



RAT CREEK PRESS

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Coming your way is Bloomin' this May

Celebrating the return of Bloomin' Garden Show & Art Sale



Donna McKay at the perennial exchange table at Bloomin 2019. | Karen Mykietka

NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS

After getting cancelled last year, the Bloomin' Garden Show & Art Sale is back, although it looks a little different this year. The event, held on Saturday, May 8 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Alberta Avenue Community Centre, will be entirely outdoors due to the pandemic.

"Protocols such as separate entrances and exits will be implemented in addition to usual safety measures so that vendors, attendees, volunteers, and staff stay safe," assures Virginia Potkins, market coordinator for the event. "The market will be held rain or shine unless the weather is extremely severe. Moving indoors will not be an option this year. Grab and go concessions will be provided by Two Brown Dogs Bistro & Catering."

Bloomin' is the perfect occasion to expand your garden. "Since last year, COVID not only unleashed threats to health, but also to food

security," points out Potkins. The result has been a surging interest in gardening and growing your own vegetables. To reduce visits to grocery stores, people want to grow whatever they can, as well as impart that knowledge to their children. "The event is thus going to be very garden-focused this year with something for all age groups."

The event will be held by the community centre on 118 Avenue and 93 Street. It will start in the parking lot and spill over into the garden area. People can find pedestrian and vehicle access from 93 Street and 92 Street respectively. There is ample parking space.

Admission is free. "Guests are not required to register in advance, but we are asking attendees to come with a 'shop with purpose' attitude so that many attendees can enjoy the market and support our vendors." Potkins hopes to attract 20-30 vendors to the market selling yearly favourites, such as Delilah's

Seeds and Arnica Wildflowers, as well as some local, unique vendors. Interested vendors who wish to participate can email Potkins at bloomin@albertaave.org.

The compost sale will be held on May 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Since its start five years ago, the sale has enjoyed immense success.

"Last year we sold 600 bags in two hours," says Karen Mykietka, compost sale organizer for the event. "To ensure we have enough to fulfill all orders, compost pre-orders have to be made by May 2." Orders to north central neighbourhoods will be delivered between May 2-8. One bag of composts costs \$10, 3 bags go for \$25, and 5 bags sell for \$40.

Compost, a decomposed organic material, is a great way to improve the fertility of your garden soil. Composting recycles organic materials usually regarded as waste. According to the Q&A on the league website, the NatureMadeTM compost sold at

the event is made out of "food wastes, kitchen grease, wood waste, and other municipal/commercial organic waste etc." by CleanIt GreenIt Composting Systems Ltd.

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.

BLOOMIN' GARDEN SHOW & ART SALE

ALBERTA AVENUE COMPOST SALE
Alberta Ave Community Centre
9210 118 Ave
May 8, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
bloomin@albertaave.org
albertaave.org/bloomin-garden.html

ONLINE

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CELEBRATING LOCAL MAKERS & CREATORS

Nova Plaza set to fill in empty spaces

Drop-in program to focus on helping homeless and at-risk people

KATE WILSON

After sitting empty for over a year, the commercial spaces in Nova Plaza on 118 Avenue between 89 and 90 Streets are ready for new tenants. The building owners confirm that four new businesses are coming: a cannabis shop (Venus Cannabis), a game store (Common Box Games), a daycare, and a non-profit group called New Life Phoenix Society (NLPS).

New Life Phoenix Society is planning a centre for homeless and at-risk people in need of a warm meal, among other services.

“The primary purpose is a resource centre, and secondary as a drop-in service,” explains Delano Thomas, director at NLPS.

With over 10 years of experience as a social worker, including four as a crisis diversion worker in the city core, Thomas is currently employed by the John Howard Society and Youth Empowerment Support Services (YESS).

He incorporated the non-profit seven months ago with business partner Garfield Aikman. Thomas says the intent is to work holistically with cli-

ents using an array of services, including referrals, legal aid, and mental health counselling.

Intake will start with creating a profile for each client to assess their needs.

