

# Rat Creek Press

Alberta Avenue • Delton • Eastwood • Elmwood Park • Parkdale-Cromdale • Spruce Avenue • Westwood



BY THE COMMUNITY - FOR THE COMMUNITY

DEC. 2021–JAN. 2022

## See Deep Freeze in arctic glory

Explore cultures and arctic creatures during this annual fête



Left: Borden Park will once again be the main site of Deep Freeze. | Marc J Chalifoux Photography

Right: Organizers encourage people to see the lights and installations at Borden Park from dusk until dark. | Epic Photography

### - TALEA MEDYNSKI -

This January, Deep Freeze: A Byzantine Winter Fête organizers invite people to explore its beautiful installations from dusk to dark.

Sauvé MacBean, creative festival manager, says, “Our main site will be Borden Park, organized in a promenade style like last year. It will be a menagerie of art and colour and sound. Come with your cohorts and see all the installations.”

With the theme of *under the ancient arctic sky*, MacBean says artists will create their ice and snow sculptures and other installations like lanterns with that idea in mind.

The theme will explore arctic creatures that no longer exist, like the woolly mammoth and the Yukon horse, as well as those that still do, like the polar bear and arctic fox.

“You just might see sculptures of past and present arctic creatures. I haven’t had a chance to meet with the sculptors and

present my ask list yet,” MacBean says, although she adds that Barrie Collier and his team of sculptors are usually up for creative challenges.

But the theme is also about recognizing cultures. “We are all these cultures under this sky,” explains MacBean. “Honouring this culture, honouring what’s come before us, and celebrating life and culture that is still around us to be celebrated.” She adds, “This land of Canada we’re on, we’re so honoured to call this home.”

Christy Morin, artistic director of Deep Freeze, says that the lanterns and lantern lighting will be beautiful at Borden Park.

Organizers are debating about bringing back the Deep Freezer Races, but this time in Borden Park. A canteen will be set up at Borden Park with food like tourtiere and perogies available for purchase. This fête will welcome back the Tourtiere Competition, so go to [deepfreeze.ca](http://deepfreeze.ca) for details.

Horse and wagon rides will also be available, and roving performers will be around

the site.

Back on 118 Avenue, Pipon Village will be set up on the grassy space by the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts.

“There will be different activities in the teepees, and storytelling around the fire,” says MacBean.

Morin adds, “Bent Arrow will be partnering with us and doing some of the programming, such as Indigenous games, winter sports, and drumming.”

At The Carrot Coffeehouse, people can stop in and enjoy live performances that range from storytelling to music. Organizers are following Alberta Health Services protocols. “Have your QR codes [for your vaccines] ready at the door,” says Morin.

“We’re very excited to host people in our space and bring live performances back to Deep Freeze,” says Morin.

And although Deep Freeze continues to evolve due to the necessity of keeping people safe during the pandemic, Morin says, “It’ll be a different Deep Freeze that

will still be very magical.”

As always, Deep Freeze: A Byzantine Winter Fête requires the efforts of many volunteers, and organizers are still looking for more people to help. Visit [deepfreeze.ca/volunteer](http://deepfreeze.ca/volunteer) to learn more.

### DEEP FREEZE: A BYZANTINE WINTER FÊTE

Jan. 14-23, 2022

Borden Park, 4-10 p.m.

Pipon Village (118 Ave & 92 St), Saturdays & Sundays

Live music at The Carrot Coffeehouse, Saturdays & Sundays

More: [deepfreeze.ca](http://deepfreeze.ca)

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

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arts on the ave presents

# Deep Freeze

A Byzantine Winter Fête ✦ Une Fête D'Hiver Byzantine

## JANUARY 14-23, 2022

Under the Ancient Arctic Sky

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** visit [DeepFreezeFest.ca](http://DeepFreezeFest.ca) for details

# A fashion show for a crucial cause

Community event will help those who are homeless

- CORINE DEMAS -

Heart of the City is happy to present their first Indigenous Fashion Show and clothing drive.

On Dec. 12, Parkdale-Cromdale Community League will host the fashion show and serve dinner. Featuring local Indigenous DJ Louis Bouchier, Heart of the City will also have a dance party after the show.

The show will feature two established Indigenous fashion designers, Acahkos Designs and Heather Bouchier Design, along with emerging designer Erin's Regalia. Jacqueline Buffalo will do the makeup.

Fey Gobel, Heart of the City's art director says, "Heart of the City has grown to encompass many art forms over the years, including poetry, comedy, dance, and more! However, one art form we have not yet explored is fashion. So, we decided it's time to branch out with an evening celebrating Indigenous culture and fashion, showcasing some of Edmonton's best textile work, beading, jewelry, music, food, and more." Gobel continues, "In partnership with Nékem, we are also running a clothing drive to collect gently used and new warm winter clothing, as well as new socks and underwear, for our houseless community members. Come join us for

a night of celebrating Indigenous fashion, eat stew and bannock, and bring a little something for the clothing drive."

Nékem is a non-governmental organization started by local Indigenous community builder, Vee Ce Duncan. Nékem's mission statement says, "Through Indigenous teachings, Nékem is creating a resilient community where people belong, find purpose, and support each other as they overcome the destructive impact of societal and cultural barriers."

Duncan and the team at Nékem regularly bring food, clothing, and emergency supplies to our houseless community members. Many of these folks have difficulty

accessing programming and resources, so Nékem goes to them in the camps and on the streets. Find out more by visiting [nekem.org](http://nekem.org).

Doors for the show open at 4 p.m. Dinner is at 5 p.m., and the show starts at 6:30 p.m. with a dance party to follow.

Parkdale-Cromdale Community League is located at 11335 85 St. Tickets are limited and free. Register by visiting [eventbrite.ca](http://eventbrite.ca) and then type in "Indigenous Fashion Show."

*Corine is a passionate spoken word artist, singer songwriter and is the president of Heart of the City Festival Society of Edmonton.*



Enjoy the variety of the fashion show and bring something for the clothing drive. | Megan Kemshead Photography



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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.

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Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

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PUBLISHER Karen Mykietka [info@ratcreek.org](mailto:info@ratcreek.org)  
EDITOR Talea Medynski [editor@ratcreek.org](mailto:editor@ratcreek.org)  
DESIGNER Brenda Fortin [design@ratcreek.org](mailto:design@ratcreek.org)  
ADVERTISING [ads@ratcreek.org](mailto: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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Serving 12,500 community members.

#### DELIVERY

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## Rat Creek Press

More than a print newspaper

#### WEBSITE

Find all our articles with additional photos, web links, community information pages, and resources on [ratcreek.org](http://ratcreek.org).

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# Indulge in holiday and winter fun

Area leagues share their plans for the winter season

- TALEA MEDYNSKI -

Area leagues have plenty of plans for the holidays and winter season.

## Alberta Avenue Community League

Alberta Avenue Community League is running its Hub Night through December, so stop by for meals and a variety of activities, such as crafts and holiday movies.

Take in a live theatre broadcast on Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. with *Enchanted Antlers 4 - The Fast and the Furry: Us*. Attendance is free. Sign up at [albertaave.org](http://albertaave.org). Proof of vaccination is required for people 13 years of age and over.

On Dec. 18 at 7 p.m., the league is holding a pub night with live music from The Give 'Em Hell Boys. Tickets are \$10 at [albertaave.org](http://albertaave.org), or at the door. Proof of vaccination is required.



Have fun and meet new people during Hub Nights. | Ali Hammington

## Delton Community League

Delton residents can look forward to skating on the Walter Gurba Rink. It will likely be open in mid-December, weather permitting. When open, public skating is 5:30 to 7 p.m. and shinny hockey is 7 to 9 p.m. from Monday to Friday. On Sunday, public skating is 1 to 3 p.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. for shinny hockey. On Dec. 24, the hours are 5:30 to 9 p.m., on Dec. 26 from 3 to 7 p.m., and on Jan. 1 from 3 to 7 p.m. The rink is closed on Dec. 25 and Dec. 31.

## Eastwood Community League

Eastwood Community League is participating in a Youth Outdoor Hockey League, which will begin in early December, although the start date is dependent on weather.

