

RAT CREEK PRESS

ALBERTA AVENUE • DELTON • EASTWOOD • ELMWOOD PARK • PARKDALE-CROMDALE • SPRUCE AVENUE • WESTWOOD

PUBLISHED ON TREATY 6 TERRITORY

WWW.RATCREEK.ORG DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

Local groups rethink holiday gatherings

Christmas dinners are still on the menu for some groups



Parkdale Cromdale's holiday-themed dinner from a previous year. This year, the league will have different plans to stay festive. | Supplied

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Overheard at the drugstore: "I hope we have a Christmas this year."

Rest assured, Christmas will still happen, but with new twists. Churches, community leagues, and groups such as Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society are getting creative on how to connect.

"The holidays can be a tricky time for people," observes Sarah De Lano, program director for Parkdale Cromdale Community League. "In spite of restrictions, we want to do something for families and individuals."

The league's holiday-themed dinner is usually its biggest annual gathering. This year, the league is taking inspiration from the success of its drive-by Halloween party. "We had DJ music, gave out goodies, and received donations to Edmonton's Food Bank." Organizers gave participants take-home activities. Participants emailed photos of

their activities to the league to win a prize.

"It's early, but we have some ideas," says De Lano.

Two annual events are still a go. "We're running our Christmas lights contest again. Lights are a nice way to uplift the community. And it's likely we will continue carolling. Look for us!"

Churches are also making plans.

Gail Wichert is the administrative assistant at Highlands United Church. She sighs when she says, "We were planning a Christmas Eve service to be held outside, transforming into a community block party. But the City of Edmonton said 'No' due to COVID. Instead, we're donating money to the Bissell Centre to provide meals." An online Christmas Eve service will share good feelings.

The generosity of holiday community activities is more than just a plate of tasty food. A seasonal community dinner is a place to share warmth and

companionship and to have a little fun.

St. Faith's Anglican Church PrayerWorks community meals will celebrate Christmas on Dec. 18, from 11 am to 2 pm.

"As we move to take-away meals in December, we will have a delicious take-away Christmas lunch available with hot drinks to go and lots of good cheer," says coordinator Jennifer Stewart. AHS health and safety guidelines will be in place. All are welcome. St. Faith's is located at 11725 93 St.

In the past, the Christmas dinner at Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society has been a memorable family gathering. This year, COVID-19 has silenced the festive supper.

All is not lost, says Sophie Laboucan, program facilitator and outreach worker for Bent Arrow's Pehonan Elders Program. Seniors will not be forgotten. "We'll be delivering Christmas bags of goodies to

the Elders so they won't have to go outside in winter weather," she says.

Once the pandemic hit, the number of registered Elders rose and now surpasses 200.

"These are the ones we want to reach, first and foremost. Seniors are often isolated and limited in their ability to travel. We want to do something special for them."

Advice to all: watch for more holiday plans for community members as Christmas approaches.

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

HOLIDAY EVENTS

St. Faith's PrayerWorks
11725 93 St

Friday, Dec. 18 from
11 am to 2 pm

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Deep Freeze

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Yule Ave is going back to its roots this year

Enjoy a safe holiday celebration with a focus on family

RUSTI L LEHAY

Yule Ave is back. Nothing as small as a pandemic can tame the irrepressible force of nature otherwise known as Frank Zotter, the dreamer behind this seasonal event.

Cancel Yule Ave? Perish the thought. “No way is that happening,” Zotter adds, “It will be absolutely unique this year. Interestingly enough when I realized I needed to alter the event, I thought back to how we have been all about our bubbles like the ornament or gingerbread creation. Even when it came to the concert, people stuck to their family bubbles. This dynamic is easily modified and transferable to these times.”

Zotter’s original vision for the event is even enhanced by Alberta Health regulations.

“Back in the day it was super exciting to watch all these families mix and match in the same room creating a person-to-person community.” This year, it will be even more family centric. Zotter says, “That was Yule Ave’s intention from the beginning: to create family memories instead of buying things.”

Zotter finds it deeply rewarding to see families take time to just be present when most people are stressed buying presents. “With the event happening a few days before Christmas, families can take a breath from the hectic nature of it all to simply make things and laugh together.”

The turkey dinner on Dec. 19 will be takeout only. Virginia Potkins, the dinner coordinator, will ensure stringent COVID-19 health guidelines are followed. Volunteers will dole out and

individually package dinners at the hall. Takeout containers will be picked up or delivered to people’s homes, keeping everyone safe. Alberta Avenue Community League is taking the dinner requests. Priority will be given to people in need and to those living in and around the Alberta Avenue neighborhood. Make a dinner request online at <http://bit.ly/YuleDinner>. Sign up to volunteer by visiting <http://bit.ly/YuleHelp>.

For the concert, organizers will live stream a trio of women singing holiday classics, carollers, a Christmas clown, and flutists. Dave von Bieker will sing more obscure Christmas music. “The live-streamed performances will focus the event,” Zotter says, “COVID-friendly guidelines take us back to the foundation of the event with families just being with one another.”

Lorraine Shulba will instruct participants on their ornament creation on Dec.19-20 at The Nina while Kirsten Scott will be running gingerbread house making at Alberta Avenue Community Centre. “Families may take gingerbread house kits home and small groups, contingent upon the current laws, may build them onsite with volunteers managing space and distribution in the hall,” says Zotter.

Zotter adds, “In a strange way, by virtue of this stupid pandemic, [the event is] going back to its roots. One of the fundamental features way back 10 years ago was creating a snow village, specifically Santa’s spectacular snow village.” Robert Woodbury will create statues and carvings that families can walk by and enjoy. Zotter says, with the online concert, everyone can experience Yule Ave “sitting by the fire and/

or screens conjuring feelings of comfort and safety in their own homes. That is our focus this year: to make everyone feel comfortable and safe near their own hearth tuning into the programs. We can still have the event with these values in mind.”

Rusti has been writing professionally since 1999. Her favourite word activities are coaching writers and offering online writing stay-treats.

YULE AVE
Dec. 19-20

Alberta Avenue
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The Nina

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a full schedule



Virginia L. Leahy and Magdalen make ornaments at a previous year's Yule Ave. | Rusti Leahy

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ABOUT US

We are a non-profit community newspaper serving Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue, and Westwood. Published on Treaty 6 Territory. 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.

GOALS

Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

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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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CIRCULATION

Serving 12,500 community members.

DELIVERY

The paper is delivered by Canada Post to all houses, apartments, and businesses in the seven neighbourhoods listed above including those with no unaddressed mail notices. For the most part, delivery begins on the last Wednesday of the month.

RATCREEK.ORG

I ♥ my
RCP

Revel in the crispness and magic of winter

Deep Freeze to have a different twist on celebrations this year

TALEA MEDYNSKI

If there's anything Arts on the Ave has proven this year, it's that there's always a way to be creative and bring art and joy to others. Such is the case with this January's Deep Freeze: A Byzantine Winter Fête.

