



RAT CREEK PRESS

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League invents a community-focused game

The Great Edmonton North Challenge gets people into their communities



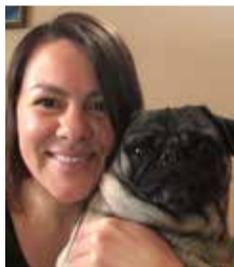
The Great Edmonton North Challenge is a way for community members to get to know their community. | Supplied



Sarah Dotimas helped create the Challenge. | Supplied



Steven Townsend is one of the volunteers who put time into creating the Challenge. | Supplied



Sarah DeLano is one of the volunteers who helped create The Great Edmonton Challenge. | Supplied



Jason Lin, a local artist, illustrated the cards. | Supplied



Kevin Wong designed the deck box. | Supplied



Marina Fata is another volunteer who helped create The Great Edmonton Challenge. | Supplied

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TALEA MEDYNSKI

Parkdale-Cromdale Community League members have come up with a novel way to get people into their community. It's called The Great Edmonton North Challenge. Expected to be released in March, the game presents a series of challenges for a chance to win prizes.

The Great Edmonton North Challenge is presented in a deck of 52 casino-quality cards. The cards can be used as a regular deck, but contain an added game of local challenges. The idea for the game was created and developed by dedicated volunteers. The cards are beautifully illustrated by local artist Jason Lin, with the deck box illustrated by Kevin Wong, the league's vice-president.

"Each card has a unique design.

Each suite is a different season. The face card components were selected to represent the community. The artwork on the back of the cards represents the Parkdale-Cromdale community," says Wong.

Some landmarks incorporated into the cards include the LRT train tracks, the historic Sheriff Robertson residence, and the muskrat for the former Rat Creek.

"Each card presents a challenge," says Wong. "Each card has a QR code. On each card, there's hints on if it's going to cost to participate and how long the challenge will take."

Participants simply scan the QR code on the back of the card or type in the web address to view the challenge. There are a variety of different challenges ranging from attending a league general board meeting to visiting one of the area's cafes. Take

a picture during the challenge and post it on Instagram.

"The challenges are community-oriented."

In order to participate, people must complete the challenges in one of the 10 poker hands. Once the challenges have been completed and submitted, participants are entered to win a prize.

"Ten prizes are associated with the poker hands," says Wong. Prizes include gift cards to local businesses.

The challenge was created to get people exploring and learning about communities in north Edmonton. Most of the challenges can be completed during the pandemic.

"During COVID time, we still wanted people to get out and do things safely," says Wong. "We wanted people to get to know north Edmonton together and generate

pride in the area."

The Great Edmonton North Challenge is open to all Alberta Avenue districts and may include a few more, such as Highlands or Belvedere. The card deck is free, although donations are encouraged since it will cost the league \$17-18 per deck. Participants can get a deck from participating local businesses, register for a deck online, or request one through cards@parkdalecromdale.org.

Organizers hope to distribute decks to local businesses by the end of March and suggest booking a deck on the website or via email.

For more information, email cards@parkdalecromdale.org.

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

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Try food from local restaurants this March

This year's food tour includes an option for doorstep delivery

NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS

For people aching to sample new or different food, Alberta Avenue has good news in store. Eats on 118 is back with some exciting changes!

Eats on 118 (originally called Dine the Ave) is an initiative that started on Alberta Avenue in 2016 as a way to engage the community, familiarize residents with restaurants around Alberta Avenue, meet restaurant owners, and try unique flavours. The food tour was the result of a collaboration between Wild Heart Collective, Alberta Avenue Business Association, and the City of Edmonton. Originally the event was a food tour, where patrons would buy tickets in advance and visit three or four restaurants over the course of an evening. The tours were always

a success.

Eats on 118 is starting in the spring this year instead of the summer and organizers have come up with creative solutions to promote locally-owned restaurants. The evolving pandemic has forced restaurant owners to continuously adapt to new restrictions and find new ways to bring patrons through the door safely. As small businesses need a spotlight now more than ever, the event will take place over the entire month of March and later in June, too.