Kate Wilson, facility coordinator, says, "Youth from U7 to U17 [players under the age of 7 to 17] are invited to register on the league's website. This is a non-competitive, fun league to utilize our outdoor community rinks, give kids an opportunity to play the great Canadian sport of hockey, and to bring community members together. It's in partnership with Delton and Spruce Avenue Community Leagues and Hockey Edmonton. People can get more information by emailing one of the three community leagues."

On Dec. 17, the league is hosting the Jingle Jammin Christmas Celebration. Arts on the Ave (AOTA) is organizing the event, in partnership with the league and Edmonton Police Services (EPS). Everything will be centred at the league.

It will be a full day event from 3 until 10 p.m. Sauvé MacBean, AOTA administrator, says from 3 to 5:30 p.m., there will be 3 on 3 shinny hockey with EPS and 3 on 3 road hockey.

"All ages, all skill levels are welcome," says MacBean. From 3 to 7 p.m., watch holiday movies, make crafts, go on a carriage ride, and roast marshmallows. The chili dinner begins at 6 p.m. Register for dinner by visiting [eventbrite.ca](http://eventbrite.ca) and searching for Jingle Jammin.

"Vaccination proof will be required for indoor activities, as per AHS," says MacBean.

Carolling throughout Eastwood begins at 6:30 p.m.

## Elmwood Park Community League

Elmwood Park Community League is treating residents to an outdoor Christmas event at the hall on Dec. 19 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Morgan Wolf, league president, says, "Special guests include Santa and Mrs. Claus as well as the Grinch and an elf! There is a Christmas backdrop available for photos with or without Santa, and fire pits and snacks and crafts for the kids."

## Parkdale-Cromdale Community League

Parkdale-Cromdale Community League is continuing to host Capoeira lessons. Sarah DeLano, program coordinator, says, "The Capoeira Academy will be running their programming from the hall during [November to January]; registration info on their website." Classes are offered to youth ages 5 to 16, as well as an introductory class for adults.

The league will hold a pub night on Dec. 17 from 7 to 10 p.m. with snacks, drinks, and trivia.

"[There will be a] New Year's Eve party with live music



Go carolling in Eastwood during the Jingle Jammin Christmas Celebration. | Supplied

(details TBA, but the band is both local and epic)," says DeLano.

On Dec. 2, a free womens' fitness class begins and continues for the first three Thursdays of every month from 6-7 p.m. "It's called Body and Movement, loosely based on the martial art Capoeira."

Proof of vaccination is required for all events. "The rink schedule will be posted at the rink and on social media [[facebook.com/PCCLYEG](https://www.facebook.com/PCCLYEG)]. We do hope to host a few rink events, but details are not yet worked out."

## Spruce Avenue Community League

Spruce Avenue Community League is keeping events low-key with a rink schedule for those who wish to use the community's ice rink. Visit [facebook.com/SpruceAveCommLeague](https://www.facebook.com/SpruceAveCommLeague) for updates.

## Westwood Community League

In Westwood, residents can participate in a holiday cookie exchange on Dec. 11 from noon to 3 p.m. at the league. According to Westwood's newsletter, "Participants are asked to bring a few dozen of their favourite holiday treats and the recipe. And don't forget a container to take home a sample of everyone's goodies!"

Participants older than 12 must have their QR code ready or proof of a negative COVID test.

And on Jan. 22 from 2 to 4 p.m., Westwood is holding its Winter Fest. Food and beverages include hot dog roasting, s'mores, coffee, and hot chocolate. Don't miss tobogganing and snow painting.

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



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# Trustee to serve kids and families

Trisha Estabrooks is back in the seat as chair and Ward D trustee

## - MICHAEL ENDERS -

Trisha Estabrooks is back, both as Ward D's trustee and as chair of the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB).

At the end of October, EPSB's trustees unanimously voted for Estabrooks to resume her position as chair as she begins her second term as Ward D's trustee. "It is an honour to be re-elected, especially during a real challenging time." Estabrooks says she believes this job is all about serving kids and families and looks forward to the next four years.

Including herself, there are two incumbents on the board. It is a whole new board essentially, but Estabrooks says she knows it will be great as there will be new ideas and fresh perspectives. Most trustees ran on a campaign to keep the draft curriculum out of classrooms and oppose the current curriculum. This aligns very well with Estabrook's opposition to the curriculum. She says it needs a complete overhaul and a rewrite.

"The main priority is to keep the draft curriculum out of the schools, and we are not out of the pandemic, so it must continually be navigated to keep schools safe." Estabrooks says she will advocate for the right measures to be put in place to keep schools operating. "We will continue to have to fight for adequate funding for public education in the province. Edmonton Public is going to be at the forefront in this fight. This is a team effort for the trustees."

The school board is going to mount pressure on the Minister of Education. Estabrooks says she believes many school

boards across the province will do the same and EPSB will be debating a motion at the next board meeting on Nov. 30 to oppose the curriculum. "This will affirm Edmonton Public's position to oppose the

curriculum with a new board."

The trustees who got elected, including Estabrooks, worked hard to assume the role of public school board trustee. "There is a heightened expectation to

work hard as trustees, especially with the current situation with the pandemic amongst other issues." Estabrooks wants the school system to be more anti-racist and inclusive. "We need ongoing work that requires conversation, attention, and an ongoing commitment to get to a better place. Another step being taken is the collection of race-based data. Edmonton will be the first in the province to take this work on."

Estabrooks believes the coming year will be another pandemic year. Parents are familiar with the challenges of sending kids to school during a pandemic. "Luckily seeing a significant decrease [of COVID-19 infections] in our city numbers, which includes our schools, will hopefully see a return to things families and kids miss such as volunteering, field trips, and graduation ceremonies."

Estabrooks does not see vaccinations being mandated for students, as this would have to come from the provincial government. However, there is a high compliance rate for teachers getting vaccinated. "Teachers know to keep themselves safe, it is wise to get vaccinated." Over 90 per cent of teachers are vaccinated at this time. "If we can end the year with the pandemic in the rear-view mirror, this will be great."

*Mike is a director-at-large on the Rat Creek Press board and also loves to volunteer in the area, especially in his community of Parkdale. When he has time, Mike loves to go for long mountain bike rides and meet up with friends or family.*



Ward D trustee Trisha Estabrooks shared her goals. | Supplied



Wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season and a New Year filled with Peace and Happiness.

**Blake Desjarlais, MP**  
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# New councillor eager to start work

Sharing the hopes and goals for Ward O-day'min

- MICHAEL ENDERS -

Anne Stevenson is the newly elected councillor for Ward O-day'min and she says she has so much love for the neighbourhoods that make up her constituency. Stevenson wants to be a voice and "try to help with any issues that come up."

Stevenson adds that she is honoured

and grateful for everyone who supported her through the campaign and says it is "a dream come true to serve in this capacity."

Racism is one issue already discussed. On Oct. 26, Stevenson was part of a unanimous vote approving a motion to work on an anti-racism strategy. "It is a powerful experience to be a part of. Setting a clear message from council,

and at the end of the day anti-racism work is about being a strong community together and not allowing anyone [to feel] excluded, and no one missing out on others' contributions. Racism creates such a barrier to getting the full capacity out of our communities and societies, and we all suffer collectively as a group when not everyone can be safe nor share their voice."

Stevenson says she is "eager to start on projects such as housing and homelessness initiatives." Stevenson is the director of strategic initiatives for the Right at Home Housing Society where she enjoys working with executive director Cam McDonald, and would like to help find solutions that can improve the current situation in our city. On Nov. 22, which is National Housing Day, Stevenson is planning to make a notice of motion around an initiative at the council meeting and she is excited to see the city support affordable housing.

When asked about the new council, Stevenson says, "Diversity is exciting on this council and a huge leap forward. Something to absolutely be celebrated." She adds that many groups are still not represented, and she would love to see an even more inclusive and diverse council in

the future. However, she says she thinks this council is collaborative and is excited to be working with others like Ward Métis Coun. Ashley Salvador.

Stevenson says that city council has been discussing finding the balance between work life and home life. She asks for people to have patience with her at this time and if she cannot attend an event, it is not for a lack of desire, but for her to find that balance.

When Stevenson and a group of friends lived together for a year abroad and then lived in different cities a few years later, they would get back together. Stevenson and her friends would have a rose and a thorn conversation where "everyone would go around and share one great thing and one not so great thing about whatever." Stevenson hopes that her ward constituents will be willing to approach her and have that kind of rose and thorn conversation.