In previous years, Deep Freeze was held in the area of 118 Avenue, from 90 to 95 Street. This year is different, with installations scattered throughout the area and other events held online instead of in-person. Organizers and artists will beautify parks, parkettes, and league spaces. Expect to see lanterns, lighting, and ice sculptures.

Christy Morin, artistic director, says, "It's all about experiencing winter in our community, from Borden Park in the west all the way to Westwood

and Spruce Ave. Hopefully Borden Park will have big ice installations."

The theme this year is *The Fiddle and Fables*, with art and activities reflecting that theme.

"Fiddle is the motif for all three cultures," says Morin. French and Indigenous cultures use the fiddle for jigs, and the Ukrainian culture uses it for dancing.

Ice sculptures will feature characters from fables, and people can read the stories or go online to hear the stories. "We'll get storytellers from the three cultures to tell fables."

"Our hope is that each league will have ice sculptures," says Morin. "We're still going to have the ice slide."

Due to COVID-19, large gatherings of people won't happen. "We will bring winter magic and illumination," says Morin. "We encourage visitors,

but to follow COVID guidelines as they change." Visit alberta.ca/covid19 for all updated restrictions and guidelines.

Another feature is lighting. Dylan Toymaker, an Edmonton artist who creates lighting design, light sculptures, and lantern art, is involved. "We'll have great sidewalk light ups."

Gabrielle deGouw, a lantern artist, is lending her artistic hand to the celebration. Also, expect to find sketches and paintings in the area.

Do-it-yourself activities will be online. Naomi Pahl, an area resident, will demonstrate how to make borscht, a Ukrainian beet soup. Other videos taught by different instructors will include how to make bannock muffins and mini sugar pies.

Morin adds, "Naomi will be teaching with her kids how to make birdfeeders."

Pahl is also creating a giant flannel graph canvas, which harkens back to the 1970s. "Teachers would put up paper and felt characters," explains Morin. "It's like a felt storyboard." The canvas will be made with timbers and reused wool blankets to look like a winter landscape.

"We're going to move it through the communities," says Morin. There people can add things like tree appliqué and lights. "Make your own person or character to add to the landscape."

Watch social media at deepfreeze2021.ca or [facebook.com/ArtsOnTheAveEdmonton](https://www.facebook.com/ArtsOnTheAveEdmonton) for further development and information.

People can also participate in a scarf installation; take or leave a warm scarf on a tree. "If your neck needs it, take it. Or, take a picture and post it on social

media." Use the hashtag #findfundeeepfreeze2021.

"Continue loving winter and appreciate the crispness of winter," says Morin. "We're committed to keeping the community uplifted through the arts. We thank our community supporters, grants, and partners. Without them, we would be without the magic of winter."

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

DEEP FREEZE: A BYZANTINE WINTER FÊTE

Jan. 8-22, 2021
(dates flexible)
Various locations throughout the area
Visit deepfreeze2021.ca for more information



Ice sculptures will still be a part of the celebrations this year. | Epic Photography

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Local organizations ready to help this winter

Essential resources are available to those who need them

TALEA MEDYNSKI

If it's a struggle to buy food, clothing, or other essentials this winter, local organizations are here to lend a helping hand.

On Thursdays from 5 to 8 pm, Alberta Ave Community League holds its Community Hub Night inside the hall. Ali Hammington, league president, says, "Right now we're operating essential services only. We'll introduce other activities as soon as the restrictions are lifted."

Among the free resources right now are a food pantry, a food bank for pets, and warm clothing provided by GiveBack Edmonton. People can take two to three days' worth of food. Fresh Routes Mobile Grocery is also on site from 6 to 7:30pm selling fruits, veggies, eggs and bread at affordable prices.

The Community Hub is meant for community members and nearby communities, but people from other areas of the city won't be turned away. "If someone says they need it, I believe them."

Barb Sharpe, co-founder of

GiveBack Edmonton, is working with organizers of the Community Hub. GiveBack Edmonton accepts donations of all household goods except for furniture and electronics due to storage space, and gives items to people in need.

"Our biggest demographic is those who are living on the streets, or making the transition from homelessness to housing." She adds, "It's for anybody and everybody in need." Some items go to the Community Hub. Sharpe is currently taking some time off, but those wishing to donate may contact GiveBack Edmonton through facebook.com/GiveBackEdmonton.

Bethel Gospel Chapel is the location of Bethel Food Pantry as well as a delivery location for Wecan Food Basket.

Christy Morin, Arts on the Ave (AOTA) executive director, says the food pantry, "Came out of a community need." Morin is part of a City task force addressing food needs. "We knew we needed something people could walk to."

Bethel Food Pantry runs Mondays from 3 to 5 pm. No identification is needed to

access the pantry.

It's set up like an old style grocery store. "They go shopping," explains Morin. "We wanted to do this with dignity." People can fill two to three bags and are encouraged to bring their own bags or donate plastic bags. Edmonton's Food Bank supplies some food, but donations are accepted. Volunteers are needed. Donate food on Mondays from 3 to 5 pm.

Wecan Food Basket deliveries used to be at Crystal Kids, but is now at Bethel Gospel Chapel.

Frank Parker, a volunteer, says, "We moved to Bethel Gospel Chapel at the beginning of the pandemic."

Wecan Food Basket is a wholesale buying club and members purchase a \$5 membership annually. Members place an order on the first Friday of each month and pick up their baskets on either the third Thursday or Friday of each month. Baskets include a \$10 produce basket; a \$15 meat basket; and a \$15 meat basket without pork. Place orders online at wecanfood.com or call 780.413.4525.

Wayne Thomas, pastor of

Avenue Vineyard Church, says the church is making daily Food Bank hamper deliveries to people who have registered through Edmonton's Food Bank. "The church in partnership with the centre is also providing some emergency food relief on a case by case basis. The Food Bank hamper deliveries are also in partnership with the centre."

Another resource is called Families Helping Families, an AOTA initiative. A volunteer family is matched with a family who requires food. The volunteer family agrees to buy and deliver \$75 worth of groceries for another family twice a month for six months.

"You get a grocery list of food from the family and you go shopping for them," says Morin. "Volunteer families can come from anywhere in Edmonton." Before volunteering, families must complete some forms and give references.

Families who require food support must live in the area of 66 Street to 106 Street and from the Yellowhead to 111 Avenue.

Morin says 40 to 50 more

volunteer families are needed. "COVID has magnified the need of the community."

To participate, email groceries@artsontheave.org or call 780.471.1580.

Visit alberta.ca/covid19 for current information on any restrictions or guidelines.

