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Saying goodbye after forty-four years

Triumphs and legends were created on NHL's best ice



Long-time employees on and off the Coliseum ice shared memories. Left to right: George Waselenchuk, facilities manager at Northlands; Trent Evans, sales; Brian Steele, refrigeration mechanic; Dan Hollohan, carpenter; Henry Stainthorp, retired head ice maker; Rob Hauck, millwright, and Chris Lewis, head ice maker. | Rebecca Lippiatt

KATE WILSON

The seven men reminiscing on the Coliseum ice last month worked together for over 30 years at the former home of the Edmonton Oilers and Edmonton Oil Kings. Memories and laughter flowed.

"The guys cared about each other. It was a great atmosphere," recalled John Provis, Northlands' operations manager. "There was definite pride on the ice and with the record the ice had in the NHL. [Staff] were doing their own stuff, figuring out to improve the ice."

Provis said NHL players considered Northlands Coliseum to have the league's best ice, especially in the '80s. It was always rated in the top three.

"A lot of guys today get called by the NHL. They're recognized," he said.

Henry Stainthorp, retired from Northlands after 40 years, is still asked to make ice for curling nation-

als and for community rinks. He recalled one incident during the arena's first rodeo in the 1970s. The dirt had to be removed for a hockey game, but it had frozen to the ice.

"People in the stands were waiting for Northlands to get the ice prepared for the game. After an hour, they had to go home," recalled Stainthorp. "The media said it was because the horse pee had frozen. That's not true."

Back then, workers started the ice plant manually. It had shut off and the maintenance worker—a rookie—forgot to check.

"He saw the ice melting so he turned it back on full tilt," smiled Stainthorp. "That's what froze the dirt to the ice."

The Coliseum, designed by architectural firm Phillips, Barratt, Hillier, Jones and Partners, opened in 1974. In 1979, the Oilers moved from the defunct World Hockey Association to the NHL, winning the Stanley Cup five times between

1984 and 1990.

Brian Steele, who also makes ice for the Heritage Classic, was 14 when he started as a rink rat at the Edmonton Gardens. By 1987, he was making ice at Oilers games when they were dominating league playoffs.

"For us making the ice for the first time, learning how to drive the Zamboni, you felt the responsibility," said Steele. "Out there by yourself, if a knick was in the ice, you knew it was your doing."

George Waselenchuk, facility manager, remembers starting with Northlands "as a kid" in 1985 when the Oilers were league champions.

"I remember the first time I saw Wayne Gretzky skate on the ice," he grinned. "It was amazing."

The Coliseum also drew musical legends like John Cougar Mellencamp.

Rob Hauck, who worked in various positions at Northlands for nearly 40 years, recalled being in

back of the house during concerts. He said attendants pulled all-nighters to set up the stage.

"The hockey game ended around 10:30, then the building attendants took out the boards, covered the ice, set up the stage. By 8 am it would be set up for the road crew," he said. "The concert crew was out by two or three am, and by eight or nine in the morning we'd have it ready again."

The Oilers' last game at the Coliseum was on April 6, 2016, while the last Canadian Finals Rodeo was in November.

The city takes ownership of the Coliseum on Jan. 1, when it will be permanently closed.

Kate took up journalism while living in northern Alberta and spent the next 20 years covering everything from local politics to community happenings. She lives in Alberta Avenue with her daughter.

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Celebrate responsibly this holiday season

Edmonton has plenty of options to get home safely

BREANN GURNEY

The holidays herald parties, and that brings more instances of impaired driving. With this in mind, Edmonton Police Service (EPS) is preparing for holiday checkpoints, but police encourage drivers who choose to drink to find alternatives to get home.

“There’s no reasonable excuse for [driving impaired],” said Const. Brayden Lawrence.

Uber, cabs, and transit are readily available. Due to high demand during the holidays, it’s best to book designated drivers up to a few days in advance. Prices for designated drivers start at \$20 plus \$1.75 per kilometre with DDSOS, an Edmonton-based designated driver company.

Around the holidays, cabs

and Uber may have longer wait times than normal. Prices for these services vary. For example, uberX charges a minimum \$5 plus time and kilometres traveled, while taxi prices start at \$3.60 plus \$1.76 per kilometre traveled.

Despite alternatives to driving impaired, some people still choose to get behind the wheel. In 2015, Statistics Canada released a census regarding the rate of police-reported impaired driving incidents. Edmonton was the seventh worst city in Canada for impaired driving.

“Risk-taking increases with inebriation,” said Lawrence. “It becomes ‘ah, I think I can do this.’”

While police encourage drivers not to drink at all, 50 mg per 100 ml of blood alcohol level is the provincial limit for those

with a Class 5 driver’s license. At that point, officers can apply provincial license sanctions, such as a three-day license suspension and a three-day vehicle seizure. A blood level of 80 mg per 100 ml is the criminal limit, which means drivers with blood levels of 80 mg per 100 ml and over can face criminal charges, vehicle seizure, and license suspension. Those with a Class 7 driver’s license (a learner’s licence) or a Graduated Driver’s License (GDL) cannot drink at all.

If you suspect someone is driving impaired, report that person. The City of Edmonton’s Curb the Danger program works alongside the community to get impaired drivers off the road. Call 911 to report a suspected impaired driver and the operator will pass that infor-

mation to police, who will try to intercept the vehicle.

Look for drivers who have inconsistent road speed, ignore traffic signals, and have trouble determining where their vehicle is on the road, resulting in swerving or driving too close to the curb.

Last year alone, 911 fielded 9,624 calls for suspected drunk driving, with 35 per cent of intercepted drivers ending up with an impaired driving charge or license suspension. In 2015, EPS officers arrested 1,573 drivers for impaired driving. There were 10 preventable fatalities that year.

Impaired driving charges tie up the courts too, with 40-45 per cent of time spent on that charge.

“During the court process, people are looking long term—

what does your insurance think of that?” said Lawrence.

Penalties can include indefinite loss of license, large fines, and criminal conviction, including jail time.

Lawrence reminds drivers, “If you feel unsafe to get behind the wheel, you have options.”

For more information on designated driving services, visit the Alberta Motor Association’s website: ama.ab.ca/knowledge-base/articles/designated-driver

Breann is a journalism student and intern at Rat Creek Press. She focuses on political issues, multiculturalism, and human rights.



People have plenty of alternatives to driving impaired. | Pixabay

RAT CREEK PRESS ASSOCIATION 9210 118 AVENUE, EDMONTON, AB T5G 0N2 | T: 780.479.6285

ABOUT US

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

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Jessica MacQueen, John Dunn, Nicole Malenczak, Joe Wong, Rob Bernshaw, Aydan Vickruck-Dunnigan, Patricia Dunnigan. The board may be contacted at board@ratcreek.org.

PRODUCTION STAFF

PUBLISHER Karen Mykietka info@ratcreek.org
EDITOR Talea Medynski editor@ratcreek.org
DESIGNER Lorraine Shulba design@ratcreek.org
ADVERTISING ads@ratcreek.org

CONTRIBUTORS

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

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Edmontonians unite over September attack

Communities celebrate unity at Edmonton City Hall

KATE WILSON

While Edmonton's Somali community voiced its rejection of violence in the aftermath of the Sept. 30 knife and vehicle attack, it was also the catalyst for a demonstration of togetherness and inclusion.

Edmontonians responded in kind.

"When the recent incident took place, many Somalis came to me. They were very concerned," Habiba Abdulle, member of the Alberta Somali Community Centre, told a large audience at the Unity Celebration. "But I knew they were going to be okay."

Abdulle's message was part of a public gathering at city hall on Oct. 27 to celebrate unity and diversity. The evening included African and Middle Eastern cuisine, choir performances by Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, and Indigenous dance performances. Edmonton's Safety Summit Committee organized the evening, with Ahmed Abdulkadir, executive director of Ogaden Somali Community of Alberta (OSCAR), co-leading it.

"I'm definitely there to join in, to show solidarity when these events happen," said Amira Shousha, a post-secondary student originally from Egypt. "I came to be an example to our community, to show unity and

respect."

Rayanne Elkhatib, a Palestinian high school student, said attending these events is a positive way to deflate potential escalation of violence.

"I believe it's really important, it develops understanding," said Elkhatib.

At the podium, representatives of the city, provincial and federal governments, police, faith centres, and Edmonton's Somali and Muslim community expressed a common theme: that Edmontonians unite when confronted with an event like the one on Sept. 30.

Our city did not react the same as other cities, emphasized David Eggen, Alberta's Minister of Education.

"In Edmonton we don't tolerate each other. We accept each other and we know each other," he said.

Within hours of the events on Sept. 30, police, politicians, and Somali and Muslim leaders called for solidarity. Abdulkadir said some Muslim women were badgered with threats, such as name calling and blaming.

