice a day with warm salt water or tea tree. A spray of Colloidal silver in your mouth a few times a day is a great way to add antibacterial and antiviral assurance.

Blowing the nose hard once a day and swabbing both nostrils with cotton buds dipped in warm salt water is very effective in bringing down viral population, or try a Neti pot.

Drink as much warm liquid as you can (such as teas, soups and broths).

Take probiotics in high potency form which ensure that we have enough good bacteria in our system to keep everything in balance and protect from invaders.

Boost your antioxidants: Vitamin C, Zinc, Selenium, Beta carotene, Bioflavonoids, assorted green blends, and anti viral herbs. Medicinal mushroom blends also build up the immune system.

Take the homeopathic version of the flu vaccine itself.

With all those healthy additions to your daily routine the only other thing you need to do is stay well rested with plenty of sleep, and nice and warm with a hot cup of tea!

Sources:

Brenda Shaw published in SNAP Newsmagazine Dec 01. <http://www.snapseatosky.com/>

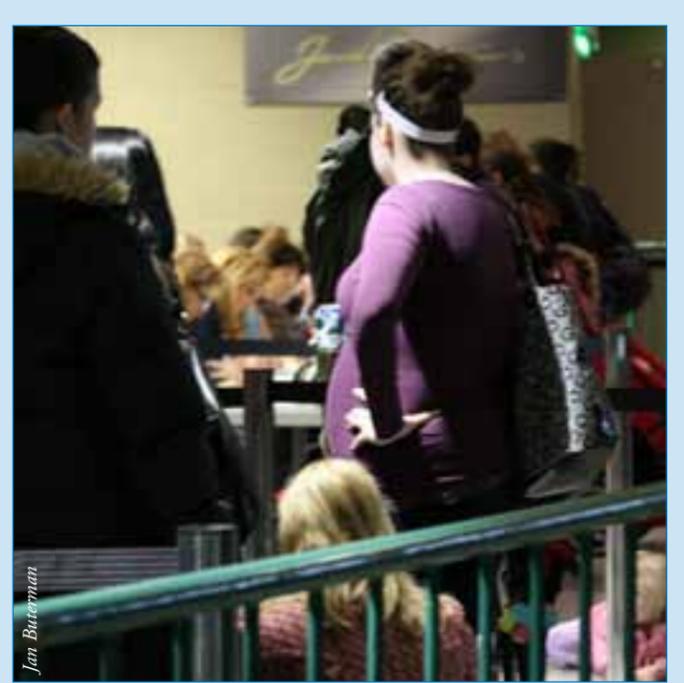
Dr. Vinay Goyal at <http://countrylife.lehmans.com/2009/09/28/simple-ways-to-prevent-influenzah1n1-swine-flu/>

Resources:

Chart comparing symptoms: Influenza vs cold vs stomach upset. <http://www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/influenza-compare-symptoms.html>

Polar Bear Health & Water, 9342 118 Avenue, Edmonton, 780-477-1328 for natural health products.

Nutrition Plus Pharmacy, 10002 82 Street, Edmonton, 780-439-5920 for homeopathics and natural health products



PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN AWAIT H1N1 VACCINATIONS ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6. AFTER A SUPPLY SHORTAGE, PREVIOUS VACCINATION SITES ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY WERE CLOSED, REOPENING AT THOSE SITES AND ADDING ADDITIONAL SITES—INCLUDING COMMONWEALTH STADIUM. ACCORDING TO TADRA BOULTON, ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES, THE COMMONWEALTH STADIUM SITE WAS IDEAL BECAUSE IT HAD GOOD ACCESS AND GOOD PARKING, ALONG WITH GOOD INDOOR WAITING SPACE SUITABLE FOR HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS AWAITING THEIR TURN FOR THE SHOT. PEOPLE ARRIVING BEFORE THE 9 A.M. CLINIC START TIME WERE ABLE TO SIT ON CHAIRS PLACED IN THE LINE AREA.

Making sense of a complicated issue

DR. TAMARA ERIKSEN, ND

Getting quality, complete information about the H1N1 vaccine is a challenge, and often we're left feeling that either the decision was made for us, or we made a decision half-armed. Here are some things to consider when making your decision.

How does a vaccine work?

In general, vaccination works by injecting patients with a small amount of selected proteins extracted from a live virus (or a combination of

viruses.) In response, your body develops antibodies against these proteins. It takes about three weeks for your body to develop these antibodies. For a time thereafter, if you encounter a virus that contains the specific vaccine proteins, your body recognizes it and swiftly "flags" the virus for destruction by your immune system.

Because the H1N1 "swine flu" vaccine contains virus proteins (but not live viruses) the vaccine itself cannot give you the flu. It may make you more susceptible to other influenza viruses.

2009 swine flu pandemic

To date,* there have been 144 confirmed cases of swine flu in the Edmonton area. Even if the incidence of H1N1 goes up ten-fold with the new round of outbreaks, you have a 0.01% chance of contracting the swine flu. (*Based on Nov. 10/09 data.)

In Alberta, 28 people (out of 615 confirmed cases province-wide) have died due to complications following

H1N1 influenza. That represents roughly a 4.5% chance of death among affected individuals. That is significant, but it's MUCH lower than annual incidence of death due to "regular" seasonal flu!

• As of November 6, worldwide there have been more than 112,425 confirmed cases of H1N1 and approximately 6000 reported deaths (worldwide).

• There are around 500,000 deaths (worldwide) attributable to the seasonal flu in any given year.

People contracting the "swine flu" tend to be relatively young and healthy. But it is important to note that in North America nearly all of the reported deaths related to "swine flu" are caused by immune systems that are taxed by the flu virus, resulting in a bacterial infection in their lungs.

Individuals particularly at risk

You may be at higher risk of getting H1N1 if you or someone in your immediate

family/social network:

- work on or around a pig farm.
- are a healthcare worker.

You have higher risk of severe illness and/or complications from H1N1 infection if you:

- are pregnant.
- a pre-existing medical condition that affects your lungs or immune function.

How dangerous is the swine flu?

In 1918, the H1N1 flu ("Spanish flu") caused hundreds of thousands of deaths all over the world. H1N1 viruses reappeared in 1976/77 and caused major outbreaks mainly in those aged 25 or younger over the following few years. The 2009 H1N1 virus closely

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AN ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES SIGNBOARD FOR AN H1N1 VACCINATION CLINIC INSIDE COMMONWEALTH STADIUM. THE CLINIC WAS ONE OF FIVE NEW CLINICS ADDED TO AVAILABLE VACCINATION CLINICS IN EDMONTON.

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December is the time to look within

EDITORIAL WITH MARI SASANO

Welcome to the end of 2009! December often becomes the busiest time of the year for many families, with social and family commitments, holidays, and then the inevitable crunch of trying to get everything done in what amounts to a short month. And on top of that, money's usually tight. It's easy to become overwhelmed by it all, but here at the *Rat Creek Press* we believe in more sanity, rather than less, at this special time of the year.

How? Our theme this

month is Renewal. Let's all take a moment to think about the things that truly make us happy at this time of the year: time to see family and friends is usually more important than shopping. Why feel guilty about not having a "perfect" holiday, when we all know that it doesn't exist—not in the way TV commercials say they do, anyways. Sure, it's great to be able to cook a perfect turkey and host dozens of people who all miraculously get along. But

it doesn't happen by accident. You can complain all you like, but if you're not trying to make things better, nothing's going to change.

Renewal also means choosing good habits over bad. First things first: taking care of ourselves, so that we can give the best of who we are. Our cover story about H1N1 isn't about scaring people about a killer illness. In fact, for most people if you do catch

it, you'll get sick and get over it. But the person next to you might have a chronic condition—don't be healthy for yourself, be healthy for your more vulnerable neighbours.

Extend that idea to other parts of your life: if you are stressed out, you can't be there for those who might need you during a crisis. And if you're the one who needs help, just ask. You'd be surprised how much easier it is when you don't have to deal with everything alone. Even if it means just talking about it, having a sympathetic ear and different perspectives can help a lot. For the rest of us: do try and help those in need: it feels good!

“Renewal also means choosing good habits over bad”

Letter to the editor:

A couple of months ago I read an article about the old Cromdale Hotel. There are rumors of condemnation and the city wanting to tear the old building down. Any maintenance issues with the structure could probably be fund raised for or maybe contact places like Habitat for Humanity to see if they would be willing to assist in the project if only to help with supplies.

With the amount of people we have on our streets who need help getting back on their feet, I for one see the perfect place for a kind of all-in-one center. A place where they can go to have a safe nights sleep, a warm meal, etc. It already has the makings for all of this and more.

It could have an employment office for those residing in the building only. It could have social workers set up to aid in what ever way they can. There could even be a portion of the main floor set up for alcohol and drug abuse counseling. Partnerships with rehabilitation centers, counseling centers, and educational advancement could be set up to assist these people in getting on track.

The old building already had the beds, a kitchen, and a room big enough to be used as multi-functional for the dining area, work room (job search), group counseling sessions etc. Furthermore it can be run as a not-for-profit and the people who stay at the hotel can also contribute to it running by putting in so many hours doing tasks such as house keeping, cooking, maintenance etc. In the long run a city landmark would stay and be used in a much needed way.

Anyway, that is just the opinion of one neighbor to the Cromdale hoping to save a landmark.

Respectfully,
Pamela Mollison

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Financial literacy workshops for women

LISA TARA EDEN

The Elizabeth Fry Society has a new program called Me and Money – Financial Literacy.

This program helps women to become financially sufficient. These workshops increase women's self-esteem and help them to make appropriate decisions when managing money.

How will the community benefit? It reduces the motivation for women to turn to crime. When you pay attention to money and respect money, you are better able to transform your financial situation.

After participating in this program, women will be able to keep track of their spending habits, pay their bills, reduce debt, achieve financial goals, and save money.

The next group starts Tuesday evenings from 5 pm to 7 pm January 19 to April 13 2010. Each workshop has components on creativity through art and journaling, self esteem and stress management. Bus tickets, soup, and light snack are provided.

For more information or to register please call Tara at (780) 784-2203.

Alectra lets kids find their voice

MARI SASANO

Jacquelyn Bland-Lawrence has been involved in theatre for about 40 years, and the artistic director of the Alectra Theatre Arts Company since 1987. But it wasn't until recently that she really understood the impact of her years of teaching.

"It was my birthday, and they threw me a surprise party," she says. "People came from all over, and others sent letters, thanking me for the impact I had on their lives. I took a step back, and I guess it put the marrow back in my bones— I got to thinking, I've had this project in mind for some time. I call it the Step Up."

Step Up is a free speech and theatre arts program for youth at risk and low-income families who could not otherwise afford to put their children in recreational programs. Bland-Lawrence recognizes the difficulty for many families to find activities for their children, from personal experience:

"I'm the mother of five children, and I adopted a sixth. I wanted them to have some kind of training. But there aren't too many doors open— hockey can cost \$5000 a year, and that's not including equipment. And it can be much, much more if it's at a

high level. A lot of kids are shut out."

"All I'm asking for is dedication and a little volunteer time to help out with the shows. Rehearsals are important, attendance is important. But with some work, I hope to have a show in June."

Classes will start January 12 and 16th, with two age groups: ages 8-12 will participate in the Stepping Stones class, and ages 13 and up will be Stepping Out. The arts, she says, can be a first step for a lifetime of success.

"When you give a child the skills to speak in public, they never look back. They can carry it with them through life, and it blows my mind when I see what can happen. Not all of them end up on stage, but they can end up being good schoolteachers, good lawyers. If you're in the arts, you can read people better."