“For example, if an individual needs housing or is transitioning back into the workforce, we work with them toward that, or people who’ve been pulled into gang-related activity,” says Thomas. “We come up with options and support.”

All services will be provided by qualified professionals with experience working with adult homelessness, with round the clock security.

But some community leaders expressed concerns about the prospect of another potential gathering place for unwanted activity in a neighbourhood already feeling saturated with the effects of homelessness.

Over the past year, transitional housing has been set up at the EXPO Centre, the former jockey dorms, and at the Coliseum Inn. The Alberta Avenue area has a history of derelict buildings and problem housing.

Ali Hammington, president of Alberta Avenue Community League, would like assurance that a non-profit less than a year old has enough experience to

work with vulnerable people.

“Certainly we need the services . . . I’m in favour of helping homeless people get re-established, but I need to know they are properly cared for,” says Hammington, who has a sociology degree and many years of experience as a crisis counselor in Edmonton’s inner city. “I’m absolutely in support of anything that helps homeless people, [but] a program like this, if poorly managed, could be a disaster.”

The Nova Plaza location is surrounded by below-market housing and several vacant properties, and gets several calls a week for police. A liquor store has opened across the street, which is another concern.

“It’s difficult for at-risk people when they don’t know where to go; we struggle to help them already,” says Christy Morin, executive director of Arts on the Ave. Morin is involved in a couple of community groups needing support.

She reiterates the feeling in the community that transitional housing and related services need to be spread out over the city.

“You put vulnerable people all into one community . . . It creates an ecosystem that is not

going to support them or the neighbourhood,” Morin says.

Rev. Tim Choi of the Edmonton Urban Native Ministry, which operates out of St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, explains NLPS will be able to offer services they cannot provide. In normal times, his ministry offers a free meal four times a week and Sunday service for the Indigenous community. “We have no showers, no career counselling. This will be very helpful for people right now,” says Choi.

Thomas’ first order of business with NLPS was to contact local Indigenous organizations, and at some point he wants to reach out to police to set up regular visits. He’s also been working closely with the Nova Plaza owners, and while he acknowledges there are problems in the building such as vandalism and addictions, he says that an important next step will be reaching out to the community.

“Our agenda is not to work in isolation,” he emphasizes. “It’s important to engage with the community, to bring in other organizations that are willing to be part of this.”

The society is working on funding and has some grants in place. They will employ four

staff and initially open with limited hours and intake. They hope to open in early May.

Alberta Avenue District Council, which includes seven community leagues and the Alberta Avenue Business Association, invited NLPS to a meeting in mid-April to discuss concerns.

“Their plans for helping the vulnerable sound like a very ambitious undertaking,” says Donna Yateman, the president of Eastwood Community League who also chaired the District Council meeting. “I would have liked to see a more detailed business model and more proactive engagement with the community they seek to provide services in.”

Further meetings with NLPS are being planned to discuss operations, risk mitigation strategies, and to develop a good neighbour agreement. For more information on NLPS, visit nlp-society.ca.

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



Garfield Aikman, left, and Delano Thomas are finalizing the steps for launching New Life Phoenix Society, in the former Landlord & Tenant space at Nova Plaza. The facility houses counselling rooms, a kitchen, and a classroom for work skills training and certification. | Photo by Kate Wilson

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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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DELIVERY

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

RATCREEK.ORG

I ❤️ my
RCP

Women report aggressive johns in the area

Residents consider ways to keep their neighbourhood safe

RUSTI L LEHAY & KAREN MYKIETKA

A teacher looking like a pre-teen because she was wearing a hat with cat ears says, “While walking to work, I was often approached [by men] even more than when I carried a briefcase.” She adds, “I’m so sick of being followed.”

Women are reporting being trolled by men at various times of the day, all over the neighbourhood, on main roads and residential streets, while walking their dog, and sometimes even when they have children with them. While this isn’t new, the concern is that men seem to be getting more aggressive in their approaches.