Abdulkadir said it's natural for people to bond when violence happens, and it's important to make use of that impulse to defuse further violence.

"What we're preaching is it's okay to feel uncomfortable, it's human. All communities, when violence happens, try to come together," said Abdulkadir.

Attendee Nicholas Pybus, who works at the Norwood

Wesleyan Church, said communities can find unity by seeking common ground within the common good.

"There are some standards that can be called the common good," he said. "Helping each other, supporting one another in whatever our walk of life. It's about everyone."

Abdulkadir said one way to deflate potential confrontation is to be aware of your own perspective and listening. This method, he explained, is a direct entry to mutual respect.

"If you are not conscious of what you're saying, it defeats the purpose," stressed Abdulkadir. "But if you're willing to learn, to listen, then we can talk."

Abdulahi Hasan Sharif, the suspect accused of the Sept. 30 attack, is facing multiple charges. A judge has also ordered him to complete psychiatric assessments to determine if he is fit to stand trial and to be held criminally responsible.

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

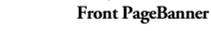


Rayanne Elkhatib (left) a Palestinian student living in Edmonton, attended the Unity Celebration with her friend, Amira Shousha, originally from Egypt. | Kate Wilson



(Left) Peggy Richardson, an elder originally from Kugluktuk, Nunavut, gave a prayer of thanks in Inuinnaqtun at the Unity Celebration. Her daughter Naomi Atatahak is on the right. | Kate Wilson

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Collective kitchens make food affordable

Community members socialize and prepare food together

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Our community loves to cook together.

The newly renovated kitchen at Alberta Avenue Community Centre is already host to the Mennonite Centre's Global Cooking program on Tuesdays, where new immigrants cook dishes from different cultures together, then sit down, socialize, and share a meal. Others in the neighbourhood are also taking advantage of the new kitchen.

"In the last month, we've had three different groups of neighbours come cook together: one group made perogies, another cookies, and the third group did an emergency cooking bee for a local family that had a tragedy," said facility and program manager Karen Mykietka.

She added, "We are working

on getting a regular collective kitchen going as well as cooking workshops and opportunities for neighbours to cook and eat together. If anyone is interested in leading or participating, let us know!"

In November, Alberta Avenue held its first collective kitchen featuring tasty, warming stews and bannock.

Alberta Health Services began to organize once-a-month collective kitchens in 1990 as a way for people to cook together and bring home nutritious meals at an affordable price (\$3-5 per person).

Two collective kitchens are also operating at St. Faith's/St. Stephen Anglican Church. Collective kitchens typically take place in community halls, churches, and schools.

Another collective kitchen began last September at Parkdale

Cromdale Community League.

On a Sunday afternoon in October, 10 people, all with a mission to cook, crowded into the Parkdale Cromdale collective kitchen. Organizer Luisa Rizzi instructed the would-be chefs on the rudiments of the afternoon's cooking activities. Within seconds, piles of brightly coloured ingredients were assigned to create a soup, roasted root vegetables, and two meat dishes.

For some participants, such as Enessa Habib, it was a new experience. "I've moved to Edmonton from Toronto. That city wasn't affordable anymore. I heard about the collective kitchen through Facebook. It's fun to meet new people and get to know the area," she said.

Matthew Surbey, a professional plumber, is another newcomer. "I read about today's

collective kitchen in the *Rat Creek Press*. I signed up online, and here I am," said Surbey. As a single dad with twin sons aged eight, the meals are helpful. "One of my sons likes to cook. The other likes to eat," said Surbey with a smile.

Other cooks, like Kathryn Plante, have been attending collective kitchens for years. A wife and mom with two children under seven years of age, Plante admits she's a fairly good cook who has "run out of ideas." She enjoys cooking new recipes with the others. Even more so, she revels in the social aspect of the monthly afternoon out of the house. "Other than my husband, these are the only adults I see every month, so this is a social event for me."

Cooking, eating, socializing... what more could you want from our neighbourhood

kitchen programs?

Spaces are available in our area's once-a-month collective kitchens.

Constance's writing and editing career spans more than 40 years. She lives in Parkdale-Cromdale.

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Enessa Habib (left) and Matthew Surbey (right), both newcomers, cooked at the Parkdale Cromdale Community League collective kitchen in October. | Constance Brissenden



Parkdale Cromdale Community League Community kitchen organizer Luisa Rizzi inspects a colourful pan of roasted root vegetables. | Constance Brissenden

Randy Boissonnault MP/Député - Edmonton Centre





Edmonton
10235 - 124 Street/rue
Suite/bureau: 103
Edmonton, AB T5N 1P9
Tel: 780-442-1888
Fax: 780-442-1891

Ottawa
House of Commons
Chambre Des Communes
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel: 613-992-4524
Fax: 613-943-0044

Randy.Boissonnault@parl.gc.ca



Festival returns to the Ave for a one-day event

Yule Ave celebrates the holiday season with families in mind

BREANN GURNEY

Yule Ave brings the holidays home for people this December with an emphasis on the values of the season.

The event returns for its sixth year at Alberta Avenue Community Centre on Dec. 16 to bring free fun for the whole family.

“I want people to create Christmas, not to buy it,” said organizer Frank Zotter about the upcoming one-day event.

The annual festival caters to all ages and backgrounds to foster a sense of community for the neighbourhood.

Zotter came up with the idea in 2011 and keeps the festival running because he wants families to experience “the charm that holidays used to have” when he was a child.

Yule Ave shifts the focus of the holidays from waiting in line to buy gifts to bringing families together to make memories they won’t soon forget. Zotter said he believes the holiday season should be about the values of the season, not gifts.

Yule Ave kicks off at noon on the Ave with hot chocolate and a snow village where Santa will hear wishes on his snow throne.

This year, additions to the festival include gingerbread house making, Christmas cartoons, and a Christmas movie. Organizers said they wanted to add indoor activities this year to give people more options and a chance to warm up.

Materials for 50 gingerbread houses will be available and festival goers can build the houses on a first-come-first-serve basis, starting at noon in the Community Centre’s Lutz

room. Expect to spend 15 to 25 minutes decorating a house. Afterwards, take it home to enjoy.

Kirsten Scott, the host of the gingerbread house making station, said she felt it was time to get involved with Yule Ave.

“I have enjoyed making gingerbread houses with my family since I was a teenager and felt it would be an appropriate community event for Yule Ave,” said Scott.

Afterward, participants can watch Christmas movies and cartoons and enjoy free popcorn and beverages inside Alberta Avenue Community Centre lounge from 1 to 6 pm. Cartoons include *Kung Fu Panda*, *Merry Madagascar*, and *Shrek the Halls*, shown at 1 pm, 2 pm and 3 pm. At 4:30 pm, organizers will screen the Christmas movie *Elf*. Space is

limited to 30 people. Should attendance be larger than expected, organizers may screen the films in the community hall gym.

“Christmas movies bring people of all ages together to connect over the common themes of family and giving. They lift our spirits and are nostalgic,” said Karen Mykietka, facility and program manager.

At 6:30 pm, enjoy a chili dinner and cookies at Alberta Avenue Community Centre before the holiday concert starts at 7 pm. The concert, which features five non-traditional acts, welcomes all denominations.

The night will end with Ward 7 Counc. Tony Caterina lighting the Giving Tree in front of Alberta Avenue Community Centre at 8:30 pm.

A meaningful send-off, the Giving Tree is a symbol of the generosity of the season and acts as a station for donations from the community to be passed on to those in need. The Giving Tree is available for anyone who needs winter clothes.

For more information, visit YuleAve.com.

Breann is a journalism student and intern at Rat Creek Press. She focuses on political issues, multiculturalism, and human rights.

YULE AVE

Dec 16, noon to 8:30 pm

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Neighbourhood children enjoy a wagon ride with Santa while experiencing the spirit of the holidays at Yule Ave. | Frank Zotter

happy holidays

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EDITORIAL

Remember your community concerns

Following up on issues identified during the municipal election

TAMIE PERRYMENT

The municipal election has come and gone, but we still have the lingering issues identified during the campaign.

These issues are important to community members and come up during an election for good reasons. It's important we don't forget about these issues. After all, we have an opportunity to keep advocating for our concerns and ensure city council and public school trustees find solutions.

The election became personal for me when I ran for public school board trustee in Ward D. I became more aware of the issues affecting trustees, my ward, and the city. During the municipal election campaign, the issues I heard people mention most were infill housing, problem properties, LRT, bike lanes, and Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) groups.

Concerns raised related to infill were regulations, more

public consultations, and lot-splitting. Many residents told me infill housing has affected them negatively in Ward D. However, when campaigning in other areas, I saw some very suitable infill.

Problem properties are a big concern in Parkdale, and no matter whether that property is next door or down the street, it is difficult to ignore.

Transit, LRT and bike lanes came up repeatedly in the news, identifying issues such as rider cost, usage, inconvenience, and budget costs.

