

Rat Creek Press

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



BY THE COMMUNITY - FOR THE COMMUNITY

WINTER 2024

Winter around the Avenue

From markets to wrestling, we have it all!



Terry Aleck and Christine Turenne leading a drumming circle at Deep Freeze Festival last year. | Epic Photography

KAREN MYKIETKA

If you would like to get out of the house, meet up with friends, shop, or get active, there's lots to do around 118 Avenue.



Neighbourhood Events

Visit your local community league website or Facebook page to find out about upcoming events. Better yet, join their eNewsletters to stay informed year round!



Entertainment

Looking for some unique entertainment? There's a live professional wrestling show on the first Friday of the month at Alberta Avenue Community League. Check out Monster Pro Wrestling on Jan. 3 or Feb. 7. Tickets are available at the door for \$25.

If you like to hang out and have a coffee or drink while listening to live music, check out Friday Nite Live or Open Mic at The Carrot Arts Coffeehouse.

The Aviary is a multidisciplinary live music venue. Check their website for upcoming events such as Femmes Voyous

& The Quintessonics on New Years Eve. Tickets are \$25 at the door.

Every Monday evening you can find Fiddler's Roost hosting music and dancing at the Norwood Legion on 111 Avenue for a \$10 admission. Hot meals available from 4 to 6 pm. The legion also offers karaoke and darts on Wednesdays and bridge on Thursdays.

If dancing is your thing or you want to learn, Boots Dance Club offers social dance and line dance lessons at Delton Community League on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Check their website for prices and details. Argentine Tango lessons are offered at Parkdale Cromdale on Monday evenings. Participation is by donation. No experience necessary.

Don't want to pay a cover charge? Stop by Mona Lisa Pub. They have billiards, Karaoke, sports viewing and daily food specials. Wednesday wing nights are very popular. Get a pound of wings for \$6 with 11 flavours to choose from.

If board or card games are of interest, you should visit Pe Matawe Games and Common Box Games. They sell and offer a variety of drop-in events.

How about some classic 5 pin bowling? Plaza Bowling, a third generation family-owned business, has been rolling balls since 1959. Reservations are recom-

mended. Groups of up to six split the cost of a lane: \$37/hour weekdays before 5 pm or \$44/hour after 5 pm and weekends.



In the new year

A new year favourite is taking in the Deep Freeze Byzantine Festival. On January 18 and 19, embrace the spirit of "Barynard Blitz!" Celebrate numerous cultures through art, performance, and food. Get outside and try snowshoeing or axe-throwing, play street hockey, or race in a deep freezer. Too cold? Nibble some bannock while you warm up around the fire.

You don't need to wait for Deep Freeze for some outdoor fun. Check out our many fantastic outdoor rinks (Delton, Eastwood, Parkdale, Spruce Avenue) for skating or shinny hockey. Opening dates are dependent on weather conditions – the goal is to open for the holiday season, but sometimes it's not possible until the new year.

If spending time outdoors in the winter isn't for you, head to Commonwealth Recreation Centre or Eastglen Pool. Many leagues offer free community swim access on Saturdays, 3 to 5 pm and Sundays, 1 to 3 pm. Check the community league websites for details.

Alberta Avenue offers members the use of their gym on Thursday evenings for sports like pickleball, badminton, basketball or floor hockey. Contact info@alberta-ave.org for more information.

Parkdale hosts a regular yoga class on Tuesday evenings for members and a parent & toddler drop in called Stay and Play, Thursdays from 10 am to 12 pm. Spruce Avenue hosts regular bingo nights.



Volunteer

If you aren't already busy, you could consider helping out some local groups. Crystal Kids Youth Centre is looking for volunteers and donations for their Santa's Market on Dec. 14. The kids have earned "Santa Bucks" to shop for their loved ones. Contact: 780.479.5283 or santas-market@crystalkids.org.

There are two community leagues seeking volunteers for their casino fundraisers. Spruce Avenue has their casino on January 17 and 18 at Grand Villa downtown. Delton has theirs on February 24 and 25 at Century on Fort Road. Message president@spruceavenuecommunity.com or vp@deltoncommunity.com, respectively.

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PACE is building its coalition to bring about much-needed change at City Hall.

City of Edmonton Pilot provides help

People with disabilities and seniors who need financial assistance may qualify



KAREN MYKIETKA

In April 2024, Edmonton City Council approved a two-year pilot to assist in snow removal for approved low-income seniors and residents with disabilities and mobility challenges.

Homeowners are required to clear snow and ice off the sidewalks around their property or risk a \$100 fine plus the cost of snow removal. Unfortunately, many homeowners are physically unable to do this task and seniors put themselves at risk for falls or other medical issues such as heart attacks.

"Edmonton winters can be challenging, particularly for seniors and individuals with mobility issues," says Chantel Perizzolo, Director of Complaints and Investigations with the city.

The pilot program will use contractors to clear snow from both the public sidewalk in front of the property as well as the private walkways to the house at no charge to those residents approved for the program. Edmonton residents with permanent or temporary disabilities are eligible if there are no individuals residing in the household who can perform snow removal. Low-income seniors are eligible for snow removal assistance if they are over 65 years and have provided a Seniors Financial Assistance application to the Government of Alberta.

If you are already enrolled in DATS or the Assisted Waste Collection program, then you only need to complete an online enrolment form. If not, then you will also need to submit a signed authorized healthcare provider form as well. Senior residents can call 211 and press 2 for the Seniors Information Phone Line. An operator will guide you to find organizations supporting seniors in Edmonton.

If a spot in the pilot program is not available when you apply, you will automatically be added to a waitlist. This ensures you will be notified if a spot opens up.

The city is also partnering with community leagues to support community snow removal initiatives. If you can be a snow angel for others in the community or help organize winter kick-off events, contact your local community league.

Winter may be arriving later and bringing less snow than in previous years, but it still comes. In an ideal world, neighbours would take care of each other, especially vulnerable residents. Lending a helping hand in your community can make a big difference.

**ASSISTED
SNOW REMOVAL
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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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CIRCULATION

Serving 12,000 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.

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.

Winter 2024-25

Constance Brissenden is an experienced presenter, writer, editor, and historian living in Cromdale. She is co-author of nine award-winning books by Cree author Larry Loyie (1933-2016), in addition to more than 20 books of history and travel.

Gail Silvius recently moved back to McCauley after living in Delton

Jacob Ulickij is a writer and craft beer professional living on Alberta Avenue with his three talkative chickens.

Joshua Mira Goldberg moved to the Alberta Ave neighbourhood in August 2023, after gentrification destroyed the diversity and vibrancy of his previous home. He is grateful for friendly neighbours,

maggies, and green onion cakes.

Julie McCrea is a 12 year resident of Alberta Avenue, and spent five years serving on the league board where she continues to help as an event volunteer. What free time she has between her work as an adult educator at NAIT and the Newcomer Centre is spent gardening, reading, and as a foster mom for rescued dogs.

Karen Mykietka is a long-time resident who has poured her heart and soul into building community in the Alberta Avenue District. She lived in Eastwood, then Alberta Avenue, and now Parkdale.