Maggie Glasgow started the conversation in a women’s Facebook group mid-March when she shared a frightening incident. “I was waiting to pick up books outside the library when a guy drove by, slowed down, nodded at me, and pulled around the corner driving up on the sidewalk.” When she didn’t respond to him waving her over, he got out of his vehicle and came towards her.

“I was really worried that he would try to grab me, so I started yelling at him to back off, [telling him I was going to] call the cops.” He didn’t get back in his vehicle until she pulled out her phone.

A couple weeks later, a

woman reported what she called a “creep alert” on the same Facebook group after she was followed by a white van while walking her dog on 114 Ave. She says the van slowed

and threatening because it gets them off. I also think that they try to use fear and intimidation and coercion as well as drugs and money to make vulnerable women enter the sex trade. I

don’t think they’re dumb or naive or innocently approaching us. I think they’re being predatory.”

Recorded reports help to allocate police resources. EPS doesn’t accept reports on prostitution as it is not an ille-

gal activity and no longer runs Report-a-john, although you can make all kinds of reports via crimestoppers.ab.ca/edmonton/ or download the P3 Tips app on your phone. To aid in developing community initiatives and requesting resources from police, community leaders developed an online form to report harassment and john activity in the RCP neighbourhoods: <http://bit.ly/118report>. Community organizers and the EPS agree it is time to revisit grassroots initiatives that

increase community presence. Some ideas include starting regular walking groups; setting up “play streets”; greening alleys; picketing against johns in hotspots; and witnessing and calling out inappropriate behaviour. Men especially can help protect women and girls by being a witness in a non-confrontational manner. Call out anyone for objectifying behaviour such as cat calling, making lascivious comments, or inappropriate actions. Add your voice to any person who may be in a threatening situation. Remember that young boys can be targets of sexual predators and unwanted attention as well. Witnesses are more of a deterrent than one might imagine. Being a witness is as simple as observing from a safe distance. Everyone has the power to witness. Be safe.

The community is exploring means to deter this unacceptable behaviour. As numerous different organizations become involved, key organizers will rally volunteers to help deal with these community challenges. Neighbours, sisters, friends, husbands, male friends and brothers, it is time to own your community.

If you are interested in getting involved, you can email info@albertaave.org or call 780.477.2773. Or drop by The Carrot Coffeehouse and ask about community safety initiatives.

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



A man seeking a sex worker approached a local woman outside the Sprucewood Library. | Karen Mykietka

down, then reversed quickly. The driver made eye contact, showed up in front of her for several blocks, then came up behind her. He only left after she shouted his licence plate number at him.

Another woman on the Facebook discussion shared, “I think they know that we are not sex workers. I think they’re fully aware that someone walking a dog or going to school carrying a book bag or standing at the bus stop with a briefcase is not a sex worker. I think the purpose is to be intimidating and gross

Members of the Facebook group, local community leagues, and a local business have recognized the need for action. The priority is safety for everyone.

If you have been harassed in any way, record and report! Call 911 if you are in immediate danger or fearful in any situation, otherwise call the police non-emergency complaint line: 780.423.4567. The more inci-

dentals are reported, the more the data will show action is needed.

Community organizers and the EPS agree it is time to revisit grassroots initiatives that

increase community presence.

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Partnership boosts work of organizations

Engineering Connects to work on projects relating to social needs

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Zack Jansen, a second year mechanical engineering student, just completed a four month co-op placement with Alberta Avenue and Eastwood Community Leagues after applying to Engineering Connects, a new program led by the University of Alberta's engineering faculty.

Jansen says, "It has been strange and exciting. I have never created solely online connections before, but I still feel that these connections are just as strong as they would have been in person. Working with Engineering Connects has been eye-opening to see the problems our communities face every day."

The goal of Engineering Connects is to take "students, faculty, alumni and volunteers out of the classroom, laboratory, or office, and put them directly into communities."

Jessica Vandenberghe, assistant dean of outreach at the Faculty of Engineering, explains that the program is building two long-term relationships with Fort Chipewyan and Alberta Avenue. The communities are very different, although both are what Vandenberghe describes as "high need communities", and both have high Indigenous populations.