The GSA groups and policy became a hot issue with school board trustees and an even bigger issue when provincial politics and the United Conservative Party (UCP) leadership race politicized it.

Some issues get more news coverage and attention than others do. But if an issue is important to you, speak up. If we do not continue to voice our concerns about important issues, they will not get the

kind of attention and strength in numbers they need to make change happen.

Here are some things you can do to ensure city councillors or school trustees hear your concerns.

Contact your councillor's office and let them know what you think about the issues important to you. It's a two-way street: your councillor may want to hear from you, so ask questions and solicit information. Be inquisitive about how city council is dealing with issues. For example, ask about how city processes work, how to speak to council, or what resources are available for dealing with problem properties. If they don't know, ask them to find out and call you back. If you wish to approach things in a less personal way, email your city councillor or trustee with your concerns. Always ask for him or her to get back to you.

Become familiar with the City of Edmonton website, especially the city government

page and council and committee meetings. Agendas, minutes and administrative reports are available. Attend a committee meeting and become a familiar face at council. All committee and council meetings are video recorded and you can even watch it online.

Regularly visit the public or Catholic school website. The public school website contains a lot of information on agendas, minutes, motions, policies, budgets, and the Alberta School Act. You can also watch board meetings online or attend a board meeting.

Talk to your community league and see if they have a civics committee to deal with issues affecting you. I belong to Parkdale Cromdale Community League and chair the Neighbourhood Development Committee (NDC). Our committee has become familiar with community issues such as problem properties, infill, and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARP).

Attend city-hosted meet-

ings asking for citizen input on certain issues, or sign up to the city's Edmonton Insight Community, an online panel where people can give feedback on a variety of issues every month.

Lastly, record the dates, times, and details of your calls and conversations. Take pictures and document it with the date. This evidence can be a valuable resource when following up later.

Let's not wait for another election before we collectively tell city council or trustees what is important in our community. Let's do it now.

Tamie has been a Parkdale resident for 24 years, has advocated for social justice for over 30 years, and is a director for the Neighbourhood Development Committee (NDC) on the Parkdale Cromdale Community League (PCCL) Board. She lives with her partner Dean, her three dogs and cats, and numerous fish tanks.



Tamie ran for the public school trustee in Ward D. | Kate Wilson

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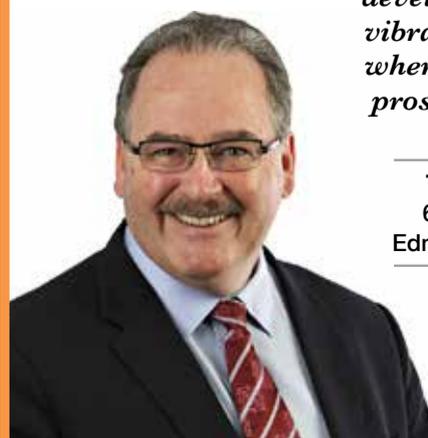
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Do your homework before renting a property

Investigating could save you grief in the long run

MIMI WILLIAMS

Last spring, I signed a lease to move into what I thought was a beautiful home, blissfully unaware of the nightmare that was about to unfold. Looking back, I have some tips to share on how others might avoid unintentionally placing themselves in a precarious housing situation.

My first red flag was before we moved in, when I posted a picture of a beautiful feature of the house and the landlord asked that I not post pictures of the house on social media. My second red flag was when, upon moving in, I discovered that feature clad in construction materials because of a building code problem. I told him his solution wasn't acceptable to me esthetically, sourced out a very affordable fix, and offered to take it off my rent for three months. When he told me he couldn't afford that and asked me to do it over a longer period,

the third red flag appeared. I was paying him a hundred more in rent than originally advertised and he couldn't afford to fix a building code violation?

Meanwhile, although the landlord had told the public health inspector he was selling the house, she drove by it regularly to ensure he kept his word. Soon after we moved in, the public health inspector arrived, inspected the house, and issued an order for repair.

There were numerous problems with the house, ranging from plumbing to heating. The landlord didn't address most of these problems, so the house failed the follow-up inspection. We moved out at the end of October.

I've learned a great deal from this experience.

First of all, you can investigate a potential rental property through the Alberta Health Services website. Under the Environmental Public Health Services Program, inspectors can inspect public places, including

housing, order that any dangerous conditions be repaired, or even declare a property unfit for habitation. Orders are posted on www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.

Landlords are required by law to keep the premises clean and in good repair. Minimum housing and health standards include a place to prepare meals, hot and cold running water, and a working fridge and stove. Washrooms must have a sink with hot and cold running water, a working toilet, and a bathtub or shower. All housing must have working smoke alarms, bedroom windows large enough to be used as a fire escape, and doors and windows that can be locked securely from both inside and outside. The landlord must ensure the home has working heat, plumbing, sewage, and electricity, although it may be the tenant's responsibility to pay for electricity.

If a property fails to meet these standards, keep looking. At the very least, do not

sign a lease or hand over any money without a commitment in writing from the landlord that the repairs will be made before you move in. If you are already a tenant and any of the above conditions are not being met, ask your landlord to make the repairs. If a reasonable amount of time passes before the problems are addressed or if the landlord refuses to address them, contact Alberta Health Services.

The City of Edmonton requires landlords to have a business license to operate rental accommodations. I would suggest that this be a very good condition to add to any lease you sign. A license isn't any guarantee that your landlord will be good, but it means they know about their legal responsibilities.

The Residential Tenancies Act makes it mandatory for landlords and tenants to complete a move-in and move-out inspection report. If your landlord doesn't do this, do

one yourself. Take pictures of every room and the exterior of the house before you move in. Make notes of any areas that need repair and keep copies of messages to your landlord and their response. Nobody ever wants to end up in court or at a Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolutions Service hearing, but if you find yourself there, the more documentation you've got, the better.

If I am ever in the market for a rental property again, I'm going to ask the landlord for references. Previous tenants can attest to whether or not the landlord is responsible and maintains the property. Landlords get to ask tenants for references and I see no reason why the reverse shouldn't be true.

Mimi is a writer who first moved to the Alberta Avenue area over 20 years ago. She has participated in a number of revitalization initiatives and continues to promote the Ave as one of the best areas to live, work and play in Edmonton.



Investigating a rental property before moving in may save you a lot of problems. | Pixabay

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Decorating affordably for the holidays

Great tips to make your home look fantastic

KEVIN WONG & STEVEN TOWNSEND

For many people, the holiday season can put a strain on the old budget. So, if like us, you want to keep costs down and still have your home looking fabulous for when guests arrive, here are a few tips.

Have a plan and a budget from the start, otherwise things can get out of hand; trust us on this. Look for inspiration wherever you can: magazines, your friend's homes, or online. This will help you have an idea of what you're looking for once you start shopping. Make a list. If you don't have one, you may be enticed by all the pretty lights and forget what you came for in the first place.

Be thrifty and don't wait until the last minute. Think about what you are getting and where you are shopping in advance. If you are looking for brand new decorations, buy them right after Christmas. Stores clear their holiday décor out with savings of 50 to 75 per cent, sometimes even more. So, that means either you save some money, or you end up getting three times as much as you planned. Garage sale and thrift stores are also good for awesome Christmas vintage finds. We bought about 70 per cent of our Christmas decorations and lights second hand, and they look great. Plus, there's not much a can of matte gold spray paint can't bring to life.

Aside from shopping smart,

a little creativity goes far. A fresh Christmas tree could cost you anywhere from \$40 to over \$100 in box stores. Artificial trees cost even more. But you can make a Christmas tree to fit your house and budget out of almost anything. We found a few Christmas tree alternatives from the great Internet for your inspirations.

Make a tree stacked out of books, perfect for a bookworm. Imagine adding some twinkling string lights to a tree made from your favourite books. Now, if you are like us, all you need is a cup of warm tea or what Steven calls "a special cup of eggnog", a comfy couch, and maybe some reading glasses, too.

What about turning the *Rat Creek Press* into a Christmas

tree? (Obviously, we expect, again EXPECT you to read all the great articles first!) Make this tree out of rolled-up newspapers, forming tiers that are supported by a wooden dowel in a flower pot. Find a dowel or branch, a flower pot, a bag of sand, a can of matte gold spray paint, and a hot glue gun or other adhesive. We challenge you to do a bit of reverse engineering to figure out how to put this tree together. Hint: start from the bottom tier first, or the top tier for a fashionable upside-down tree.

For those good at tying knots and with plenty of branches available, try a hanging tree. Cut branches starting from small lengths and gradually getting longer. Arrange the branches in

the shape of a triangle. Then, tie the branches together vertically so you can hang the tree on a wall or door. Adorn with your favourite decorations or spice it up with dried flowers and fresh-cut greens. This might be the most space-saving DIY Christmas tree you can make. Make sure to hang it high enough so your kids or pets do not using your beautiful tree as a ladder.