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

RESOURCES

Alberta Ave Community Hub
9210 118 Ave
Thursdays, 5-8 pm

Bethel Food Pantry
11461 95 St
Mondays, 3-5 pm

Wecan Food Basket
wecanfood.com or
780.413.4525
Families Helping Families
groceries@artsontheave.org
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arts on the ave



Kaleido
FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL

Deep Freeze
A BYZANTINE WINTER FESTIVAL
UN FESTIVAL D'HIVER BYZANTIN

Get ready to lace up your skates this winter

Some community rinks will be open for use within guidelines

TALEA MEDYNSKI

This winter, some leagues will open their community rinks, with health protocols in place.

The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) collaborated on a document with COVID-19 health guidelines for rink use. These guidelines were developed with advice from Alberta Health Services (AHS) and reviewed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health's team. Those guidelines may change depending on the pandemic situation.

Overall, leagues must follow public health guidelines and disinfect any shared equipment after use. Guidelines also include how many people can be on the ice rink at a time, depending on the activity.

Only 10 people can gather for community skating (free skating activities) on a rink and no organized sports are allowed until otherwise stated. This limit is in place until Dec. 15. Contact your league for information after that date.

These restrictions also mean that no one can use rink shacks or amenities such as indoor bathrooms because restrictions require leagues and community centres to close for in-person services.

Other basic guidelines include not touching your eyes, nose, or face; physically distancing; washing your hands thoroughly; using your own equipment and water bottles; and staying home if you're feeling unwell.

Kate Wilson, Eastwood Community League's facility coordinator, says, "We're keep-

ing the ice surface open, only. The actual rink building is now officially closed to the public... people can use the [outdoor] benches. As per usual, we'll have a staff person there during all public skate times."

The Eastwood rink hours are Wednesday to Friday from 4 to 9 pm, Saturdays from 11 am to 9 pm, and Sundays from 11 am to 8 pm.

Wilson adds, "We've installed a new outdoor PA system, with two directional speakers mounted on the east side of the rink. Come out to skate to your favourite playlist or the top 40 on the radio. Rentals are welcome, Mondays and Tuesdays, or any other time outside the regular hours."

Spruce Avenue Community League will not be opening their rink yet.

Sabino Spagnuolo, the league's communication director, says, "Due to recent COVID-19 restrictions, our beloved skating rink is unable to host regular hours of operation for the public. This situation is evolving, so please watch our social media channels for updates!"

Parkdale Cromdale Community League (PCCL) is opening their rink.

Shawn McKay, rink director, says, "Programs and activities are still to be finalized."

When guidelines allow and COVID-19 numbers are low enough, scrimmages will be a priority. Until then, the league is holding free skating. The league is focused on ensuring activities are fun and safe.

He started flooding the rink on Nov. 11. "The goal is to have ice as soon as possible.

Every time I am out flooding, people drive by honking their horns. Some stop by to check on things and to see when the ice will be ready. Needless to say, people are excited and eager to strap the skates on. I know I am."

Rink hours are still to be determined, but it may be weekday evenings from 4 to 9 pm, and weekends 9 am to 9 pm. "Last year we operated with a host from noon to 4 pm on weekends."

Time will be blocked off for certain uses once provincial guidelines allow. "The thing to really focus on will be the number of attendees and how the league will create a safe space for people to go out and have fun." Interested in volunteering or have questions? Email shawn@parkdalecromdale.org.

Delton Community League won't be opening their rink this December due to COVID-19.

Farid Foroud, league president, says, "We will re-evaluate at the beginning of 2021."

Alberta Avenue Community League will not create any ice for its winter games this year.

The ability to participate in activities at community rinks is evolving regularly. Leagues will be adapting to regulations and available resources over the rink season, so check with your league. You can also visit efcl.org/rinks for developing information about rinks.

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



Henry Stainthorp (pictured) floods Spruce Ave's rink back in 2016. This year, Spruce Ave has decided not to open the rink, but watch the league's social media for updates. | Kate Wilson

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CORRECTION

There were a number of errors in the November 2020 issue, on page 14 of the article "Healing trauma with creative interventions."

Most notable is that the print article should state that Jon Jon Rivero and Paula Audrey Rivero wrote the picture book, *My Name is Trauma*. The teachings that come from the book and shared in the workshop are from their collaborative effort, experience, and expertise.

Other paragraphs have been added to as well. The full corrected article can be viewed online at ratcreek.org

OPINION

Considering the priorities of a budget

Budgeting isn't about numbers; it's about people

KAREN MYKIETKA

Budgeting is hard.

It's not the math that is hard. It's the ramifications of decisions. Difficult decisions are necessary to make the simple math of balancing money coming in and money going out. There are many unknowns when making decisions about the future, especially with this ever-changing pandemic.

Every family, organization, business, and level of government is wrestling with this reality right now. So where do you start?

Take some deep breaths, then focus on your strengths and on solutions. Look for the opportunities. Ask yourself, what is most important? What are the priorities right now? Don't waste energy worrying about and fighting against things you

have no control over. Look at what you do have control over and work on that.

Most businesses have had to make adjustments or complete 180 degree pivots in an attempt to survive the impacts of this pandemic. They've had to lay off staff, change their service model, or change the products they sell. Small businesses have been unfairly impacted, although they are more nimble and able to make changes; however, they usually have fewer resources to weather months of crisis.

Being forced to change the status quo can actually lead to more innovation and better results.

Cities have limited revenue-generating ability, and as the third level of government, they are subject to the trickle-down effect of budget cuts and inadequate funding (or funding phi-

losophy differences) of federal and provincial governments. The impact of the feds and the province not adequately funding their areas of responsibility is that the city and communities experience the fall out of homelessness, health care, education, social services, and so on.

Cities have more needs and demands for service than money to pay for them. So what are the priorities and who gets to decide?

The City of Edmonton says it is moving towards priority-based budgeting, but they aren't quite there yet. Council gave administration the task of cutting \$85 million in one-time funding and \$56 million in ongoing budget items in an attempt to have a zero property tax increase. No property tax increase is a funding cut because there is no extra money given to deal with inflation or

population growth. Add to this the substantial revenue shortfalls due to the pandemic and the only way to get to zero is to make hard cuts across the board.

Yet, cutting seemingly insignificant programs and services and closing facilities can have a ripple effect in many areas and well into the future.

Leveraging the collective wisdom and passion of stakeholders to find alternatives to cuts and closures would be a better approach, but that takes time and effort. Staffing costs are always an organization's largest expense. Asking workers what would make their work or jobs more efficient would probably reveal more useful information and ideas than simply asking upper management to cut a certain number of positions.

The original property tax

increase was proposed to be 3.2 per cent. This would have been an extra \$68.66 this year for me. A one percent increase would only be \$21.46 more, which is less than the cost of buying one coffee a month. I would rather pay a little more property tax than lose community pools, ice arenas, recreation programs, grants to non-profits, and several more services.