Engineering Connects is partnering with local leagues,

businesses, and Arts on the Ave to work "on projects related to social need, community connection, or access to basic needs such as affordable housing, healthy food, or clean drinking water." Ten students work at co-op placements in the community over the winter term.

Students benefit from the experience. "[The students will learn] what it's like to be a part of a diverse community and participate in a community project." They also learn how to take their engineering skills and consult with a client as well as build communication and leadership skills.

"I was surprised by how much the community relied on grants. I had thought that the government provided direct funding for most community projects, I didn't realize how much time and effort went into obtaining funding for projects the community is passionate about," says Jansen.

Engineering Connects chose Alberta Avenue because one of the researchers read Carissa Halton's book, *Little Yellow House*. The book is about Halton's experience living in the Alberta Avenue area. Vandenberghe says the program was then connected to the league due to local resident Maggie Glasgow's work at UAlberta North.

Glasgow connected Alberta Avenue Community League

to Engineering Connects. She is also on the league committee working with Engineering Connects on its first project, a community seating area.

"The partnership increased capacity on projects that we wanted to do but didn't have the resources to," says Glasgow.

Karen Mykietka, manager at Alberta Avenue Community League, had Jansen and another student, Ashim Gurung, work on planning and creating virtual park and garden tours, get quotes for building a gazebo, inventory empty lots in the neighbourhood, research outdoor and indoor gardening options, and assist with funding applications. In addition, she worked with them and Alberta Avenue Business Association (AABA) to develop a collaborative project. Together, they made improvements on AABA's website directory.

"Having all this extra help really got a number of projects moved along," says Mykietka.

Glasgow also connected

Christy Morin, executive director of Arts on the Ave (AOTA), to Engineering Connects. Around the winter of 2019, Engineering Connects was interested in problem properties and derelict properties. Now, Vandenberghe sits on the

in one project. We have several members of leadership of Engineering Connects as part of that. They are also bringing great partners into the project and specialists in the field of agriculture and landscaping," says Morin.

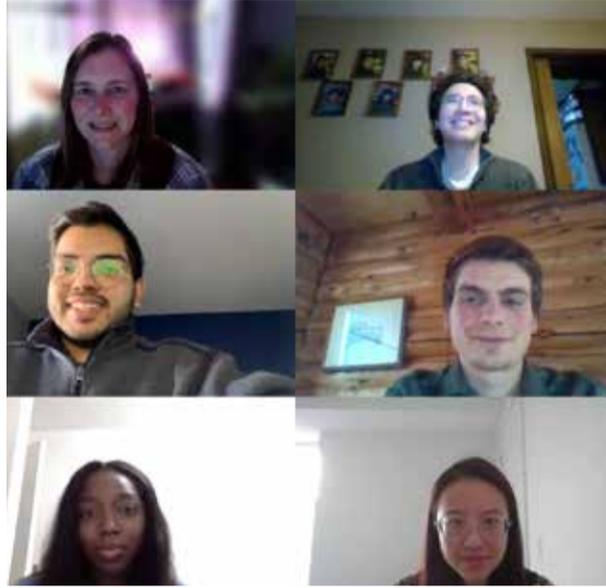
They've also had two co-op students working with AOTA through the winter. Eastwood Community League has also benefited from working with co-op students. "It's a boost for the entire Alberta Ave district," says Morin.

Other possible, future projects include a greenhouse and an outdoor public washroom.

"At some point in the future, we'd like a physical presence," says Vandenberghe, who explains Engineering Connects would like to work on housing, food security, and safety. "We've been building relationships with neighbours and not-for-profits."

Look for more articles on the partnership in future issues.

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



Engineering students, staff, and community members held numerous virtual meetings on the benches project. | Supplied.

AOTA's development committee and Torrey Dance, director of special projects with the Faculty of Engineering, is on AOTA's board of directors.