Have fun decorating!

Kevin is a self-proclaimed foodie with a very punny sense of humour, who will possibly be your next best friend. Steven is an Edmonton native, community organizer, and small business owner.



Writers Steven Townsend and Kevin Wong got about 70 per cent of their decorations second hand. | Kevin Wong

Christmas encourages the spirit of sharing

An African immigrant contemplates Christmas traditions

NADINE UWIMANA

Christmas is celebrated around the world in many different ways. Now that I've been in Canada for four Christmases, I understand Christmas as a good spirit that affects everyone.

I am a Rwandese woman, an immigrant who is enjoying every holiday in Canada. Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day are fairly new to me, but when it comes to Christmas, my home country and Canada share some traditions.

In Rwanda, Christians celebrate Jesus' birth by going to church in the morning. After church, we eat with family and friends. There is no special dish for Christmas. Every family cooks their favourite food. Mine was always matoko, a cooked green banana. We ate it with fried rice and chicken. This was a special meal for my family.

We don't go around singing Christmas carols like some people do here, but we do

have one unique custom. In Rwanda, at noon on Christmas Day, everybody listens to the radio waiting to hear baby Jesus cry. Every radio station plays a baby's voice crying and relates it to baby Jesus, who was born that day.

My first Christmas in Canada, I was staying with a Canadian family. I was excited to see how another culture celebrated Christmas.

First, we woke up and opened presents under the tree. Then we had breakfast together. In Rwanda, we don't give gifts on Christmas Day. I enjoyed my first Christmas gifts in Canada immensely!

In terms of celebrating Christmas in other African

countries, I quizzed a classmate at Concordia University of Edmonton. Thoriso Mahlatsi is a second-year international stu-



African countries like Rwanda or South Africa celebrate Christmas in similar ways to Canada. | Constance Brissenden

dent from South Africa, where Christmas traditions are not that different from Canada or Rwanda.

"There are no special dishes that we cook for Christmas in South Africa," Thoriso shared. "In my family, we celebrate in a

different family home each year. First it may take place at my family, next at my uncle's, and then at my grandparents. The weather in December is sunny, and we all celebrate together."

This year, Thoriso may stay in Canada for the first time. "I'm not sure if I am going home this December. I may celebrate it with my dad's friends here in Canada. It will be another good adventure for me."

Talking to Thoriso, I realized some African countries have a similar way of celebrating Christmas. The way Thoriso described South Africa sounded

like Rwanda.

Last year, I went to see the play *A Christmas Carol* at the Citadel Theatre with a friend. For many in the city, seeing this play is a tradition with its story of Scrooge, a greedy man who is transformed into a good man through the power of Christmas.

December is a special month because of Christmas. People give gifts to each other and share meals. I see kindness everywhere. Why do we have to wait for Christmas to be kind to others? I sense the spirit of love, generosity, and kindness. I wish we could live Christmas every day.

Merry Christmas to you and your family. Please make it a December to remember.

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

Protecting your pets during the winter

Cold weather affects animals just as much as people

MARI SASANO

When winter sets in, we prepare to keep ourselves warm, but we should also do the same for our pets.

“One of the misconceptions is that we see these fluffy fur coats and we assume they keep them warm, but when the temperatures falls, especially when they get wet, they’re susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite,” said Kylie Adams, coordinator of communications and marketing at the Edmonton Humane Society (EHS).

She recommends keeping your cats indoors if you can, while limiting outdoor time for dogs based on weather conditions and the size and coat length of the animal.

“There are signs to look for, including shivering, picking up their paws, or biting and licking at paws—there is no fur on them—and refusing to move and play. And with some animals, consider boots and coats,

if they’re comfortable with them.” If you suspect frostbite or hypothermia, call your vet.

Outdoor dogs should have a properly insulated shelter with straw or hay (not blankets) as bedding. If you see an owned pet without shelter or left in a car, call the EHS’s Animal Protection department at 780.491.3517.

The City of Edmonton can also help lost or stray animals.

“Call 311 and an officer will come and pick it up, or alternatively, take it to a vet to see if they have a microchip. If the info is up to date, they’ll return the animal,” said Tanya Laughren, community relations advisor at the Animal Care and Control Centre. Officers only pick up dogs, but will pick up cats in an Animal Control borrowed trap, which is a humane trap for abandoned or feral animals.

If you find a lost pet, try to keep it warm, either by bringing it inside or into a shelter like a garage or kennel. You

can never be sure if an animal is friendly or not, so if you have your own pets, keep the stray in a room by itself. Provide fresh water, but Laughren recommends not feeding the animal, since it might have allergies or sensitivities.

Take injured animals to Guardian Veterinary Centre at 5620 99 Street (call 780.436.5880), where they’ll be examined and cared for, otherwise the Animal Control officer will take it to their facility.

“Our vets and behaviour team assess each animal. They each get their own kennel space, bedding, enrichment activities, food, and water. They’re taken for walks, there’s a treadmill, heated floor, and spa music. The animals relax and they know they’re in good hands. And we can do surgeries on site for emergencies at the vet’s discretion.”

If Animal Control can’t trace an owner from tags, tattoos, or microchip, they will post a photo on their web page,

edmonton.ca/pets, and wait for an owner to claim it. Animals are held for 10 days if there’s ID, or three days if there’s no ID. Unclaimed animals go to the EHS or to a rescue.

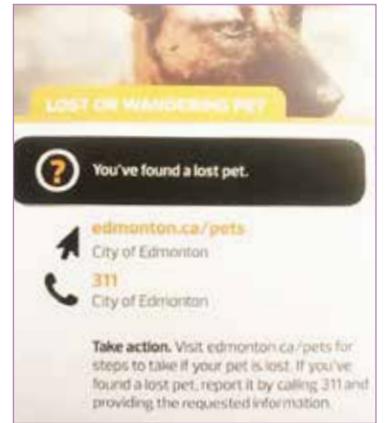
It’s important to have ID on your pet with current pet licensing or microchip company information, and to make sure they’re secure in your yard when they’re outside.

Laughren suggests walking the back fence line in your backyard to ensure the fence is in good condition. The ground can shift in cold weather or a strong wind can damage a fence.

Although it’s tempting to “rescue” a lost animal, a pet needs to be reunited with its family whenever possible.

“It’s important to note that it’s illegal to keep or rehome an animal. Animals get out all the time, and you should try not to judge.”

Mari is a writer and civil servant.



OWNED PETS WITHOUT SHELTER OR IN A CAR:
Edmonton Humane Society's Animal Protection department:
780.491.3517

INJURED PETS
Guardian Veterinary Centre 5620 99 Street (call 780.436.5880)



A neighbourhood cat enjoys the fall weather, but in the winter pet owners should try to keep cats inside. | Talea Medynski

Cycling with confidence throughout the year

Important tips to prepare for cycling during the winter

STEPHEN STRAND

Cycling in the winter may seem precarious and even dangerous, but with proper precautions, it can be rewarding, fun, and a simple way to get around town.

“The most important items for winter bicycles are good tires, fenders, and lights,” said Eric Grant, an Alberta Avenue resident and year-round cyclist. “Keeping the chain oiled and making sure the brakes are working well are the most important maintenance issues.”

Grant said although it’s possible to ride safely on ice and snow without specialty tires, “I really like having studded tires, because it allows me to stop quickly with more confidence.” He suggests going slow at first and avoiding major roads if possible.

Warm and visible clothing

is also important. “A brightly coloured and reflective outer shell is a good idea for staying visible. The best way to stay warm is lots of layers.” He uses fleece and wool.

Most bicycle shops carry the necessary gear for winter cycling, including BikeWorks, a fully equipped and volunteer-run workshop. To help people save money, BikeWorks also offers programs on preparing for winter biking, such as a tire studding course.

“We have all the tools (including specialty bicycle tools) needed to repair and maintain your bicycle, and mechanics to teach you how to do it,” said Molly Turnbull, project coordinator with the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters Society (EBC). They have an expansive selection of new and used parts and bicycles available for

purchase.

Turnbull said bicycle maintenance is crucial.

“Winter cycling is notorious for being hard on your bike. So that your components don’t wear quickly, it’d be best if you regularly cleaned your drivetrain [the parts that push or pull your bike] at the very least,” explained Turnbull.

She suggested installing fenders and extensions to your fenders so slush from the front tire isn’t thrown into the drivetrain. “Taking care of your bike can save you a lot of money in the long run. Prepare to spend \$20-\$50 for cleaning and lubricating your drivetrain.”

Turnbull also advised wiping down a steel-framed bike if there are any chips in the paint.

Road safety is especially important.

Coreen Shewfelt, BikeWorks’

manager, said, “Don’t be afraid to take the whole lane to stay safe!”