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

Free sand keeps your sidewalks safe

City continues Community Sandboxes Program with changes

KAREN MYKIETKA

After a review and public consultation, the City of Edmonton decided to continue

the Community Sandbox Program with only 100 public sandbox locations for the 2024-25 season. The program provides free, dry sand

at designated locations for use on icy sidewalks and walkways. This is intended for individual, residential use — including community leagues — but not for businesses and contractors.

Freeze-and-thaw cycles in winter make for icy roads and sidewalks, making them dangerous for pedestrians and vehicles alike. While a fall on ice may be unpleasant and embarrassing for some, for others it can be life-altering. Falls cause 85 per cent of seniors’ injury-related hospitalizations. They can result in chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence, and even death.

It’s important that residents keep their sidewalks clear of snow and ice to keep them safe and accessible for everyone. Keeping up on snow removal can be a challenge for some, but ice is even trickier: It is difficult to chip it away and, as snow melts under the sun during the day, water seeps onto sidewalks and freezes again overnight. Sometimes all you can do to keep up is use something gritty like sand or kitty litter for traction.

The change in sandbox locations allows more resources to be dedicated to improving snow and ice control for active pathways, including bus stops and public amenities. The larger bins are easier and quicker to refill so they are a more reliable source of sand for residents.

However, this means that you may not find a sandbox at your local league anymore. Some lost access, but found different solutions: Instead of going without a sandbox, Elmwood Park Community League decided to manage and pay for their own box for their community members.

Sand is also available at the ecostations.

Remember you need to bring your own container when you visit your local community sandbox, large sand bin location or roadway maintenance yard (and please do not drive into the yards).

Tips for keeping yourself safe and upright this winter

Wear footwear with a good tread made of natural rubber or put ice grippers on your footwear.

Carry a resealable bag with sand or kitty litter to sprinkle on icy paths.

Walk like a penguin! Point your feet outward.

Use ski or walking poles or a cane for extra stability and balance.

Step on snow or grass for better traction.



Free sand for residential use can be found in the parking lot of the Borden Park pool.



Residents can use free sand from the green box at Eastwood Community League.

SAND LOCATIONS IN CENTRAL EDMONTON

7507 Borden Park Road – Northeast corner of parking lot near outdoor swimming pool and tennis courts

10517 95 St. – Central Maintenance Yard

11803 86 St. – Eastwood Community League, northeast side of league at the north end of the parking stalls

12139 105 St. – Westwood Community League, east side of league just inside parking lot near sidewalk

Low-cost tips for lower winter bills

“Character homes” don’t have to mean high utilities.

JACOB ULICKIJ

Whether you’re new to the neighbourhood or have lived here for decades, winter brings the same woes regarding utility bills. However, older apartments and character homes face unique challenges when it comes to keeping costs down.

Northern Edmonton saw explosive growth throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In fact, during the year the house I’m sitting in was built, Edmonton’s population climbed by 3 per cent. If you look at the whole decade, the increase jumps to nearly 20 per cent! With new Edmontonians came new homes, though not all were built equally.

According to a 1941 census, 60 per cent of Canadian dwellings relied on inefficient heating (stoves or space heaters), and 93 per cent used coal, coke, or wood as their heating fuel. As technology and household income improved, so did comfort — in the early 1980s, under 7 per cent of Canadian homes now relied on stoves or space heaters and under 5 per cent used coal, coke, or wood as their heating fuel.

If your home was built somewhere between those years, your heating bill may be higher thanks to the original construction. Add the various renovations, upgrades, and retrofits completed over the years (especially the ones you don’t know about), and you may begin to see why your utility bills look different from those of our neighbours in newer homes.

Luckily, many low-cost options for home insulation are renter-friendly and do not require many tools. For instance,



Plugging a mud room draft with a blanket. | Jacob Ulickij

a DIY shrink-and-seal film kit costs less than \$20 and requires only a few minutes to install with a hair dryer. Shrink-wrapping older windows, especially those with only a single pane, will help trap heat while making it harder for cool air to transfer through them and into your home.

You can also use something as simple as curtains to improve your quality of life. Opening curtains during the day and closing them at night will ensure sunlight warms your home while preventing that warm air from leaving during the night. Doubling up on curtains (even mismatching ones!) can make a more significant difference, all while giving your place a cozier look. Blankets or bubble wrap will do in a pinch.

If your home has exposed stone or brick such as a fireplace or accent wall,

ensuring that sunlight hits these dense surfaces means they will radiate heat for the rest of the day. While we’re on the topic of fireplaces, ensure your unused chimneys are plugged with insulation and that any cover provides adequate insulation.

Other low-cost options involve your overall HVAC efficiency. Replacing old filters can improve airflow from your furnace, and patching any holes in the ductwork with a bit of tape can ensure heat reaches where you need it. Area rugs or carpets to reduce heat loss through floors can make rooms feel warmer too.

There are also free options for reducing heating bills. Closing the door to rooms you rarely use and covering the air vents in those rooms will concentrate heat on areas you use most frequently. For extra insulation, you can hang old



Sealing and insulating an unused chimney. | Jacob Ulickij

blankets or quilts over the unused doorways to prevent cold from leeching in. Draft stoppers under your exterior doors (like a rolled-up towel) will likewise prevent cold air drafts.

Taking steps to feel warmer around the house may not result in lower bills, but it will mean being comfortable. Moving furniture away from outside walls and closer to your heat source will make your downtime more comfortable, as will throwing on an extra layer around the house.

Lastly, some readers may be eligible for the Home Upgrades Program to help cover utility and upgrade costs. Visit the HUP website for more details, and check out Energy Champion for personalized Albertan utility and rebate advice.

Housing is reconciliation

Funding for new housing development at Pimatisiwin site

GAIL SILVIUS

A small group of supporters gathered at Pimatisiwin (former Sands Hotel) on Fort Road on Nov. 4 to learn more about a 14-unit townhouse style development, to be located on land owned by NiGiNan Housing Ventures.

Funding for the project came through the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated (NICH). NICH brings together Indigenous-led housing and housing-related service delivery organizations to provide lasting solutions for populations experiencing housing inadequacies, including unhoused Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural, and northern areas.

This announcement includes more than \$22.3 million in funding for five projects in Alberta led by Aboriginal Housing Society, Buffalo Keeper Nehiyaw Centre, NiGiNan Housing Ventures (two projects), and Wood Buffalo Wellness Society.

Keri Cardinal, CEO of NiGiNan Housing, thanked the board, staff, and residents for journeying together in a healing model based on love.

The healing model takes time. People who have been street-involved or are living with addiction or mental health challenges can be in supportive housing, back to the streets, and then try again with supportive housing. NiGiNan offers non-judgmental support to its residents. However, community residents aren't always supportive of these housing initiatives. Morgan Wolf, vice-president of the Elmwood Park Community League, wants more consultation with the community. "Residents report an increase in crime and social disorder since Pimatisiwin opened," she says.

During the announcement, word arrived of the death of Senator Murray Sinclair, who

chaired the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Edmonton Griesbach MP Blake Desjarlais invited attendees to observe a moment of silence. "This kind of housing is part of the work and obligation of reconciliation," he said afterwards. "In the nine years since the 94 Calls to Action were presented to Canadians, only 15 actions have been completed. At this rate, we should have those actions all completed in 65 years. Our people need housing now, we can't wait."