**When asked about the new council, Stevenson says, "Diversity is exciting on this council and a huge leap forward. Something to absolutely be celebrated." She adds that many groups are still not represented, and she would love to see an even more inclusive and diverse council in the future.**

Ward O-day'min Coun. Anne Stevenson shares her hopes for the ward. | Supplied

*Mike is a director-at-large on the Rat Creek Press board and also loves to volunteer in the area, especially in his community of Parkdale. When he has time, Mike loves to go for long mountain bike rides and meet up with friends or family.*

# Ward Métis welcomes new councillor

Ashley Salvador is excited to create sustainable solutions

- TEKLA LUCHENSKI -

Ashley Salvador is excited to begin her tenure as councillor for Ward Métis. With a background in urban planning, sociology, and sustainability, Salvador brings a well-rounded skill set.

"I'm very excited about the folks we have around the table, too. I think there's a lot of diverse voices, different life experiences, expertise, and I think that'll make for better decision making."

Homelessness and affordable housing was a major concern at the Nov. 1 city council meeting. Concerns including the opioid crisis and inequity of resource allotment across wards are connected. In that light, Salvador points out that she has consistently called for holistic solutions.

She says, "When it comes to housing, homelessness, and affordable housing, being able to really look for more systemic solutions, address root causes, which of course, is looped in with conversations around... mental health, addiction, and really a larger conversation about community well-being. That was kind of reflected across the board. Obviously. It's a major, major conversation in our ward."

Salvador has a holistic vision for Ward Métis and for Edmonton. "We can talk about the need for more permanent sup-

**"When it comes to housing, homelessness, and affordable housing, being able to really look for more systemic solutions, address root causes, which of course, is looped in with conversations around... mental health, addiction, and really a larger conversation about community well-being."**

Ward Métis Coun. Ashley Salvador shares some goals for the ward. | Supplied

portive housing. From the perspective that this is a health issue. This is about well-being. This is about safety in our communities. It's also about being smart with our dollars. It's much more economical to do the right thing at the outset, as opposed to not, and seeing that cost reflected in our healthcare system. So, being able to talk about issues and frame issues with that holistic perspective, and



being able to lean into that complexity is something that I really look forward to doing."

Salvador advocates for a decentralized model and says that people who are vulnerable and need help with housing or other needs live everywhere in the city. "I think oftentimes, we think it's a downtown issue, when in reality people are facing those challenges everywhere.

And historically, I think we've seen a concentration of supports and services and affordable housing in that downtown core and a little bit into Ward Métis, as well [as] in the Alberta Ave area. And it's just really important that we're able to spread out those services." She continues, "Not only is it important for those [vulnerable] communities, but it's also more conducive to recovery and well-being, so that we're able to integrate things like permanent supportive housing into [more] neighbourhoods."

Salvador would like to see more diverse, walkable, and accessible communities for young families, and for seniors who would like to age in place. Developments should be well connected to transit and amenities. She suggests planning clusters of smaller bungalows around a central courtyard or garden space and retrofitting character homes.

"Being able to have different types of infill is a crucial part of this conversation [about] zoning bylaw renewal, which is a process that is ongoing at the city and is going to be coming to the urban planning committee and eventually council office quite soon."

*Tekla is a freelance writer who has lived in the Parkdale neighbourhood since 2013.*

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## OPINION

# Think before buying pets as gifts

Owning a pet is a lifetime commitment with responsibilities

- ASHLYNN CHAND -

In my third year of my undergraduate degree, I adopted a grey short-haired kitten from the Edmonton Humane Society. I was feeling lonely at the time due to my busy schedule, so I wanted some silent company to study with me. Although she was technically a present from my mom, it wasn't a spontaneous or conventional gift. It took years of thinking and months of preparation.

As much as I love my cat, I would never gift a pet to anyone unless they understood fully what owning a pet means. I took my time choosing which cat I wanted by going to the same shelters frequently and seeing the same cats and kittens. I also was prepared to take on any financial responsibilities that I might encounter in the future.

In an CBC article, Terra Maclean, an animal care worker, says: "Pets can be a 20-year commitment—and that means major demands on a person's time and finances." According to statistica.com, in 2021 the annual cost of taking care of an adult cat amounted to over \$2,500 while for adult dogs, the annual cost amounted to \$3,724.

I can certainly attest that veterinary visits alone can be costly if your pet gets sick or has an infection. In cats, eye infections are common and for dogs, ear infections happen often. My own cat developed an eye infection that was resistant to medicine and eventually, she went fully blind. Now, the right eye needs to be removed for

fluid buildup, which will cost around \$2,200.

Even if there are no medical issues, the daily costs of food and treats are still worth considering. According to investopedia.com, besides vet bills, food is the biggest cost for pet owners.



Consider the responsibilities involved before getting or giving a pet. | Pixabay

Young children plead for pets, often promising to do all the heavy lifting in pet maintenance. Realistically, parents with young children who want a pet should recognize that they will still need to take care of their child's pet in some form. The website Crazy Rich Pets states "a child is rarely responsible enough to care for a pet, and they might end up treating it like a toy, only playing with it when they want, and then disregarding its other needs."

In the same article, they advise, "If you, as a parent, or the kid's parents are not prepared to care for the pet themselves, then the pet has no place in that home."

Skipping necessary medical procedures can cause problems for other

the holiday season have a higher rate of return. The Richmond SPCA website states some news stories are "unclear whether it is talking about all holiday adoptions or adoptions of pets to be given as gifts to someone else – it indiscriminately alternates in the type of adoptions it refers to." The Richmond SPCA and other humane organizations track their returns carefully and for this particular humane society, Richmond holiday returns are "generally are a bit lower than [their] annual rates of return." Another point of contention is that homeless animals still need to be adopted to save their lives and humane societies do not discourage adoptions during the holidays for that reason.

I'm not saying you shouldn't adopt pets during the holidays, but rather you should be careful of gifting an animal when you're wearing rose-coloured glasses. There are alternatives to owning a pet if you're just looking to cuddle with an animal, such as checking out a local cat café or volunteering at animal shelters. If those alternatives can't satisfy you and you've done your research, then the love of a new lifetime friend cannot be beat.

*Ashlynn is a writer based in Edmonton. She has a BA in English and Psychology from the University of Alberta. Her work has appeared in Ricochet Media, This Magazine, and the Toronto Star. She can be described as a friendly neighbourhood cat: very small, very fast, and can sleep anywhere.*

community members. Spaying or neutering a pet can help manage overpopulation and prevent stray animals. The City of Hamilton warns its citizens that: "stray animals can carry diseases such as rabies and distemper, cause damage, destroy property, get in the road and cause accidents, attack people and other animals."

According to Richmond SPCA, there's also a fair amount of debate about whether the pets adopted during

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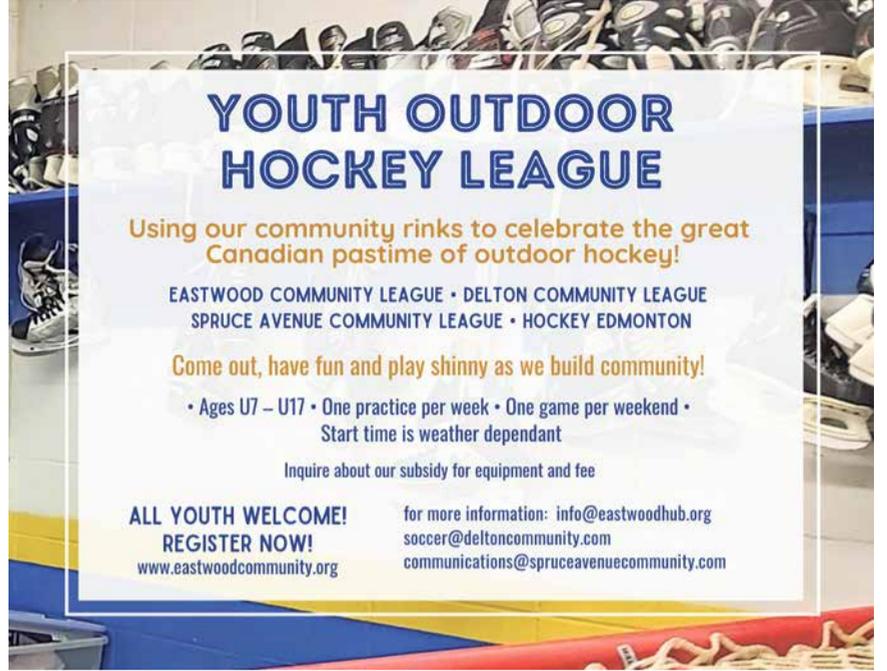
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# Twelve days of shopping locally

Try these shops for some great gift ideas this holiday season

## - VICTORIA STEVENS -

As the snow flies, we are reminded that it is holiday gift giving season! If you are looking to pick up one-of-a-kind gifts, give these shops a try.