In the face of uncertainty and crisis, it is wise to pause and reflect, prioritize what's most important, involve more people, and in the end do what is right, even when it is not popular.

A busy woman of many jobs, Karen spends too much time in front of a computer. In the past 20 years, she has lived in Eastwood, Alberta Avenue and now Parkdale, meeting awesome people everywhere she goes.

Presenting your latest Rat Creek Press update

Your community newspaper thanks you for your contributions

KAREN MYKIETKA

On Wednesday, Nov. 25, Rat Creek Press Association held its Annual General Meeting online with 17 people in attendance. It was great to be able to see people's faces; however, it was a far cry from our usual appreciation event of food, wine, and dessert socializing with our Friends of RCP and volunteers.

Continuing board members Mariam Masud, Joe Wong, George Crawford, and Steven Townsend welcome new members Gail Kessler, Mike Enders, and Victoria Stevens. Thank you to the new board members for stepping up to help the RCP build community and sustainability.

The board and staff would like to extend a big thank you to all the RCP supporters and

volunteers. The RCP wouldn't exist without you!

The bad news is RCP ended the 2019-20 fiscal year with a \$5,565 operating deficit. The good news is that RCP received a \$14,000 grant from Canadian Heritage Canada Periodical Fund, Special Measures for Journalism for 2020-21. Despite this extra funding, cuts had to be made in order to balance next year's budget.

You'll notice that this issue is a combined December/January issue, and July/August will be the same. This brings RCP from 12 to 10 issues a year. You may also see more eight page issues instead of 16 pages. It's quite likely the number of issues will have to be reduced further in upcoming years.

Reducing the print issues doesn't mean you will miss out on community news and

the great stories of our neighbourhoods. We are working on increasing our digital media coverage. This actually allows us to serve you better by getting you the news and relevant information in a more timely manner. So please, follow us on Facebook and watch our website ratcreek.org.

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PARKDALE CROMDALE

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The Carrot Community Arts Coffeehouse
thecarrot.ca | @TheCarrotCoffeehouse

Eastwood Community League
eastwoodcommunity.org | @EastwoodCL

arts on the ave



Eastwood Community League



Temporary housing to shelter people in need

Most temporary shelters will operate until the spring

STEPHEN STRAND

Since the pandemic began, homelessness has become an increasing problem due to people losing their jobs and shelters not being designed for physical distancing. With winter here, shelters and city-operated spaces are finding ways to house people safely.

“The City doesn’t operate bridge housing, but we continue to work with our partners in the homeless-serving sector to find ways to quickly address homelessness,” says Nicole Thomas, spokesperson for affordable housing and homelessness at the City of Edmonton.

On Oct. 30, the Edmonton Convention Centre opened as a 24-hour temporary accommodation. “Boyle Street Community Services, Mustard Seed Society, the Bissell Centre, and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society are working together to operate the facility and ensure it meets the needs of vulnerable Edmontonians. All [Alberta Health Services] AHS public health orders will be followed to ensure the safety of people using and working at the facility,” says Thomas.

Cheryl Whiskeyjack, executive director of Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, says the City is funding the other three organizations to do the work at the Convention Centre, and that “Boyle Street is actually subcontracting Bent Arrow to provide cultural support services for the people accessing services at the winter shelter,” says Whiskeyjack, explaining many people they’ll be serving will be Indigenous.

Camp Pekiweewin, an anti-police violence, emergency relief and prayer camp established in July, was not a tenable housing solution. Existing shelters were limited in what they could provide, due to COVID-19. Outbreaks occurred. So, the City opened the temporary shelter site at the Convention Centre and the Stadium as their response.

When the City approached Boyle Street Community Services about the Convention Centre, the organization said they needed to support the Indigenous community in a culturally meaningful way and subcontracted the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society to help.

“What we’re providing is

access to Elders and spiritual advisors for the folks who will be accessing the shelter who request that kind of support,” explains Whiskeyjack. Smudging ceremonies will take place morning and evening to create a safe, calm space. Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society will also provide access to pipe ceremonies, sweat lodge ceremonies, and various other services. “We are also going to be spending time talking with the people accessing the shelter and say, ‘Here is who we are. Here is what we can do. What would you be interested in?’”

“There’s lots of historical trauma, mental health, addictions, all kinds of issues that those folks are experiencing, so we want to be able to help them access programming and supports that have some meaning to them. As opposed to just having Western kinds of responses to those needs,” says Whiskeyjack. Health protocols will be followed.

The Convention Centre will be used as a shelter until next spring. Additional space is also being provided at the Commonwealth Stadium.

“The City has also supported Hope Mission in opening additional space in Commonwealth Stadium using the west pod,” says Thomas. Pods are enclosed concession areas off the concourse level. “This space opened initially as an overnight shelter to replace overflow space previously provided at the Central Lions Senior Centre. As of Nov. 12, it will offer 24-7 service.” This space is an addition to Hope Mission’s shelter.

Commonwealth Stadium became available out of necessity. “The shelter we were operating at the Central Lions Recreation Centre was closing and we needed a new space to keep people safe during the winter while maintaining adequate distancing,” says Joel Nikkel, Hope Mission’s direc-

tor of development.

They provide meals, washrooms, a drop-in centre, a shuttle to the Hope Mission main building, housing support, recovery program support, and a place to sleep night or



The Stadium will function as a temporary shelter until spring.
| Stephen Strand

day. Eventually, there will be showers.

Employees screen for COVID-19 symptoms, including temperature checks. Staff wear PPE as required and AHS Environmental Public Health (EPH) perform audits to ensure compliance with all AHS regulations and COVID-19 prevention measures.

The Stadium will function as a shelter until the end of next March. “Hope Mission is building a new Herb Jamieson Shelter that we plan to have completed before winter 2021,” says Nikkel.

The Coliseum Inn was also converted into temporary housing in the spring.

Bill Lamppost (a pseudonym) had been living at the Coliseum Inn for about six weeks when I spoke to him. He says there’s no time limit on how long people stay. “As long as the support staff see I am working with my housing worker and we are trying to move forward, trying to get me out of here and into my own apartment,” says Lamppost.

“It’s got everything you’d think a hotel room would have. I’m in one with two queen-sized beds. I got a little bar fridge, basically. A microwave, TV. There’s a desk over in the corner. And of course, a full bathroom.”

Because of COVID-19, people have their own room.

This helps keep the risk of transmission down. Rooms are cleaned by staff.

“Housekeeping, they are on an alternating schedule. It’s about every second day.” But Lamppost also cleans his room. “It just takes a little bit of pressure off them. You know what, it’s my mess. Why shouldn’t I clean it up?”

The Coliseum Inn provides meals, which Lamppost feels aren’t quite sufficient. “The meals, as a rule, usually it’s cereal and a piece of fruit for breakfast. You get milk and spoons.”