"Housing saves lives. NiGiNan is recog-

nized nationally for its work in building housing models that include culture as part of the healing process," added Desjarlais.

Across Alberta, provincial government numbers show the rate of unintentional opioid deaths is more than eight times higher among First Nations Peoples.

Pimatisiwin presently has emergency space for 55 individuals and supportive (permanent) housing for 60 more. The new development will house another 56 people. Other services include medical attention and meal

preparation. Cultural workers lead pipe ceremonies and healing circles, and residents have opportunities to have some land-based experiences.

"We have completed the development permit request and are just waiting on a decision. We hope to have a spring 2025 start and be finished by summer 2026," said Cardinal.



Townhouse style development for 56 people slated for parking lot of former Sands Hotel. | Supplied

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Libraries stack fun and learning

Visit the Edmonton Public Library Sprucewood Branch for lots of winter activity



Sprucewood Branch at 11555 95 St has much more than books to offer visitors. | Rusti Lehay

RUSTI LEHAY

Wool and books have more in common than the average library patron might realize. Who doesn't like snuggling up under a cozy blanket as the days cool down and the light wanes earlier in the afternoons? Recently, Edmonton Public Library (EPL) Sprucewood patrons even had a chance to learn the art of weaving with a community art project.

"We bought a little loom thinking it would be a fun thing to put out on the floor, (invite folks to) weave a strip and make a community art project," says Sarah Foy, Sprucewood's community librarian.

Less than a smooth beginning for the librarians. They can catalogue books, lend out games, music, movies, audio books, create after school activities, dream about offering video game tournaments for tweens and teens in their newly expanded program room once renovations are complete... but constructing the loom stymied them.

When the master weaver from Traceable Textiles across the street dropped in to pick up her holds, she saw their flawed

attempts. She then properly constructed the loom, showed them how to use it and donated beautiful Alberta wool for patrons to participate in weaving a project.

There is far more than words to be found at a library. While they loan out a multitude of formats, they also offer an English vocabulary and conversation club every Tuesday afternoon. Welcoming all parents and caregivers, Bent Arrow also offers a beading circle alongside Indigenous parenting practices.

Foy noticed kids were dismissed early on Thursdays and needed a safe space and stimulating activities. Thursday afternoon STEAM Lab was born to fill that need. Full STEAM ahead is where kids can create robot battles, build hovercrafts, design their own games, and discover all things Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math.

Each of the 21 EPL branches has a community librarian like Foy, whose job it is to connect other agencies doing similar things and respond to community needs as they arise. The underlying mission is to cross collaborate and connect people in the community, addressing points of vulnerability such as filling out forms

that can intimidate the average person even more than constructing a loom for librarians. Every Saturday, a volunteer helps patrons fill out forms. Anyone needing assistance can register for a spot between 2:30-4:30 pm or drop in to see if there's a spot available.

For the wee ones, there is a flagship early literacy class called Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn every Friday at 10:30 for ages birth to age three (and their caregivers) . Foy also shares that, when babies meet a public health nurse at their two-month-old immunization appointment, they receive a Welcome Baby Package with a book, a CD, and loads of info from EPL. "We also encourage parents to go to any library branch and register their baby for a free library card," explains Foy. "The parents can choose a new board book to keep, and then library staff put the baby's nameplate on the book."

The librarians also ensure parents learn of the EPL's Ready. Set. READ! Program in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Children receive a free book every month until they turn five, and then the library holds a little

graduation party.

The weekly recurring events may look repetitive, but every month the community needs dictate additions or changes. Foy says, "We call them DIY Fun, and customers can always find different scavenger hunts or crafts. For example, for Dinovember, staff created a dino trading card station. We want to always offer something different to continue engaging kids." Another example is the Letters to Santa Project that started in mid November.

If you are vacationing, take the library with you by signing up at melibraries.ca. This allows you to drop in to any Alberta library, borrow books with your EPL card and return them to any Edmonton branch if you bring the borrowed items home.

Writers weave words together that fill library shelves and patrons are free to devour those words in all the existing forms, adding their own while building, conversing, beading, singing, and creating. Between the stacks, check out all the other activities and offerings from libraries, continually striving to build community. Libraries are one of the last spaces people can gather for free and gain so much.



Alberta Avenue
Community League
invites residents to

BYOCN Build Your Own Community Night

Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
gym, lounge, meeting room,
commercial kitchen.
What would you like to host?

www.AlbertaAve.org

EPCOR’s meter project sparks concern

Manufacturer linked to ethnic cleansing and displacement of Palestinians

JOSHUA MIRA GOLDBERG

A public utility’s choice to use an Israeli supplier for an equipment upgrade is causing concern among community members. EPCOR is installing new water meter technology in Edmonton homes and businesses. The rollout is happening in different neighbourhoods at different times, and is currently underway in the Alberta Avenue area.

In July 2024, a Palestinian community member with family in Gaza noticed that the device EPCOR had recently installed was marked “Made in Israel”. This led to community conversations, phone calls to EPCOR, and community research to learn more about the company that made the devices.

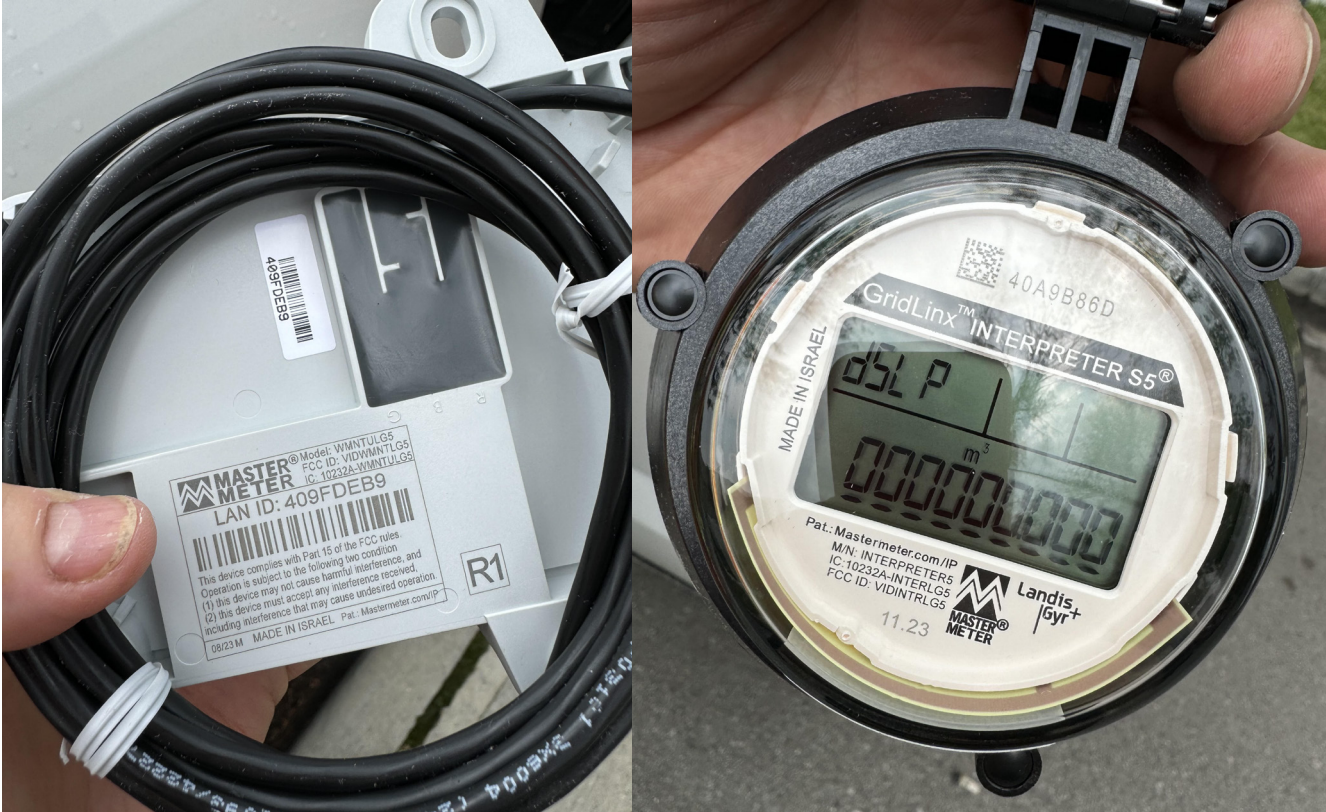
According to EPCOR’s website, the new device is a wireless data-reader that sends information from your water meter to EPCOR and will replace manual water meter reading.