From March 1-31, people are encouraged to sample food from the participating restaurants. Diverse restaurants are offering food specials ranging from \$15-\$25. Restaurants will follow guidelines specified by Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Government of Alberta to keep patrons safe. As there will be no

tickets, Alberta Avenue is yours to discover and experience at your own pace!

For those who prefer to eat in the comfort of their own home, a delivery option is available. An Eats on 118 Tour & Taste Box can be purchased online on alberta-avenue.com/eats-on-118 until March 29 for \$68.25. A curated box filled with a diverse selection of food from participating restaurants will be delivered to your doorstep.

Over the past five years, Eats on 118 saw hundreds of patrons visit more than 40 restaurants along Alberta Avenue.

"I never knew certain restaurants existed until I participated in an Eats on 118 tour," says Nick Marcus, an HR professional living in the west end and working downtown. "Alberta Avenue is often overlooked by many. The event is a good

opportunity to bring awareness to this part of the city. I have recommended many restaurants on the Avenue to my colleagues. Since then, lunch has been regularly ordered from these restaurants."

As the pandemic surpasses a year of challenges to small business owners, Wild Heart Collective encourages Edmontonians to keep the restaurants along Alberta Avenue busy while indulging in the gastronomic delights that Eats on 118 has to offer.

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.

EATS ON 118

March 1-31
alberta-avenue.com/eats-on-118

Some participating restaurants:

Battista Calzone
Coliseum Pizza & Steak
Coliseum Safeway Deli Counter
Flava Cafe *NEW*
Green Onion Cake Man
Jasmine Belle Cafe *NEW*
Paraiso Tropical
Tasty Sabaya & Pizza *NEW*
Swagat Indian Bar & Bistro
Szechuan Village
T&D Noodle House
The Duck Bar & Grill
The Carrot
Two Brown Dogs Catering *NEW*



Pictured is a menu item from The Duck Taphouse & Grill. | Supplied

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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.

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RCP

This year, SkirtsAfire rises triumphant

Creative solutions provide options for SkirtsAfire's audiences

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Now in its ninth year, SkirtsAfire, running from March 4 to 14, continues to feature women with joyous enthusiasm. But artistic director Annette Loiselle admits it wasn't easy to finalize a working event.

One of the hardest choices was made last spring to leave Alberta Avenue and book the Westbury Theatre on 84 Avenue as the one and only SkirtsAfire venue. The large theatre in the ATB Financial Arts Barns seemed ideal for physical distancing. A year was spent meticulously preparing to make the most of the space. Then, on Jan. 29 of this year, it was announced that theatres would continue to be on the COVID closure list.

"We scrambled," says Loiselle. "Where would this year's feature show, *Makings of a Voice*, be filmed so that we could at least offer it digitally? What other plans would have to change?"

Makings of a Voice, a world premiere written and performed by Dana Wylie, found a home in the former Army & Navy department store on Whyte Avenue. "The store is designated as a market, and as such is open during the COVID shutdown," says Loiselle.

A theatrical song cycle with the universal theme of discovering our individual identity,

Makings of a Voice deals with motherhood and daughterhood. Wylie presents her personal journey with honesty and sensitivity through music and monologue. Tickets are available online for viewing March

installation has its gallery in the Army & Navy storefront windows. The windows will also host *The Key of Me*, singer-songwriters performing individually inside, their voices broadcast to the street. Six other storefronts

it is now being artfully filmed and presented digitally from March 7 to 14. The theme is unusual but inspiring: how to have an unhealthy body yet still contribute positively to life. The words of Edmonton's poet lau-

meant to be digital. The 12-minute film asks, "What has COVID been like for you?" One participant memorably shares what it's like to be a "long hauler," with ongoing negative symptoms. Says Loiselle, with a sense of satisfaction, "I'm so glad we did this film. We captured a variety of stories from diverse communities and experiences."

This year's planning has been heartbreaking at times. "We always knew there might be many scenarios. We held onto hope that our original vision for a COVID-safe live festival would be a reality. Then everything changed again," says Loiselle. Ultimately, SkirtsAfire came up with satisfying solutions. "When all is said and done, there is something freeing in letting go. We can still bring joy to people, even against so many odds. There is real resilience in Edmonton's arts festival community."