She has been using speech and theatre as a kind of therapy for years, and is excited to be expanding this field for children in our area. In many instances, she sees kids who need the kinds of challenges that her classes offer. Boredom, she says, often leads to poor performance in schools, but having something to do gives them a second chance.

"You've got to develop each person's skills, particular to the individual. I bring out the very best I can of what they have. They develop self-confidence, without the ego. With speech skills, a child can try things at school they might not have the courage to otherwise," she says.

"This is where kids discover themselves. An artistic child can be daydreaming in school, but inside is a very intelligent child, but bored. I've seen it happen. Once, I had the worst kid I've ever seen! I agonized over him. But one day, I invited him to come in the booth to operate the sound and lights, and that's what he does today."

Bland-Lawrence's enthusiasm is obvious, as is her love of children. And she is willing to do whatever she can to ensure every child's success who walks through her door.

"They don't necessarily come from bad homes, but they're not part of something so they can become fodder for mischief. It gives them a place to go, a place to belong to. I want to give them something they can do, something they can be impassioned about."

For more information, phone 780-436-5493 or 780-462-2548 and leave a message. Alectra is located at 10967 97 Street.

EPS take down record number of johns during vice sting

MARI SASANO

Edmonton Police arrested a record number of johns November 11 and 12 during a vice sting operation targeted for the Canadian Finals Rodeo.

"That's an unusual number. It's the most we've ever been able to get," says Constable Andrew Larson. "We had more arrest teams this time as well, and it happened while the CFR was in town so we hit a lot. It was extremely busy."

Larson adds that this does not indicate a problem on the rise, but an increased number of arrest teams as well as two undercover officers.

"The problem is the same, we just made more arrests. We hit a high time. That's something

that's been done during Capital Ex, but this time I think is the first time during CFR. That was the major reason it was such a high number."

All of the arrested men were not from the area, and most were from outside Edmonton. Larson hopes that these kinds of arrests will send a message to individuals who look for prostitutes in our neighbourhoods.

"I hope so. Definitely for those who were caught, it's a life-changing event. Most of them don't have a criminal record. Their cars are seized for a mandatory 30 days. They have to make an application to get it back, so if you are from out of the city, how do you explain to your family where your vehicle is?"

Complicated issue . . . continued from cover

related to a series of virus outbreaks from 1918–1956. This is why younger people are more vulnerable to the swine flu, whereas people born before 1957 have been largely protected against the new pandemic virus.

What do we know about the 2009 swine flu vaccine?

The Canadian government has set-up "fast-track" approval processes in order to ensure that the vaccine is available in time to be useful. "Fast track" approval means that a vaccine might be licensed without the usual safety/effectiveness data requirements. That does not mean it is not tested. The individual active components are tested for immediate safety, and/or historical data on safety of the individual components is used.

Preliminary data are promising:

- Approximately 99% of adults who got the vaccine developed seroprotection, i.e. effectiveness.
- Typically, seroprotection provides about 85% protection against the virus. (15% of people will still get sick, but may have milder symptoms.)
- A single dose of the vaccine appears to be sufficient.
- Duration of protection has not been established.
- The vaccine has not yet been studied in children or

seniors.

- Pregnant women should not get the adjuvanted "swine flu" vaccine.

- People who are severely allergic to eggs should not get this vaccine.

- Avoid the vaccine if you've received another flu vaccine with the last 8 weeks.

- However, you can get the regular seasonal flu vaccine at the same time as the H1N1 vaccine.

other relevant historical data:

The 1976 H1N1 vaccination program in the US resulted in unusually high incidence of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) following vaccination. That vaccination program was ultimately suspended due to safety concerns.

GBS presents as progressive neurodegeneration and ascending paralysis, which can ultimately progress to paralysis of the muscles of respiration and death. Severity/progression of symptoms varies widely among affected individuals. Some people spontaneously recover completely. Some are paralyzed for life. Some die fairly swiftly.

- In Canada, the current reported risk of developing GBS after regular seasonal influenza vaccination is around 1 in 1,000,000.

- In 1976, the incidence of GBS after H1N1 vac-

ination was more than 1 in 100,000.

- While there is evidence of causal link between the vaccine and the increased incidence of GBS, the definitive reason was never established.

What about "additives" in the vaccine?

Most of these "additives" are nutrients contained naturally in our regular diets and are not cause for concern with some exceptions. The additives of greatest concern are formaldehyde, thimerosal, and squalene.

Formaldehyde is a byproduct of your body's normal metabolism. It is very reactive and readily bonds to proteins and nucleic acids, but your body has mechanisms to deal with this chemical in minute doses. Formaldehyde does not accumulate in your body. It is rapidly metabolized and excreted.

Squalene is among the contents in the oil-based formulation in which the adjuvant is cultured. Squalene itself is not listed among the contents of the vaccine nor the adjuvant portion. Actual squalene content in the vaccine is either non-existent or not discretely disclosed.

Thimerosal is a mercury-based preservative that is present in this vaccine. The safety of thimerosal preserva-

tive remains an issue of heated debate. Thimerosal remains "associated" with a number of neurological conditions (eg: Autism spectrum disorders.), though this association has not borne out to be conclusively "causative."

Need more information?

If you require additional information, discuss your

concerns with your doctor or primary healthcare provider. Or feel free to contact Dr. Eriksen with your questions at dr.teriksen@gmail.com.

Dr. Eriksen is a registered, licensed Naturopathic Doctor, currently in general and family practice in north/central Edmonton, AB.



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Is your local school closing?

JAN BUTERMAN

Inner-city neighbourhoods are facing an unexpected speedbump on the road to revitalization—school closures. CCEP—City Centre Education Project—a unique collaboration among seven local Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) schools, is currently undergoing “Sector Review,” a process widely believed to be leading to one or more of these same schools to be slated for closure. CCEP schools include Delton, Eastwood, John A. McDougall, McCauley, Norwood, Parkdale, and Spruce Avenue.

Closing a school or changing a school site for another purpose will have an impact on neighbouring homeowners whether or not those homeowners have children in that same school. EPSB has held a number of “conversations” to discuss possibilities for school use. A company hired by the school board is seeking community feedback at their website, <http://sectorreview.bangthetable.com>

Do you know how your local CCEP school fits into your community?



SPRUCE AVENUE SCHOOL



MCCAULEY SCHOOL



MCDUGALL SCHOOL



DELTON SCHOOL



NORWOOD SCHOOL



PARKDALE SCHOOL

Get to know your CCEP schools:

<http://programs.epsb.ca/ccep>

City Centre Education Project
Nancy Petersen
Project Coordinator
780-471-2630
nancy.petersen@epsb.ca

Delton School 12126-89 St.
<http://delton.epsb.ca/>

Eastwood School 12023-81 St.
<http://eastwood.epsb.ca/>

John A. McDougall School
10930-107 St.
<http://johnamcdougall.epsb.ca/>

McCauley School 9538-107 Ave.
<http://mccauley.epsb.ca/>

Norwood School 9520-111 Ave
<http://norwood.epsb.ca/>

Parkdale School 11648-85 St
<http://parkdale.epsb.ca/>

Spruce Avenue School
11424-102 St.
<http://spruceavenue.epsb.ca/>

Get involved in discussing how your CCEP schools will be used:

Ministry of Education
Honourable Dave Hancock,
Minister of Education
780-427-5010
edmonton.whitemud@assembly.ab.ca

MLA Janice Sarich
Parliamentary Assistant for the
Ministry of Education
780-415-9462
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Edmonton Public School Board trustee, Ward D
David Colburn
780-429-8083
David.Colburn@epsb.ca

CCEP school elected representatives:
- Delton School
- Eastwood School
- Norwood School
- Parkdale School

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Kim Krushell
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One parent's defense of our inner city schools

REBECCA LIPPIATT-LONG

Back in the day, I discovered the “inner city” while writing for Our Voice. I did an interview with a young woman who lived here. I knew she didn't live in the best of circumstances, so as I drove down the street looking for her house I was surprised to see mothers out walking with strollers, and old trees lining the streets, two-story houses with children's drawings hanging in the windows, and backyard gardens, rows neatly weeded. That foray into Norwood radically shifted my view of what the inner city looked like.

I lived downtown, and sometimes on my way home from my work, I would cruise this neighbourhood in my blue Firefly, ogling old brick houses, great architecture, imagining myself as a child attending the old brick school on the corner. I saw one house for sale, and put a call into the realtor. It was \$120 000—way out of my post-graduate, riddled-with-student-debt, reach.

Five years later with one toddler and another child on the way, I wanted to live in a house, with a backyard. In a community. Lugging my child up and down apartment stairs and panicking at the thought of my children dealing with Jasper Avenue traffic, I moved into a house a block over from

the first house I'd looked at. While I was finally out of student debt, I was precariously hovering on the edge financial incertitude.

That didn't much matter in Norwood though. Within a week of moving into my house, I'd met half the people on my block – the security of knowing my neighbours was more valuable than a robust bank account at that point. The Value Village and Bissell Thrift Shop were just up the street, and I discovered the joys of the Italian Centre. Red peppers for \$1.29/pound! Locally grown tomatoes! And more cheese than angels in heaven.

Then came Arts on the Ave and the Carrot— a coffee shop my children were welcomed at and given toys to play with! I gave a mental raspberry to downtown Starbucks where people smiled indulgently at my cute children, until they started actually acting like children. Festivals. A farmer's market. I discovered the neighbourhood parks as we walked through our community. I cried when Habitat for Humanity handed over the keys to the homes on 96 Street to nine families- with 20 children between them.

I could walk. With my kids. Anywhere I needed, or wanted, to go.

My little utopia has been threatened

Edmonton Public School

Board is funded by the province for the number of children in school. There are 100 000 spaces, for 70 000 children. 50% of schools (mostly in older neighbourhoods) face declining enrollment. In the suburbs, 25% of Edmonton children do not have a neighbourhood school so, not only are existing schools likely to be shut down, but six new schools are going to be built.

For whatever reason, the city centre schools and Hardisty have been slated for “review” first. There is an ongoing consultation process, but the School Board is being very closed mouthed about their plans. I've attended several meetings regarding possible school closures, and many people feel that our status as an inner city community puts us at a disadvantage.

Despite this perceived disadvantage, I've heard so many good things about Norwood Elementary School. The children are multi-lingual (one parent told me there were nine languages in his son's grade 1 class), there is a formal buddy system in place, where children are matched up with a peer from their own grade; a partnering program, where older children mentor those in younger grades; a focus on reading; partnerships with the United Way, adult mentors from Big Brothers and Sisters; a school psychologist who comes

in one day a week; and a school nurse. Class sizes are small – great for all kids, but particularly necessary for many children in this neighbourhood. I like Norwood school and intend to send my children there, and the parents who send their children to the other 6 inner city schools feel as strongly about the services their schools provide to their children.

There are great reasons to send our children to our neighbourhood schools, but a subtext in our community that is not much talked about, despite our commitment to revitalised neighbourhoods, is how passionate we are about green living. I know many people live here, who have made the choice to live here because of the benefits it offers. I know families who have chosen to live here, because they can live with one car and use public transit. (I even know one couple – a university professor and a poet- who don't have a car at all.) I never see a line up of cars outside Norwood – but I do see children walking to school every morning. We care about urban sprawl; we want to live in communities whose members are multicultural and economically diverse. Where progressive ideas and their implementation matter more than bank accounts and a second car in the attached garage.