The device is branded Master Meter, a North American distributor for the Arad Group, an Israel company. The Arad Group designs and makes water technology for sale in more than 50 countries.

The Arad Group was created in 1941 by Kibbutz Dalia, an Israeli settlement built in 1939 near the Palestinian villages of Daliyat al-Rawha’ and Sabbarin. In 1947-1949, members of Kibbutz Dalia attacked their Palestinian neighbours. Similar attacks happened across Palestine. Israelis killed over 13,000 Palestinians, displaced over 725,000, and took over 78% of Palestine.

The Arad Group supplies water meters to Mekorot, Israel’s national water company. Mekorot provides water to illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, while depriving Palestinians of access to water in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Naqab. This discriminatory practice has been called water apartheid, and it violates international law.

Fatima Saleh, a spokesperson for the EPCOR Delivers Genocide campaign, says, “It’s unconscionable that EPCOR is putting devices in our homes sourced from companies not only complicit in apartheid



The two meter-reading devices EPCOR is using. Both are labelled “Master Meter” and “Made in Israel” - on the front of the round one, and the back of the rectangular device. | Kyla Tichkowsky.

and genocide, but actively profiting off the elimination of Palestinians from our lands.”

EPCOR sent an emailed statement when asked how they made the decision to use devices made by the Arad Group / Master Meter.

“We understand that some have concerns with the company that manufactures our AMI water meter reading devices and where components in the device are made. We have met with some members of the community and continue to listen to their concerns and deeply personal stories.”

“The devices we are installing are the only devices on the market that are compatible with our existing AMI technology platform, which we are using for our electricity meters that were installed across Edmonton between 2014 and 2017. Using the existing technology platform was the lowest-cost option for our customers.”

Alberta Avenue resident Leila Sidi, and other community members, met with

EPCOR twice to explore AMI alternatives. She says, “EPCOR either failed to do their due diligence in learning about which company they were investing in, or chose to ignore their findings. Either way, it’s unacceptable and they should backtrack and find a better solution.”

“It’s unacceptable for a corporation to defend poor decision-making and claim ignorance,” says Nora Salem, another Alberta Avenue resident who is Egyptian-Palestinian and has family currently in Gaza.

According to EPCOR’s emailed statement, “Customers who receive a notice about an upcoming AMI meter installation can opt out, and for the duration of the project (to the end of 2025) there is no installation fee for a non-standard meter.” After this time EPCOR will charge a \$200 one-time installation fee for the non-standard device.

EPCOR confirmed that this opt-out

option includes people who already had the new device installed not knowing about the human rights concerns, and now want it removed. Anyone who opts out will have to pay \$25 per month starting September 1, 2025. This fee is subject to annual review and may change.

The EPCOR Delivers Genocide campaigners are not satisfied with the option of individual opt-out. “The point is that Palestinians are being forced out of their homes to make way for these genocidal and apartheid-complicit companies situated on stolen land. Until companies like EPCOR and stakeholders like the City of Edmonton understand that and fully divest from Arad and Master Meter, we will be protesting their complicity as well.”

More information about the EPCOR Delivers Genocide campaign can be found on their website, epcordeliversgenocide.ca.

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IT'S LIFE-CHANGING.

Finally! A local Doctor is helping cancer survivors live free from the constant pain and suffering associated with **Peripheral Neuropathy.**

Irreversible is not a word you want to hear from your Doctor, but it's a common one if you've been diagnosed with Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy or CIPN.

Elliott S. of Edmonton, AB survived testicular cancer only to be living life in constant pain. He felt as though he were walking on pins and needles, becoming weaker and weaker every day. "I was beginning to be worried that one day I would be wheelchair-bound.

Nearly half of the patients who undergo chemotherapy will develop Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy or CIPN.

Chemotherapy meds travel throughout the body and attack cancer cells, sadly they can also cause severe damage to healthy nerves. CIPN can begin within weeks of starting treatment and can worsen as treatment continues. A high number of really unfortunate people will be forced to endure the symptoms associated with CIPN for months, or even years after they've completed chemo.

When asked how CIPN was affecting his quality of life, Elliot responded **"It was difficult to even walk up and down stairs and do other things we usually take for granted."**

The most common symptoms include:

- Pain, tingling, burning, weakness, or numbness in arms, hands, legs or feet
- Sudden, sharp, stabbing or shocking pain sensations
- Loss of touch sensation
- Clumsiness and trouble using hand to pick up objects or fasten clothing
- Loss of balance or falling

For some, their nerves will recover over time. For most, the nerve damage is **'irreversible'**. Elliott had been told just that by a series of Doctors and specialists. Essentially, they could cure his cancer but couldn't fix the damage done by the drugs used to cure his cancer.

Then Elliot made a call to Dr. Melanie Morrill Dr. Ac. of Accessible Acupuncture in Edmonton. Dr. Morrill Dr. Ac. is using the time-tested science of Acupuncture and a technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease.

After a series of treatments, Elliott was taking stairs with stride.

We have a split-level house and it has a lot of stairs. "This morning I walked down the stairs and made breakfast." Elliott shared.

"I remember thinking 'that's become mighty easy for me', I didn't have to hold on to the handrail or anything! It's life-changing to have this mobility back!"

Again and again, we meet with patients who were once diagnosed as "untreatable" or "incurable" but after receiving Dr. Morrill Dr. Ac.'s treatments are now living lives free from pain and suffering. For over six years she has been reversing the effects of CIPN and other varieties of Peripheral Neuropathy, including that caused by diabetes without invasive surgeries and medications that come with uncomfortable side effects.