For more information on SkirtsAfire's 2021 Reimagined multi-disciplinary events, to buy a ticket to *Makings of a Voice*, and for access to *Body of Words* and *Covid Collections*, visit: www.skirtsafire.com

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



Covid Collections is a short film that can be viewed online from March 4-31. | BB Collective

8-14 at \$27 per household (plus applicable fees).

"It is a real gift to be able to use the Army & Navy store space. Without a theatre, it became the ideal venue to film *Makings of a Voice*," says Loiselle.

SkirtsAfire's annual visual art

in Old Strathcona will host skirt design installations. People are encouraged to follow a map to check them out, then vote for their favourite skirt made from upcycled materials.

Another show, *Body of Words*, was originally slated to be live in the Westbury Theatre. Instead,

reate, Nisha Patel, and poet and spoken word artist, Medgine Mathurin, combine with choreography by Karissa Barry and dance from Ballet Edmonton. Tickets for the digital show are by donation.

Covid Collections, another SkirtsAfire offering, was always

SKIRTSAFIRE

March 4-14, 2021
www.skirtsafire.com

A library card opens a world of resources

Pick up materials safely and access a ton of digital offerings

STEPHEN STRAND

Never let it be said you can't do anything fun for free. A perfect example is Edmonton Public Library (EPL), which offers free library cards to Edmontonians. With a library card, patrons can borrow physical materials and access EPL's online services.

All EPL locations were closed on Dec. 13, 2020, as part of the mandatory province-wide health measure issued on Dec. 8. "EPL locations are temporarily closed for in-branch visits until further notice to help limit the spread of COVID-19," says Sharon Day, director of branch services and collections. Day adds that the health and safety of their staff and customers remain their top priority.

"Although our branches are closed, customers are still able to borrow physical materials safely with our library takeout service," says Day, and explains that people can safely pick up their holds using the library's contactless pickup service at the customer's preferred location. To do this, go online to place items on hold. Once the item

is available, head to the takeout location and pick up the item.

The library also has thousands of e-books and audiobooks in their digital collections available to patrons. Their extensive list of online resources include e-magazines, e-newspapers, movies, television shows, music, access to online classes,

shows.

"EPL has been building our digital collection and resources for over a decade. The pandemic provided us with an opportunity to expand our online services and programming to connect with our customers in a safe way," explains Day. "In addition to our vast

personal picks pack, and expanded our EPL on YouTube video library."

During the pandemic, EPL responded quickly to the needs of their customers. "We shifted our focus to online delivery of our resources, programs, and events and our customers have been very receptive,"

biggest months for OverDrive [one of their digital content distributors] lending coincided with branch closures due to health restrictions; April saw a 58 per cent increase over the same month in 2019, while December saw a 44 per cent increase over the same month a year prior." On top of that, the EPL from Home videos were watched over one million times in 2020. "There was also a substantial increase in new and active users on our e-content with over 5 million digital materials borrowed."

In addition to promoting their online services, EPL is practicing proper health protocols to help prevent further spread of the virus, while still offering free services to all library members.

All of EPL's latest COVID-19 updates can be found at epl.ca/reopening/. For more information about EPL's online services, visit epl.ca/resources/.



Library patrons can take in digital and online resources and entertainment, like Baby Laptime on EPL from Home on YouTube. | Edmonton Public Library

and an EPL YouTube channel with virtual story times, sing-alongs, classes, and puppet

collection of online resources, we also introduced our new library takeout service, the per-

Day explains. In 2020, EPL saw a 34 per cent increase in their e-content usage. "The two

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

An interest in gardening is on the rise

Community gardens and programming will help increase food security

NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS

Last spring, mounting expenses, increased confinement, and concerns about food supply propelled a sudden interest in gardening.

“[At one point], everyone had a backyard with a garden,” states Kate Wilson, organizer of Eastwood Community Garden. “People were more connected with nature. Densification followed urbanization. With more people choosing to live close to work, not everyone has a garden now.”