**Pe Metawe Games** (11805 94 St, pemetawe.com/games) is an Indigenous-owned role playing game (RPG) and board game store offering a variety of games, such as Dungeons and Dragons. They offer drop-in games nights, currently done virtually. The gift of a monthly membership, drop-in sessions, or one of their many board games would be a great gift and experience to give.

**Avenue Artisan Shop** (9004 118 Ave, inside MedX Drugs)

A place to find locally created gifts from artisans in the community. You can find wall art, jewelry, and even books by local artisans, ensuring the gift you are giving will be truly unique.

**Plaza Bowling Co.** (10418 118 Ave, plazabowlingco.ca) is a vintage five pin bowling alley with modern touches. Book a lane or grab a gift certificate for some bowling shenanigans as a gift for the

person who has everything.

**The Carrot Community Arts Coffeehouse** (9351 118 Ave, thecarrot.ca) As a hub for arts on Alberta Ave, you will find a variety of handmade and artisan-created pieces to buy. You will definitely find that perfect gift.

**Common Box Games** (8932 118 Ave, commonboxgames.com) If you have a lover of RPG card games, such as Magic: The Gathering or Pokemon, Common Box Games is the place to shop. They offer both sealed packs and singles to help that gamer build the perfect deck as well as accessories.

**Nexwave Video Games** (10402 118 Ave, facebook.com/NexwaveVideoGames/)

Video game nostalgia is in full swing, so why not remind someone of great childhood memories? Nexwave has got you covered from the early days of NES and Sega all the way up to the PS4. They can be found on Facebook at

Nexwave Video Games.

**Alternative Glass and Snacks** (12459 97 St, 780.474.0744) offers an array of cannabis accessories, infused snacks, and beverages. Blown glass bongos, vape pens, and beautiful pipes can be found here for the cannabis connoisseur in your life. They can be found on Facebook at Alternative Glass and Snacks.

**The Nina Haggerty**

**Centre for the Arts** (9225 118 Ave, thenina.ca) The Nina's artists use mediums such as clay, textiles, and paint to create incredibly unique and beautiful art. The Nina also offers a Create Box if you are interested in exploring different art forms. Purchases can be

made online or in person.

**Bissell Thrift Shop** (8818 118 Ave, bissellthriftshop.com) is the perfect place to find that one-of-a-kind gift at an affordable price. Thrifting is very much a trend right now and is a great way to keep your shopping list under budget.

**Al-Hikmah Bookstore and Clothing** (8901A 118 Ave) carries a great selection of Arabic language books, including books for children of all ages, as well as beautiful cultural gifts. The staff are very friendly and are happy to help you choose something perfect.

**Straight Blast Gym** (11714 82 St, straightblastgymedmonton.com/) is a mixed martial arts gym offering classes and training for people of all ages, abilities, and interests. Those who like to be bumped and tossed around will love some sessions in their stocking.

**Elite Dance Studio** (11756 95 St, elitedancestudio.net/) offers dance classes for all ages and skill levels as well as interests. You can learn the classic two-step or a steamy Latin dance. Offer to sign the dance lover in your life up for one of their programs as a gift this year.

Whatever you decide to give or do this holiday season, we hope you have a good one!

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



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1: Find some unique artist-made gifts at The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts. Their Holiday Show & Sale is Dec. 10, 5-9 p.m. | Supplied

2: The Avenue Artisan Shop recently opened in November. | Ali Hammington

3: The Carrot Coffeehouse always has a great selection of gift ideas, like this coffee. | Supplied

4: Give the gift of dance lessons from Elite Dance Studio. | Rebecca Lippiatt

# Dining locally during the holidays

Choose from a wealth of different cuisines

**- SHAREE ALUKO -**

The festive season is the perfect time to meet up with friends for a meal or simply dine out more often to enjoy the holidays. Fortunately, there are many local options to consider.

**Flava Café** has just the right blend of seasoning to keep you coming back for more. Conroy Smith, CEO and operations manager, is a Jamaican who migrated to Canada.

“As an immigrant to this country, my mission is to use food as a tool to create a community of togetherness, diversity, and inclusion. I strongly believe that no man is an island, because together we’re stronger, and together everyone achieves more,” says Smith.

Flava Café is located at 8307 118 Ave, and offers authentic Jamaican food such as jerk chicken, jerk pork, oxtail, curried goat, rice and peas, and festival dumplings. They are open Tuesday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. What makes Flava Café unique is that they are a quick service restaurant and use Jamaican food to create fusion from other cultures.

If you are craving some barbecue, **The Barbecue House** has you covered.

Kelvin Yeung, a family member who works in the business, says, “We’ve been in business since 1981. Family owned and run and the longest [running] Chinese barbecue shop in Edmonton. Tony Yeung

(my uncle), [was a] hard worker, [and] came here from Hong Kong in the mid ‘70s, with my other Uncle Henry and my dad, Ken. And our family has been working hard at the shop since.”

They are located at 9711 118 Ave and offer authentic Chinese barbecue such as pork, ribs, sausage, chicken, and duck. They are open from 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday to Saturday.

It is easy to become addicted to the delicious green onion cake at the **Green Onion Cake Man**, owned by Siu To.

“I immigrated from Hong Kong in 1975 and have always served in restaurants. I love good food and love to share good food with my fellow Edmontonians. We [serve] Northern Chinese cuisine and our special serving of green onion cake is right from the grill,” says To.

They are located at 9132 118 Ave and their hours are Monday to Saturday, noon to 8 p.m., and Sunday noon to 6 p.m.

A wide selection of great-tasting food is offered by **Coliseum Steak and Pizza**, owned and operated by the Varvis family.

“Peter Varvis immigrated to Canada from Greece in 1949 and was soon followed by his brother

Chris Varvis. What makes our food unique is the fact that it hasn’t changed since the day we opened in 1976. Our menu has generally remained the same, apart from a few appetizers that have been switched out over the years, but the main dishes we are known for haven’t changed and neither have our recipes,” says Christine Varvis.

The menu features steaks and pizzas, as well as barbecue pork and beef ribs, lobster tails, and a variety of other classic steakhouse fare.

Coliseum Steak and Pizza is located at 8015 118 Ave and is open Monday to Thursday, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Friday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., and holidays from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Mona Lisa Pub** is a great spot to hang

out, especially if you are looking for a night out with lots of entertainment. Brothers Riz and Ayaz Charania have owned and managed the pub for the past 18 years.

The pub offers happy hour pricing, affordable menu items, Wing Wednesday, Thirsty Thursday, karaoke, and plenty of other entertainment options.

“We have worked real hard to make Mona Lisa’s Pub a welcoming and safe environment for everybody! We also have recently gone through a beautiful renovation of the whole establishment, from front to back and top to bottom. We are inviting and fun! Our staff members consist of a strong, friendly, and close-knit group,” says Dawn Totten, an employee.

This pub is located at 9606 118 Ave and is open Sunday to Thursday from 11 a.m. to midnight, Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 a.m.