But if the road is especially slick, such as when there is freezing rain, try to stay out of car lanes and stick to separated infrastructure, or even the sidewalk if there are no other options.

“When it comes to icy conditions, try to avoid braking and turning at the same time, as well as taking inclines at an oblique angle. If you see an icy spot or curve coming up, slow down before the path becomes treacherous,” explained Shewfelt. If you feel yourself slip, resist the urge to use the brakes. Keep pedalling, because you can often recover before you fall.

Because of the longer nights, “lights are also essential for winter cyclists, and adding reflective material to bikes or

clothing isn’t a bad idea either,” said Shewfelt.

While it is important keep feet and hands warm, beginners tend to overdress. “If your ride is long enough to break a sweat, you will fare better if you feel a bit brisk when you start, before you start moving,” said Shewfelt.

So, why ride your bicycle in the winter?

“You accomplish something, you get the blood pumping, and you’re more engaged in the beauty of winter,” said Turnbull.

Visit ratcreek.org for more information.

Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood with a bag covered in pins and filled with books and notepads.

City resources help vulnerable individuals

Who to call if you see someone publicly intoxicated

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Winter is a chilly time to be intoxicated in public, with the city and season bringing unique dangers.

Const. Cam Buffalo, a member of one of Edmonton Police Service's northwest division's beat teams, said people who are intoxicated outdoors could catch hypothermia.

"Alcohol thins out your blood, so you think you're warmer than you are," said Buffalo.

The sun sets sooner, and if someone is wearing dark-coloured clothing, drivers may not see them. Telltale signs of intoxication include someone who can barely stand, who is carrying alcohol, or who is stumbling into traffic.

At this point, call the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team, the police, or 911.

REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities runs the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team, a partnership between several local resources. The team provides crisis intervention services for people who are publicly intoxicated, for people with a non-emergency crisis, or if there is a possible safety concern.

"We're not a frontline," said Lindsay Daniller, REACH's director of community initiatives and strategic development. "The idea is to call 211 if you see someone in distress."

With five Crisis Diversion teams on the streets, they're kept busy. Daniller said the team was expecting to respond to 9,000 calls for service this year, but have responded to over 11,000 crisis events. The teams have responded to over 2,000 events

in October and November this year alone. They often see the same people.

The crisis team helps address non-emergency issues, freeing up time for police.

"Police can then attend to real crimes and what needs real police resources," said Daniller. "We've linked the crisis team with police around their protocols."

The team generally takes intoxicated individuals to shelters (like Hope Mission or the George Spady Society) to sober up and access workers, who can connect them to programs or other resources.

"Sometimes we'll take people to hospitals if there's real distress," said Daniller.

Buffalo added, "If they're banned from both, we'll watch them until they're sober."

If you see someone you think is publicly intoxicated or in distress, call 211. "Distress could mean someone's outside, not sufficiently dressed, or upset. They might have mental health issues or be publicly intoxicated."

When you call 211, prepare to answer some questions, then press three and speak with an operator, who may have more questions.

The crisis team is a great resource, but police are also available. Buffalo said to call the police if there's anything they should know about. He explained 211 can't always respond to the situation immediately.

While it may be tempting to help an intoxicated individual, remember not to put yourself in any danger.

"If you're comfortable intervening, get that person out of traffic," said Buffalo, giving an

example. "For the most part, leave it to us."

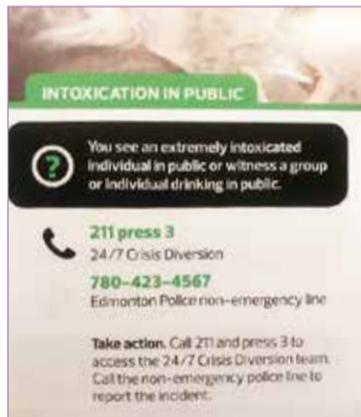
The fine for public intoxication is \$115. "We tend to save those for extra-belligerent drunks," said Buffalo.

And of course, if there's an emergency, call 911.

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



Resources are available if you see someone intoxicated in public. | Pixabay



your eastwood news



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Eastwood Community League

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ewcl@shaw.ca

eastwoodcommunity.org

Public and family ice skating: open soon!

Our rink will be open soon for public and family skating. Check our Facebook page and eastwoodcommunity.org for an announcement with details on when the ice is ready and open!

Seeking extra hands

Community league board members are volunteers dedicated to helping improve our neighbourhood. But we can only do so much. If you have experience in accounting, event planning, or have time to spare, please lend us your support as a board member.

We are also hiring for a paid position as a facilities manager. Contact us for more information if you are interested.

Chili and carolling on the Ave

We're partnering with Arts on the Ave to bring yuletide cheer.

Join us at the Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave) on Dec. 15 at 6 pm. Chili will be served at 6:15 pm. Carolling goes from 7-8 pm., so bundle up. The event is free. If possible, let us know if you're coming ahead of time by phoning us, emailing us, or visiting us.

Next general monthly meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 6, from 7-9 pm. Join us, voice any concerns, and represent your community.

Volunteer & Notices

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VOLUNTEER FOR DEEP FREEZE

Jan. 8-16. Volunteer for one of the coolest winter celebrations. Feed the community, build our yurt, or meet and greet artists—the choice is yours! deepfreezeefest.ca/volunteer or call 780.471.1580.

CASINO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Alberta Avenue Community League for Feb 2 & 3 at the Grand Villa Casino downtown. Sign up: secretary@albertaave.org or 780.477.2773.

COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Interested in collective kitchens, cooking workshops, community dinners or other kitchen programming? Let us know! info@albertaave.org or 780.477.2773.

DEEP FREEZER RACES & STREET HOCKEY

Seeking teams of 5 for Deep Freezer race. Enter online at deepfreezeefest.ca/deepfreezer-races/. Seeking teams of 4-7 players for street hockey. Players must be 18+ and sign a waiver. Apply at deepfreezeefest.ca/street-hockey/.

SEEKING RINK HOSTS

Looking for people on Saturday & Sunday afternoons to supervise and assist skaters, monitor a campfire, make hot chocolate, and serve snacks. info@albertaave.org

SHOES/BOOTS FOR CHARITY

Donate shoes or boots to Gino at Fast Shoe Repair and he will clean, polish and fix them for charity. 8652 118 Avenue, 780.477.2876

BAKE OR DECORATE

Enter our Tourtière Baking Contest! Apply before Jan. 11: deepfreezeefest.ca/tourtiere/. Or, enter our Lamppost Cozy Challenge. Apply before Dec. 23: deepfreezeefest.ca/lamppost-cozy-challenge/.

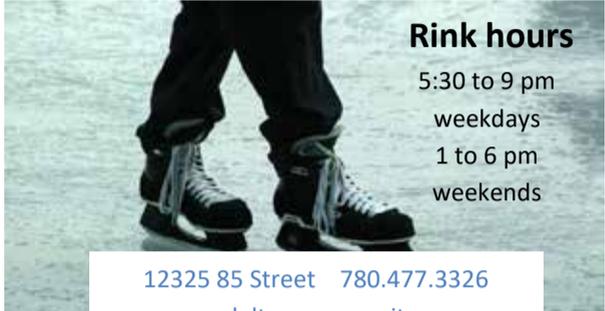
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Join our line up of performers or sell your art or wares in our gallery or artisan market. More: deepfreezeefest.ca/apply.