A refrain I've been hearing

from parents over and over is why, when we made a decision to live in a neighbourhood where our children can walk to school, should we be penalised by having our schools closed, when people who've chosen to live in neighbourhoods with no schools, be rewarded with even more tax money being spent. Where does the City's plans for downtown revitalisation and our collective need to reduce our environmental impact fit into this school facility planning?

Where do we go from here? Do we let the Edmonton Public School Board close our schools (two this year? Three the following year? Bus all of our children to other communities the year after that?)

Closing city centre schools is no way to revitalise a neighbourhood; combat urban sprawl or reduce our carbon footprint. Closing city centre schools will not teach our children about sustainable living, environmental responsibility, social justice, or healthy living.

We need to work together to ensure our children have the best education possible. We need our communities, our parents, our neighbourhood associations to work together so that our children and our communities are strong, environmentally sustainable. We need to call our school board, our provincial government and our city council to this task.

A hello from our new ad rep

SANDY MCCUBBIN

Hi, and happy fall to all of you from the New Guy here at the Rat Creek Ads Department! I am new, both to the paper and to this part of town, Alberta Avenue. New people, new surroundings, new businesses and job descriptions have made for a steep learning curve. Everything I see is new and I find myself asking questions like, "What does that restaurant serve?" or, "Where do I find a snow shovel and how much will it cost?" Of course, the answers to these questions and many more can be found in the pages of the very publication that I now work for.

From soup to nuts, poinsettia to petunias, continuing education to home renovation, it's all here. I was looking to move into the Parkdale neighbourhood and where should I

find a real estate agent but right here in the *Rat Creek Press*, or RCP if you prefer the hip, mod, cool, text-friendly acronym.

And speaking of all things new and exciting, isn't the curb and gutter and asphalt of 118 Avenue a beautiful thing? Sure it'll be covered with more than a dusting of snow and ice over the next four or five months, but hey, won't that only make the warmth of the shops, eateries and other fine establishments of our distribution area that much more inviting?

Not all of our advertising is business driven. The RCP offers modest discounts to not-for-profit organizations and community events as well as our regularly updated online calendar available online at www.ratcreek.org.

Some wise thinker once noted that change was the only

constant. I suspect there are more than one constant, and that discovering new things like the monthly content of the RCP is constant change. Wow! Who knew that I could get my hair cut and see great theatre all within walking distance of the best fresh baked bread south of the Yellowhead? Not to mention welding, small engine repair, dump haulage, landscaping, dog walking, tool sharpening, tailoring, used car and truck sales, recycling... I could go on.

Feel free to browse the RCP web site for size and price of advertising, to you our readers and customers. I will be calling on some of you soon and following in Dawn Freeman's most capable footsteps to include you in this focus on business column. Hi, my name is Sandy. I'm new here and I like it already.



Doug Elniski
MLA Edmonton Calder

12,064 diapers raised for the Terra Centre

Last month, Terra, the centre for pregnant and parenting teens, had a 'Baby Hero's Diaper Drive' to help young families in Edmonton. I am pleased to report that the constituents of Edmonton-Calder came through for this cause, and helped to make a difference in the lives of mothers and babies in need.

Using social media outlets Facebook and Twitter, my office managed to raise 12,064 diapers in 72 hours. The total diapers raised from the entire campaign were 84,328.

We delivered these diapers to the Terra display in West Edmonton Mall using my Smart car. If diapers are piled on the roof and the car is driven slowly, you can fit approximately 6,000 diapers in it.

I would like to thank everyone involved with this campaign, especially the volunteers and supporters who donated their time and money to this important cause.

Terra is one of the many organizations in Edmonton that does tremendous work for young families, yet we seldom hear about them.

This holiday season, I encourage all Edmontonians who are financially able to make donations, to do so. We are proud and silent givers in Edmonton, times are tough, and the holidays are an especially good time to help out others in need. Pick your charity and support it!

-Doug



Updates from the Spruce Avenue Community League

The Spruce Avenue Community League held its Annual General Meeting with the election of board members on Monday October 19, 2009. Two outstanding director positions remain vacant, Social Director and Sports Director. If you are interested in these positions please call 780-719-6085.

The board is looking forward to another busy year with the operation of the outdoor rink (as soon as cold weather permits), the re-development of the playground and park, Family Day celebrations, the 15th Annual Garage Sale April 29, 30 and May 1, the 50/50 draw at the 2010 Edmonton Rexall Indy, nomination of front yards for the City of Edmonton Front Yards in Bloom contest, and an upcoming casino. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these activities please call Verna at 780-479-8019. Community League Memberships are available by calling David at 780-477-6716.

By becoming a member of the Spruce Avenue Community League you will have access to free public skating, free swimming on Sundays from 2 to 5 pm at the MacEwan Centre for Sport and Wellness (located at 10700 104 Ave), and reduced rental rates for the hall. Monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7 pm at the community hall. You are encouraged to attend.

On Monday December 14, guest speakers will be Shahriyar Khan, Community Development Officer with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Dan Jones from the City of Edmonton Traffic Safety and Joel Ebbes from the Edmonton Police Services. If you have concerns about traffic and/or crime issues within the community we ask that you attend. To keep abreast of activities within the community league you may visit www.spruceavenuecommunityleague.blogspot.com or call the community league number at 780-471-1932.

Submitted by Ken Johnston Spruce Avenue Community League President

Keynote Music
"Some talent is born... Most is learned"



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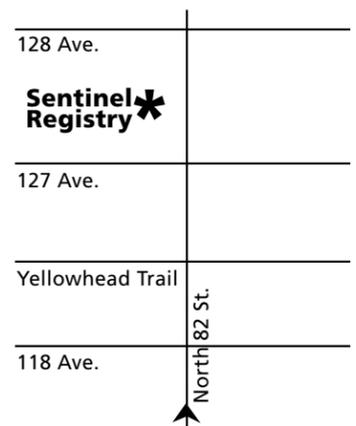
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Simple steps to set New Year's Resolutions and achieve them

JUDY LOVEDA

Have you thought of your New Year's Resolutions yet?

Or do you dread the thought because you know deep inside that your heart is not in it, because you haven't stuck with any resolutions for very long?

Below are some ideas that have worked for me. Following these methods for 30 days has helped me to establish new habits.

After 90 days, I was 26.5 pounds lighter. Although weight loss might not be your goal, success can be yours in any area when you follow these simple steps.

Get Clarity

Write down exactly what it is you want. Think big. Be generous, be outrageous. Think of the impossible.

If you can dream it, you can achieve it.

Pretend You Are Being Interviewed

Ask yourself this question, "What will I do when I have ... (what you came up with)? Repeat the question, again, and again, writing down everything you can come up with no matter how outlandish, how irrational or how small or big.

This exercise helps you

get really honest with yourself. It allows you to feel the feeling(s) behind your desire. Immediately you will know if this is what you truly want.

The Looking Glass Technique

Standing in front of a mirror, look at yourself. Say, "I DO IT!" Keep standing there thinking of your desire.

Feel the feelings you associate with having your desire. Repeat it until you feel excited to take the action even if it involves standing an hour or more

The Two Chair Method

Have a friend walk you through this exercise.

- Place two chairs facing each other (1 metre apart).
- Chair #1 is where you are sitting now.
- Chair #2 represents you having accomplished your goal.
- Sitting in chair #1 feel what it feels like to be stuck in the state you want to change (obstacle).
- Now move to chair #2 which represents you having reached your goal.
- In chair #2 feel what it feels like to have what you want.
- Do this a couple of times so you really feel the feelings when sitting in each chair.
- Again, sit in Chair #1.

Choose a small object. Place it on the floor between the chairs.

It symbolizes what is blocking you from achieving your desire.

- Move to chair #2 without moving the obstacle.

Notice how wonderful the feeling is of having overcome the obstacle and having reached your goal.

If there are any other obstacles repeat step (i) and each time put objects on the floor between the two chairs to symbolize the barriers or resistance you feel towards achieving your goal. This process will help you turn the tide of feelings within you which might have prevented you from achieving your goals, assuming you have had doubts or hesitancy about being successful.

Be A Contrarian

Often the words you tell yourself can evoke feelings that are negative. This technique can empower you to do what you really want to do. For example, substitute a word that means the same thing.

- Instead of saying:
- > Lose Weight say Release Weight
 - > I Can't Do It say I Choose to Do It
 - > I'm Afraid I'll Not

Do It say I Feel Assurance I Will Succeed.

The Calendar Method

- Use a calendar with squares the size of one inch by one inch.
- Block off a 30 day period.
- Print your goal in large block letters at the top of the page.
- Place a check mark in the box on the day you actually take a small action towards achieving your goal.
- On the day you consciously choose to do nothing put a straight horizontal line in the box. (An 'x' would only remind you of all the times you have failed in the past and cause you to feel resentful).
- If you only think about it and do nothing one day put a check mark with a short vertical line through the upper half of it. This way you will not find yourself being



critical of yourself for having done nothing towards your goal that day.
7. Repeat the 30 day time segments until your goal is accomplished.

Important! Have A Follow-Up Goal to Achieve

Often it happens that once the goal is reached you may lose focus and revert to your old habitual lifestyle. Don't allow that. Rather set a second goal to attain and let your new lifestyle reflect it. Remember success is a daily 24 hour journey. May it be yours this year.

Wishing you Abundant Health, Wealth and Success!

avenue initiative revitalization

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



Thank you!

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making 2009 a successful one.

Thanks to the many dedicated volunteers there were amazing events, including Kaleido Family Arts Festival, Avenue Goes to the Dogs and the Avenue Garden Show & Art Sale. Volunteers also came together to clean up large items from people's homes and alley ways. Five Working Groups met monthly to shape the future look of the Avenue. We are truly beginning to see everyone's efforts pay off! With the hard work of both community and business, the Avenue is well on its way to transforming into a vibrant place for community and all of Edmonton to enjoy!

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season!

Judy Allan, Avenue Initiative Coordinator

DEEP FREEZE is Looking For Volunteers January 9th & 10th

Our winter festival needs your help! To volunteer, contact Judy 780-496-1913



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JANUARY 9 & 10, 2010

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artsontheave.org

Souljah Fyah
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OLDE Tyme CURLING ★ MUSIC ★ SNOW CARVING ★ STREET HOCKEY ★ FUN

Rat Creek Press welcomes new board members

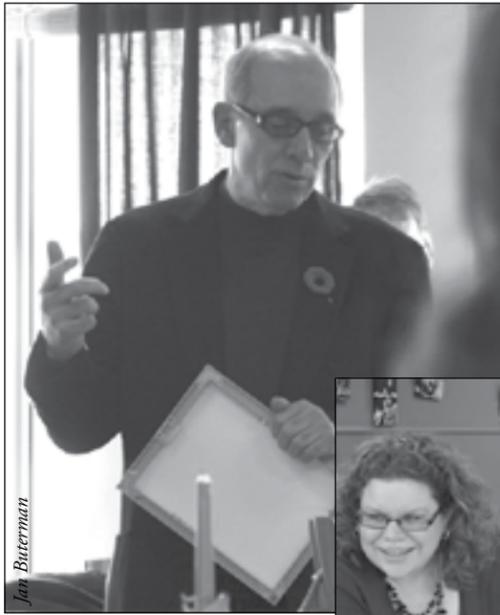
MARI SASANO

The Rat Creek Press held its annual general meeting on November 8 at the Carrot Cafe, with good news all around: our community newspaper is in great shape. We have had a very strong year in terms of retaining strong writers and attracting new ones, and our finances are in good order. We continue to grow our advertising revenue, as well as other fundraising efforts including casinos and our first successful book sale.