**Popular Bakery** provides a relaxing environment to eat sumptuous pastries, fresh breads, and hot beverages. The prices are reasonable to fit any budget, with good customer service in a very laid back atmosphere. They are located at 9307 118 Ave and are open Tuesday to Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

*Sharee has a Masters in Business Administration and is passionate about sharing information.*

**The festive season is the perfect time to meet up with friends for a meal or simply dine out more often to enjoy the holidays. Fortunately, there are many local options to consider, including:**

**Flava Café**

**The Barbecue House**

**Green Onion Cake Man**

**Coliseum Steak and Pizza**

**Mona Lisa Pub**

**Popular Bakery**



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8

5: Flava Café is a quick service restaurant. | Supplied

6: The Barbecue House has been in business since 1981. | Supplied

7: Mona Lisa Pub is a great neighbourhood watering hole with affordable food and plenty of entertainment. | Supplied

8: The Coliseum special pizza and caesar salad with garlic toast. | Christina Varvis

# Gift ideas that make a difference

Simple things can bring huge smiles to your loved ones

**- NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS -**

We spend hours deciding what to give our loved ones for a gift and we are often tempted to lean towards convention. But unless we understand what was really needed, we can never tell if our gifts made their recipients happy. However, once you start knowing your loved ones better, you may be surprised that the simplest of things can end up being the best gifts.

In a world where we have become busy with our jobs and errands, taking time to be with family and friends tops the list of gifts.

ever happened to me,” Raymar remarks. “This is what I really wanted — a simple phone call, someone to talk to and make me feel alive. Not a fancy phone that never resounded with a call.”

For Sherryz Dhaliwal, a young mother, her neighbours offering to babysit twice a week was the best gift ever. “I inherited a piano from my grandmother and was gifted a dozen song books on my birthday, but I had no time to practice. Thanks to my thoughtful neighbours, I can now actually play a few songs,” she beams.

Rosa Michaela, a widow living alone and whose only child is living abroad,

the tree lit after all those years.” Rosa wipes away tears of happiness. “The tree brought back wonderful memories. I am so thankful to these young men.”

For Kala Ravi, a senior citizen living alone, having someone volunteer to sell her furniture was a great help. “I needed space to move around in my wheelchair as well as the extra money.”

Even simple things like grocery shopping, shoveling snow, offering to walk a dog, or cooking and cleaning can make a big difference. Help a friend to clean their garage. Unused discount coupons might be useful to someone. Offer financial assistance to people who need it.

from Calgary when my husband was sick was the best gift I could ever ask for. For an immigrant to Canada like myself with no family, friendship is a huge gift without which I would have ended up homesick. Offering to draft a resume, being a professional mentor, or even familiarizing them with a city’s sights and sounds is a big blessing for many newcomers to Canada who are unfamiliar with the new life.

“Gifting comes from the heart and soul,” my grandma used to say. “Your gifts must fill up hearts and decorate a person’s life, not empty spaces.”



Left: Shopping for groceries for a senior citizen during colder weather is a wonderful gift. Centre: Helping a friend to clean their house is another gift idea. Right: Setting up furniture for a neighbour who needs help is a valuable gift.

Photos by Nazreena Anwar-Travas

Last year, Adam Raymar’s children gave him a new smartphone. “It was full of applications and looked pretty grand. But that was it, nothing more,” he says sadly. Then a year later, his niece moved to Alberta and started calling him every Sunday. “It is the best thing that has

has a different story to tell. “Since my dearest husband passed away years ago, I have never set up a Christmas tree. Last year, my son’s friends dropped in suddenly, pulled the tree out of storage, and set it up! It was so nice seeing

While giving a cash gift card may seem to be an ordinary gift, the extra money might go a long way in helping someone experiencing difficult times.

From a personal perspective, years ago my colleagues helping me to relocate

*Writing has always been Nazreena’s biggest passion besides crocheting and breeding birds. Having changed nine schools as a child in different countries, cultural tolerance and flexibility to adapt to diverse environments come naturally to her.*

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# When love and prayers bring hope

Sharing a personal experience of the importance of ceremony

**- CHERYL WHISKEYJACK -**

For two weeks in early October, Bent Arrow was a partner with our Parkdale-Cromdale Community League neighbours in an art installation meant to bring awareness to community and healing for the families of MMIWG2S (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People).

Kevin Wong and Steven Townsend, both board members of the league, approached us last winter to ask for guidance and support in bringing their idea to life. The idea was to create an awe-inspiring art installation that evoked love, honour, and remembrance for the women and men who were taken from us too soon. I quickly became excited at the potential this display had to educate and honour. I spoke of resources we could bring to the installation. Our teepee. We should have a sacred fire, a fire meant to be a portal from this earthly experience to the spirit world where our lost are now. We explained that the fire needed to be tended and fed and the firekeepers needed to support visitors who came to make offerings of tobacco to the sacred fire. The smoke would carry prayers up to the spirit world, to the Creator. We talked about starting the art installation in a ceremony, with an Elder lifting a pipe for us to have our offering to the people, that it be well received, that it educates others in a good way, that the families feel the honouring of their lost loved ones.

We invited others into the circle to help us plan. Stephanie Harpe is a community advocate and activist on the issue of MMIWG2S to communities all across Alberta and Canada. She brought forward the idea to have the images of the lost projected onto the red panels. She also suggested including the stories of the families left to mourn, piped into speakers placed around the display so visitors could see their faces and hear the families' experiences. It was to be a truly multi-dimensional experience for every visitor.

Some things happened that we did not plan. Like the altar of offerings that grew each day at the base of the installation. Flowers, stuffies, and tobacco, left by visitors and family. For two weeks this installation hosted visitors.

When it ended, we also had a ceremony to extinguish the sacred fire. The Elder said that for two weeks, this fire burned. Many prayers were said and many offerings were made. And because of this, the remnants of

the fire, the charcoal and ash, were still holding those prayers and that they remained very sacred and powerful, with the power to protect. The Elder invited those present to take some of that charcoal home as protection.

Speeches were made. Gratitude was expressed. Gifts were exchanged.

When I spoke, I shared how I have a niece who is struggling with addiction and living on the street. That her dad has been made to feel guilty of wasting police resources when he reports her missing. I expressed how far we have yet to go in this journey, that those meant to serve and protect don't see her as worthy of it.

We all went home.

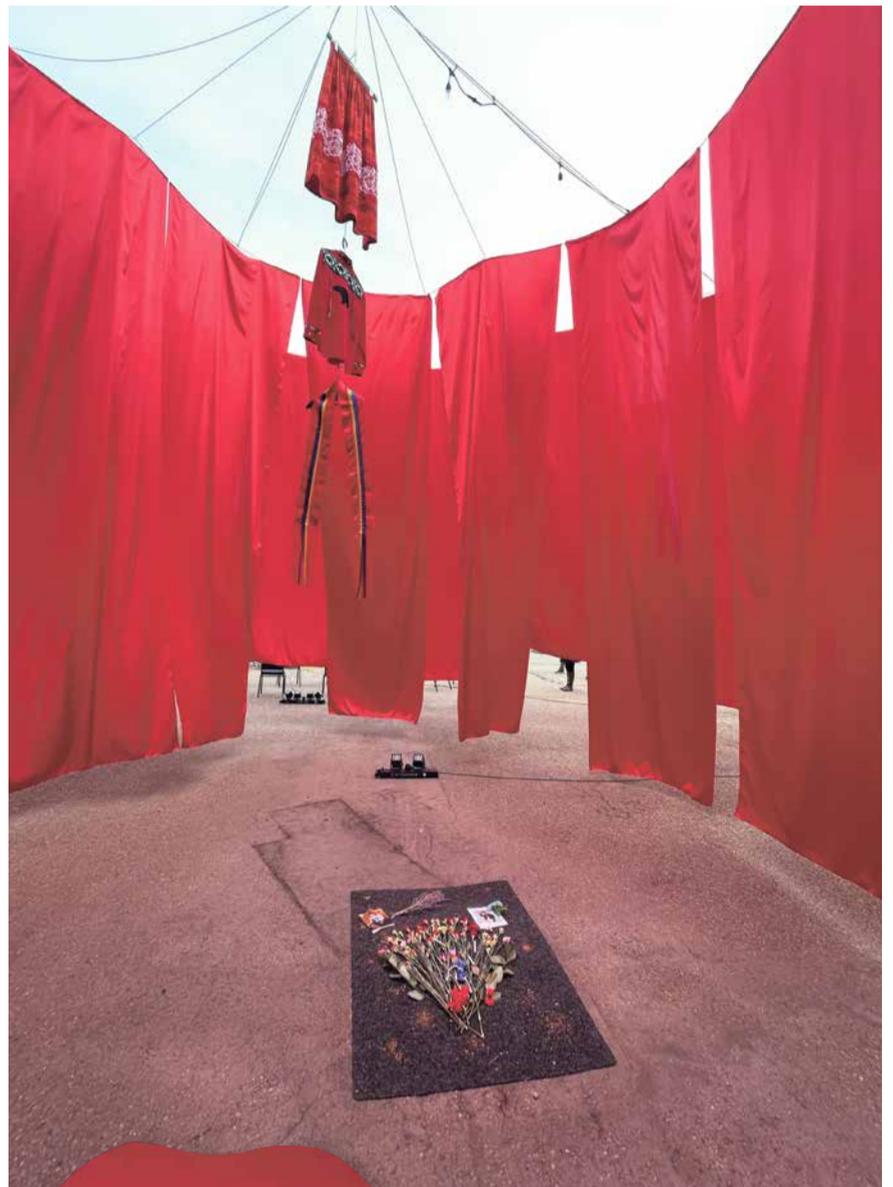
I took a piece of that charcoal home. I placed it in the frame with the embroidered red dress that was gifted to the families. I shared the teaching with my brother. I told him about the charcoal, of all the prayers and offerings that were made, and how this charcoal now carries those prayers and has the power to protect. I told him that I prayed for my niece and