"We are working on the green alleys project. It's beautifying back alleys, changing alley culture, and creating positive place making, and also working on safety and food security all

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Breaking the barriers with public art

Arts on the Ave to install new public art displays

NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS

Whether you are walking or just driving on Alberta Avenue, it is hard to miss the creativity showcased through the display of public art.

“Every sculpture displayed is part of a 16-year-old dream,” says Christy Morin, executive director of Arts on the Ave (AOTA). The organization was incorporated in 2007 with a goal to have creative spaces with accessible art and since then has organized extensive art showings, interdisciplinary festivals, and activities that blend artistic expressions in an educational, mentoring, and sharing environment.

The most recent display of public art on the Avenue was *The Meeting*, a circle of crouching red figures created by artist Wang Shugang. The red gentlemen moved their meeting elsewhere, and AOTA is now gearing up for its next public arts installation, a large sign proclaiming *Let's Heal the Divide*, created by artist Toni Latour.

“[The] neon sign will go up on the east wall of the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts building either by the end of April or early May. Work is underway and there is no definite date. The sign will foster inclusivity and a recognition of Alberta Avenue district’s ethnocultural identities, besides a proc-

lamation to heal differences that divide us,” says Morin.

She adds, “Movements focused on inclusivity are gaining popularity. Alberta Avenue has a lot of history. It is home to early settlers, new immigrants,

residents and property owners, introduced Morin to Barrie Mowatt, the CEO of Vancouver Biennale, which is a non-profit organization exhibiting public art. “A coalition was formed,” she says. Vancouver Biennale loans AOTA

special visitor: *Golden Pig*. Artist Yong Fei Guan constructed *Golden Pig* from recycled plastic.

“Beauty lies in ashes,” Morin points out. “The *Golden Pig* is a classic result of debris viewed through a creative lens.

It is a reminder to community residents to take recycling efforts seriously.” *Golden Pig* will complement the new sign by symbolizing dichotomy. The pig that represents a positive image in Chinese culture is looked upon negatively in other cultures. *Golden Pig* will be displayed when the weather becomes warmer, probably mid-June to early September. Call Eastwood Community League to request a time to see it.

One of AOTA’s goals is to create opportunities to experience the joy of artistic expressions and to nurture creative environments.

“The sculptures are transitory public arts. Enjoy them while they last,” explains Morin, who recommends people take advantage of the creative delights the community has to offer while following COVID health guidelines at all times. “When someone stops to look at art for even five seconds whether to admire, take a picture, or just to talk about it, we have achieved our goal,” smiles Morin.



Golden Pig will be the newest art installation by Arts on the Ave. | Supplied

and new businesses. We have residents from different professional, personal, and financial backgrounds and an assortment of ethnicities, cultures, and traditions.” What better place than the Avenue to display such a sign?

Years ago, Alfred and Maria Fung, two

artwork as Alberta Ave aims to transform into a creative arts district. “These sculptures have an international footprint and we are very lucky to display it on the Avenue,” says Morin proudly.

Not so far away, Eastwood Community Garden is getting ready to welcome a

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.

Jane’s Walk in May unites city dwellers

Walking with a purpose to share our stories in the city

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Jane’s Walk began in 2007, a year after the death of Jane Jacobs, an urban activist and author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Walking together on the first weekend in May and sharing our stories of life in the city is a simple activity, but the outcome is huge. “The walks are all about community, working with the city to promote understanding. The idea is to walk together, sharing our neighbourhood stories in a fun engagement in city life,” says Wesley Andreas, a board and committee member of Spruce Avenue Community League.

Andreas sits on a loose organizing committee for Jane’s Walk in Edmonton. His community involvement goes back many years, and the result is channelled into Jane’s Walk. Andreas was the league’s lead on a history project commemorating Spruce Avenue’s 65th anniversary in 2016. Working with other volunteers, Andreas collected the history of the residents. The result is a series of historical house plaques and street signs

that dot the neighbourhood. Since then, the signs have helped guide Jane’s Walk.