Sometimes pastries are included with breakfast. “Lunch is non-existent. Supper can vary,” he says with a laugh. Supper includes food like spaghetti, roasted turkey, or roast beef. His biggest complaint is the portion. “I don’t think there’s enough food in there to fill up a four year old,” Lamppost says. The food is free to tenants, though. Although the meals aren’t the most filling, he says he likes staying there.

The Coliseum Inn is managed by Boyle Street Community Services and funded by Homeward Trust. “Individuals referred there are connected to a housing worker and they’re already engaged in the housing process,” says Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust.

Homeward Trust leases the hotel from month to month.

“We are looking at the building, as we are several other hotels, for longer-term use. But there is a whole process around that and it requires a lot of due diligence,” McGee explains. Homeward Trust is working with the City to find a longer-term solution.

Homeward Trust also is opening a bridge housing site at the old jockey dorms at the old Northlands horse racing track, but have experienced a delay in opening. “We were moving a project team to it, and then it was interrupted by COVID.” A project team member tested positive for COVID-19.

“Everybody is okay, thankfully. That was a few weeks ago, so we’ve had to go through a process of isolation. It really paused and made us have to pivot around staffing.” They plan to have the dorms staffed and opened by mid-November.

Food will be provided to people living in the dorms because there are no microwaves or fridges to store food. Like at the Coliseum Inn, people staying at the dorms will be connected with housing workers. Onsite supports at the dorms are oriented towards the housing plan, but McGee says it’s important for people to have a safe place to stay.

While their primary goal is a long-term housing plan, they work with people staying there to access resources. While Homeward Trust aims to have people housed within three weeks, it may take longer. “Sometimes the best housing option for somebody might have a waitlist.”

All AHS guidelines are followed at the Coliseum Inn and at the dorms, including disinfecting regularly and limiting how many people eat in the same place at the same time.

So what happens next spring?

“The City is actively looking at how it can quickly create permanent and suitable housing options for people experiencing homelessness,” says Thomas. “Until those spaces are available, the City and its partners will provide immediate access to low-barrier accommodation to help vulnerable Edmontonians stay safe.”

For more information, contact Boyle Street Community Services, Mustard Seed Society, the Bissell Centre, Hope Mission, and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. Or call 311.

Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.

RESOURCES

bissellcentre.org/
hopemission.com/
boylestreet.org/
theseed.ca/
bentarrow.ca/
[edmonton.ca/
homelessness](http://edmonton.ca/homelessness)
homewardtrust.ca/

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Edmonton

Art installations a vibrant part of the community

The art will generate conversation and draw new people to the area

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Alberta Avenue is the new, temporary home to three art installations and will soon be welcoming another.

Residents may have noticed two giant beans (*Love Your Bean*) in the grassy space by the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts and the crouched figure sculptures (*The Meeting*) at the corner of 118 Avenue and 91 Street. In early November, *Walking Figures* was installed in front of the Telus building on 118 Avenue and 89 Street. Soon, a large neon sign with the words “let’s heal the divide” will grace the east-facing side of the ArtsHub building.

Christy Morin, executive director of Arts on the Ave (AOTA), says displaying public art is not only good for generating conversation and building community, it’s also a way to draw people to the neighbour-

hood, creating an artistic destination.

All the artwork comes from a partnership with Vancouver Biennale, a non-profit organization exhibiting public art to generate conversation, engagement, education, and social action. The sign is a donation from Vancouver Biennale and is a partnership between AOTA, Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts, and ArtsHub 118.

AOTA partnered with Vancouver Biennale, Avatex, CN Rail, Kor Alta Construction, Edmonton Community Foundation, City of Edmonton, The Works, and the Avenue Initiative. All the partners played a key role.

“CN Rail transported all the sculptures at no charge,” says Morin.

Italian-Canadian artist Cosimo Cavallaro created the giant red and yellow beans, part of a larger collection. Says Morin, “The beans are about

whimsy and fun.”

The Meeting is eight crouching sculptures painted red. Sculpted by Chinese artist Wang Shugang, *The Meeting* was first exhibited at the 2007 G-8 summit meeting in Germany. While most of the figures are arranged in a circle and displayed on the vacant lot at 118 Avenue and 91 Street, one is deliberately set apart from the others in front of the community league building across the street. In fact, Barrie Mowatt, founder and president of Vancouver Biennale, travelled to Edmonton to help with the placement.

The Meeting represents a socio discussion. “Are they ready to jump up? Is the one on the league lawn outside watching? Is he supposed to be observing or ready to jump into the meeting?”

Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz sculpted *Walking Figures*. Now deceased,

Abakanowicz was “a survivor and creative artist who started from nothing.” She survived the Second World War and created the sculptures, also part of a larger collection, in her studio.

“They’re made from cast iron and represent the commonness of man,” explains Morin. “It’s how we work in a collective and yet maintain individuality. There’s a patina; they’ve all gone through life. Who are those people? Where are they going? What’s their story?”

Installed on Telus land, Telus gave permission to use the space for *Walking Figures*, and Kor Alta Construction helped to excavate and secure the land for the installation.

Let’s Heal the Divide is created by Toni Latour, a queer feminist East Vancouver artist. It’s meant to “bring healing, conversation, and restoration.” The sign may prompt people to ask, “what needs healing?” It will be mounted on the vibrant green

wall of the ArtsHub building, possibly before the new year.

“They’re all transitory public art,” says Morin, “People have a conversation about it, then we return it. They’re loaning them to us for free for up to two years. They commission internationally-known artists. We’re so blessed to have them. It’s something we’ve never imagined.”

People are welcome to take pictures of the installations. Morin adds, “We ask that people don’t climb them—we don’t want anyone to fall.”

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

Maria and Alfred Fung, residents and property owners, enjoy *The Meeting*. | Arts on the Ave



Liam Crotty (left) and Gaelyn Kulikowski (right) during the Arts on the Ave treasure hunt. | Xylanna Kulikowski



Chinese artist Wang Shugang sculpted *The Meeting*. | Bin Lau

Workers prepare to secure the *Walking Figures* art installation. | Gabrielle deGouw



Walking Figures is one of the most recent art installations along 118 Avenue. | Gabrielle deGouw



Think about the meaning of *Walking Figures* as you stroll down 118 Avenue. | Gabrielle deGouw



Alexis Kienlen's dog Edie, exploring the art this fall. | Alexis Kienlen

This season, grab winter by your bootstraps

Local options abound for outdoor fun and fitness

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Edmonton offers endless possibilities to get out, get moving, and have fun. Don your warmest clothes and embrace all that winter has to offer.

In 2012, the City of Edmonton launched Winter City Edmonton as a guide to winter activities. Another great resource is the Explore Winter Edmonton website. Together, the two sites (see below) include advice on everything from what to wear to options such as walking, skating, sledding, and skiing.