her family who feel powerless to protect her. I then gave him the frame with the charcoal and red dress. He accepted my offering with gratitude. My brother travels from his home in another province every two weeks to come and search for her. On the last visit, I learned that his daughter reached out to him for help. He was elated. He was able to convince her to get help. She has been hospitalized since and is slowly progressing. He explained that he feels strongly that the gift I gave him is responsible for this latest unexpected positive turn.

Will she continue to improve? I hope so. More importantly, my brother felt the love and prayers that added up to hope. Love and prayers that came not just from the usual suspects in the Indigenous community, but from the wider community of caring folks who came to visit, to pay respects, offer prayers, feed the sacred fire, and be educated. This is the power and importance of ceremony. It was an incredible honour to partner with the Parkdale-Cromdale Community League.

*Cheryl is the executive director of Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. She is a community leader with over 25 years' experience in the non-profit sector.*

**Some things happened that we did not plan. Like the altar of offerings that grew each day at the base of the installation. Flowers, stuffies, and tobacco, left by visitors and family.**



**FUNDING**  
 PCCL has received the Anti-Racism Grant from the City of Edmonton. PCCL and its partners hope to create an exhibition tour in other communities to raise awareness. Email [info@parkdalecromdale.org](mailto:info@parkdalecromdale.org) for more information and to get involved.

Left: Affected families received an embroidered red dress, and the Elder offered families a piece of charcoal from the sacred fire. | Cheryl Whiskeyjack

Above: The installation received many visitors over two weeks. | Cheryl Whiskeyjack

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# Vancouver is what the heart needs

Travel to the city by the sea for a cost-effective break



A walk along English Bay is a relaxing time to soak up Pacific beauty. | James Oakes

## - CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN -

Many of us crave travel these days. I am one of them. My entire being wanted to hit the road. But how to avoid stressful issues, such as costly COVID-19 testing, converting to American dollars, or signage in other languages? I chose a five-day, four-night visit to our own Pacific idyll, the international City of Vancouver.

I shopped for the cheapest flights possible. On Flair Airlines, I chose to only bring a large purse (stuffed to the brim) to avoid additional baggage charges. Returning with WestJet, a carry-on bag was included in my fare. I bought one at Value Village in Vancouver for \$15. Round trip flight: \$330.

After the 90 minute flight, I was in Vancouver and almost danced to the SkyTrain to head downtown. Wearing a mask didn't bother me. It's a small concession for the sheer pleasure of going somewhere.

I bought a TransLink public transit Compass Card (a one-time fee of \$6; see [compasscard.ca](http://compasscard.ca) for more info). Day passes are \$10.75 for adults and provide access to all buses, SkyTrain, and SeaBus. Otherwise, visit [translink.ca](http://translink.ca) for more information on fares. Do not bring a car to Vancouver. Parking is outrageous and the traffic is congested. Public transit during my stay: \$50 (plus a \$5 fee for leaving YVR on SkyTrain).

For the first two nights, I stayed in one of the oldest hotels in the city, smack in the middle of the west end. Located on Denman Street at Davie, I found the English Bay Hotel on Booking.com for \$112 a night plus tax. The hotel was safe and in a vibrant location, but it is run down. However, the price was right. For

the last two nights, I stayed with a friend, also in the west end. Hotel: \$280.

I love the west end's English Bay with its palm trees and sand. As for food, walk along Davie, Denman, or Robson streets until something takes your fancy. Relax in a Breka Bakery & Café at least

once, with its scrumptious pastries and exquisite coffee. My friend and photographer, James Oakes, lives near the Breka on Bute Street. "It's the heart of the west end, with locals and visitors mingling," he says. Breka treat: \$10.

Wherever my fancy took me, I

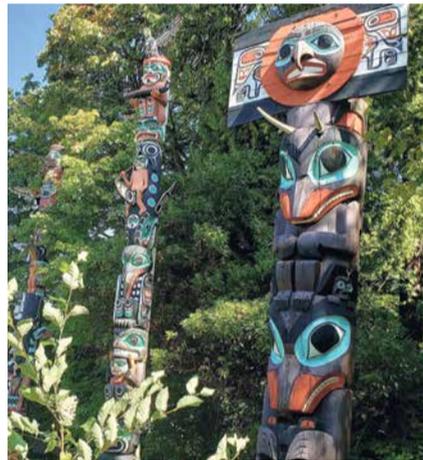
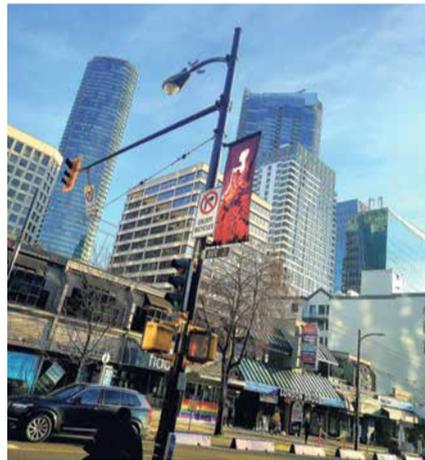
enjoyed impromptu food and beverage choices. Vaccination cards are checked. I ate Persian (lamb shank and rice) at Gillaneh Grill House on Denman Street, Chinese at On Lok Restaurant and Wonton House on East Hastings, and Thai, Japanese, Indian, and Italian elsewhere. Average daily for food: \$40.

Using a day pass (load your Compass Card on the day of travel), I took the SeaBus to Lonsdale Quay on the North Shore. From there, I bussed to Grouse Mountain on a winding route along the coast. If you've never been up Grouse Mountain's Skyride, spend \$61 (adult ticket) on this thrilling gondola to the top. Masks and a vaccination card are required.

The next day, with another day pass, I walked to West Georgia Street and caught the #257 Horseshoe Bay Express. From the early 1900s, city folk came by boat or train to enjoy the lovely view of Howe Sound. Walking on the small beach, I lowered my mask and breathed great gulps of Pacific air. Simple pleasures are the best. I could have splurged with the famous Troll's Restaurant fish and chips, but chose an ice cream cone nearby. Then it was back to Vancouver, and across the Lions Gate Bridge past Stanley Park.

Vancouver never disappoints. From the vantage of an Edmontonian, it's like many international cities rolled into one. Enjoy the ambience without blowing the bank. Explore on foot, and hop on, hop off public transit. Or just sit with a coffee and watch the world go by. It's been awhile and it feels oh, so good.