That’s where community gardens play an important role.

“Over the years, there has been a resurgence of interest,” Wilson points out. “The evidence is the increase in demand for community gardens. The 2020 Eastwood pop-up community garden was a part of the City of Edmonton pilot program. There was a good public response from people from all

ages and we hope to have one this year too.”

Wilson hopes to expand the garden by adding more plots. “Besides the mental respite, these gardens are a valuable source of fresh food, especially to low-income people who may not have access to large food retail outlets.”

Owing to security constraints, a pop-up garden is not an option for Alberta Avenue. Instead, the focus is on expanding the existing community garden.

“We are one of the best community gardens in the city,” says Ali Hammington, president of Alberta Avenue Community League. “Our approach is totally different. Thanks to funding grants, we plan to start a program where gardeners can donate seeds to community plots and distribute the harvest on Community Hub Nights. It is important that nutritious food is available to all, especially the less privileged.”

A beehive project is also underway. If everything goes as planned, Hammington hopes to have honey extraction done next year. Hammington planted her first garden last year, and enjoyed a full harvest thanks to tips offered by the garden committee, a team of gardeners at the community garden.

“Luckily, Spruce Avenue still has green spaces,” says Sabino Spagnuolo, communications director at Spruce Avenue Community League. “Last year’s pop-up gardens were an overall positive experience. Of course, COVID did play a role too,” he laughs. “With many public activities closed, people wanted a change. The application for our community garden is underway. Our program director, Ashley Ayume, is leading the planning efforts and we are thankful for the tremendous efforts put in.”

Spagnuolo hopes Spruce Avenue’s community garden will be an asset to the commu-

nity when it opens to the public next year.

“Programs developed alongside will contribute to things like food security, too. This is not just a space to engage residents, it is an investment into the community,” continues Spagnuolo. “Pop-up gardens allowed us to work out logistics we would face and we would welcome them again, but developing a community garden has longer term goals which will positively impact many groups. We hope to have a group of experienced gardeners to share tips to budding gardening enthusiasts and retain the interest.”

Wilson, Spagnuolo, and Hammington all agree that demand for community gardens are on the rise and are convinced that the increased interest in gardening will continue over the years. People are cognizant of sudden changes in the economy, recognize the health benefits gardening offers,

and want to do it right.

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.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Alberta Ave
albertaave.org/
community-garden

Eastwood
eastwoodcommunity.org

Spruce Ave
spruceavenuecommunity.com

Find a garden near you:
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Organizers of Eastwood Community Garden hope to add more plots. | Supplied

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Selasi's Grill serves up flavourful food with a spicy bite

STEPHEN STRAND

The day my wife and I ate at Selasi's Grill was one of the last days of the polar vortex that hit us in early February, and it had actually warmed up to a balmy -17 degrees Celsius before taking the wind into account.

Even though Selasi's Grill has opened their dining room to allow sit-in dining, we ordered take out. When we called ahead to order, there was a banging noise in the background, and the lady seemed preoccupied but friendly.

They offer Canadian pub-style food and west African food, resulting in a large menu that could cause questions about freshness and quality. Happily, that was not the case.

We ordered the jollof rice with chicken (\$23.99), the beans and plantain with goat (\$22.99), and Annie's fried chicken dinner (\$14.99).

Located in the former pub across the street from Commonwealth Stadium, Selasi's Grill is in an excellent location, especially once professional football picks up again after the pandemic. But their parking lot is small, which could cause issues. Even during a cold snap and with limited dine-in service, I had to park down the street and walk, a good sign for business.

Three women stood behind the counter. When I walked up, one handed me

my food, while another woman took my payment.

Annie's fried chicken comes with waffle fries and a small container of coleslaw. The coleslaw was saucy and was nothing special. The waffle fries,

of the jollof rice and the beans and plantain kept nagging at me. And when I placed my chicken down momentarily on a plate to scoop up some of the jollof rice, one of my cats grabbed the fried chicken before I could stop her.

was grilled and similar to jerk chicken. It had crispy skin with moist meat, and I preferred this chicken over the fried chicken. It came with a few pieces of plantain on the side.