Three of our board members remained to lead our paper into 2010: Harvey Voogd, Jo-Ann Siebert, and Loriann Youngman. We bid farewell to our chair, Cheryl Walker and outgoing board members Cath Jackel, Sheryl Boisvert and Gina Gariano. We welcomed three new board members, our Daring Diner Angie Klein, Jordan Batty, and Patricia Foufas, who is a librarian at the Sprucewood Library. We look forward to working with these fantastic, motivated individuals!

The atmosphere was festive, as the meeting was followed by the Rat Creek Press 10th Anniversary Party, which was attended by dignitaries Mayor Stephen Mandel, MLA Brian Mason, and Ray Martin. Attendees were treated to a panel discussion featuring former editors Jacquelyn Vandenberg and Karen Mykietka, and current editor, Mari Sasano. Cake was served, with a few songs by Mat Halton.

Here's to another great year for the Rat Creek Press!



MAYOR STEPHEN MANDEL SPEAKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF RAT CREEK AS PART OF THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITIES SUCH AS ALBERTA AVENUE IN THE PROCESS OF REVITALIZATION. MANDEL PRESENTED A FRAMED CONGRATULATORY STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF EDMONTON TO RAT CREEK PRESS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBER, JOANNE SIEBERT.



GUESTS MINGLE AT THE RAT CREEK PRESS 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



FORMER RAT CREEK EDITOR KAREN MYKIETKA SPEAKS AT A PANEL SESSION AT THE RAT CREEK PRESS 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



CURRENT RAT CREEK EDITOR MARI SASANO SPEAKS AT A PANEL SESSION



INITIAL RAT CREEK EDITOR JACQUELYN VANDENBORN SPEAKS AT A PANEL SESSION



HIGHLANDS-NORWOOD MLA BRIAN MASON AND LONGTIME COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AND FORMER MLA RAY MARTIN, ALONG WITH FORMER RAT CREEK PRESS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS, ENJOY THE PANEL DISCUSSION WITH EDITORS PAST AND PRESENT.



MUSICIAN AND DAD MATT HALTON IS PRIVY TO DAUGHTER MADDIE'S DEEP THOUGHTS

Give the gift of time

ANNA DER, SATS OF EDMONTON

Hello! Do you like to drive? If so, we at Seniors Assisted Transportation Society of Greater Edmonton, or SATS, want to talk to you! You can help out your community by easily giving two or three hours of your time, including the use of your car!

We re-imburse the gas you spend driving elderly neighbours to their important appointments. You give door-to-door services by walking them to and from their appointments. Support times are needed anytime Monday to Sunday from 8 am to 8 pm.

SATS is a registered Alberta non-profit society and a Canadian charity and we are set up to support the elderly who need a hand occasionally with their transportation. We have

some basic rules. We charge the elders for a membership and for gas tickets and then we administer those gas tickets to the volunteer drivers. We pay for and arrange a security clearance and a drivers' abstract on all volunteer drivers and we offer driver training along with other education classes for drivers, compliments of Alberta Motor Association.

Your vehicle insurance is enough if it covers you for \$1 Million. We have letters from Alberta Finance and the Insurance Bureau of Canada that state you do not need to purchase extra insurance as volunteer driving is the same as driving your family. SATS also purchases \$5 Million in extra liability insurance for additional coverage for the volunteer driver to keep us all calm.

We guarantee you will enjoy volunteer driving and volunteer walking. These people lived through the Great Depression and they can teach us all how to enjoy family and friends, and how to age wisely and healthily!

If you cannot volunteer at this time, consider donating to the program to support others who volunteer. It is all about creating a safety circle around the elders in our community. If you, a member of your family, a neighbor or a co-worker is interested in doing good deeds, please ask them to stop by 9907 108 Avenue or telephone Anna Der at 780 732-1221.

Webpage: www.satsfedmonton.org
Email: info@satsfedmonton.org

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Blue about money – is there a secret to thriving?

LISA TARA EDEN

A friend of mine named Linda passed away a few years ago in a tragic boating accident at sea near Scotland. Once she told me some jarble garble about “hope” and “try”.

I think about her jarble garble often so I was going to write an article called “Hope and Try – The True Secret to Thriving”. But then I thought there is so much written about the power of positive thinking, wouldn’t I just be boring you? Besides, my friend Linda was physically beautiful and born into a wealthy family. Do you think Linda would have known what it was like to face multiple barriers?

What if I am a newcomer and a single parent and have six children? My children and I could have witnessed excruciating violence in our home country and now my children are trying to fit in with their peers in this new country. Perhaps

I have often left my children unattended for fourteen hours a day for the last five years so that I could pay the \$10,000 fee for the refugee transportation loan, but in the sixth year I get a bad respiratory infection and fall short of the money. Collection agents are calling me.

What if I am a single mother recovering from drug and alcohol addiction which had once led me to a life of crime? After I paid my restitution fees for thefts that I once committed and waited the three years to apply for my pardon, I suddenly get sued by an insurance company for another \$3000 fine. Possibly, since I first paid my restitution, I took out a student loan, graduated with a degree in social work, and found a job working for a non-profit agency. I don’t have the money to pay the \$3000 for the insurance company because I have to pay my student loan back and support my children and myself. I will have to wait

three more years after I pay the \$3000 fine before I can apply for my pardon.

Sometimes things don’t click

I could have mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual disabilities.

I could be under unbearable circumstances, like six women I know who are sex slaves in China and have been told that if they leave the business one of their family members will die.

And Linda said, “Hope doesn’t die. It simply moves to different footfalls, rarely running to the pace we wish.”

You would be surprised to

know that Linda did not live the “princess” life that most of society deemed her to have. Although Linda was extremely wealthy, her father was not balanced and frequently chose power over love. As a child, Linda’s father literally made her



sleep in a dog house outside to control her. At the time when most young women go to parties and have boyfriends, Linda was forced to date her father’s

prominent work associates.

Linda died at a young age but was trying her best to achieve a mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual balance and as a result was in a loving, healthy relationship and contributed

financially to charities that helped women to better their lives.

Linda told me to try this. Light two candles. One candle represents “hope”, the other candle “try”.

Two powerful words.

The pocket Oxford dictionary’s first definition for hope is, “a feeling that something wanted may happen,” and the first definition for try is, “attempt”.

Think about the words.

I hope and try to be gentle and loving with myself, to raise my children to have a meaningful life, to do my work the best that I can, and to send light and love to the women in China.

Click.

Lisa Tara Eden is the financial literacy coordinator for Elizabeth Fry Society. To find out more about Elizabeth Fry’s Me and Money workshops call Tara at (780) 784-2203.



The Rat Pack

DECEMBER IS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

BY ELLISON

On December 10th, it is the anniversary of human rights being invented in 1948. By 1976, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was an international law. The idea was invented because of the events of the Second World War. Believe me, these events were so scary that they cannot be written down in my column. These nightmares would be scarier than a nightmare’s nightmare.

Article 2 of the UDHR says:

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.”

That means simply that everyone gets all these rights. Everyone includes you, no matter if you’re Asian, black or white doesn’t matter if you’re a boy or girl. It’s beside the fact what language you speak. There is NO reason not to have these rights.

BUT, do zombies have human rights?! They’re like alive/dead humans!! Is there an expiry date for 10 days after you’re dead?

Til’ next time
Ellison

CHRISTMAS WITH GIVING

BY THORIN, AGE 6

Christmas is a time when people get things, but most people seem to prefer to receive than to give. I don’t think that is cool and I am trying to change it. This year I am giving something to the Turkey Run and to places that give toys to children who need them. I am telling this to all my friends to copy my example and people who are reading this, you should as well. It is good to help people who need these things.

SOME GIFT IDEAS

BY GIER, AGE 12

Christmas, we have it every year but what do your kids look forward to getting? My favorite Christmas things are presents, hot cocoa, presents, Christmas dinner, presents, candy, and presents! Here’s a tip about giving presents while still saving money. If you have something you know somebody likes and you have had it for years and you know they will like it then try giving it to them. It works great and the only thing you had to buy this year is wrapping paper. Sometimes you can enjoy Christmas by volunteering at places that need help so everyone else will be enjoying your Christmas spirit. Also if you’re low on budget you can send them a Christmas card or give them a hug because it’s the spirit that counts! Have a Merry Christmas everyone and have a happy New Year! HO! HO! HO!

SINK YOUR CLAWS INTO WARRIOR CATS

BY GALA, AGE 9

A book that you should try to read is The Warriors Series by Erin Hunter. If you like cats, adventures or battles and some romance too, you will love these books.

Warriors is about four clans of cats that live in the forest. The first series is about a kitty pet (human’s pet cat) called Rusty. He ends up in the forest and joins one of the clans, called Thunderclan and saves it from an evil cat called Tigerclaw.

The second series, called The New Prophecy, is about Firestar’s (formerly known as Rusty) daughters, Leafpool and Squirrelflight, along with other cats from different clans. They have to go on a quest to find midnight in order to save the clans from Two-legs (humans).

The third series, called Power of Three, is about Squirrelflight’s three children, Jaypaw, Hollypaw and Lionpaw. Many years before a prophecy was given to Firestar that three of the kin of his kin will hold the power of the stars in their paws. The three young cats must face many challenges to find the true nature of their powers.

There are also two special editions, called Bluestar’s Prophecy and Firestar’s Quest, as well as three field guides that tell you more about the Warriors secrets.

I have read all these books and I love them. They are exciting and action packed and they always have surprising twists at the ends.

And if you like these, then you can also read Erin Hunter’s other series called The Seekers (but in my opinion they are not quite as good)!

Picturing the social economy in the Alberta Avenue Community

JORGE SOUSA

Welcome to the first article of a series exploring the efforts to transform the Alberta Avenue community. This series will introduce the Social Economy by profiling the various activities and initiatives as the key contributors to strengthening an already strong community. These activities and initiatives are making the community safer and fostering civic pride inherent in this neighbourhood.

My name is Jorge Sousa and I am new to the neighbourhood. In fact, I am fairly new to the city. I moved to Edmonton from Ontario just over three years ago to work at the University of Alberta. When I arrived I had heard there are Portuguese bakeries in this city, so my first objective was to find the magical custards, and I was immediately told that I could find them on the Ave. In addition to being told the location of

the excellent bakeries, I was given additional information, which to be quite frank was rather unflattering. I was told about an area that is rife with drug activity and people are generally afraid to be outside. I was a little concerned, but that did not keep me from finding the custards.

To be honest, what I first noticed and experienced on my first visit to the Ave was a community consciousness that I had not been told about. Since moving to the area it has become even clear that fostering greater engagement is the primary strategy applied to efforts to renew the Alberta Avenue community. Enhancing engagement is an important community development principle practiced in areas that have crumbled due to systemic neglect and other social ills.

Over the last three years I have heard and read much about the Alberta Avenue community. I had initially been

told that the private sector was the driving force behind the efforts, but that was quickly dispelled upon several visits to the neighbourhood. Yes, for-profit businesses have indeed been a driving force, but not in the same way that businesses have shaped other neighbourhood renewal initiatives. What I noticed was that the people were the real drivers of local change.

These folks not only called for real change, but have also ensured that there are ongoing opportunities for different folks to be actively involved in different ways. As an academic and community activist, it became important for me to make sense of what was going on in this neighbourhood. I am particularly interested in the intentional and non-intentional efforts that have resulted in improvements that are visible and sustainable. One way to look at the changes is to refer to the activities as promoting community well-being

by fostering a sense of belonging.