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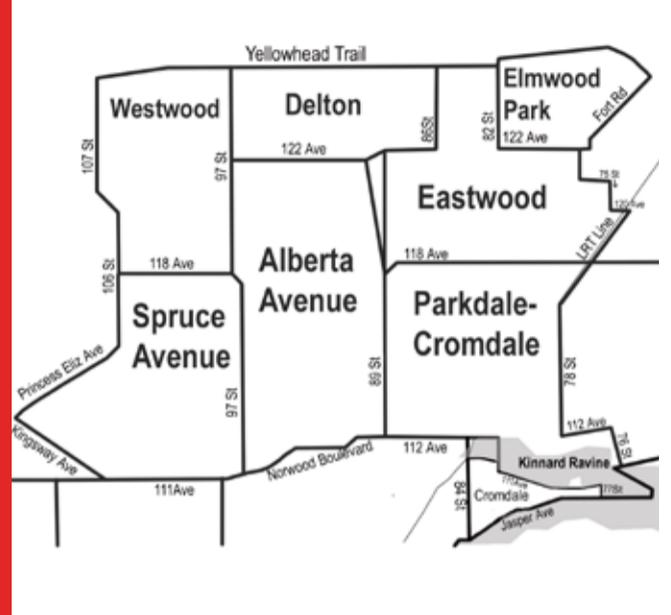
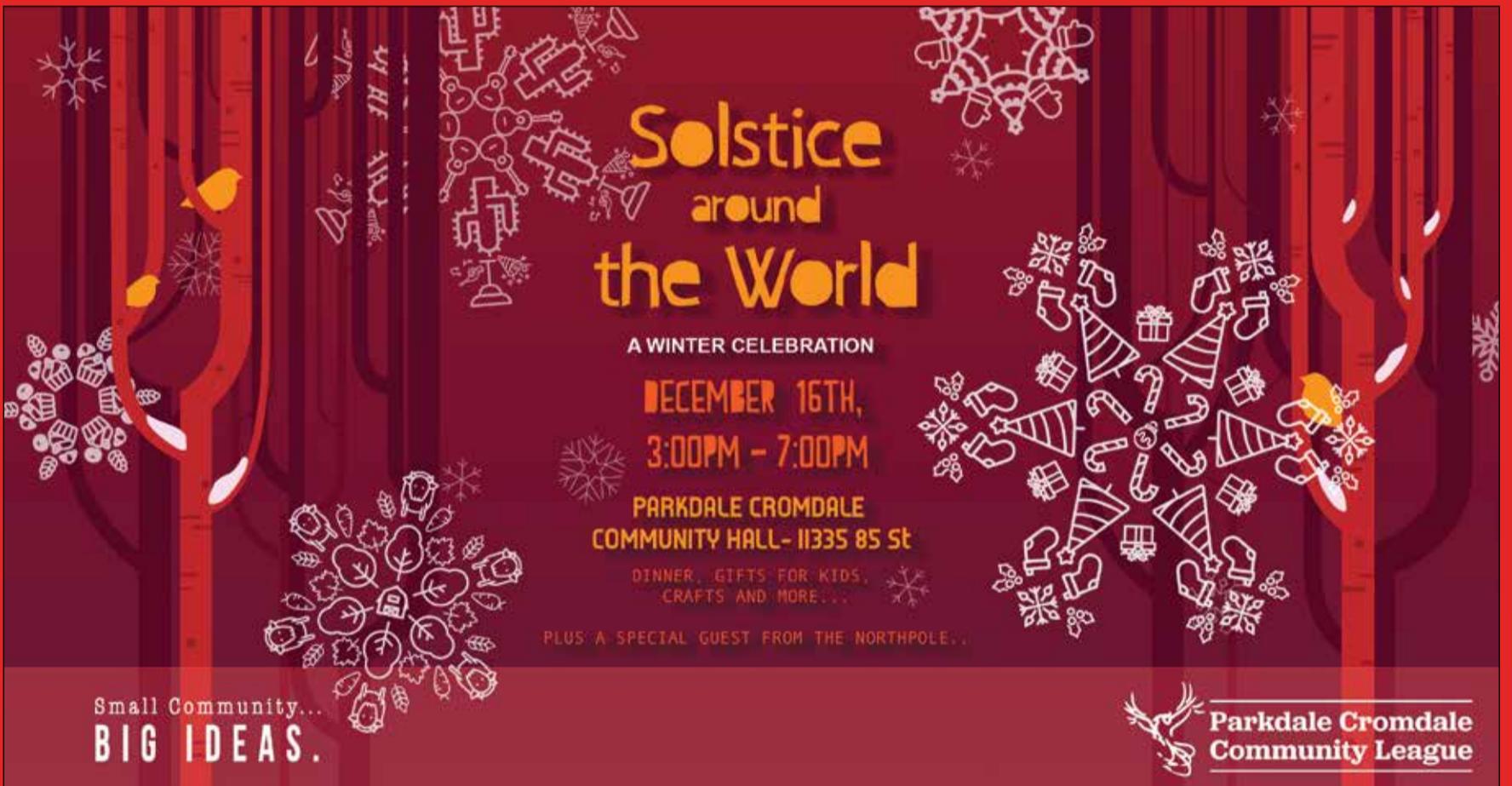


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ELMWOOD PARK COMMUNITY LEAGUE
12505 75 St | epcl@shawbiz.ca | elmwoodparkcommunity.org

A new board was elected in September. Check our Facebook page for details and updates.

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Medical marijuana has numerous benefits

Forum focused on medical cannabis with seniors in mind

RUSTI LEHAY

Seniors curious about medical marijuana attended a packed forum predominantly about the drug at the Central Lions Seniors Association on Nov. 20.

Dr. Mark H. Kimmins, who started as a colorectal surgeon, became an advocate for medical marijuana when patients returned their painkillers. Knowing too many people die from opiate addiction, Kimmins became interested what else marijuana can help and found a lot.

Health Canada has concluded there is substantial evidence to support the use of medical cannabis for several symptoms or conditions including: chronic pain, nausea and vomiting, motor disorders, epilepsy, insomnia, anorexia, fibromyalgia, Crohn's disease, headache and migraine, osteoarthritis, psychiatric disorders, and much more.

Most questioners wanted to hear how medical marijuana may reverse or prevent dementia.

Kimmins replied, "Ongoing research indicates the potential

to reverse, prevent, and/or treat dementia and Alzheimer's." One audience member said, "Hurry up." The audience laughed as Kimmins responded, "We are all on the same conveyor belt. We just get off at different times."

Bill Hallam, another speaker, was given a death sentence in 2000. Doctors advised him to seek palliative care. Several friends suggested marijuana.

"The prescribed drugs caused painful swelling of my eyes, joints, hands and intense nausea," said Hallam. Stealing his desire to eat also stole his vitality. "I wasn't the type of guy to wake up and smoke a joint. I became that guy." After a joint, he could eat, then feel great until evening. "That diagnosis slammed me into the right here, right now moment. At night, I smoked a joint to relieve anxiety."

In 2016, Hallam was one of the 13,000 Canadians who sued the Canadian government, winning the right to grow their own medical cannabis.

Recreational cannabis and medicinal cannabis products have vastly different profiles. The latter will continue to be

distributed through a traditional medical model, eventually becoming available in pharmacies. Currently, medical marijuana may be purchased only through licensed providers, although patients with prescriptions may grow their own.

The cannabis plant contains approximately 100 chemicals called phytocannabinoids. Many of these compounds have potential therapeutic benefits while only one of these compounds (THC) is psychoactive.

At this point, licensed producers can only sell dried cannabis and edible oil extract products. Vapourizers, the recommended way to use dried medical marijuana, heats the drug to release the medical components and the patient inhales the vapour. This method is efficient and has no smoke or carcinogens.

Kimmins recommends starting with the lowest possible dosage, increasing slowly to the most beneficial level. But cookie fiends beware. One cookie with cannabis will not produce any immediate effect, but eating 20 may result in excessive vomiting.

Hallam says growing the challenging plant "is part of my therapy." A former candy-maker,

he makes cannabis candies, cookies, or brownies. "I make some batches with cannabis, some without so I can avoid the delayed cumulative effect if I want to eat a whole tray. I also use a vaporizer because my doctor says smoking it is risky."

Kimmins said there have been no reports of overdoses. According to Kimmins, marijuana doesn't target our vital systems and our bodies also have what is called an Endocannabinoid System. This system's receptors bind to our body's natural compounds as well as to the cannabis plant.

"Reports of ibuprofen, coffee, even water overdoses exist. There is no such report on medical cannabis. One monkey received 150,000 times the recommended dosage."

The monkey returned to normal behaviour after staring at a wall for several hours.

Expect to pay \$5-15 per gram of medical marijuana, although compassionate pricing is available from most licensed producers. Kimmins said prices may fall as the industry becomes more established and research progresses.

Recreational marijuana will

be legal on July 1, 2018.

A member of the Professional Writers Association of Canada since 2003, Rusti has been writing professionally since 1999. Her favourite word activity is immersion editing with memoir writers.

MORE INFORMATION

**Cannabis Revealed by Dr. Bonnie Goldstein
Marijuana Gateway to Health by Clint Warner
Cannabis in Medical Practice by Mary Lynn Mathre**

naturalhealthservices.ca/events for free education seminars.

The Cannabis Show available at [YouTube.com/CannabisShow](https://www.youtube.com/CannabisShow)

1.844.262.0942 Natural Health Services

www.naturalhealthservices.ca
ACMPR to grow your own medical cannabis
patientcare@naturalhealthservices.ca



Medical marijuana can help with many health conditions. | Rusti Leahay



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Seniors want to stay in their communities

Diverse communities allow people to age in place

KATE WILSON

When it comes to housing, today's seniors want choice.

"They don't want one size fits all, because lifestyles are so varied," said Maxine Mcleod, an occupational therapist. "Seniors want to have choices to reflect what they value."

As a therapist, Mcleod has seen how some retirees plan ahead for a move that brings them closer to their children and grandchildren.

"Then there are others who say 'I'm going to die in my own house'," said Mcleod.

A recent Age Friendly Edmonton report notes 82 per cent of seniors want to stay in their own home as they age. It projects the population of people aged 55-64 will more than double over the next 30 years. Seniors over 80 could increase as much as 266 per cent.