The beans were very flavourful and cooked to the point of being softened, without being mushy. They had fragrant spices with a slight heat that snuck up at the end of each bite. The plantain was starchy and firm and made a great backdrop for the beans. The goat was underwhelming, solely because the pieces we received were mostly bone. It added very little to the dish, and I would not have missed it if it wasn't there.

I enjoyed the plantain so much that I wish I ordered an additional side of them.

It is rare that I stop eating a piece of fried chicken mid piece to eat a different dish. Not that it was bad; the other dishes were just that appealing. Jollof rice was my favourite, but the plantains would make for a great late-night snack. The food was a little pricey, but the portions were larger. I am going to give them 4.5 out of 5 forks.



A sample of food from Selasi's Grill. From left to right: beans and plantains with goat, Annie's fried chicken, and jollof rice with chicken. | Stephen Strand

my favourite style of fries, brought back memories of childhood. They were a very pleasant surprise. The fried chicken had a nicely spiced, light batter, but it didn't travel well. By the time we got home, the batter had softened and separated from the chicken.

Normally fried chicken receives my full, undivided attention, but the smell

Jollof rice is made with tomatoes, tomato paste, spices, rice, and traditionally either a habanero or Scotch Bonnet pepper for heat. The flavours mix together well and get absorbed into the rice, giving it a reddish-orange colour and such a fragrant scent that it made me forget that it was simply a rice dish. The chicken leg served with the jollof rice

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

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OPINION

Examining the pandemic's impact on women

Striving for gender equality is good for everyone in the end

TALEA MEDYNSKI

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. In the months after, people suffered massive job losses. While the job losses for men are numerous, they are even worse for women. Women already have lower incomes due to a gender pay gap and being overrepresented in part-time work, so the job losses are disastrous. This should matter to all of us, regardless of gender, because it will impact most families and our economy in the long run.

A Statistics Canada study showed that between February and April of 2020, 5.5 million workers either lost their jobs or lost work hours due to COVID-19. By June, the number reduced by 43 per cent. The study compares the difference in employment between February and June and states, "In all age groups, men were closer to pre-employment levels than women." Let's look at men and women between the ages of 15 to 24. Men's employment in June was 19 per cent lower than

February, while women's was down 26 per cent. For men aged 25-54, employment reduced by 6 per cent. For women, it was 8 per cent. For men aged 55 and older, employment went down by 8 per cent. For women, it was 11 per cent.

Part of the reason why there's such a difference may be due to the industries many women work in, which have been hit very hard with job losses. The Canadian Women's Foundation states, "Workers affected include flight attendants, cooks, servers, and cleaners in travel and hospitality. As stores close or reduce hours, there are cutbacks for retail workers, many of whom are also women. Women in the already precarious and undervalued childcare sector have also stopped work as daycares are closed (except those serving essential-service workers). Aside from industries shut down by COVID-19, women also make up the majority of Canada's minimum-wage workers and part-time workers."

It should be noted that despite the facts about job loss in industries dominated by women, a

lack of education isn't necessarily the issue. According to a 2019 Statistics Canada study about the gender pay gap, "Women are now better educated, on average, than their male counterparts, having made substantial gains in educational attainment over the past three decades by increasingly acquiring university degrees at the bachelor level or above, and doing so at a faster pace than men."

Women with children have also been adversely affected by the pandemic's impact on education and childcare. Parents have had to cope with ongoing and unpredictable school and daycare closures. Plus, women have always performed more household chores and parental tasks than their male partners.

That trend continued during the pandemic. According to Statistics Canada, "Women reported that they were the ones who mostly performed the parental tasks in their household during the pandemic, including homeschooling. Further, employment status and work location affected the division of parental tasks within couples.

For example, men who worked from home reported a more equal division of parenting tasks, but it was the opposite for women who worked from home as they were less likely to report sharing tasks equally and more likely to take on the bulk of the parenting responsibilities."