If you've recently beat cancer only to find that you're living a life in constant pain and discomfort or you're struggling with the same symptoms as a result of either Peripheral Neuropathy or Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy, Dr. Morrill Dr. Ac. and the incredible team at Accessible Acupuncture can help!

Dr. Melanie Morrill Dr. Ac is accepting new chemo-induced neuropathy patients in the new year.

Call 587-879-7122 now to schedule your January 2025 consultation.

SCHEDULE a consultation TODAY
CALL 587-879-7122

HYS Centre 600, 11010 101 ST NW
Edmonton, AB
AccessibleAcupuncture.ca

Winter dreams of summer gardens

Local award winners may inspire you

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN &
JACOB ULICKIJ

No matter your gardening pleasure, the City of Edmonton takes pride in your efforts. The Edmonton in Bloom Awards reviews nominations for various categories and selects standouts from hundreds of community contributions every year. With some work (and a few dirt stains), you may be recognized for your balcony garden, edible yard, natural yard, or tiny yard. General yards and public spaces are also honoured as we encourage communities to come together and plant their best.

The Front Yards in Bloom awards were launched in 1999, and the City of Edmonton collaborates with various partners to cultivate community spirit and enhance the city's beauty. With the 2024 season behind us, we're highlighting the best of the best and looking forward to an even bigger 2025.

For more information:
Edmonton.ca/programs_services/landscaping_gardening/front-yards-in-bloom



**Community Garden - 1st Place:
Alberta Avenue Community Garden**

This floral backdrop to Alberta Avenue's favourite summer festivals has its roots planted firmly in the community — literally and figuratively. Located behind the community centre on 118 Avenue and 92 Street, this meeting place of backgrounds, skills, and passions continues to be a source of pride and beauty for the community.

"The gardens exemplify community building, out-of-the-box creativity, and hard work," says the Awards Committee.



All photos of Alberta Avenue Community League gardens | Supplied



Beyond just beauty, the garden also gives back freely to the neighbourhood. In what has become an annual tradition, potatoes were planted in a vast communal area of the backyard. This year, volunteers celebrated over 1,300 pounds grown, shared, and donated to local pantries!

Numerous projects dot the flower-studded yard. From an active apiary that supports nearby pollinators, to a donated greenhouse bursting with hot peppers late into the season, the sky is the limit regarding the creativity and hard work of those who want to bring a unique and beautiful twist to their neighbourhood.

The joy of this award is as shared as the labour that went into it. "The certificate will be displayed," says Hemanta Siwakoti, a garden volunteer. "It's an indication of respect shown by the City of Edmonton for gardening and nature. It shows respect in a very special way."



Parkdale Cromdale Community League gardens | Supplied

Public Spaces - 2nd Place: Parkdale Cromdale Community League

From chest-high lilies to beds bursting with marigolds, the gardens of the Parkdale Cromdale Community League (PCCL) stand as unique a meeting place as the communities that surround it.

Summer employee Autumn Meszaros was immersed in PCCL gardening this past summer, and can be thanked for much of the work that went into planting and maintaining their impressive yard. Despite her immersion in studying economics at the University of Alberta, Meszaros was eager for the opportunity

to pursue a family tradition. "My great-grandfather lived in Welland, Ontario. He was a florist and the head city gardener."

For Meszaros, a summer job at PCCL gave her the rare opportunity to work outside. "It was nice to do gardening in the summer," she says. "Being outside enhanced my well-being. I appreciate the community league very much for this opportunity."

Are green thumbs genetic? Maybe. What we know for sure is that the outreach of any garden goes beyond the plants themselves. We may walk by them, admire them and start growing our own flowers or vegetables to find some of that joy at home. However you find joy in the soil, we hope it is a journey of gratitude.



Edible Yard - 2nd place: Beth & Otto Mahler in Parkdale

Beth and Otto Mahler show us there's no such thing as building your trellises too tall. "My passion for gardening came from my parents, who immigrated from Europe in the 1950s," says Otto. He tells us that during their time, the entire block in Norwood was a contiguous garden. With very few fences around to break up the mosaic, the outdoors was a fantastic meeting place for communities. The Mahlers' spread of edible plants reminds us how families may still cultivate a substantial vegetable garden as a source of inexpensive, healthy food.

"Today, spending time in the garden gives me a chance to chat with neighbours who pass by. We often exchange updates about our gardens and trade plant cuttings and saved seeds. It gives me great joy to see the love of gardening gaining momentum in our community," adds Otto.

The Mahler family encourages everyone to plant something – even starting small with a few tulips or a tomato in a pot on your deck. The potential rewards are immense, and well beyond the awards. With a few hours of work, you can expect delicious food, stronger muscles, time in the sun, and maybe even new friends.



Tiny Yard - 2nd place: Mike Hukalo in Alberta Avenue

The Hukalo lawn is a stunning example of how much you can do with a bit of space and a splash of creativity. Located on a busy street, this

small pocket of calm highlights what a curated approach to gardening can offer. Complimentary colours, a stunning mix of vibrant highlights and thick ferns, and a tangled, yet refined border. Like haikus to poets or canvases to painters, limitations (in this case,

space) often reveal new potential. Even the warm string lights and rich wooden steps complement the effect of walking into a private oasis. Luckily for the community, the garden is far from private, and the panel took notice.

After finding a photo of the property

online from 2014, Hukalo's work is even more impressive. From a couple of spindly trees and planters on the stairs, the garden now stuns those who pass by and reminds us how much potential there is in our own front yards.



General Yard - 1st place: Lorealea Gaboriau & Gary Pihl in Alberta Avenue

While buying hanging planters and potting mix is one way to make your garden pop in the spring, there is nothing quite like a perennial garden to remind you how beautiful the seasonal changes can be here in Edmonton. Luckily for our community, the lilies, roses, and ivies of the Gaboriau lawn are among the first greens to greet us as the snow fades and the blooms begin.

With a mix of public and private displays, the colours erupting from Gary and Lorealea's gardens are an absolute showstopper. Years of pruning, diligent weeding, and careful maintenance have rewarded our community with a lawn as resilient as the people who tend it. A timeless home behind the boughs makes for the perfect canvas that makes this year's General Yard 1st Place unique, memorable, and charming all in one.*



Looking back to Amber Valley at 99 yo

Horace Hinton, Part of Alberta’s Black history



Horace Hinton (front) is recognized with a certificate celebrating his 99th year, along with MLA Janis Irwin and MP Blake Desjarlais. | Constance Brissenden

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

In the black-and-white photo dated 1946, Horace Hinton is one of 10 Black athletes making up Amber Valley Baseball, Alberta’s first all-Black baseball team.

Twenty-four kilometres northeast of Athabasca, the community of Amber Valley was founded in 1910 by African-American families. Their greatest desire was to escape racism and violence. They headed north from Texas, Oklahoma, and other southern states pursuing free homesteads offered to settlers in 1910.

The Obadiah Place provincial heritage site, the homestead of one settler family, is a remembrance of the approximately 1,000 African-Americans who arrived in

this early period. The community built a school in 1913, and a nondenominational church in 1914.

Another huge achievement was its all-Black baseball team playing in the Northern Alberta Baseball League. The formidable Amber Valley Baseball players were much admired throughout northern Alberta. Unlike in the United States, they could play against white teams and did so with style.