It's a global trend, and in 2010 the World Health Organization addressed the phenomenon with its Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. It commits members to incorporate senior-friendly design into their planning. Edmonton

became a member that year.

Having senior-friendly housing and services throughout communities benefits more than seniors, said Mcleod.

"For seniors, diversity means having the supports to solve problems while they're still minor, as opposed to waiting until a crisis happens," she said. "For the community, diversity ensures all perspectives are encountered."

Maggie Kellar, a resident of Avenwood Corner (seniors apartment), has lived in Alberta Avenue for 20 years. She said it's where she wants to stay.

"Everything's so close: the drug store, bakery," Kellar said. "There's always people walking by. This is my home."

Gloria Koshman, another resident, said she left for a year but came back.

"I moved in with a friend, but I came back. I wanted a place of my own," Koshman said. "Now it's my home."

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), seniors' housing vacancies in Edmonton shrank last year from 6.3 per cent in 2015 to 4.2 per cent last year. That means waiting lists. The Greater Edmonton Foundation reports a two year

wait list for its seniors' lodges.

And more people are retiring here. Nearly 40 per cent of Alberta retirement spaces were in Edmonton, compared to 33 per cent in Calgary, reported CMHC.

As aging in place takes front stage, organizations and developers are tackling the issue with innovative home design and urban planning.

Alternatives to ageing in your own community

Home For Life™—a partnership of the city, Age Friendly Edmonton and Alberta Health Services—promotes building new homes that can accommodate a family throughout their lifespan.

"We're trying to increase the supply of housing in Edmonton that people can continue to live in as they approach old age or in case of an accident or illness," said Ron Wickman, an architect and one of the founders of Home For Life (HFL).

Those homes are designed with wider doorways and hallways, for example, and larger turning areas in the kitchen and bathroom. City councillor Andrew Knack, whose portfolio includes seniors, said designing a home under HFL guidelines is a win-win.

"It allows neighbours who may have mobility challenges to come over for a community potluck. If you design a city that works for those who are older, it will work for everyone," Knack said.

Wickman is working with developers to get one of these homes built. Another developer just completed an HFL house in King Edward Park.

Another option is garage suites. Mick Graham, owner of Singletree Builders, noted family members such as aging parents occupy up to 70 per cent of garage suites.

"They're ideal for someone who's in a change of life and wants to move closer to family and still have some independence," Graham said.

Nearly 80 of these suites were built in the city over the past two years.

Another emerging senior-friendly alternative is the pocket neighbourhood: typically smaller houses with shared green space, a visitor suite, and a common house.

"It's a kind of co-housing development. Residents own their own unit but also own a share of the common area," explained Graham, who is trying to put together his

first pocket neighbourhood in Edmonton.

The city doesn't have zoning for this kind of development, but it can be done through a direct control zone, said Graham.

What they do is create community.

"It makes sense on a whole lot of levels," said Graham, adding they're also a safety net. "They appeal to a mix of ages, young families just starting out as well as singles, seniors. It means you always have someone at home."

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

HOUSING INFORMATION

edmonton.ca/affordablehousing
edmonton.ca/agefriendly



Maggie Kellar, left, and Gloria Koshman take in some fresh air near a leaf-strewn Alberta Avenue street. They've lived here almost two decades, and say this is where they want to stay. | Kate Wilson

Season's Greetings from Nolan Drugs

We sincerely wish you and your family Season's Greetings and a happy and safe Holiday season. May the upcoming year bring you the best of health, happiness and prosperity.

Nolan Drugs has been serving the community for over 60 years. We customize our services to meet your needs. We thank you for your continued patronage and look forward to serving you for many more years to come.

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 Fax: 780-479-4029
info@nolandrugs.ca

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 Saturday: 9am - 5pm
 Sun & Hol.: Closed

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YULE AVE: A BLAST Variety Show Chili Dinner at 6:30 Show at 7	Santa's Snow Village Spectacular 12 - 4 PM
Decoration Creation Station 12 - 4 PM	Yule Make Your Own Gingerbread House 12 - 4 PM
Yule Watch a Christmas Classic (Elf & more!) 1 - 6 PM	Open Walls Art Show 11 AM - 3 PM
Lighting the Yule Ave Giving Tree 8:30 PM	Santa's Horse & Wagon Ride 11 AM - 2 PM

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MORE INFO ONLINE AT YULEAVE.COM

Local champions make communities better

Business owners consider customers like family members

On Nov. 4, Arts on the Ave (AOTA) debuted the Champions of Alberta Avenue project, which includes photography, written profiles, and a short film. Visit artsontheave.org for more information on the project.

In the meantime, continue to look here for condensed profiles of these local champions, written by Shirley Serviss.

Improving quality of life is key to Nolan Drugs

Welcome is inscribed on the glass in numerous languages at the entrance to Nolan Drugs at 8731 118 Avenue. It speaks to the diversity of the Avenue as well as the owners' attitude.

Brothers Zaher and Mohib Samnani bought the store 17 years ago, carrying on the tradition of the original owners. The Nolan brothers started the drugstore over 60 years ago.

Born and raised in Kenya, Zaher and Mohib came to Alberta in the late 1980s and studied at the University of Alberta. They both graduated with pharmacy degrees and worked in different drug stores before becoming the third owners of Nolan Drugs.

Owning a business on Alberta Avenue when it was a much rougher neighbourhood didn't deter them. "We see people as individuals who need support and help whatever their socio-economic situation," Mohib said.

Their upbringing as Ismaili Muslims made adjusting to life in Canada relatively easy. "We

were raised with a cosmopolitan ethic to accept differences and embrace them," Mohib said. "Our faith teaches us there is a level of generosity, kindness, service and giving back to society that is expected of us."

Progressing as a business within a community has driven some of the innovations they've implemented. They were the first in Alberta to offer a fully automated verification system along with an industry-leading medication management system that provides a full client profile simply by scanning the barcode on a pouched medication.

When the brothers bought the store, it had fewer than six employees. Two years ago they moved to their present location, a spacious venue for their staff of nearly three dozen with two counseling rooms for medication reviews. They pride themselves on personalizing their care to meet client needs and offer after-hours on-call services for emergency prescriptions, home consultations, and free prescription delivery.

"We deliver medication all over the city and to Wetaskiwin, Camrose, Sherwood Park, and Spruce Grove," Mohib said.

Their motivation is to ensure their clients have a good quality of life. They must be doing something right. They still have at least one of the original customers. Another octogenarian client made them chocolates every Christmas until his death last year.

Community connections vital to Donair Express

When customers who came to Donair Express as teens return with their children or grandchildren, it makes the hard work of running a restaurant worthwhile.

Samir Bleibel and his brothers bought the business at 8523 118 Avenue from a relative in 1989. The four brothers had followed another brother to Edmonton from Lebanon in 1987.

Although French is the second language of Lebanon, the brothers had attended an English school, so language wasn't a problem in their new country. "It gave us an advantage," Samir said. "However, it was a totally new style of living. You have to build your connections and get used to a different political system."

The brothers worked together in the shop for three or four years. Younger brother Radwan took on the management until 2010, when he moved on to other pursuits. Now Samir is cutting down on the import business he started in 1993 to put more of his energy into Donair Express. He's grateful they have been blessed with long-term employees. Edil Kilson has worked there for nearly seven years and is more like family, Samir said.

Donair Express has the distinction of being one of the few shops in the city to make their own donairs. They offer both beef and chicken, mix the meat with spices, and build it on the

spit based on their own recipes. "We have high standards of quality in the meat," Samir said. "We also offer shawarma, which is more Lebanese than donairs."

Samir has noticed demographic changes with more professionals and families moving in. The friendliness and community support has always been important, particularly as he sees the third generation of customers in the shop.

"It's not a customer-business relationship; it's more of a friendship or family," he said. "I'm staying here because of the people."

Optimum Auto puts faith into practice

Optimum Auto Service bills itself as "Your Trustworthy Mechanic" and lives up to that promise.

Owner Basit Alqubaisi said customers come to the shop based on trust. "I look at each customer as gaining a new friend, not in terms of the dollars their business will bring."

Alqubaisi came to Edmonton from Jordan as a student in 1996. When his father's fortunes changed and he could no longer afford to continue in school, he worked as a labourer, but quickly realized he'd never get ahead that way. He'd always liked cars and had worked on them as a hobby since he was young, so he apprenticed as a mechanic.

He was a journeyman, with a wife and five-month-old child, when he lost his job at an auto

dealership. He took a course on micro business, borrowed money from his in-laws, bought used equipment, and started his business, renting one of the bays in the building he now owns at 8416 118 Avenue. Expansion didn't happen overnight, but as other tenants moved out of the building, Optimum Auto took over more and more space and added more mechanics. By 2013, Alqubaisi bought the building.