Parents with school-aged children also had to decide which parent would quit a job or reduce hours to accommodate childcare or distance education. It would make sense for the parent with the higher income to keep their job. With the continuing pay gap, it's more than likely that the woman would be the one to quit her job or reduce her hours.

Don't forget single parents. The Canadian Women's Foundation states, "80 per cent of single-parent households are led by women" so the financial situation would be worse for a single parent affected by job loss or reduced hours, never mind dealing with childcare or navigating distance learning.

From a financial perspective, fewer women in the workforce or women working fewer hours

means less money contributing to the economy, so the loss is bad for everyone. A McKinsey & Company article from July 15, 2020 examines this topic closely. The authors call this detrimental effect to women a "gender-regressive scenario." They estimate that if nothing is done, "global GDP growth could be \$1 trillion lower in 2030 than it would be if women's unemployment simply tracked that of men in each sector." However, if something is done to increase gender equality, then we could add "\$13 trillion to global GDP in 2030."

Gender inequality has always been there, and the pandemic has simply exacerbated the problem. Our society can no longer claim this inequality is a feminist issue. It's an issue for everyone. And the sooner equality is achieved, the better life will be for everyone.

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



Women have been adversely affected by the pandemic. | Image by Christo Anestev from Pixabay

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Reflecting on a year of the pandemic

Navigating the difficulties that resulted from the virus

STEPHEN STRAND

In 2019, I made tremendous strides in my career, fitness, and personal life. It was a year filled with personal highlights, such as paying off my student loans early and expanding my freelance career to the point where I was no longer dependent on my main job. I had kept off the 50 pounds I had lost two years prior and exercised four days a week. I was becoming pickier with the work I was taking, accepting only the high paying or the super fun jobs. I learned to skateboard. Poorly. But I learned, nonetheless.

By mid-February 2020, I was ready to give my two weeks. One of the sports broadcasting companies I work for had given me a solid confirmation of work until October and a tentative offer of work until spring 2021,

with the opportunity to train for a higher paying, more enjoyable role. Enough work was confirmed for me to step away from my main job.

Then the virus hit and shut down my main job before I could officially give my notice. This helped because they gave me a temporary layoff notice that got me onto EI before CERB was rolled out. That was the only silver lining. On March 12, 2020, I lost all my work in one day. A week later, my wife lost all of hers. Three weeks after that, our washing machine and dryer quit working and the stove lit on fire. A several-thousand-dollar house project could not wait any longer. Knee surgery booked for 2020 got postponed, with no reschedule date as of yet.

That was the beginning of the slide down. My mother-in-

law passed away in August. My temporary layoff got extended. And extended. And extended again to the end of July 2021. My union at my main job, for reasons no one could understand, decided to enter into negotiations while we were shut down. The collective bargaining agreement they sent us to vote on completely left out my department. Union members voted in that collective agreement, despite my pleas to not accept the agreement, which has left my job in limbo. Will my department even exist much longer? The company's social media page indicates it will not.

Many job applications went unanswered. Too many to not take it personally. The main sports broadcasting company I work for (owned by the same company that promotes #LetsTalk) cut their crews in

half. Unfortunately, I was not on the right side of that line. Doesn't losing your job negatively affect your mental health? After all, mental health is something this company claims they care about.

Throughout the past 11 months, I have caught myself sinking (spiraling, actually) into a depression I have never felt before. Without constant noise and distraction, I find myself crying or getting mad over the simplest things and arguing over nothing. I'm constantly trying to manage my knee pain, always aware of the painkillers I have taken, often using CBD/THC to help with pain and insomnia. But they leave me lethargic and I often waste the day, which feeds the feeling of uselessness.

For years, I had tied my self-worth and identity to my

job. Sitting at home, marginally employed for close to a year, I have had to learn that I am more than my job and more than a paycheck. My wife has preached that to me for years, but only recently have I begun to listen. It is hard to not take work, or the lack of work, personally when I have been rejected so many times. At least I have my health, as they say, which I try to remember. While it has been a tough experience and I struggle, I know I am still significantly better off than so many other people. I am thankful for that.

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



Stephen Strand (left) with his wife. | Stephen Strand

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