Horace Hinton was born in August 1925 in Maidstone, Saskatchewan, another largely American Black settlement. His parents moved to Amber Valley around 1932 when he was seven years old. A lifetime athlete, he played with the Amber Valley Baseball team, starting in his teens.

After moving to Edmonton with his family, Hinton worked as a bouncer at a local hotel. One day, a friend suggested that he apply for a job with Northwest Utilities, now Atco Gas. He was hired and worked with the company for twenty years until he retired.

Today, Hinton is a proud 99-year-old living in the Parkdale community. He still drives, does his own banking and lives in the house he bought more than 50 years ago.

In October, Hinton received recognition from two levels of government. Gathering at his home, MP Blake Desjarlais and MLA Janis Irwin both brought certificates congratulating him on his life and age.

As his son Troy said, “Dad feels truly

honoured and appreciated.”

Humour is one of Hinton’s weapons against time. I asked him for the secret of longevity. With a laugh, he quickly answered, “Eat, drink, and party.”

When it comes to living legends, Horace Hinton is one of them. Today, few know about the quiet man who goes about his daily life with the help of his son Troy, and a caring next-door neighbour, Rauldon Augustine.

Horace Hinton encourages all of us to “keep doing the things you can do,” as we get older. For his own part, he loves watching sports on television. From his own playing days in Amber Valley to his Blue Jays ball cap today, “baseball has always been my sport.”

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Selling books, swinging a soprano sax

Reg Silvester is as eclectic as his bookshop



Surrounded by great books, Reg Silvester is at Railway Avenue Bookstore on weekends at Queen Mary's Market. | Constance Brissenden

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Reg Silvester's life is a lot like a well-read book with many storylines. On the weekends, look for him in his bookshop at Queen Mary's Market on 111 Avenue, surrounded by thousands of new and used books on neatly organized shelves. Nights are another chapter: You may find him playing his soprano saxophone with The Swing Cats, a brass and rhythm group he launched more than a decade ago. He also plays alto sax with the Saint City Big Band in St. Albert. Silvester knows a few things about living an eclectic life. He's been an Edmonton Journal reporter, founder of an arts publication, an antiques and collectibles dealer, a course materials editor for Athabasca University, and a band leader.

As a senior, Reg Silvester returned to Edmonton and the Alberta Avenue Community League in 2021, after a few years away in Saskatchewan and Athabasca. "I live two doors down from where I used to live in the 1980s. The neighborhood is affordable and that's a huge plus. It is tidier and friendlier today. There are beautiful yards. I make good connections with activities at the league," he shares. His bookshop, Railway Avenue Bookstore, can be found around a few corners in the huge Queen Mary's Market. It's worth the easy search. Visiting recently, I bought two interesting books, both about exotic travel adventures. I can read and dream for a total price of only \$9. Along the way, Reg Silvester has learned a few things about business that he'd like to share.



Reg Silvester (right) plays the soprano saxophone in the The Swing Cats at Alberta Avenue Community League. | Constance Brissenden

"You need to be tough to run a business. When I had a business selling antiques, I bought high and sold low. I was a softie when it came to my customers," he admits. His antique business, located in Saskatchewan, failed. Let that be a lesson, says Silvester. "Don't be a softie." Running a business at any stage of life is a challenge, but it's also an adventure. Silvester started selling antiques at Queen Mary's Market three years ago. When a nearby retail-

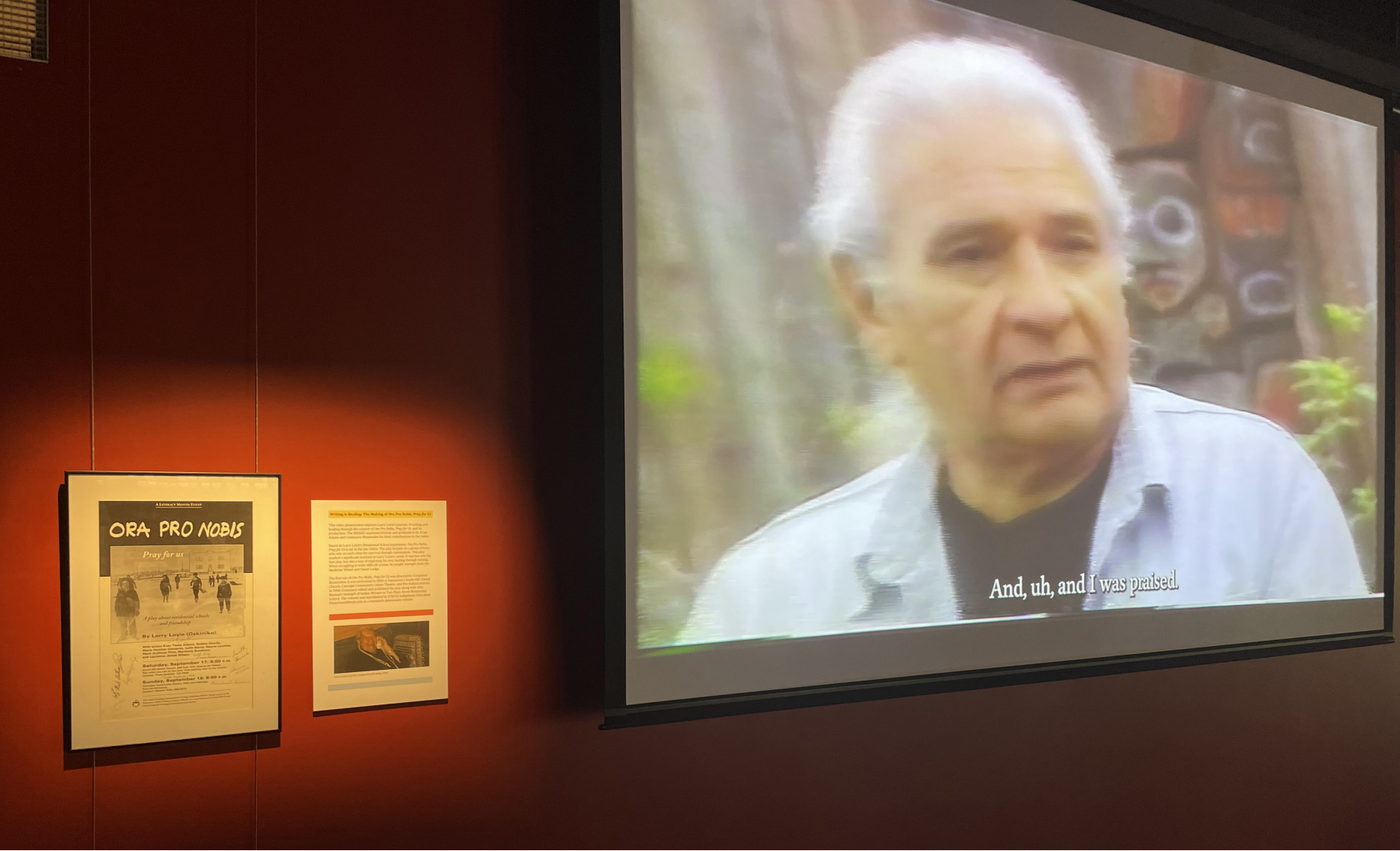
er announced he was retiring from his book business, Silvester offered to buy it. He soon found himself cataloguing books alongside antique pottery and art, arranging his corner of the market into an attractive and well-organized world. Continuing to work part-time keeps Silvester active. The move may not make the retiree rich, but it does have perks. "I enjoy meeting people, talking to them, and selling books that I know they will enjoy reading."