There are countless examples of obvious activities, including: a new art gallery (Nina Haggerty); social enterprises (the Bissell's Thrift Shoppe); member-based organizations (the community leagues); and a volunteer-run non-profit business (the Carrot). What all of these examples have in common is that they have a social purpose attached to their mission, which is a significant part of the efforts to renew the Ave.

It is my belief that one way to understand what is happening on the Ave is to frame it as an example of Canada's Social Economy. I am sure you are asking, "the Social what?" Yes, the Social Economy. I am not being a total academic here. The Social Economy has been a part of Canadian society since we became a federation. Some people think of it as the non-profit sector while others refer to it as Community

Economic Development. If you are in either of those camps, then you both are correct. You see, while there is no agreed-upon definition of the Social Economy, there is broad agreement that we need non-profit and for-profit approaches to neighbourhood renewal as well as grassroots involvement, which are pillars of the Social Economy.

So, what am I getting at? My point is that to understand the efforts that have contributed to improving the Alberta Avenue community is to meet the people involved and to explore the impact that different activities have made to the community. In effect, this is what I will be exploring over the next year. So please read join me over the coming months as I aim learn about the community and to share stories about rewards and challenges found in efforts to enhance community pride and strengthen the local Social Economy.



Ardee opened his eyes.

"Good morning," he said to himself.

Ardee thought it was funny that he said good morning to himself and started to giggle. His mom came into his room smiling and asked him what was so funny.

"I said good morning to myself," replied Ardee.

"That is kind of funny," said his mom. "Good morning."

Ardee jumped out of bed and gave his mom a big good morning hug.

"Ardee, your aunt is coming to dinner tonight," said his mom. "We need to get dressed and go to the store to buy some groceries."

Ardee thought about what his mother said, "My ant is coming to dinner tonight?" asked Ardee.

"Yes," replied his mom. "But I don't have an ant," stated Ardee.

Ardee's mom laughed. "Well, I'm sure you'll find one tonight."

Ardee didn't want to waste any time and told his mother that he was going to go outside. Once Ardee was dressed he went out to his backyard. Where to start, thought Ardee?

Ardee looked in the garden first. He looked under the lettuce, beside the carrots and on the top of a tomato. After a few minutes Ardee's mother came outside.

"Ardee, we need to go to the store now," she said.

"But I'm not ready yet," replied Ardee.

"Why not?" asked his

mom.

"I can't find an ant," said Ardee.

Ardee's mom laughed. "I told you that you'll find one tonight."

Ardee and his mom went to the store. When they got there, Ardee's mom asked him to grab a little grocery cart that he could push himself. Ardee wondered what kind of food he should get for his ant. As he walked through the store he looked at all the different things to eat.

"Mom," called Ardee. "Yes Ardee," said his mom. "I think I know what to get."

"What do you want to get, Ardee?" asked his mom.

"I need an apple, a cookie and a peanut." He said.

Ardee's mom smiled and as they went from aisle to aisle she placed a bag of apples, a package of cookies and a jar of peanuts in Ardee's basket. After Ardee's mom was finished shopping they went to the checkout counter.

Ardee placed the apples, the cookies, and the peanuts on the counter. The lady behind the counter took Ardee's groceries and placed them in a bag.

"Is that all you need today?" she asked.

"I think so," said Ardee.

"Is all that for you?"

"No. My ant is coming to dinner tonight," said Ardee.

The lady smiled. "You must be very excited," she said.

"Oh I am. But, I haven't found my ant yet," explained Ardee.

Ardee's mom and the lady

laughed.

"I told you Ardee," said his mom. "You'll find one tonight."

When Ardee and his mom got home, Ardee asked if he could stay outside for a while. His mom told him to stay in the backyard.

Ardee began his search again.

As the morning passed, Ardee continued to look for his ant in the garden. Finally, after looking and looking Ardee found an ant.

"Hi there," said Ardee.

"Where are you going?" He watched as the ant hurried along the sidewalk. Ardee was very careful as he followed the ant down the sidewalk towards his sandpit.

"Do you want to come for dinner?" asked Ardee.

The ant crawled off the sidewalk across the grass towards the rock garden. Ardee was right behind. He didn't want to lose the ant that had taken him so long to find. The ant stopped by one of the rocks that circled a flower bed. Ardee watched as the ant went under the rock. Ardee lifted the rock and fell back in surprise when he saw what was under it.

Hundreds of ants scurried in every direction.

"Wow!" shouted Ardee. "It's an ant party."

Ardee ran to his house and asked his mom for a container. Ardee's mom was busy preparing for dinner and pointed to the bottom cupboard. He found a small empty butter container that had been cleaned. "Perfect," he thought.

Once he got back to the overturned rock Ardee scooped up a pile of dirt and several ants with it and popped on the cover.

"Mom will be so happy when she finds out," Ardee said. "She must have known I had more than one ant, that's why she got a bag of apples, a whole package of cookies, and a big jar of peanuts at the store."

After a while of supervis-

ing his ants, Ardee decided it was time to tell his mom the big news. "She's going to be so happy that you're all coming to dinner."

He opened the back door and before he could announce his big news his Dad called to him.

"Ardee, could you come here please."

Ardee went into the living room.

"Ardee, your Aunt Sue is here. Come and say hello," said Ardee's Dad.

"Hi Ardee," said his aunt. "I'm going to have dinner with you tonight."

Ardee stood and stared for a minute. He looked at his container full of ants and then back at his aunt.

"That's great!" he declared. "The more the merrier!"

After Ardee had washed up he took his container to the dinner table and sat down.

"What's in the container Ardee?" asked his Aunt.

"Oh, it's a surprise," he answered.

Ardee's Mom had all of her best dinner plates and silverware on the table. All of the food was set out and ready to go.

"Mom really worked hard on this," he thought. "These ants are going to be impressed!"

As the family was just about to eat, Ardee noticed something was wrong.

"Mom, we need one more plate," said Ardee.

"Why Ardee?" asked his Mom.

"Well, for our special guest," he said.

Ardee's Mom looked very puzzled.

"Ardee, what guest do you mean?" she asked.

It was at that moment Ardee thought it was time to show everyone his big surprise. He opened his container and dumped it on his plate dirt and all.

That night when Ardee was lying in bed he felt very sad. He finally realized which aunt was coming to dinner. His Mom and Dad both told him that it wasn't his fault, but that in the future he should not bring bugs in the house.

Ardee smiled. He had never seen his Aunt Sue jump so high.

Darren Theberge published his first story, Ardee and the Missing Treasure, in February



Making the most of winter



health & wellness
WITH JENNA C. HOFF

If you're like me, you prefer summer (long and sunny days and green grass) to winter (snowy days and long, cold nights). However, just because the weather is chilly doesn't mean you have to curl up and hibernate until spring! In fact, there are many healthy and (fun!) activities that you can do to make the most of the season!

Go for a moonlit and starry walk. Bundle up warmly and take a leisurely stroll around your neighborhood. I find the quiet brought about by the snow-padded world brings about a simple peace and creates an ideal time for self reflection.

Join an indoor sports club: Perhaps this is the perfect time to sign up for something new, whether it's a floor hockey team, or a dance class that you've always wanted to take.

Enjoy the river valley: Our city is blessed with a river valley jam-packed with amazing parks, trails, and scenery. Just because its winter now doesn't mean we can't enjoy it! Slip on your snowshoes or

cross-country skis, bundle up extra warmly, and head out to enjoy nature. One of my favourite hobbies is taking seasonal photographs, i.e. taking photos at the same location at different times of year, and then compiling them into a collage of framed seasonal colour.



Nurture yourself: As the days get shorter, the amount of sunlight that we are exposed to on a daily basis often goes waaay down, putting us at risk of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). This, combined with the fact that the holidays (and

post-holidays) can be a lonely time for some folks, means that this can be an emotionally challenging time of the year. Make it a priority to nourish your emotional side by connecting with those you love (friends or family), and by scheduling extra fun pampering for yourself (perhaps it's a good time to try out that new spa down the street!) And be extra vigilant- don't be afraid to seek the help and advice of your doctor or mental health professional if you feel your emotions spiraling downward.

Jenna Hoff is a former pediatric Physical Therapist turned freelance writer. This will be her last column for Rat Creek Press.

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches WITH DEANNA COX

Gaden Samten Ling's Centre (The Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society) is located at 11403 101 St., Edmonton. It was incorporated into a society in 1991 by Geshe Ngawang Kalden, a Tibetan monk who passed away in early 1998. What started off as meditation meetings in basements became a society some 11 years later. The current spiritual director is Kushok Lobsang Damchoe. He is from Tibet and was forced to flee his country in 1965 when his father was tortured and killed following a protest in Southern Tibet. His mother passed soon after. He has been a monk since the age of 12 and has studied under the teachers of the Dalai Lama. He believes that by training the mind, anything in this world can be faced.

There seems much for me to learn about Buddhism, so complex yet simple at the same time. The more research done for me brought increased questions. So with that said, I will try to stick to the basics in this article and leave the exploring to you, should your interests be tweaked. A good place to start might be their website at www.gasamling.ca. They are fundraising for a new building and have hosted a silent auction and dinner, "An Evening in Tibet" which was on November 21, 2009 at Alberta Avenue Hall.

Spotlight On Buddhism in our community

GSL has a threefold mission statement: to evoke positive change in the human condition; to encourage individuals to develop compassion, tolerance and loving kindness for greater peace and harmony in society. The above is supported through instruction and practice of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and meditation under the guidance of a qualified spiritual teacher. Their values revolve around compassion, respect, wisdom, mindfulness and integrity.

This organization follows principles set out by the Gelug lineage of the Dalai Lama. They sponsor visiting Tibetan Lamas to give teachings here in Edmonton. They wish to alleviate human suffering by promoting individual responsibility, healing and providing charitable services to the community. GSL feels our communities can greatly benefit from the practice of meditation. They offer different levels of teaching from beginners up on a weekly basis. Call (780)479-0014 for times and further information.

Join with me in December as we celebrate our Lord's birth. I will be visiting Bethel Gospel Chapel 11461 95 St. I also want to mention an awesome competition underway



for some needy families this Christmas. Do you know of a family who has had a rough year and is in need of encouragement? 105.9 Shine FM and 930 AM the Light want to make the season a bit more special for 12 families this Christmas. You can nominate someone you know to receive a Christmas miracle by sharing their story. For further information visit www.shinefm.com or www.cjca.ca and click on the contests link. The miracles are off the wall and enough to really start the year off right! Make sure to drop me a line if you'd like your place of worship in the spotlight or have a prayer request, thank you for words of encouragement too!

EDMONTON

In the winter months we are all required to focus effort on sidewalk snow removal. Snowy walks restrict mobility for seniors, and slips and fall threatened us all. Please do your part to help keep pedestrians safe by removing snow and ice from City sidewalks adjacent to your property. Your customers, friends and relatives will thank you.

Let's keep Edmonton moving this winter.



GET A GRIP ON SIDEWALK SAFETY

clear your walks within 48 hrs after a snowfall

A home-made Christmas

Gift giving is a complicated social experience and there's no other time like Christmas to pile on the complexity. How many of the following questions have you wrestled with?

Who and what circles should receive a gift? Should I give gifts only to those I know will give them in return? What do I do when someone gives a gift and I've nothing to offer in return? What if I exchange a gift that is clearly cheaper? Will the receiver be offended if my gift is second hand/home-made/bought at an outlet?