A visit to Allsports & Cycle opened the door to my winter endeavours. The pandemic has put restrictions on the store's trade-in options, but aisles of new equipment are available. Resale skiing and snowboarding equipment is skimpy, but there are plenty of new equipment options.

Ice skates, used as well as new, for all ages and skill levels, and

from figure skating to shinny, are in demand.

"This year, it's best to come in as soon as possible to get your winter gear," advises Tyler Schmidt, purchaser and sales manager.

Families with more enthusiasm than money may be able to access donated sports equipment for their children. At Allsports & Cycle, a father walked in with a big hockey bag. His son had finished with his skates, pads, and helmet, and he wanted to donate the still-useful gear. "Sport Central will pick them up here," Schmidt told him. "It's a really good place to donate equipment."

Sport Central was the brainchild of sportscaster Cecil "Tiger" Goldstick and local volunteers in 1991. The goal: to provide free sports equipment to children from ages four to 17 in low-income families.

Today, more than 200 agencies can recommend children for the 15 sports included in

the program. Once a child has been recommended, a visit to the warehouse follows. A child can receive anything from head-to-toe hockey equipment to cross-country boots and skis or more, as requested.

Sheldon Oleksyn, executive director, has a unique problem these days: due to COVID-19 restrictions on sports activities, Sport Central has too much gear. "I want families to know we are waiting for them," he says. "Right now, it's more important than ever for kids to get exercise."

If walking or running is on your books, don your warm clothes, put on shoes with traction and get out there. Walking poles help with stability on slippery sidewalks.

Walk in the river valley or in Borden Park, then toboggan at Rundle Park, or skate on local ice rinks. Our four community league rinks are: Delton's Walter Gurba Rink, Eastwood, Parkdale Cromdale, and Spruce Avenue.

Volunteers make these rinks happen and are always needed. Read more about community rinks in this issue.

Winter cycling is another tantalizing possibility. Copious information is available on edmonton.ca/wintercycling, including winter cycling maps, routes, and what to wear. A single gear bike or dedicated winter bike is advised.

Look beyond our area for a real break. Take a day trip to Elk Island National Park, 35 minutes east of the city on the Yellowhead. Enjoy a walk in the woods along well-packed trails. Count all the bison you can spot. A pass must be purchased. For a family group, admission is \$16.

Another option is the Strathcona Wilderness Area, a 30-minute drive east on the Yellowhead. Winter walks and cross-country skiing are both recommended in this free park.

Be sure to check alberta.ca/covid19 for any changing restrictions or guidelines.

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

INFORMATION

Allsports & Cycle
13016 82 St
780.760.2121 or
allsportscycle.com

Sport Central
11847 Wayne Gretzky Drive North
780.477.1166 or
sportcentral.org

OTHER RESOURCES
wintercityedmonton.ca
exploreedmonton.com/winter
edmonton.ca/wintercycling
pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/elkisland
www.strathcona.ca/recreation-events/



Tyler Schmidt, purchaser and sales manager, at the entrance to the used skates room at Allsports & Cycle. | Constance Brissenden



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Enjoy Jamaican cuisine at Flava Café

Friendly service and great food at this newly opened café

STEPHEN STRAND

In 1985, Mordecai Richler stated in a *New York Times* article that in Edmonton, “There isn’t a first-class restaurant anywhere in town.” Whether his view of Edmonton was warranted or not is up for debate. Regardless, Edmonton is no longer a culinary wasteland. There has been an influx of culinary diversity throughout the city in the last few years, especially along Alberta Avenue.

In early November, Flava Café opened its doors to serve Jamaican cuisine. With a small, simple shop, Flava Café offers counter service, delivery, or curbside pickup. It was open for less than a week when I went in to see what they had to offer. Walking in, I was greeted by

two very friendly men behind the counter.

I ordered the jerk chicken meal (\$14), the jerk pork meal (\$14), and two cans of pop (\$2.50 each).

When I asked what sides were available, one of the men said, “rice and beans.”

“OK,” I said, as he filled the take out containers.

“Want coleslaw?” he asked.

“Sure,” I said, even though I am not the biggest fan. I am not morally opposed to coleslaw, I just feel the energy expended on it is not always worth the effort, and quite often try to slide it onto my wife’s plate without anyone noticing.

The jerk chicken was flavourful, with a crispy skin. Not the spiciest jerk chicken I’ve tasted, but it had a tasty seasoned flavour. Some Jamaican jerk sea-

soning was included on the side for dipping. The dip was both flavourful and spicy and is what the owners use to baste their chicken and pork.

Jerk seasoning’s primary ingredient is the Scotch bonnet pepper, which is what gives it the heat. Mixed with various spices, herbs, garlic, and onion, it makes for a flavourful hot seasoning. It’s a seasoning that was born out of necessity in Jamaica. In 1655, Britain colonized Jamaica and Africans who were formerly enslaved by Spanish settlers fled to the Blue Mountains to escape. They hunted wild pigs to survive and used a blend of spices and herbs to marinate meat. That blend is Jamaican jerk and it is now beloved around the world.

The jerk pork had the same seasoning as the chicken, and

the pork held onto the flavour of the seasoning well. The pork also had a crispy edge to it, which, alongside the flavour, would make a great sandwich.

While my wife loved the jerk chicken, I preferred the jerk pork. But, we agreed that both dishes were enjoyable.

The rice and beans were nicely cooked. They were slightly on the flavourless side, but acted as a nice canvas for the flavours of the jerk seasoning I poured over the chicken, pork, and rice.

The coleslaw was simply coleslaw, but it went well with this dish and I ate it all.

I was pleased with this meal and with Flava Café. The food was cooked well, and the jerk sauce was a perfect balance of flavour and spice.

They sell jars of their jerk sauce, which I will be purchas-

ing to add to meals at home. They also sell jerk chicken and jerk pork sandwiches and Jamaican beef patties.

Be sure to check alberta.ca/covid19 for any changes or restrictions when it comes to visiting restaurants.

RATING: 4.5 OUT OF 5 FORKS.

Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.

FLAVA CAFÉ

8307 118 Ave
587.936.1919 or
fulaflava.ca
Mon-Fri: 10 am to 6 pm
Sat: 11 am to 6 pm
Sun: Closed



From left to right: the jerk pork and the jerk chicken. | Stephen Strand

SPRING 2020:



FALL 2020:



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Alone for the holidays during a pandemic

Spending the festive season alone doesn't need to be lonely

VICTORIA STEVENS

The carols play, the snow falls, the streets glow with colourful lights. 'Tis the season for laughter, love, and merriment. This year, however, all that seasonal bliss will need to be done in a physically-distanced way.