A graphic for a casino fundraiser. It features a red background with a glowing marquee sign that says "CASINO Volunteers Needed". Above the sign are several playing cards (Ace of Diamonds, Ace of Clubs, Ace of Hearts, Ace of Spades). Below the sign, there is text about the importance of casino revenues for the organization's sustainability and ability to provide services, programs, and events to the community. The dates "Feb 24 & 25, 2025" are prominently displayed, along with the location "Century Casino, 13103 Fort Road". At the bottom, it says "Meals provided & Transportation provided if needed" and provides contact information: "To volunteer please contact: VP@deltoncommunity.com" and the website "www.Deltoncommunity.com". There are also stacks of colorful casino chips at the bottom.

A graphic for a winter celebration. It has a dark blue background with white snowflakes and a snowman. The text "OFFICIAL SNOW ANGELS HIGH-OFF PARTY" is at the top. Below it, "Winter Celebration" is written in large, white, stylized letters. The date and time "Saturday Jan 11 2025 1:00pm - 3:00pm" are listed. The location "11803 86 St NW EASTWOOD COMMUNITY LEAGUE'S" is provided. It says "Games, Food and lots of FUN". There is a small logo for Eastwood Community League. Below this, another graphic says "Need a Shovel? Take a shovel!" in large, white, stylized letters. It encourages people to "Stop by and pick up your shovel while supplies last." and says "Together, we'll keep Eastwood looking its best this winter!". Contact information is provided: "Contact: (780) 477-2354" and "community@eastwoodhub.org". There is a small shovel icon at the bottom right.

Cree author Larry Loyie honoured

After six years of intense work, the Writing is Healing exhibit opens



A video about Larry Loyie is part of the exhibit at the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at UBC in Vancouver. | Constance Brissenden

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

Six years ago, I stood in my Edmonton living room surrounded by 32 boxes, the product of 24 years that I spent with my partner, Cree author and residential school Survivor Larry Loyie. Inside the boxes were files, manuscripts, photos, correspondence, newspaper clippings, videos, recordings, and interviews. Soon, the boxes would be shipped to the University of British Columbia’s Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC).

Before he died in April 2016, Larry Loyie and I talked about our nine bins of residential school research. Where would it all go? Born in Alberta, Larry had lived in Vancouver for many years. He had a close connection with UBC and its new residential school centre. The choice was easy. The Centre welcomed our donation with open arms.

My first task was to organize the contents of the bins. Working without Larry was sad and exhausting. But after one year, the 32 boxes were ready to go. I didn’t know it then, but the archive

project was just beginning. More than a dozen staff worked with me to make it happen.

On November 4, 2024, I walked through the Centre’s doors into an exhibit entitled Larry Loyie, Writing is Healing. Banners, display cases, and a video are all part of the exhibit which will stay up until May 23, 2025. The launch was one of the most satisfying days of my life.

The day also marked the launch of the Loyie-Brissenden Collection, an archive available on the IRSHDC website for students and others around the world.

The residential school system affected more than 145,000 Indigenous children in more than 140 schools across Canada. Larry Loyie was one of the first to write about a survivor’s experience in residential school. In his play, Ora Pro Nobis, Pray for Us, he stepped back to the 1940s and his six years as a child forced to live at St. Bernard Mission school in Grouard, Alberta. He focused on the friendship of the boys, and how it helped them survive their years away from home. The children and their parents had no choice. The Canadian government was

determined to wipe out their Indigenous cultures and languages.

Larry’s play, which I directed, was first performed in 1994 — 12 years before the Canadian government apologized to residential school survivors. Larry went on to write nine books, four of which were about the residential school experience.

Back in 1994, Evan Tlesla Adams played George, the Larry Loyie character in Ora Pro Nobis, Pray for Us. “Larry was excited about writing, just on fire... He wanted to write, and he wanted this play to live,” recalled Adams, a Coast Salish actor and, today, a renowned medical doctor. “He wanted people to know the truth, and nothing would stop him.”

As a young actor, Dr. Adams was just beginning to learn about his parents’ time in a BC residential school. Like most Canadians, he was learning about a hidden history. Today, we have all learned so much more.

The Loyie-Brissenden Collection is now the largest personal Indigenous archive in Canada. In the words of Kristin Kozar, IRSHDC’s executive

director, “We’re creating an archive that goes beyond the basics, to create a portrait of a survivor. Larry Loyie always said the archive wasn’t about him alone, it was about all survivors, the thousands who faced the challenges of their school years.”

Larry Loyie was a groundbreaking activist who shed tears to put truth on paper. He wrote: “Writing is healing, one way for us to deal with the anger that is present amongst us. I now use writing as part of my healing and I’m sure it can help others with similar problems. Healing is a human problem, not a racial one.”

Larry Loyie, Writing is Healing, is open until May 23, 2025, Monday-Thursday, noon to 4 pm, Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre, 1985 Learners Walk, UBC Campus, Vancouver, BC. For information: 604.822.6941.

To view the Larry Loyie, Writing is Healing video and Loyie-Brissenden Collection: <https://irshdc.ubc.ca/>

Larry Loyie and Constance Brissenden website: www.firstnationswriter.com

For more on Larry Loyie books: www.goodminds.com

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Re-imagining Closed School Sites

We aim to transition spaces so they continue to serve the community



Mount Royal School is now closed. | Trisha Estabrooks.

TRISHA ESTABROOKS,
EPSB TRUSTEE WARD D

In recent years, the school communities near 118 Avenue have seen a number of changes. In the spring of 2017, Rundle, R.J. Scott and Lawson schools were closed and a new K-9 school, Ivor Dent, opened in the fall of that same year. In spring 2020, Montrose and Mount Royal schools were closed and the newly renovated and expanded Highlands K-9 school opened.

The decision to build replacement schools was ultimately a good decision, in my opinion, for kids and their families. Opening Ivor Dent and Highlands K-9 schools gave students access to newer facilities and additional programming. It also showed the School Board’s commitment to investing in schools in older neighbourhoods, knowing that one component to a thriving neighbourhood is a local community school.

As with every decision, though, there are also consequences. The opening of two K-9 schools meant that a number of our older school buildings would be empty and available to lease. Through my time serving as

your School Board Trustee, I have encouraged community groups, sports teams, faith organizations and anyone interested in leasing space within the closed schools to reach out. The reality is that some of the empty school space has been well used and other spaces not used at all.

The other reality is that it costs the school division tens of thousands of dollars to operate these buildings each year, in addition to significant deferred maintenance costs, or the work that needs to be done to keep a school building in ideal condition. For example, the deferred maintenance cost at Mount Royal school is \$4 million. Because these buildings are not being used as schools, the division does not receive any funding from the provincial government to operate or maintain them.