I must admit that some years the myriad of potential problems pretty quickly saps the joy out of giving. This season (spoiler alert for the loved ones/neighbours/useful acquaintances in my life!) I may opt out. The very act of

typing those questions made my eyes start twitching. Then again, maybe I'll make up some very large batches of the following items (they are sure to please most people). Hey, perhaps you can make some up too then we can exchange the same homemade gift and call it 'even'!

Mom's Playdough for the kids (or kid-at-heart) in your life

1. Mix together in a small saucepan:
¼ Cup salt
1 Cup flour
1 Tablespoon Cream of Tarter
1 Cup water
1 Tablespoon oil
Food Colouring (use lots for vibrant colour)

2. Cook over medium heat (stirring constantly) until

mixture forms a thick ball.

3. Remove from heat and let cool.

4. Knead until smooth.

Bath Soak for the bathers (or the people-you-wish-were-bathers) in your life

1. Mix together in a large bowl:
4 Cup fine sea salt
4 Cup baking soda
4 Cup milk powder
10-20 drops essential oil
dried lavender, rose petals, citrus peel or favorite herb (optional)

2. Divide into pretty jars. Makes 3 litres of bath soak.

Pretty Convincing Irish Cream (this is a gift I give myself

when I'm making the other gifts)

1. Mix together:
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1 Cup whiskey
2 Tablespoons Chocolate syrup
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon coconut extract
2 Cups- half and half cream
1 teaspoon instant coffee

2. Bottle and refrigerate. Makes 1 litre. Expires in three weeks (roughly).

Hope these tried and true gift ideas bring back (or carry on!) the joy of the giving. And if I forget to give you a gift: May you have a very blessed Christmas from my homestead to yours.



No flu shot required!



The Daring Diner
WITH ANGIE KLEIN

Let's face it. We as Canadians face flu season every year. We suffer through coughs and achy necks. We endure ever-changing strains of the nasty viruses and try to prevent them with a yearly shot. Sometimes Mother Nature is particularly cruel, sending out an even more virulent strain. Our immune system is all we have to save us. That got me thinking, maybe it's a good time to look at the benefits of "The Stinking Rose." If you don't know the term, it fondly refers to garlic.

That's Aroma A Garlic Restaurant was just the place to do such research. We should have walked, but we didn't. That's Aroma is located in the Hy's Center just off 111 Avenue and 101 Street, right here in the 'hood. It was steady for a Tuesday when we arrived, the sweet scent of garlic warming our cold noses.

We sat down and ordered a drink. Garlic infused beer, brewed especially for Sorrento's, That's Aroma's parent company. It was one of the highlights of our meal. Jeff commented that it was two of his favorite things, garlic and beer. It's brewed by local Alley Cat Brewery, which sadly our wait staff was unaware of.

We were pleasantly surprised when they brought us complimentary Garlic Focaccia Bread with a full bulb of roasted garlic to spread on it. In this economy, the need to make a dollar go as far as possible is more important than ever. That's Aroma's DINNER BAILOUT sounded like the answer to our prayers: a three course meal for \$20. WOW! But just like the old adage goes, "If it sounds too good to be true, it

probably is."

The first course was soup or salad. The day's soup was a pretty, creamy carrot soup, perfect for the crisp weather. The salad, a huge pile of mixed spring greens, the pre bagged kind, topped off with peppers, fresh tomato wedges and a light balsamic dressing. Big, but boring. Next, the entrées. There were three selections, and our family is a unit of three, so we each chose one. Steak dinner for Tyra served with the daily pasta, roast beef dinner with pasta for Jeffrey and a chicken cutlet with potatoes and vegetable for me.

I was impressed that the chef could make Tyra's tiny steak so close to medium rare, and at the same time shook my head at he re-heated slices of dried up shoe leather that passed for Jeff's roast beef. My chicken cutlet was cooked properly and probably would have been tasty if it wasn't drowning in the same extremely salty brown sauce as was on the roast. We were all expecting to have a garlic flavor to at least some of the meal, but sadly all we tasted was salt. Perhaps that is why they don't put salt and pepper on the tables. The meal was rounded out by a boring tomato penne that was very short on flavor and a side dish of potatoes and veggies that were so salty they were not edible.

However, the third course was great: we all ate desert with delight. Lemon mousse for Tyra and a lovely light orange sorbetto served in its natural fruit shell for Jeff and I. Our bill came in a little over \$100.00 with tip. If you are looking for quantity over quality, then this is the deal for you, but I think I should have had the Garlic soup.

Until next time...Happy Eating!

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Verna and Henry Stainthorp know that renewal comes in many forms



Resident Profile
WITH HARVEY VOOGD



HENRY & VERA STAINTHORP

It may be a neighbourhood undergoing change or a relationship that surprises you. It can also be the ebb and flow of a life where lives are enhanced, or the physical change as water freezes and ice melts. The Stainthorps, Henry and Verna, have seen the growth and renewal of their community—and their family.

Verna's story

Verna Stainthorp has lived in Spruce Avenue for 42 years.

"I was raised in Tofield, but my mother came to Edmonton to give birth to me at the original Royal Alex Hospital," says Verna. "Today it is the site of the Glenrose Hospital. I was born here and later came back to live and work here. I've come full circle."

Verna was raised on a farm that has been in her family since 1912.

"I started in a one room country school which was 5 miles away. I remember when I was 9 years old being put on the horse by my parents and the teacher taking me off at the other end. If the horse stopped to eat grass on the way, so be it."

Verna came to Edmonton at 18 to attend Alberta College. She attended for one semester before getting married, having three daughters and beginning her work life as a unit clerk at the Royal Alexandra and Glenrose hospitals. Later she went to Grant MacEwan College, first part-time and then full-time, to get her Social Work degree.

"I worked for the province for 28 years," said Verna. "I worked in income support programs in the North Office, behind the old Cromdale Hotel. We did home visits and had really neat clients. Far different than from what it is now."

She also worked as a liaison worker between the province and women's shelters, as well as in policy development.

Verna met Henry in 1976

"I needed a curler, Verna volunteered and that's how we met," remembers Henry.

"Henry had his own league and I curled when I was in high school," adds Verna.

Henry was born on a farm in Westlock, but came to Edmonton at the age of 16 for work. After five years in construction, a stint that included building the Brazeau Dam, he was hired as a rink rat at Northlands.

Thus began the 36-year career of a man who became one of Canada's premier makers of curling and hockey ice.

"When I began in the fall of 1963 the Sport Ex, which had 24 sheets of curling ice, had just opened in the spring," says Henry. "As a rink rat, my job was to pull the barrels of water around as well as pebble the curling ice."

The next year, the ice maker quit. After another candidate failed to work out, Henry was given the job.

"Back then there was no place to learn to make ice," says Henry. "You learned on your own how to make better ice. The critical thing was the time you had to make ice."

It was a demanding job—he would be called to clean the floor, lay the forms and make the ice, up to 24 sheets. After big events like Oktoberfest, he would have four days to do this. But the work had plenty of lifetime highlights: Henry was the icemaker for the Edmonton Oilers during their glory years.

"I remember Verna walked from the Coliseum basement to the catwalk high in the ceiling to watch the Oilers win the 1985 Stanley Cup final, one month before giving birth to our son," he says.

Though Henry retired from Northlands in 1999, he's never stopped making ice.

"I've had my own ice making business for the last 30 years. I've put ice in at NAIT, Briers, Canada Cups, and last week at the Legal Curling Club."

Spruce Avenue community activities

Verna and Henry are renowned in Spruce Avenue for their volunteer work with the community league.

"The league used to meet in Spruce Avenue school," says Verna. "All types of courses and workshops would be offered through the school."

Back then there were many more houses, but the neighbourhood has changed.

"When I moved here in 1967, there was no mall," says Verna. "There was one row of houses on the west side of 106 Street and then empty land and the Kingsway Hotel."

"NAIT was here, but across from them on the east side of 106 Street were private military quarters (PMQs). The PMQ people were very community spirited. Next to the PMQs was the Sears store and next to it, right beside the traffic circle, was a Loblaws. What is now Value Village was a Safeway."

The landscape changed over time

"Kingsway Mall was built in 1972 and Sears moved there. The community league hall was built in the '70s with money from the Mall for the loss of

houses and green space. Before then, we had a rink and skate shack."

"When my girls were growing up, I was a Brownie leader," says Verna. "We use to meet in the Lutheran church which is now Northern Lights Theatre."

Verna volunteered with the league when her children were young and then got back involved in the early '90s.

"There were issues around the loss of money," says Verna, "so I became the Treasurer in 1994. Henry got involved in 1980 and on and off would go help make the ice at the rink."

"You can't exist separately," says Verna. "So you become involved and keep the league and hall going. If the hall wasn't open, I would hate to think what would happen. And you get to know people. We still have a core group that has interest and goals. Today we are working on the redevelopment of our park."

A new generation

Henry's hobbies now include grafting trees. He has over 20 grafts with 9 varieties of apples in the backyard. Verna, for her part, quilts. "When the girls were young, I use to sew out of necessity," says Verna. "I made their and my clothes. Today I make quilts for their kids, including made from old denim jeans."

Spruce Avenue is also seeing a new generation moving in

"There is a renewal process underway in our neighbourhood," says Verna. It looks like young families are coming in and a lot of houses are being bought up. For a while it seems there were a lot of rental houses. Yet in a lot of ways it is the same. We have long-term neighbours. There are still a lot of the original, 60-plus year old, houses."

"Different streets were developed at different times. One of our neighbours on 105 Street has been here since her house was built."

She remembers before houses were built, the area was vacant land with a slough which was used as a dump. When she landscaped her property, she found disc blades, five-gallon paint cans and ploughshares.

And renewal continues at home. Henry's two daughters, Verna's three daughters and their son have created 13 grandchildren.



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

An Uneasy Balance

The recent proposal by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the House of Commons Justice Committee to require roadside screening for all drivers, even if police do not have reason to suspect they have been drinking alcohol, is disturbing.

There is already random screening for impaired drivers. Police set up RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) checks in communities across Canada, sometimes advertising their plans, sometimes not. The courts have upheld this method of screening as being constitutional, as a breath sample is not required unless a police officer has reason to suspect the driver has been drinking. For most people the RIDE check is a momentary inconvenience.

This proposed law would require drivers to provide a breath sample even if police do not have reason to believe they are impaired. MADD says countries with similar laws have seen a decrease in impaired driving and that such laws save lives. Of course, a country with the death penalty for drunk drivers would also see a decrease in the crime – and certainly no repeat offenders, but how far do we go with enforcement procedures?

It is safe to say everyone is opposed to drunk driving – but there are civil liberty issues involved. There is the presumption of innocence and the right to not self incriminate. That may seem odious when we're talking about a crime such as drunk driving, but it is hypocritical to hold principles and apply them only when convenient. Could such random testing be legally challenged as an unreasonable search and seizure? Or would the courts uphold such a law as a reasonable and demonstrably justified infringement on our rights? The problem, as always, is the definition of reasonable and demonstrably justified.

With the members of MADD I am in favour of making our streets safer. However, I think this proposed legislation goes too far. What do you think?

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LAW AND ORDER
WITH CST. ANDREW LARSON

Neighbourhood Foot Patrol

Over the past many years, 118th Avenue and 95th Street have been besieged by criminal activity related to the illicit drug trade. Drug dealing and prostitution is an every day occurrence and the EPS faces a difficult challenge to deal with these issues with the fiscal constraints and massive loss of experienced police officers to retirement.