Before COVID-19, Jane’s Walk tours were led, in-person, by knowledgeable local people like Andreas. Starting last year, all the Spruce Avenue walks were posted online, sprinkled with fascinating

mittee, shares his excitement for the event. “Edmonton started our walks in 2010 as a grassroots movement,” he recalls. “After a few years, we thought, wouldn’t it be great to make a bigger deal of it?” One way was to link Jane’s Walk with the city’s community leagues.

Parkdale-Cromdale residents are invited to walk from the league’s brightly decorated chain link fence to the CreArt Edmonton mural displays along the path into Kinnaird Ravine from Sheriff Robertson Park. “The fence and the murals are artistic representations of the city,” says DeLano. “They are uplifting reminders that we have so much good energy and good people here.”

In walks big and small, virtual, and with cohorts in the great outdoors, Jane’s Walk is alive and well. A follow-up event is being planned for Community League Day this September, in person if allowed.

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



Pictured by the doors is Ian Hosler, who led a Jane’s Walk in Westmount in 2019. | Supplied

tidbits about houses and history. Again this year, participants are encouraged to visit the Spruce Avenue website and use the information as a guide.

The purpose of Jane’s Walk is to preserve Jacobs’ legacy. Edmonton joins hundreds of cities worldwide in response to her encouragement to make cities work on our behalf. One such observation seems particularly relevant. Jacobs wrote, “Streets and their sidewalks—the main public places of a city—are its most vital organs.”

Ian Hosler, program coordinator for the City of Edmonton’s planning com-

Many other leagues will join Spruce Avenue Community League in developing ways to get people out walking while maintaining COVID-19 safety protocols.

Sarah DeLano, program coordinator for Parkdale-Cromdale Community League, is completing her studies in community engagement at the University of Alberta. Jane’s Walk is a perfect project, she says. “I am inspired by Jane Jacobs and her involvement in community building. Today, more than ever, people are craving activity and we can go out and walk as a family.”

LINKS

Worldwide site: janewalk.org
 Spruce Ave’s virtual Jane’s Walk: sites.google.com/view/spruceavejanewalk
 Parkdale-Cromdale Community League: parkdalecromdale.org
 EFLC’s toolkit for building a Jane’s Walk: efcl.org/initiatives/janewalk2021/
 Edmonton Jane’s Walks (virtually May 7-9): janewalksyeg.wordpress.com/

OPINION

Inspecting Alberta's draft curricula

Why it's important to read the draft and provide feedback

REBECCA LIPPIATT

Teachers or parents have probably heard about the controversy surrounding the UCP's draft of the kindergarten to Grade 6 curricula. It's no surprise the draft was written. One of Premier Jason Kenney's election promises was to re-write Alberta's school curricula. What is a surprise is what the UCP are suggesting students should be learning.

Previous Conservative governments developed the current curricula, and it was in the process of a six year redraft when the UCP won the election in 2019. The NDP's redraft included hundreds of teacher, parent, and education professional hours. It incorporated how children learn, process information, and understand their environment and the world.

The UCP draft, released this April after one-and-a-half years of preparation, is a hastily prepared document that aims to fill students' heads with as much information as possible. In Grade 2 social studies, children are expected to be able to map out Ancient Greece and compare its political structure to that of Rome. That same year, they would learn about Charlemagne, the Anglos, Saxons, Jutes, Joan of Arc, and then explain how England's

medieval laws were changed by the preceding 700 year's events. To top it off, these students will then compare the Black Death and COVID-19.

Faced with this type of detail, the Internet went wild. Someone said that dinosaurs had been removed from the curriculum. I thought that was an April Fool's joke. Alberta is a hotbed of paleontology. How can Alberta's children not be taught about our world-famous science? Well, that's because dinosaurs aren't mentioned in the proposed curriculum. Additionally, the single science reference to evolution in Grade 5 gives an incorrect definition.

Alberta's Indigenous culture is neglected. Despite our ubiquitous Treaty 6 acknowledgments, Cree people and culture are mentioned only five times, and all but one of those is in an historical context. Dene are mentioned four times, Chipewyan, Sarcee, and Saultaux not at all, Blackfoot four times, and Stoney once. In contrast, Greek culture is mentioned 24 times.