Fast forward to today. Recently, the Board of Trustees declared six schools surplus. This means that the school division no longer has a need for the following buildings: Montrose, Mount Royal, R.J. Scott, Rundle, Lawton, R.J. Scott and Queen Mary Park schools. The cost to operate and maintain these buildings outweighs any potential revenue that might

be received by renting these schools to the public. Declaring the sites surplus will save the division money and, if the sites are sold, will create revenue the division can use toward other initiatives. At the forefront of this decision, for me as one trustee, is the fact that these buildings and the land on which they are on, could and should be used for other purposes.

I have had some folks reach out and ask, “But wait a minute, isn’t Edmonton Public running out of space, shouldn’t we reopen the closed schools?” It’s a good question as the space crunch within EPSB is real. The problem is the area of the city where we need the space the most is not where our empty schools are located. Additionally, the cost to reopen the schools is significant and given the state of some of these buildings, not worth the investment.

Schools are often situated on beautiful pieces of land with lots of green space, close to transit and nestled within our communities. Once that building no longer serves as a school, we need to find ways to transition that space into one that serves the community in a different way. Now that the decision has been made to surplus these sites,

the school division must follow a process.

First, the Government of Alberta will review the site and determine if there are other uses for it. If so, the government may acquire the property. If the Government of Alberta decides not to acquire the property, the Division’s Joint Use Agreement (JUA) partners—Edmonton Catholic School Division, Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord and the City of Edmonton—have the first right-to-purchase. If neither the province nor a JUA partner express an interest in the property, the division can then attempt to sell the property on the open real estate market.

The process is now underway for closed schools in our neighbourhood to undergo a change. And while change can be daunting at times, it can also bring unexpected benefits and the potential for great things for the community.

I look forward to supporting community through the next phase of re-imagining these buildings.

Please reach out if you have questions about this or anything else to do with Edmonton Public Schools and public education: trustee.trisha.estabrooks@epsb.ca

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Having Scent Sensitivities Stinks!

Light-handed use of scented products can make someone’s day easier

JULIE MCCREA

I get into the Uber and immediately roll down my window. I stare hatefully at the car vent air freshener as my head begins to pound. Again.

Walking into an office bathroom, I pause as a cloud of cleaning product fog envelops me. I can feel my eyes water and my throat and lungs begin to feel like there is a small boxer punching their way out from within. Again.

I move away from a neighbor as he makes his way around the table at a community event because his cologne is so strong, I can pretty much taste it. Automatically, I start to feel ill. Again.

These things are a regular everyday occurrence for me and many others with chemical allergies and scent sensitivities. I had always been on the conservative end of my relationship with scents, but after being one of the “lucky” ones to get H1N1 flu back in 2009, my sensitives got so much worse. Not an easy thing to have navigated over the past 15 years in a world where it seems like EVERYTHING has to have a scent attached to it (insert unimpressed face here).

“But, Julie! The commercials say I have to have laundry that smells fresh for weeks and that I should spray air fresheners every chance I get! I need to douse myself in expensive perfume and scrub my counters with something that will announce to everyone’s olfactory system I am aggressively clean!!” Do you, though? How often do we actually think about

what all those chemicals are doing to our health, whether someone has sensitivities or not? The Canadian Lung Association shares on their website that scented products can contain several toxic chemicals. Even “scentless” products are not 100 per cent without risk, but generally don’t have any additional scent added to the product, or a compound has been added to mask its scent rather than remove the underlying toxic chemicals.

Victoria Stevens, the owner of Metropolitan Rockabilly Hair Design, has intimate knowledge of what I am talking about. She works behind the chair in a salon, and also does mobile hair styling. She experiences health issues due to scent sensitivities as well and, in her line of work, this is extra challenging. “As someone who works in an industry with a lot of smelly products, it is difficult to find scent free products that also work well,” she says.

Victoria can be triggered by scents that will cause her to get an instant migraine. In her salon, she can control the products she uses. However, she has had to quit jobs at other salons because the products they used caused her to react constantly. When asked what salons could do to help alleviate effects of chemicals and scents for their staff and clients, she says good ventilation is key. With her own clients, she discusses their own sensitivities when they come in. She also believes that this is a route that salons can take to ensure they avoid using products on their clients

that have proven to be triggering in the past.

Some organizations and workplaces not as dependent on products like a salon, can take additional steps to safeguard everyone’s health. I have been a contract instructor at NAIT for the past 11 years, and was delighted when they rolled out a scent

has her own struggles with scent and chemical triggers. She says that when people see the posters or hear from their colleagues about their issues with scents, they generally react positively and have no problem reducing or eliminating the scents they wear and use. “No one has complained about not being able to bring in candles or diffusers, or not wearing perfume.” Brenda praises the success of this campaign because it informs people about something that they may not otherwise be aware of. “Nobody wants to make another person feel ill,” she adds.

For the past four years, I have been working from home. This means less exposure on a day-to-day basis to scents on public transportation and in the office. I have fewer headaches and asthma flare-ups, and I feel that my overall health is better because I can control what I use in my space.

I know encouraging people to stop using scented products is too big of an ask. However, some things can help both sides of this issue. Scent is better as a discrete, intimate thing. A whisper of scent when someone gets close to you or a faint hint as you enter their home can be a lot easier to deal with (and distance yourself from) than when your scent enters a person’s space like a high school marching band. Also, consider those of us with these sensitives like your canaries in a coal mine: Maybe what we react to should give everyone else food for thought to consider limiting exposure to scented products and the chemicals they contain.



LIMITED SCENT ZONE

Be scent smart and consider those with sensitivities or allergies. Please do not use scented personal products or sprays in this area. nait.ca/scentlimited



awareness campaign. Posters around campus informed that scented products can cause negative reactions for some people, and encouraged that they not be used.

Brenda Binette, Manager of Health Safety & Environment at NAIT, also

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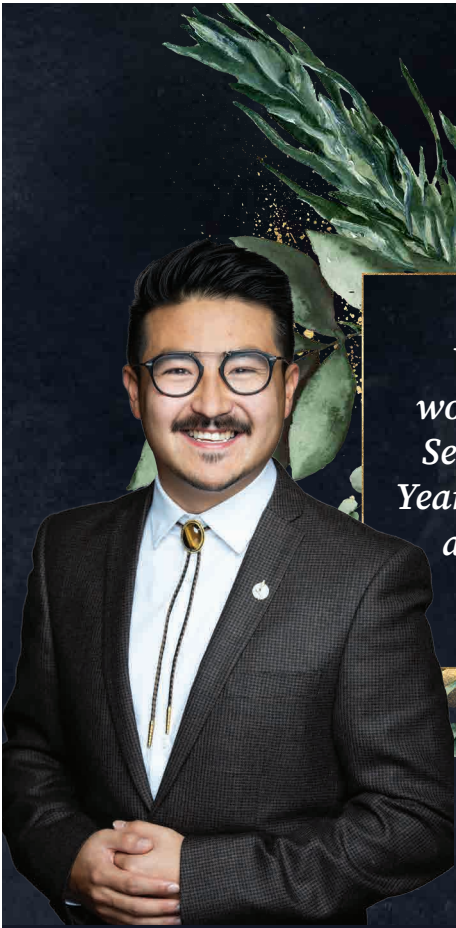
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