I have been to many meetings and many public forums within the Alberta Avenue, Eastwood, Parkdale and Norwood communities. One sentiment I have heard voiced over and over again is the demand for more foot patrol or "beat" officers in the area. One member of the community I have spoken to many times always says to me, "I wanna see the boots on the street."

Most citizens like the con-

tinuous and close contact with the police; they may feel more secure when officers are visible and on the street. Beat policing is the oldest form of policing. This was how policing was done in Roman and Medieval times as well as in the "wild west." In most of our favorite western movies you will often see the town Sheriff like Wyatt Earp, walking up and down his community working as the first and last line of defense against the outlaws. But for years, police departments around the world rejected foot patrol as antiquated, expensive, and irrelevant to contemporary policing. In today's policing models, we depend on the police car to get us to the calls we are attending.

Recently in Newark, New Jersey, they implemented neighborhood foot patrols to the community and conducted

a study where they looked to answer the following questions. These were:

Does foot patrol improve police-citizen relationships?
Do citizens feel safer when officers patrol on foot?
Does foot patrol reduce crime?
Will citizens report more crime when they have closer contact with the police?
Will more arrests be made in foot-patrolled areas?
Will foot patrol officers be more satisfied with their jobs and have more positive attitudes about citizens?
Will citizens' fear of victimization be lessened?
The Police Foundation in Newark found that introducing foot patrol significantly enhanced the citizen's perception of safety in the neighborhood. This is something no other

police strategy has been able to do. The study showed neighborhood foot patrol had the following positive effects:

Residents knew when officers were patrolling their neighborhoods on foot.

Residents in areas patrolled by officers on foot thought that crime was less of a problem than did residents in areas with only motorized patrol.

Residents in areas with foot patrol felt safer and less likely to be victimized.

Residents living in areas with foot patrol took fewer steps to protect themselves against crime.

Residents in areas with foot patrol were more satisfied with police services.

Chief Mike Boyd and the Superintendent of Downtown Division John Findlay have placed a new emphasis on the

Neighborhood Foot Patrol. Starting in November, three new beat officers have been introduced to the community, more than doubling our previous number of two. This will mean we will have three beat officers responsible for 118th Avenue and two officers for 95th Street, as well as a Community Liaison Officer and Community Sergeant.

I am personally very excited about this new influx of man power with a clear mandate, "Have the boots on the street." This should help in the fight against drug dealing and prostitution that has plagued this community for far too long. So if you see the beat officers in hats walking down 118th Avenue or 95th Street, please say hello and introduce yourself. It would be great to meet you.



A minute with Brian Mason By Brian Mason, your MLA

Friends,

As the holiday season approaches, and many of us get ready to spend time with loved ones, it is important to remember that this year has been especially hard on many individuals and families in our community.

We have seen unemployment rise sharply since last December, and many are struggling just to make ends meet. The number of Albertans requiring some form of social assistance also continues to rise as more and more see the effects of the economy hit their kitchen tables.

As we have all heard, and

many of us have seen, the demand on food banks here in Edmonton and across the province has also had a dramatic increase in usage as a result of hard times. I would encourage everyone who is able to give generously this season to do so; this is important now and throughout the entire year.

I have spent the last 20 years proudly representing North East Edmonton. In that time I have seen some unbelievable acts of kindness from many in our community. I know that our neighborhoods have some spectacular people that understand how important it is to give back and to stand up for their

friends and neighbors.

I assure you that I will continue to stand up and work hard for you in the Alberta Legislature now, and throughout the next year.

On behalf of my family and myself, I wish you all a very happy holiday season and all the best in 2010!

Thank you for reading and please do not hesitate to contact my office at 780.414.0682 with your questions, comments and/or concerns.

Brian Mason, MLA

*Edmonton Highlands-Norwood
Leader of Alberta's NDP
Opposition*

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Children's Christmas Movie & Crafts

Thursday, December 17 from 4pm to 6pm
Bring the kids to enjoy a movie & crafts while you peruse the farmers' market.

Free winter playground festival

Sunday, December 27 from 12pm to 4pm.
Family fun in the snow! Come join in the fun, beat the winter blues by celebrating the season with family and enjoying what Edmonton winters have to offer. Join us for a variety of indoor & outdoor activities: snow painting, snowman making, snowshoeing and more.

Self-Defense Training for Women

January 16 & 17 8am - 4:30 pm
RAD (Rape Aggression Defense System) - a program of realistic, self-defense tactics and techniques. Taught throughout North America, the RAD system is a comprehensive course for women that begins with awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, while progressing on to the basics of hands-on defense training.
Cost: \$40. To register call 780-477-2773 or stop by during office hours.

Preschool Gym Class

6 Saturdays Jan 23 to Mar 6 (no class Feb 13)
Tired of being cooped up indoors on those cold winter days with an energetic preschooler? Then sign up for this class. It'll burn off some of their energy and preserve your sanity! The class will focus on gross motor activity, cooperative play and building confidence in children. 3-5 year olds from 10am to 10:45
18 months to 3 years from 11am to 11:45
Instructor: Sara Hendricks, Phys.Ed Teacher and mother of three little ones living in Alberta Avenue
Cost: \$30. To register call 780-477-2773 or stop by during office hours.



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OWNER OF K9 BEHAVE

Re-bonding with Fido

As I take another sip of tea, I reach down to give Dogma a scratch on the ear. Ever faithful, he is the typical portrait of the dog lying next to the feet of his master. I recall renewing our own relationship by doing more little walks just between us. Being 15 years old and unable to do most of the things he did growing up, I have to consider Dogma's needs. Taking him to Eastwood dog park, even for a few minutes, was too much for him. But a hobble around the block suited him much better. He would come home with a smile on his face and lay on his blanket (at my feet) for the rest of the night, contented that he was still accepted as part of the family and had fulfilled his dogly

duties.

Dogma has inspired me so much through the years I started to think of things owners could do with their pet to renew their bond and relationship.

Create a new routine that includes a special activity with each pet on an individual basis. Provide them some alone time with you, a massage, an extra walk to a special place, sharing special treats together (a pet treat for your pet, and for you, a cookie or dessert). Karma and I always share a yogurt before visiting at the seniors' residence.

Take a course. Yes, your dog may already know the basics which will make the course easy – it's an opportunity for the two of you as a team can renew those basic

commands but more importantly get to know each other again while meeting other new people and their dogs.

Decide to complete a short photo diary of your pet. Dust off the camera and take some new photos of your pet in their favorite spot or doing their favorite thing and add it to your diary.

Create a little photo story. This could be a great activity for the whole family or just the kids. Whether a typical day for Fido or something with imagination take photos and then create a story book around it. Maybe Fido saves his favorite toy from the boogie man. Perhaps the story is how the cat found his favorite toy after searching the house and meeting and discovering its secrets.

Perhaps try creative skills at taking a movie of the dog's adventure in the back yard.

Write a story from the pet's point of view of an average day or typical activity. Perhaps the dog's view of the feeding routine could be revealing.

These are just a few ideas, but the point is to feature our pet. We need to remind ourselves how much a part of our life they are and to show them how much we still appreciate them even after 15 years. If your dog is younger and more capable, maybe this is the time to teach some new



tricks, take up a dog sport, or renew a forgotten game.

Oh, and yes, this is just as therapeutic for us as for the pet – if not more so!

Darlene Taylor, K9 Behave
780-915-0213,
k9behave@presplus.onza.net

Sprucewords

WITH PATRICIA FOUFAS

Looking Back, Looking Forward

A new year is on the horizon. For some, a brand new year means focusing on purging bad habits and for others, it means developing new and improved ones. As the New Year approaches, we at the library have an opportunity to do a little navel gazing too. For the library, it is a time where we can reflect on ways to do better what we do – provide access to information and diverse cultures for our patrons. It is the wealth of information in our databases that is, perhaps, our best kept secret. For the coming year we will attempt to have our information secrets revealed in order to better assist our customers navigate our online resources.

There is something for everyone in our database collection. For academic information,

EBSCO's Academic Search Elite and GALE's Academic ASAP are a great starting point for doing scholarly research at home. For those interested in genealogy, the Ancestry Library, Heritage Quest, Edmonton Obituaries and Biography and Genealogy master index will provide a great place to start for researching family roots. For the music lover, the Jazz Music Library, Music Online and the Naxos Music Library provide an excellent resource of online music that patrons can listen to for free. Up to the day developments in legal cases are available in Law Source. If those examples don't entice you, there are magazines and newspapers from all over the world available same day or next day in our Press Display database.

While our customers have

become more accustomed to our online and downloadable materials, few people realize how much information they can access simply by logging in to their library account. One wonderful and underused resource that we provide is the database collection that we have available for in branch or remote access. Better than the untamed internet, databases provide a pre-sorted and organized way of tapping into high quality full text information. We look forward to helping you access and explore our subscribed databases.

Patricia Foufas is a Library Assistant at the Sprucewood Branch of the Edmonton Public Library. Patricia firmly believes that EPL databases are the key to a happy and informed 2010.



Carissa Halton



Carissa Halton

MOMS, DADS, GRANDMAS, TODDLERS AND BABIES GATHERED AT THE CARROT COFFEEHOUSE ON OCTOBER 4 AND NOVEMBER 1 TO LEARN HOW TO SEW AND WEAR A BABY SLING. PARTICIPANTS BOUNCED AND FED BABIES WHILE THEY MEASURED, CUT, SEWED AND IRONED THEIR WAY TO 'HANDS FREE' BABY CARRYING. THIS FREE COMMUNITY EVENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE CITY OF EDMONTON SPARKS GRANT AND THE CARROT COFFEEHOUSE.

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Keep your New Year's Resolutions this year — Register now for January dance classes in

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ART & THEATRE

THE CARROT'S VISUAL ARTISTS COLLECTIVE

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

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE

The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts provides a studio where a collective of artists who have developmental disabilities can explore their creative potential and contribute to Edmonton's art community. The Stollery Gallery, located at the Nina Haggerty Centre, is accepting submissions for exhibitions throughout the year. Priority will be given to artists or organizations that experience barriers to the conventional art world, such as artists with disabilities, mental health issues, low-income or self-taught artists. For more information, please phone 780-474-7611, email info@ninahaggertyart.ca www.ninahaggertyart.ca

COMMUNITY ARTS NIGHT AT THE NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Come out for an evening of art making ranging from clay building to printmaking and everything in between. There is no fee required, just an interest in art. 18+ Limited space so please phone ahead to register: 780-474-7611. Tuesday evenings from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at 9225 - 118 Avenue.

MUSIC

PIANO LESSONS

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

PIANO LESSONS IN YOUR HOME

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

GUITAR LESSONS

All styles, all ages. Experienced and tailored to you. Call Reg at 780-915-1241.

DROP-IN GROUPS & PROGRAMS

PRIDE CENTRE PROGRAMS & EVENTS

9540 111 Ave, Ph 780-488-3234

YouthSpace (Youth under 25) Drop-In:

Tues to Fri 3-7 pm, Sat 2-7 pm
Youth Movie: Fri 6:30-8:30 pm

Community Drop in: Tues to Fri 1-10 pm, Sat 2-6:30

Seniors Drop-In: Tues and Thurs 1-5pm

TTIQ (Education and support for Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning people at any stage of transition): Second Tues of the month 7:30-9:30 pm

Community Potluck: last Tues of every month, 6-8:30 pm

Drop in Counseling: Mon to Fri 7-9 pm

Cocaine Anonymous: Thurs 7-8 pm

AA Big Book Study: Sat 12-1 pm, open to everyone

Youth Understanding Youth: Sat7-9 pm

Gay Men's HIV Support: Second Mon

of the month 7-9 pm
Free School: Second Sun of the month 11 am-5 pm

AVENUE PLAYGROUP

Tuesdays, 10am to 12pm at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre (9210 118 Ave). Come visit with other parents while the children enjoying playing together. Interested in being a host? It's very easy. You just greet people and make coffee! Call 477-2773.