Optimum Auto started on 118 Avenue because there was space for rent and it was cheap at the time. "There was a prostitute on every corner," Alqubaisi explained, but it is close to downtown, the north side, the arena, and is busy during the day. The city helped with the revitalization. "The demographic is changing. There are all races here now."

Because he's suffered from discrimination, Alqubaisi won't tolerate it. "I hire males or females of all nationalities, as long as they're willing to work." Staff are not considered expendable. "I care about each staff member and we work as a family."

Alqubaisi feels he owes Canada a lot. "I've been treated far better than I would have been in my own country where you have to know somebody to get anywhere," he said. "Home is where you find peace and love. My wife and kids and friends are here. This is home."



Brothers Zaher and Mohib Samnani have owned Nolan Drugs for 17 years. | Kaye Ly



Samir Bleibel (pictured) said long-time customers bring children and grandchildren to Donair Express. | Kaye Ly



Optimum Auto owner Basit Alqubaisi (right), speaks with a customer (left). | Kaye Ly

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Help this holiday season!

The Christmas Bureau of Edmonton helps families, seniors and singles at Christmas, providing festive food hampers, toys for children 12 and under, and gift cards for teens age 13-17. If you need help at Christmas, call our intake line at 780.414.7695 after Nov.1.





WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

WINTER PATIO WEEKEND AT THE CARROT

Dec.1-2 | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Warm up with a hot chocolate on our heated patio.

COFFEE WITH COPS

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 10-11 am | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Join a roundtable conversation with EPS.



DEEP FREEZE WINTER FESTIVAL GALLERY OPENING

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7-8:30 pm. | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave).

JAZZ JAMS: JOE SEMPLE QUARTET

Thursday, Dec. 7, 7-9:30 pm. | The Carrot Coffeehouse

(9351 118 Ave). Joe Semple is a clarinetist drawing inspiration from greats like Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane, while also exploring sounds of Michael Lowenstern and Eddie Daniels. Performance followed by jam session. \$5 cover.

JINGLE JAMMIN' CHRISTMAS CAROLLING

Friday, Dec. 15, 6-8 pm. | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave) or Eastwood Community League (11803 86 St). Enjoy music, a retelling of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and homemade chili before singing Christmas carols in the neighbourhood. RSVP on Eventbrite.

YULE AVE

Saturday, Dec. 16, noon to 8:30 pm. | Alberta Avenue & The Nina. More info: YuleAve.com

SOLSTICE AROUND THE WORLD: A WINTER CELEBRATION

Saturday, Dec. 16, 3-7 pm. | Parkdale-Cromdale hall. Dinner, gifts for kids, crafts and more. Plus a special guest from the North Pole.

CREATE YOUR OWN XMAS CARDS

Monday, Dec. 18, 6:30-9 pm. | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Make cards at the watercolour workshop led by Josee Francis. \$40 per person, materials incl. Sign up at Eventbrite or call 780.471.1580.

HIP HOP SHOWCASE

Wednesday, Dec. 20, 7 pm. | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Pay what you can. Hip hop duo Locution Revolution hosts the night! Listen to sick beats and perform on our open stage for hip hop artists, rappers, spoken word, and poets. Rated PG.

YOUTH GROUP LAUNCH CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday, Dec. 22, 7-10 pm. | Norwood Wesleyan Church (11306 91 St) for ages 12-18.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Sunday, Dec. 24, 11:15 am. | Norwood Wesleyan Church (11306 91 St) with free community meal directly after the service.

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Sunday, Dec. 31, 6 pm - 1 am. | Alberta Avenue rink.

Skating, music, fire, hot chocolate, refreshments & more! Check Fb.com/ AlbertaAvenue or AlbertaAve.org for details.

ENTERTAINMENT

5 PIN BOWLING

Every day, 10 am-10 pm. | Plaza Bowl.

KARAOKE

Wednesday to Saturday, 9 pm-2 am. | Mona Lisa's Pub. LIVE MUSIC Fridays, 7:30-9:30 pm. Cover: \$5, children free. | The Carrot Coffeehouse.

OPEN MIC

Saturdays, 6:30 pm. Sign up upon arrival to guarantee a spot. | The Carrot Coffeehouse.

PRO WRESTLING

First Saturday of the month. | Alberta Avenue. Tickets: \$20. More: monsterprowrestling.com.

SAVE THE DATE

DEEP FREEZE

Jan. 13-14, 2018. | 118 Avenue between 90 & 94 Streets

FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Brought to you in partnership with NorwoodNeighbourhoodAssociation.ca

ESL & LANGUAGE

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

ESL ENGLISH LESSONS
Thursdays from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at Parkdale-Cromdale.

ALL-AGES SPANISH LESSONS
Free every Monday from 6-7:30 pm at Parkdale hall.

GLOBAL VOICES CHOIR
An informal way to practice English. No experience with singing or English is required. Light lunch is provided. Thursdays noon - 1 pm at Mennonite Centre. More: Suzanne 780.423.9682.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE
Fridays, 10:30-12 pm at Highlands Library. Part of Catholic Social Services LACE program. More: 780-424-3545.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)
More: Edmonton Mennonite Centre 780.423.9522 or info@emcn.ab.ca

FOOD & SUPPORT

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

COLLECTIVE KITCHEN
Cook with friends, try new recipes, help your food budget. St. Faith/St. Stephen: Cost: \$3. Second Tuesday: 1-3:30 pm. Trish 780.464.5444. Third Wednesday, 5:30-8 pm. Amanda: 587.930.8238. Call ahead. Parkdale Hall: Last Sunday of the month. Check parkdalecromdale.org for details. Alberta Avenue: If interested email info@albertaave.org.

PARENTS & PRE-SCHOOLERS

GROWING TOGETHER
A free drop-in group for pregnant women and women with babies up to 3 months of age. Free resources including milk coupons and prenatal vitamins. Tuesdays 1:30-3 pm at Norwood Centre. More: 780.471.3737.

STAY AND PLAY
Free indoor play space and unstructured group for parents and children. Snack included. Mondays 10 am - noon at Norwood Centre.

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

PARENTING & LITERACY
English classes, free childcare, parent-child activities, parenting support. Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 - 12 pm from Sept 19 to Dec 7 at Norwood Centre. Register 780.471.3737.

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

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

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

CHILDREN

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

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

YOUTH

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

TEEN LOUNGE
Play video games, make a DIY project, or just hang out. Thursdays, 6:00-8:30 pm. at Sprucewood Library.

GLOBAL GIRLS
Build new relationships, develop a sense of self-confidence and identify pathways to be able to achieve your goals. Every other Thursday, 3:15 - 5:30 pm at the Mennonite Centre. Register: 780.423.9691.

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

ADULTS

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

COFFEE FRIENDSHIP CLUB
Wednesdays, 1-2 pm. | The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Have coffee with individuals who are single, divorced, or widowed and looking to meet new people in Delton, Eastwood, Parkdale-Cromdale, Westwood, Spruce Ave, and Ab Ave.

COMMUNITY ART NIGHT
Free art workshop for adults. Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 pm at The Nina.

SENIORS

NORWOOD LEGION SENIORS GROUP
Cribbage, Wednesdays at 1 pm at Norwood Legion.

SENIORS BREAKFAST & SOCIAL (55+)
Join us for breakfast, visit, play cards, or

billiards. Wednesdays 11:30 am - 12:45 pm (10:30-11:45 am during the summer) at Crystal Kids.

FAMILIES

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

BOARD GAMES NIGHT
Plenty of games to choose from or bring your own. Last Tuesday of the month 6:30 pm at The Carrot.

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

MUSIC LESSONS BY CREART
Free group music lessons Saturdays at Parkdale-Cromdale from 10 am to 12 pm. More: creartedmonton@gmail.com or 587.336.5480.

FREE COMMUNITY REC ACCESS
At Commonwealth Stadium on Saturdays from 5-7 pm and Sundays from 1-3 pm. Check with your league to see if they participate and on which day.

LOCATIONS

Community Leagues - see page 12
St. Faith/St. Stephen Church 11725 93 St
Highlands Library 6710 118 Ave
Sprucewood Library 11555 95 St
Norwood Family Centre 9516 114 Ave
Carrot Coffeehouse 9351 118 Ave
The Nina 9225 118 Ave
Norwood Legion 11150 82 St
Crystal Kids 8715 118 Ave
St. Andrew's Church 8715 118 Ave
Bethel Gospel 11461 95 St
Mennonite Centre 11713 82 St



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St. Stephen: 780.422.3240
Sunday Worship:
 8:30 am - Low Mass
 9:00 am - Morning Prayer
 9:30 am - High Mass
 7:00 pm - Evensong

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

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

AVENUE VINEYARD CHURCH

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

AVENUE CHURCH

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

11335 85 Street (Parkdale Hall)
 avenuechurch.ca

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

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

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

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

NORWOOD WESLEYAN CHURCH

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

EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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