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



Left: Robson Street is great for people watching and window shopping. Right: Totem poles in Stanley Park, an easy walk from Vancouver's west end. | James Oakes



The Lions Gate Bridge from the Stanley Park Seawall. | James Oakes

# MAKE THE CALL

## Make a Difference!

Reporting helps police identify hot spots and know where to deploy resources

**Here is what to do:**

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Call 780-423-4567 or #377 (press "2" for complaints, press "8" for all other concerns or speak to an operator, then press "1" to register a new complaint) for non-emergency situations or to report a John or a John activity

Call 211 and press "3" if someone is having a medical or mental health (non-emergency) crisis

To report crime online go to [edmontonpolice.ca/reportacrimeonline](http://edmontonpolice.ca/reportacrimeonline)

Crimes like theft from a vehicle or damage to property can be reported online

Call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 if you have a tip and want to remain anonymous

Call 311 for bylaw complaints, needles, litter, illegal dumping and vandalism

To report a problem property: Call 311 or use the City of Edmonton website and search "Report a Problem Property." Both are confidential when filing a report

Alberta Ave District Beat Team: [nwbeats@edmontonpolice.ca](mailto:nwbeats@edmontonpolice.ca)

For more support, contact [greenalleys@artsontheave.org](mailto:greenalleys@artsontheave.org)



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# Transforming an apartment building

Time and effort has paid off for both owner and tenants

- REBECCA LIPPIATT -

Vince Carnovale bought the apartment building he named Kings Landing on 94 Street and 114 Avenue in 2018 from a numbered company. When he first purchased Kings Landing, there was a drug dealer living on each floor and regular parties throughout the building, which spilled into the community. The basement was a chop-shop for stolen bicycles. The original building systems were not up to code.

In the past three years, Carnovale has completely transformed the building. He says, "I've poured my heart and soul into this building."

The charm of an older apartment building remains. The stairs to the second and third floors have the original wooden railing. All the suites are bachelors or one bedrooms and all have large, light-filled windows. Each suite has its own unique size, shape, nooks, and crannies.

In his initial renovations, Carnovale did his best to repair the hardwood floors and old cabinetry but over time, he realized that newer materials are easier to keep clean, repair, and replace as necessary. In subsequent renovations, he's installed vinyl flooring in all the suites, and replaced the old cupboards with new ones. Each suite has a new kitchen and bathroom (with the exception of one suite, which retains its purple bathtub.)

Each suite is heated by an old-fashioned radiator. It took multiple tries, but Carnovale figured out a way to balance the hot and cold rooms by adding an additional air vent to the radiators furthest from the boiler room. The entire building's electrical system has been updated up to and beyond the required code with GF plugs and new fixtures.

Changing the atmosphere of the building took significant time and effort. Carnovale put the safety of his residents front and centre. Both



Kings Landing has undergone drastic changes since 2018. | Rebecca Lippiatt

main doors have keyless fob entries. Every suite has two locks with a strike plate. Carnovale installed a new group mailbox. Tenants also need a fob to use the laundry room, and the door has a two-way, 180 degree peephole so tenants can see in and out before entering or exiting. The building has been modernized with a brand-new fire safety system and a fire safety plan is available for all tenants to read. Cameras are installed outside and in all the common areas, which Carnovale can monitor in real time. Lights flood the sidewalk on the street level apartments, making the entries unattractive for

people to loiter. The parking lot is fenced and monitored by cameras.

Carnovale recently completed phase one of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program from Edmonton Police Services. There is also a resident manager in the building.

Karesha Kennedy, a former tenant says, "Vince is an amazing landlord.

He was always present and able to answer any questions I had. Whenever something was wrong, I could always approach him and he'd be ready to fix anything. He always tried to make my stay comfortable and privacy was a given at all times."

Kings Landing has 23 units, priced starting at \$798 which includes all utilities including WiFi. All suites are pet-friendly.

Carnovale says he is proud of the physical changes he made to Kings Landing, but more proud of the changes the building has made to the neighbourhood. "Good efforts [in this building] change the terrain of the whole neighbourhood. Everyone benefits."

Now that Carnovale's work is nearly complete, he is looking for a buyer to preserve and carry on the changes he has made.

*Rebecca has attended free concerts as a bouncer, juggled plates as a waitress, completed a degree in microbiology, laboured in the oilfield cleaning storage tanks, and worked as an editor. In her current incarnation, she has been a full-time photographer for several years and is a mother to two boys and stepmother to two girls.*

**"Vince is an amazing landlord. He was always present and able to answer any questions I had. Whenever something was wrong, I could always approach him and he'd be ready to fix anything. He always tried to make my stay comfortable and privacy was a given at all times."**

**Karesha Kennedy,  
a former tenant**



The units are pet friendly. | Rebecca Lippiatt

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# Grieving during the holidays

## Navigating sadness during a celebratory time

- ASHLYNN CHAND -

Most holidays are regarded as a time to be around loved ones. But, for people who are grieving someone, these celebrations are painful reminders of who they've lost. Joyful memories and experiences can trigger grief or trauma because it reminds people of what they're missing.

Jon Jon Rivero, an occupational therapist and certified trauma specialist at Qi Creative Inc., says triggers aren't always something that people can consciously pinpoint because trauma and grief could be trapped within the body. Once the senses (such as taste, smell, touch) are activated, they can trigger a response.

Be patient and try to create a safe place to experience those emotions when triggers happen, Rivero advises.

"It could happen when you're feeling really great," Rivero says. "During the holiday season, you might not feel so great and not know why."

Rivero explains grief is different for everyone and no one approaches loss or trauma in the same way. He suggests taking it slow and going at the pace you're comfortable with during the holidays, and that sometimes you do need to put yourself first.

"One of the most important things to know is that you're not alone," Rivero says. "If you are grieving, it's okay to grieve and those feelings are normal. If we don't allow ourselves to feel those emotions, then it can cause

more problems down the road."

It's also normal to not feel anything. "Some people don't grieve in the ways most people think [of grieving]," he says.

If you're anticipating challenges, seek professional support if you're able to do so. Reaching out to a friend, community leader, religious leader, or an Elder can also be helpful alternatives when grieving.

"I'm a big firm believer of pro-active mental health," Rivero says, recommending trying to think of the positive memories of a loved one.

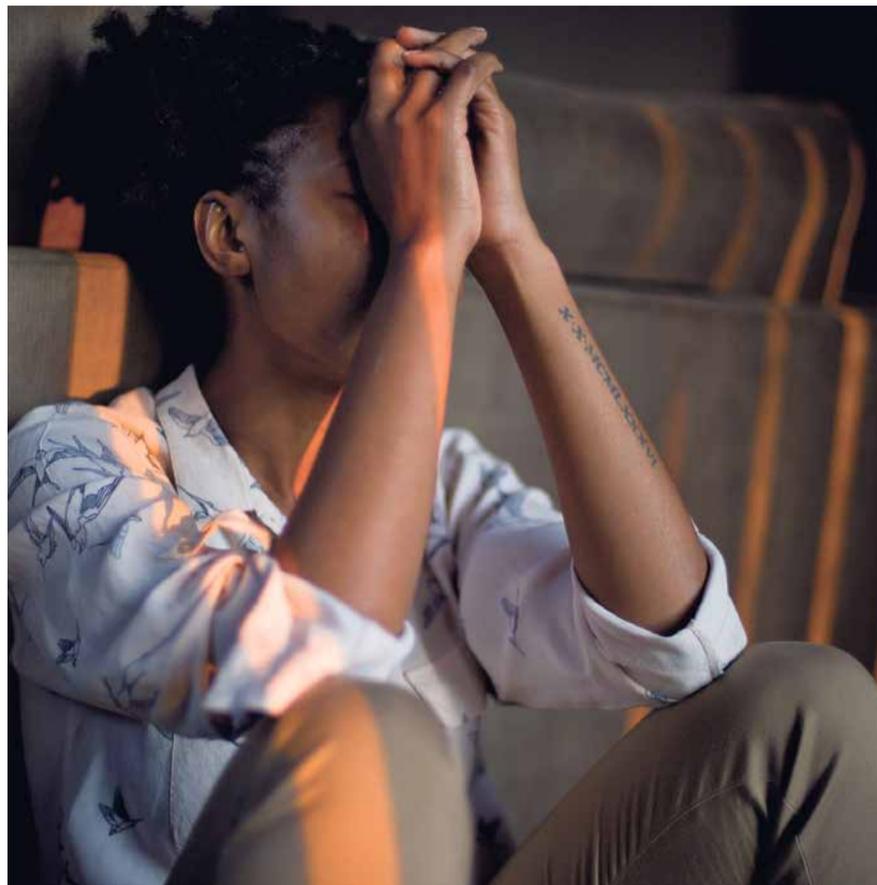
Practicing mindfulness is a great way to create a safe place. According to Rivero, one way of doing this is by activating different senses that make you feel good, such as aromatherapy, baking, or looking at old photos. Rivero notes that if you're not able to take care of your needs prior

to experiencing stress, it's going to be a lot harder on your body, mind, and soul to deal with the loss.