My children learned about Mi'kmaq and Anishinaabe cultures and the Haudenosaunee confederacy. The latter is still included, but only in relation to the American system of government. Students must be able to answer the question: "Did the Great Law Of Peace shape American democracy?" I'm not

sure if Chief Wilton Littlechild, who endorsed the curricula, actually read it or was given a few pages to base his endorsement on. As MLA Janis Irwin says, "The UCP's curriculum fails to support the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and has rightly been rejected by the Metis Nation of Alberta and the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations." In addition, the curriculum is full of religious references, yet Indigenous spiritual traditions are ignored completely.

The UCP also obtained Sheldon Kennedy's endorsement, a former hockey player who was abused by his coach. While he appeared to support the curriculum, he later clarified he only supported the concept of including consent. While the term consent is used, more detail must be included. According to the curricula, "consent is established by clearly communicating refusal and permission." There must be more information about children who are not in a position to give consent as well as information about sexual abuse and sexual assault. A clearer link needs to be made between consent and sexual activity. Specifically, while the draft does say, "sexual activity without consent is sexual assault and is never okay," it should also say, "you have the right to consent to sex." Nowhere are

children taught about enthusiastic consent (i.e. both parties must willingly and happily consent to an activity in order for it to happen.)

Abstinence is mentioned once, pregnancy eight times (and only in the physical education and wellness curriculum, never in science), while birth control is mentioned twice. The Grade 6 physical education and wellness curriculum reads a bit like a manual for Gilead, with its focus on understanding a healthy diet for pregnancy. LGBTQ2S+ issues are completely erased, as if not teaching children about the diversity of gender and sex experience might somehow make them disappear.

In the music curriculum, it appears that the authors are giving a nod to Jason Kenney with the inclusion of his grandfather, Mart Kenney's *When I Get Back to Calgary*. This song is the one of two examples for big band music. There are no mentions of Alberta's own Black jazz musicians, Judi Singh or Big Miller.

Also disturbing are allegations of plagiarism for some of the draft curricula. Dr. Sarah Elaine Eaton, a professor specializing in plagiarism and academic misconduct, analyzed several excerpts from the curriculum and alleges, "I have identified several different sources in my brief analysis. This indicates

that content has been lifted or borrowed from multiple original sources, not just one or two."

In the UCP draft, the curricula contains such nuggets as KKK in the American context while the Canadian involvement is limited to those "who felt distracted by social changes and the advances of groups they believed were inferior." This portion has no local history, such as how Edmonton's KKK membership was 5,000-7,000 and they supported the election of Mayor Don Knott, and had a cross burning on his lawn in celebration when he won. They later had another cross burning party at the Edmonton Exhibition Grounds with his permission. The KKK was not just an American story.

As Irwin points out, "Its complete lack of developmental appropriateness, [is an] erasure of LGBTQ2S+ perspectives, other newcomers, and removes critical Indigenous content."

Share your feedback with your MLA, your school board representative, and the Alberta Government at alberta.ca/curriculum-have-your-say.aspx and view the draft at curriculum.learnalberta.ca.

Rebecca is a full-time photographer and is a mother to two boys and stepmother to two girls.



The UCP has released a draft of the kindergarten to Grade 6 curricula. | Image by Stefan Meller from Pixabay



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CURIOSITY**

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AVENUE.
SHOP. DINE.
PLAY. WORK.**

Priyah Naicker, Priyah Fashions

Seniors are invited to share their ideas

Alberta Ave Community League's online survey is open for feedback

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Seniors! If you're reading this, Alberta Avenue Community League (AACL) wants to hear from you.

In April, the league launched an online survey to learn more about mature adults age 55 plus in the community, their interests, their needs, and their use of technology. The survey is open until mid-May, with an option to ask for telephone help.

A New Horizons for Seniors grant from Employment and Social Development Canada is helping fund AACL's seniors' programs. "Future activities will be shaped by the desires of those who want to participate," says Valda Roberts, vice-president of the league. "We have ideas for programs, but are these the ones that will really satisfy the participants?"