For many, this holiday season will look very different from years past. Christmas parties are definitely not happening, travelling to visit family is discouraged, gathering with people outside your household is not safe. With COVID-19 cases continuing to climb and enhanced restrictions in place, many people will find themselves alone for the holidays.

Alone doesn't need to mean

lonely. As a transplant to Alberta from southern Manitoba nearly 20 years ago, I have spent at least half of my Christmases alone. Working retail for the first few years and then moving into the hairdressing industry didn't allow me time to travel back to Manitoba to see my family. Being new to the city, I didn't have many close friends to join for Christmas. I began to cherish spending Dec. 25 alone—although not truly alone, because my long-time basset hound companion was with me for most of them—as a day I could truly relax and focus on me. As a hairstylist and salon owner, I found it was the one day of the year where no one was trying to book an appointment with me

or ask me to make decisions. Over the years of solo holidays, I have created some traditions that have made the day—and the season—bright.

Solo holidays are a great time to try out something new that you just haven't had the time to pick up or pick up where you left off with other activities.

Nazreena Anwar-Travas, an area resident, has spent quite a few holiday seasons alone and has used that time to learn something new. In the past, she learned to bake, practiced on the keyboard again after a long hiatus, and mended clothes or cleaned out the fridge. This year, she plans to try out some new recipes, get a journal and workout schedule set up for the new year, create a scrapbook,

and walk or drive to admire our winter wonderland. Anwar-Travas says there are bonuses to spending the holidays alone, mainly saving money and getting to cook whatever you want to eat!

Like Anwar-Travas, my solo holiday traditions have included baking different cookies and dropping them off at my neighbours' front door, practicing guitar, and spending a lot of time on crafty projects like crocheting. I always cook a totally inappropriate sized dinner for myself and my dog, and spend Christmas Day enjoying boozy drinks while playing video games. I usually set up a tree and lay out stockings for both myself and my dog, which we open in the morning.

With the prevalence and ease of using electronic communication such as video calling, spending the day with loved ones virtually is a wonderful way to keep everyone safe, and still feel connected.

Embrace the quiet, slowed down pace of a solo holiday season as a time to reset, renew, and rediscover yourself.

Editorial Note:

Restrictions, recommendations, and guidelines are changing, so be sure to check alberta.ca/covid19.

Victoria is an entrepreneur, roller derby player, and basset hound lover living in the Delton area.



Spending the holidays alone doesn't have to be lonely. | Image by Jill Wellington from Pixabay

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Find different ways to look for positivity and happiness

RUSTI L LEHAY

Flying home from Australia in 1989, my seatmate asked me four questions. I still remember her amazement to my last answer. The question was: What would I do in a white room, no way in, no way out, only a shaft of sunlight streaming into that empty space? I answered that I saw myself relaxed and curled up in the inviting sunlight. I was the first person she had met who imagined themselves comfortable there. According to her psychology training, people's white room answers indicated feelings about death.

This year's lockdown forced many people to become more comfortable in their own skin and to accept what may feel intolerable for extroverts.

Enjoying alone time is akin to breathing for me. I adore coping only with my own energy zinging around, and it does zing, not needing to flow and co-mingle with anyone else's.

If eulogists at my funeral stick to the truth, they'll have to say, "Prying Rusti out of her comfort zone to attend events was a nightmare." I hope they add, "She was worth the effort."

My extroverted nieces suf-

fered during the first lockdown. I employ varied habits that may aid others struggling during COVID. Anybody can advise, "Find enjoyable solitary activities," though I believe unsolicited advice only masks criticism. We all need to navigate these

(Free memoir writing article upon request.) If reading traditional books fails to tempt you, try comic books or graphic novels. Anyone can Netflix binge.

Listen to calming binaural beats and allow yourself to

fill a social gap, attend online meetups or discussion groups. Talk to a friend on the phone or resurrect the art of letter writing. Don your mask to go mail them.

As unsolicited advice may be criticism, I will cease and share

Sometimes I attend between three to six daily Zoom meetings. Can we say we are really alone? People quarantined after the First World War did not have our tech to stay connected.

Busyness is likely my downfall and, on the bright side, a boon during lockdown. I am interested in almost everything, and find it a challenge to fit in daily exercise, good food, reading, and writing. If I do watch something, it's on an iPad on the kitchen counter while I process kombucha or kefir, cook meals, or clean before moving to the bigger screen to bounce on my trampoline. If I do sit, I might sort papers, indulge in some zentangle, or paint my nails.

Positive psychology suggests our contentment and happiness is 90 per cent dependent on teaching our brain to scan for the positive. The ancient Greeks defined happiness as, "the joy we feel striving toward our potential." People who choose a big dream or goal require daily baby steps, building in some rewarding daily achievable goals. And, they tend to be happier. Working passionately toward a goal delivers more pleasure and satisfaction than trying to find the bottom of Facebook or the mythical end of Netflix. You might even reach bedtime feeling grateful for your solitude.

Rusti has been writing professionally since 1999. Her favourite word activities are coaching writers and offering online writing stay-treats.



Zentangling can be a fun solitary activity. | Rusti L Leahy

challenges in our own way. I can only share what works for me.

Writing and reading is naturally a one person endeavour. Maybe write your life story.

imagine BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals). Zentangling (drawing complicated patterns or doodling) and walking are the closest I have ever come to meditating. If you need to

this: my days disappear all too soon, starting the day with writing gratitude, my Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG), tweaking my memoir, reading, all before any screen time.

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Eastwood mural needs community help

Workshops for designing and assembling the mural are expected in the new year

KATE WILSON

A mosaic tile mural planned for the north side of Eastwood community hall is heading into the design stage, and recruitment for community help is underway.

“The north wall has had graffiti in the past. We thought it would be great if we could bring to it a positive image, something encouraging,” explains

Christy Morin, the league’s networking director.

She says the primary goal of installing a prominent piece of public art is to bring beauty to the area and to create a landmark.

“The community hall and grounds are not just a space, but a piece of home for residents. A mural adds a sense of special place in your home community.”

Volunteers are being asked

to help create the design and to help assemble the tile panels.

“Someone doesn’t have to be an experienced designer to help make mosaic tile art. They can come in, young or old, and participate,” says Morin.

The artist, Theodora Harasymiw, is one of the city’s premier mosaic tile creators. She will be asking workshop participants to explore the theme of flowers of Eastwood.

“This is about bringing

neighbours together, to have their hands in a project that will be a landmark in Eastwood for generations to come,” says Donna Yateman, league president. “We want the whole community to feel a sense of pride when they see the mural.”

Workshops are taking place in the new year and will focus on creating a design and helping assemble the tile panels.

People who’d like to participate are asked to contact

Eastwood Community League at: 780.477.2354.

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 Eastwood.