COMBO WORKOUT

Drop-in Tuesdays, 7:15 to 8:30pm at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre (9210 118 Ave). Stretching, movement and Lotus Qigong for balance, harmony, and to open our hearts. This is a non-strenuous, lift-the-spirits combo which peaks your sense of exploration. Drop-in fee: \$5.00 (Seniors, Students, Unemployed \$3.00). For more info call instructor Astrid Lueth 780-477-0683.

CARROT WRITERS' GROUP

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

MOMS & TOTS

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

SENIORS DROP-IN

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

STITCH AND CHAT

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

SENIORS DROP-IN - NEW TIME!

Thursdays from 2pm to 3pm at the Alberta Ave Community League (9210 118 Ave) Come visit with other neighbourhood seniors, play a game or just visit over coffee and snacks. Then peruse the farmers' market.

BABES IN ARMS

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

SALVATION ARMY

Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (EC3), 11661 95th St, Ph 780-474-4324. Drop-in hours: Monday through Friday 9:00am - 4:30pm and Friday night 7:00pm - 9:30pm

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 780-477-5931.

CRYSTAL KIDS YOUTH CENTRE

8718 118 Ave, Ph 780-479-5283 Youth program (ages 6-17): Mon to Thur 12pm-8pm, Fri 3pm-10pm, and Sat 1-5pm.

BOOK CLUB

Love to read? Come and join us at The Carrot Coffeehouse on Wednesday evenings from 7PM to 9PM for Book Club! Lively discussions, humor, and

enlightenment! We will begin monthly gatherings starting September 9. For more info, call Ann @ 780-752-4867.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CAFE

For those who need to practice their new-found English language skills. Every Saturday morning (starting October 3), 10:00- 11:30 AM at Bethel Chapel, 95 St. @115 Ave. Free child care provided.

ENTERTAINMENT

THE CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEEHOUSE

9351 - 118 Avenue
THURSDAYS: Zoomers (Boomers with Zip!) Open mic 1-4 pm Contact: Ann Jones Ph: 780-752-4867 Email: windsorhouse@shaw.ca

FRIDAYS: Live music, 7:30pm-9:30pm \$5 cover charge

SATURDAYS: Open mic 7:30pm-9:30pm
Music, spoken word, comedy, plus every Saturday great Cinnamon Buns!!!

*The Carrot will be closed Dec 24 to Jan 1 for private functions

SPORTS & REC

PRESCHOOL GYM CLASS

Tired of being cooped up indoors on those cold winter days with an energetic preschooler? Then sign up for this class. It'll burn off some of their energy and preserve your sanity! The class will focus on gross motor activity, cooperative play and building confidence in children.

6 Saturdays, Jan 23 to Mar 6 (no class Feb 13). 3-5 year olds from 10am to 10:45 and 18 months to 3 years from 11am to 11:45. Instructor: Sara Hendricks, Phys.Ed Teacher and mother of three little ones living in Alberta Avenue. Cost: \$30. Call 477-2773 to register.

FREE SWIM FOR ALBERTA AVE COMMUNITY LEAGUE MEMBERS

Sundays from 12pm to 2pm at Eastglen Pool (11410 68 Street).

GIRL GUIDES AND BROWNIES

If you're a girl looking for fun, friendships, and new challenges, Girl Guides of Canada - Norwood District has a spot for you! Sparks (girls aged 5 and 6 or in Kindergarten or Grade 1) meet Mondays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Brownies (girls aged 7 and 8 or in Grades 2 and 3) meet Mondays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Girl Guides (girls aged 9 to 12 or in Grades 4 to 6) meet Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. All groups meet at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 8715 - 118 Ave. For more information, call Jean at 780-469-4487 or Angel at 780-642-0879.

VOLUNTEER

DEEP FREEZE FESTIVAL

Deep Freeze Festival is looking for volunteers for January 9 and 10. Call Judy 780-496-1913

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

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

NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

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

THE CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEEHOUSE

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

THE LEARNING CENTRE

LITERACY ASSOCIATION is seeking volunteer tutors to help adults develop reading, writing and/or math skills. Volunteers participate in group learning, tutor one-to-one, or assist drop-in learners. Skills and Experience: High school level reading, writing and/or math skills. Openness to tutor and learn with adults with various life experiences, including living with homelessness. Two locations: Boyle Street Community Services and Abbottsfield Mall. Contact: Denis Lapierre Coordinator at 780-429-0675 or email: dl.learningcentre@shaw.ca

NOTICES & UPCOMING EVENTS

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-ALONG

Sunday, December 13, 7:00 pm This is a free, family event. All are welcome. Bethel Gospel Chapel, 11461 95 St.

D-GANG

Christmas fundraiser for the Carrot Café with the D-Gang and Friends, Sunday December 13. Doors at 6:30 pm, music from 7-9 pm. 100% of ticket proceeds will be donated to the Carrot Café. Buy tix at the Carrot 9351-118 ave. 780.471.1580

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MOVIE & CRAFTS

Thursday, December 17 from 4pm to 6pm. Bring the kids to enjoy a movie & crafts and go peruse the farmers' market.

JINGLE JAMMIN' CHRISTMAS CAROL EVENT

Friday December 18 from 5 pm-10 pm -- Christmas Caroling on the Ave and Chili at the Carrot.

CHRISTMAS TREES NEEDED FOR DEEP FREEZE

Deep Freeze festival needs your gently used real Christmas trees after you have finished with them. If you can help, please drop your tree off to the Alberta Avenue Community Centre (9210 118 Ave) by the west fence by January 7 2010.

FREE WINTER PLAYGROUND FESTIVAL

Sunday, December 27 from 12pm to 4pm. Family fun in the snow! Come join in the fun, beat the winter blues by celebrating the season with family and enjoying what Edmonton winters have to offer. Join us for a variety of indoor & outdoor activities: snow painting, snowman making, snowshoeing and more.

FARMERS' MARKET

Every Thursday from 2pm to 7pm at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre on 93 St & 118 Ave. Buy fresh veggies, meat, eggs and various artisans goods. Vendors listed at www.albertaave.org/market.

CRUD AVENUE DOG WALKING
Meets at 6:30 pm every Monday at St. Alphonsus Church (118 Ave & 85 St), then walks west towards 95 Street. Contact CRUD at info@crudemonton.org.

EATING MADE EASY: HEALTHY EATING FOR A HEALTHY YOU

Edmonton Meals on Wheels (11111 103 Ave) First Tuesday of the month from Noon to 12:45pm
Monthly discussions about healthy eating with a registered dietician. First Tuesday of the month from Noon to 12:45pm
Nov 3 What's the fuss about fibre?
Dec 1 What's on your menu?
Bring your own lunch or enjoy the meal of the day for only \$2.25. To register, or for more information, please call 780 429-2020

CARROT GIFT CERTIFICATES

Buy your friends an original gift: tickets to Friday Night For Two at the Carrot (evening performance) or gift certificates.

CRUD SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

All CRUD members are invited to attend a special general meeting on Thursday, December 3rd at 7:00pm at The Carrot Community Arts Coffeehouse (9351-118 Ave). The purpose of this meeting is to change a clause in the by-laws.

WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE

Saturday & Sunday, January 16 & 17 at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre (9210 118 Ave). Come learn realistic, self-defense tactics and techniques. The RAD System is dedicated to teaching women concepts and techniques against various types of assaults by utilizing easy, effective and proven self-defense/martial arts techniques. Cost: \$40/person. For more info or to register call 780-477-2773.

CHURCH SERVICES

AVENUE VINEYARD

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

ST. ALPHONSUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

ST ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN

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

SALVATION ARMY

Edmonton Crossroads Community Church (EC3)
11661 95 Street, Ph 780-474-4324
Sunday 3:00 pm and Wednesday 7:00 pm

ST FAITH'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

95 St. @115 Ave, 780-477-3341
Sundays 9:30 AM - Communion; 11:00 AM - Family Bible Hour



Edmonton
Public Library

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

Children

Aboriginal Family Storytime

11:30 a.m. Fridays, October 23, 2009 to May 28, 2010

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.

Graphic Novels and Comics - A Gaming and Book Club for Kids

6:30 p.m. Tuesdays until December 15, 2009

Ages: 10 - 14 years

Call 780-496-7099 to register

A book club for graphic novel/

comic book lovers. Come and join us for gaming and to talk about some of your favorite novels and find new ones to enjoy. Snacks will be provided.

Teens

Teen Gaming

6:30 p.m. Fridays

Ages: 12 - 17 years

Please call 780-496-7099 to register

Come to the library to play some great games!

Adults

Women's Afternoon Out

1 p.m. Wednesdays

Ages: 18 - 99 years

This women's community group comes together every Wednesday to enjoy some crafting and practice their English conversation skills. Come for some fun chats and stitch, knit or even paint! If you have something you're working on, feel free to bring it along.

English Conversation Circle (LACE Program)

10:30 a.m. Saturdays until December 19, 2009

Free of Charge

Drop-In.

Practice your English at the

library. Drop in and join others who also want to speak in English. English Conversation Circle is part of Catholic Social Services' Learning and Community Enrichment (LACE) program. For more information contact Biviana from Catholic Social Services at 780-424-3545.

Cafe Anglais - English Conversation Club for Newcomers

6:30 p.m. Mondays

Call 780-496-7099 to Register

FREE of Charge

Learning English? Join the club at Cafe Anglais where

you can chat in English, meet new friends, and use our vast resources!

Stories from the Heart of the City

1:30 p.m. Thursday, December 17, 2009

Drop-in, Free of Charge

All are Welcome!

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.



BRENDAN VAN ALSTINE SPEAKS TO SUPPORTERS AT HIS CAMPAIGN LAUNCH AS EDMONTON'S FIRST DECLARED CANDIDATE FOR THE NEWLY-FORMED WARD 7. THE EVENT WAS HELD AT ST. FAITH'S CHURCH ON THE EVENING OF NOVEMBER 7.



RAT CREEK WRITERS OLD AND NEW LEARN SOME TIPS FROM EDMONTON JOURNAL EDITOR KAREN UNLAND AT THE FALL WRITER'S WORKSHOP

The Rat Creek Press
 Wishes You and
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CARISMA CHURCH

Invite your family to our Annual Free Christmas Banquet

December 10 - 5:30pm
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 11803 - 86 Street

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 fax: 780.496.8113
 email: ed.gibbons@edmonton.ca

Hello Highlands-Norwood!



On behalf of my staff and myself, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy and safe holiday season, and all the best to you and yours in 2010!



6519 - 112 Avenue
Your MLA, Brian Mason
 Edmonton Highlands-Norwood

www.brianmason.ca ph: 780.414.0682

We look at our streets and see
potential instead of problems.

SAFE, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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- Clyde Harris

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 www.crudedmonton.org



Jingle Jammin' at The Carrot!

The Carrot goes A' Carolling
 Friday, December 18, 5:00 - 10:00pm
 FREE Christmas carolling, food & beverage!

SHOP! Come shop The Carrot this Christmas! We have a great array of gift baskets, jewelry, kids items, pottery and more! Great gift ideas! Shop Local!

2010 Calendars Now on sale!
 Now available, calendars that feature Arts on the Ave Artists!



9351-118 ave www.thecarrot.ca 780-471-1580