"[Self care] is extremely important in the grieving process because it allows us to handle stress," Rivero says. "Because when we're grieving and we're experiencing challenging emotions when we get triggered, we're challenged physiologically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually."

Speaking as someone who has experienced grief, Rivero understands the challenges people may go through during the holidays and urges others to be nurturing and kind.

**Speaking as someone who has experienced grief, Rivero understands the challenges people may go through during the holidays and urges others to be nurturing and kind.**



The holidays aren't a time of joy for everyone. | Pixabay

challenges people may go through during the holidays and urges others to be nurturing and kind.

"Grieving doesn't necessarily get easier," Rivero says. "However it does become more familiar and it increases my awareness in my ability to choose what to do."

If you or a loved one is experiencing grief or trauma and need guidance,

visit mynameistrauma.com or call The Support Network at 780.482.4357 (HELP). If you're a youth, you can call the Kids Help Line at 1.800.668.6868.

*Ashlynn is a writer based in Edmonton. She has a BA in English and Psychology from the University of Alberta. Her work has appeared in Ricochet Media, This Magazine, and the Toronto Star. She can be described as a friendly neighbourhood cat: very small, very fast, and can sleep anywhere.*

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# Ward councillors share priorities

## City council meeting may set the tone for the next four years

- ASHLYNN CHAND -

On Nov. 1, the newly elected city council discussed with administration the concerns they heard while campaigning.

Public services, green spaces, land development, and road clearings were popular topics. However, housing and homelessness are priority concerns in Ward Métis, says Coun. Ashley Salvador.

“People are looking for more systemic, compassionate solutions,” Salvador says. “Permanent supportive housing in particular [...] is obviously a direction we’re moving in, being able to lean into that, in recognition that mental health supports, addiction supports, employment supports need to be wrapping around that housing model so folks have all the necessary supports they need to start to recover.”

Erin Rutherford, councillor for Ward Anirniq, notes there is an inequity with the distribution of services when it comes to the north side. According to Rutherford, many residents believe higher income neighbourhoods are prioritized. Salvador says a decentralized model of support is also critical. In her campaigning, people were displeased with the way supports and services are placed in the city.

“Historically we’ve almost concentrated a lot of those social supports and services in particular neighbourhoods,” Salvador says. “Being able to spread that out not only is it good for those communities, but it actually helps with recovery, being able to integrate folks into neighbourhoods so people are a part of a community.”

Anne Stevenson, councillor for Ward O-day’mín, says encampments are becoming an issue for community members.

“Housing and homelessness was absolutely, at least two-thirds of people, their top of mind issues,” Stevenson says. “There’s some real impacts, ongoing impacts, for residents through the presence of encampments. I’m going to flag Dawson Park in particular. Neighbours there are facing significant risks from fires and it really struck me on a tour there’s too the significant ecological damage that is occurring in that situa-

tion.”

Salvador discussed the issue of problem properties and vacant derelict sites in Alberta Avenue and Parkdale-Cromdale, citing the high numbers of fires and suspected arson in the area recently.

According to some councillors, action for climate change is another important issue. Salvador says this issue was very prominent in Ward Métis and people want to know if city council is going to follow through on the plans set

a huge push by the community to get everyone on board around a vision for that street that’s more walkable, more pedestrian oriented, more retail.”

Salvador says public-enacted transit ties in nicely with neighbourhood revitalization and emphasizes the need for safe, active modes of transportation so that people feel comfortable walking and biking around their communities. Both Salvador and Stevenson say the bus network redesign impacts seniors accessing transit on demand.

Public safety and safe streets is a concern for residents in both Ward Métis and O-day’mín. Stevenson says residents feel that there is nobody to turn to when they’re in danger, and explains the Chinatown Transformation Collaborative Society of Edmonton spends \$10,000 a month of their own funds for their own private security firm because they weren’t receiving responses to violent attacks against their businesses. Stevenson uses the Downtown Business Association piloting their safety initiatives as another example.

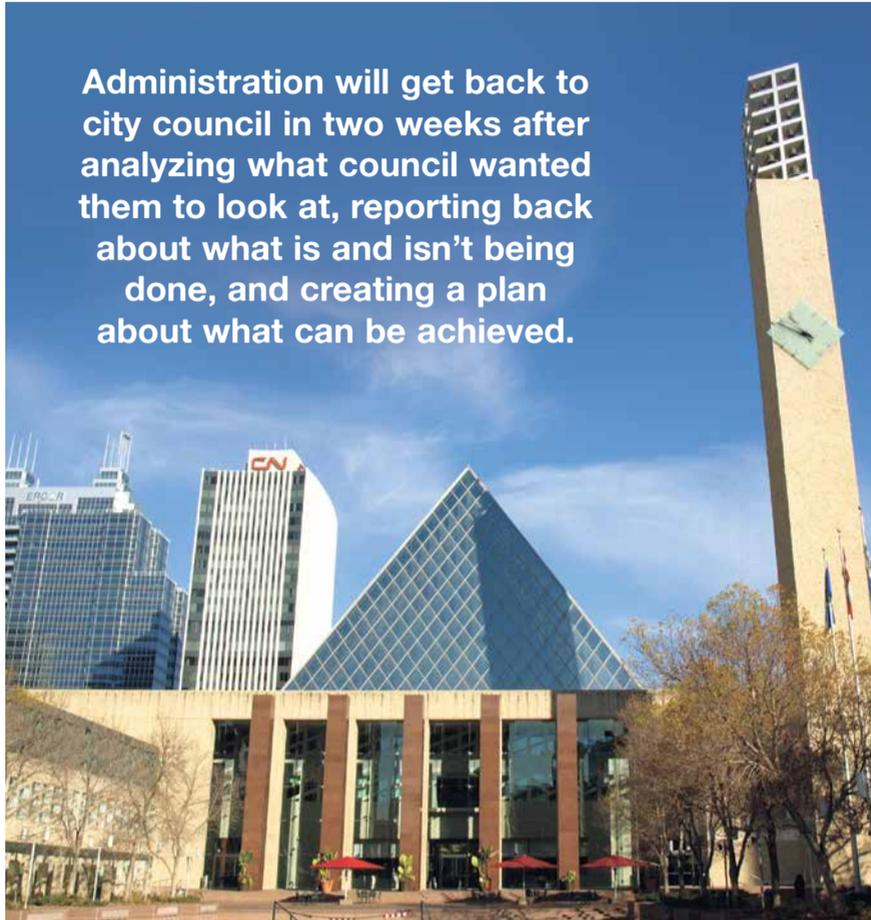
“These community-based efforts [...] are incredibly successful and I think fantastic approaches to safety in our neighbourhoods,” says Stevenson. “But again feeling they don’t have the resources they need to be truly effective.”

Another priority for Salvador is the opioid crisis.

“People are dying every day in our city,” Salvador says. “That has a huge impact on the safety of the district; not only is it about the health and wellness of community members, but it’s also about the viability of our main streets, our economy.”

Administration will get back to city council in two weeks after analyzing what council wanted them to look at, reporting back about what is and isn’t being done, and creating a plan about what can be achieved.

*Ashlynn is a writer based in Edmonton. She has a BA in English and Psychology from the University of Alberta. Her work has appeared in Ricochet Media, This Magazine, and the Toronto Star. She can be described as a friendly neighbourhood cat: very small, very fast, and can sleep anywhere.*



This city council meeting outlined ward residents' concerns. | City of Edmonton

“We need to take a close look at that and start looking at systemic solutions because that is just not okay,” says Salvador. “People are not feeling safe in their own communities.”

Stevenson says problem properties are an issue in Ward O-day’mín as well, but notes the impact it has on neighbours.

“They’re the ones having to call in the issues and there [is] not being any follow-up and the real risk of retribution they face, y’know, from having their neighbours shouting at them to having their tires slashed,” Stevenson says.

through the EnergyTransition Strategy. Edmonton’s Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan was approved by the previous council in April 2021.

Salvador also wants to revitalize mature communities in Ward Métis because there has been a loss of key amenities, such as grocery stores closing, schools closing, and recreation centres up for closure every budget cycle.

“101 Ave was a topic of conversation, folks really want to see that revitalized,” Salvador says. “I think there has been





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