Workshops will take place in the new year, overseen by the artist, Theodora Harasymiw. | Supplied

Community league seeking new faces

Eastwood Community League continues to build community connectedness

KATE WILSON

Eastwood Community League has been busy this past year-and-a-half. The board renovated their hall last summer and installed security cameras. They expanded their community garden, offering a portion to residents for free community harvest.

They’re also inviting commu-

nity participants to offer their creativity and energy to help make a mosaic tile mural for the hall exterior. The mural should be ready by the end of February, and installed in the spring.

“All these upgrades highlight our aspiration to keep building community capacity with an emphasis on safety, connectedness, and beautification,” says Donna Yateman, league president.

“While all this is taking place, we’ve seen some vacancies on the board. We’re looking for new board members to keep the momentum going.”

Yateman notes Eastwood is a diverse and vibrant neighbourhood, with many small businesses starting up and young families moving in. There are also challenges in the area of food security and building community connectedness.

“We’re in the midst of recruiting board directors, and would be thrilled to hear from any residents who’d like to bring to our board their enthusiasm for growing community and continuing our upgrades.”

Available positions include secretary, treasurer, and directors-at-large. Interested residents are asked to contact Donna Yateman or the Eastwood Community League office at:

780.477.2354. Their website is eastwoodcommunity.org.

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 Eastwood.



Volunteer Coordinator Wanted!

Do you want to help mobilize our volunteers?! We are looking for an enthusiastic person who can get our volunteers together and accomplish tasks and coverage for events. The ideal candidate leads by example and can work with teams to organize activities and gives and receives constructive feedback. Overall someone who loves working with people can be developed into this role!

If this sounds like you!

Contact us at President@spruceavenuecommunity.com

Preference will be given to candidates with league membership (Free for 2020 -2021) followed by residents of Spruce Avenue.

Christmas Light Contest

Ready your lights and decorate lawn for the best, most colourful, creative community display. Open any house in the **Parkdale Cromdale Area!!!** Even nominate a neighbour!

Nomination deadline : **December 17th**
Judging Day : **December 18th**
(Remember to turn your lights on!)

To Enter or Nominate a Neighbour Scan the QR code or go to

ParkdaleCromdale.org/christmalightmap



Desk jobs can cause weak or tight muscles

Build a routine for improved flexibility and strength

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Sedentary jobs should come with a warning label: may result in a bad back, tight hamstrings and hips, and weak core muscles.

Kirsten Scott, a retired massage therapist, explains desk jobs typically cause irritation in three muscles.

“The hip flexors—the front of the hip—gets shortened. The piriformis muscle [in the buttocks near the top of the hip

joint] almost always is what causes the sciatic nerve to get irritated,” she says. You may also notice tightness in the psoas muscle, which wraps from the front of your spine into your hip. “You stand up and it spasms.”

The key, says Scott, is “stretching and also strengthening.”

If your muscles are feeling very inflamed and tight, it may be a good idea to start by taking a pain killer or muscle relaxant. Consult a doctor first to ensure

this is a safe approach for your individual circumstance.

But when you’re able, take the time to stretch and ensure you have a quiet space. “Listening to your body is hard because we have too many distractions,” says Scott. “Take the five minutes and just focus on it.”

Don’t overstretch. “Push too hard and it gets irritated and inflamed,” Scott explains. “We can move more slowly.”

Stretch incrementally. “On the first day of stretching, stretch to where you can feel

the tightness and ease off slightly; take three deep breaths and release. The next day, move to where you feel the tightness and take three deep breaths. The next day, push into the tightness.”

Stretching isn’t the entire solution, though. “If we’re stretching, we also need to strengthen. That’s where seeing a physiotherapist can be helpful.”

Incremental strengthening and building up fitness levels is equally important.

“When we move too quickly, we injure ourselves. Our soft tissue just cannot manage it. We want results, so we push it.”

The best way to ensure stretching and fitness becomes part of our life is to build a routine.

Try these stretches and exercises below (or online at ratcreek.org).

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



Stretching and strengthening is key to ensuring your desk job doesn't cause you physical problems. | Image by ArtCoreStudios from Pixabay



CAT COW 2 Slowly arch your back and lift your face toward the ceiling. Hold for a few seconds, then repeat. Repeat 8-10 times. | Talea Medynski



QUADRICEPS STRETCH Stand with your feet close together, supporting yourself with a chair or against a wall. Bend your left leg and grab your left foot with your left hand.



CAT COW 1 Start on your hands and knees, arms straight and under your shoulders. Slowly curve your spine by pressing your abs toward the ceiling, and drop your head toward the floor. Hold for a few breaths. | Talea Medynski



PIRIFORMIS STRETCH Lie on your back, feet flat on the floor and both knees bent. Lift your left leg towards your chest, then cross your right ankle across your left knee. Place your hands underneath your left knee and pull your leg towards your chest. Hold the left leg, feeling the stretch in the right hip flexor. Slowly, place the left leg back on the floor and switch sides. Repeat 8-10 times on each leg. | Talea Medynski



HAMSTRING STRETCH Sit with one leg extended and your back straight, then bend your other leg, resting the sole of your foot against your mid-thigh. Slowly reach toward your ankle, keeping your knee, neck, and back straight. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Repeat two times on each leg. | Talea Medynski

Do you want to create a mosaic tile mural?

We're looking for committed, hands-on people to help design and assemble a mural for Eastwood Community Hall. Workshops are happening in the new year.

Contact Eastwood Community League to learn how you can participate!

info@eastwoodhub.org • 780-477-2354

WE'RE HIRING...

FACILITY CARETAKER

We are seeking a hard-working individual who likes to work on projects and will take pride in maintaining as well as keeping the facility well-running, safe and secure.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Skill in General Maintenance, Grounds-Keeping, and Carpentry
- Ability to be a good representative of the League and work well with the Board, Committees, and Community Members
- Flexible, Proactive, has the ability to work without supervision, and will keep open communication with the Board

APPLY BY EMAIL:

President@parkdalecromdale.org
parkdalecromdale.org/facilitygroundscaretaker



Parkdale Cromdale Community League

arts on the ave presents

Deep Freeze

A Byzantine Winter Fête
Une Fête D'Hiver Byzantine

JANUARY 8 - 25, 2021

DeepFreezeFest.ca

The Fiddle & Fables

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WHAT YOU CAN



8 Outdoor Park Locations!

Alberta Avenue * Parkdale/Cromdale
Eastwood * Westwood * Spruce Avenue
Delton * Elmwood Park * Borden Park

ICE CARVINGS

STORIES

LIGHT INSTALLATIONS

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

& MORE!

Stay Tuned! #DeepFreezeFest



Deep Freeze Trees Please!



Drop off your Christmas Tree
between Dec 26 and Jan 6 and we
will give it an exciting second life
at Deep Freeze!

Drop off at "The Meeting" art
installation at 92 St & 118 Ave.

DeepFreezeFest.ca

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