Knowing more about local seniors is the survey's goal. If some questions seem personal, it's because they are. Do you live alone? Do you have a support system? Do you use technology? Do you have mobility issues? Do you need help? The answers will say a lot about

what seniors want and need.

For Serena Archambault, a part-time program assistant at AACL, the survey gives her a chance to continue learning.

volunteer with four students from The King's University on social isolation research. The new survey grew out of this.

To date, the response to the

A big surprise is that seniors, or "older adults" as she prefers to call them, are fully mobile. "Seniors don't want to be a burden, but they do want somebody to talk to," says Archambault.

This summer, look for socially distanced outdoor gatherings for seniors taking place behind the league hall. "We may be painting, we may be singing, we may just be hanging out with refreshments," says facility manager Karen Mykietka, a member of the seniors' planning committee.

In the fall, watch for new activities inspired by the survey responses.

Canning and pickling workshops in the league's commercial kitchen, for example, are one way to bring people of various ages together. "We have untapped talent that can be

shared. It's usually older people who know how to do these things. Younger people would appreciate learning how," says Mykietka.

Before COVID-19, the league focused on gathering the community together at events and block parties. With COVID-19 still an issue, the league is digging deep into new ways to end isolation. One focus will be teaching basic computer skills so that individuals can use social media platforms such as Skype, Zoom, and Facebook.

"From the survey, we are learning that seniors want to get more comfortable and knowledgeable about how to use these popular platforms," says Roberts. "They help to lessen the pain of isolation brought on by COVID-19."

To complete the seniors' survey go to <http://bit.ly/AACLSeniorSurvey>.

For assistance, call 780.479.6237 and leave a message for a call back.

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



Alberta Avenue Community League wants seniors to complete a survey so that the league can develop seniors' programming that reflects what seniors want and need. | Constance Brissenden

She will soon graduate from the University of Alberta in sociology, with a minor in economics, and a certificate in applied social science research. Last year, Archambault worked as a league

seniors' survey has been positive and honest. Archambault observes, "A lot of seniors want more connection. They don't have as much support as they would like."

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May 29, 2021



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1 for \$10
3 for \$25
5 for \$40

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curb side pick up
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Saturday, May 8
9am to 3pm



Details & pre-orders
at albertaave.org

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TUESDAY TO FRIDAY
11AM - 10PM
SATURDAY 10AM - 10PM
SUNDAY 10AM - 2PM



EASTWOOD COMMUNITY LEAGUE

GROUNDS AND FACILITIES ASSISTANT

Eastwood Community League operates a community hall, a fully serviced rink building and outdoor rink space, a community garden and a pocket-park.

We're seeking committed and enthusiastic individuals to work with our Groundskeeper as Ground and Facilities Assistant for the summer of 2021.

Duties will include

- groundskeeping and light landscaping
- maintenance at the hall and rink building
- assisting with programming and community festivities
- occasional office work related to memberships and events
- other tasks as they arise

Applicants should have:

- a high school degree or be working toward a high school degree
- English language & communication skills
- a hands-on aptitude for handling tools and landscaping implements
- an aptitude for learning new skills

They should enjoy following instructions, and be comfortable working on their own initiative. They should enjoy working with a team.

Other requirements:

- 17 to 30 years of age (Canada Summer Jobs requirement)
- Canadian citizen
- a valid government issued license and social security number

ANTICIPATED DURATION IS May 15 - Sept 30, 2021
This is a part time position, approx. 15 - 20 hrs/wk; \$18 / hr

Send resumé to info@eastwoodhub.org
or 11803 86 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5B 3J9
PH 780-477-2354 FOR MORE INFORMATION

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MAY 10, 2021 AT 4 P.M.

that Bloomin' garden show & art sale

Saturday, May 8
10:00 am - 4:00 pm



Alberta Avenue Community Centre
93 St & 118 Ave

More info at albertaave.org

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