

The Riverbend Ragg-Times

A PUBLICATION OF THE RIVERBEND COMMUNITY LEAGUE

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Our Local Hockey Champions!

Serdachny and Markowski both eligible for PWHL draft this June

By Dave Rumbold

Local hockey talents Danielle Serdachny (left) and Stephanie Markowski were last featured in these pages in 2019 as proud members of the gold medal winning IIHF world champion Canadian U18 women's hockey team.

Both Serdachny, a forward, and Markowski, on defence, were recruited to U.S. College hockey programs after high school. Markowski played with the Ohio State Buckeyes this year as they won the NCAA women's hockey championship! Serdachny played for the Colgate University Raiders and as a member of the Canadian women's national team this year. She scored the winning overtime goal against the USA that clinched the 2024 IIHF World championship



and another gold medal for Canada! Congratulations and best wishes to our local champions as they

enter the next stage of their hockey careers. Watch for them to go in the PWHL draft this June!

Join us for TRAC Fun Run!

Run, walk or just come out and support your community

By Karin Shott

It's not too late to register for the 19th Annual TRAC Community Run/Walk, which will be held on Sunday, May 26 at Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School (behind the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre).

The event includes 10K, 5K and 3K individual races, a 3K family run/walk and a 1K Kids Fun Run for children ages six and under.

To register, please go to raceroster.com and search "trac fun run."

For more information on the event or to find out how you can get involved as a volunteer or sponsor, please contact the TRAC Community Office at yegTRAC@gmail.com or call 780-439-9394.

We hope to see you on May 26!

The Early Days of Riverbend Community League

Diane Dunn and Pat Collins reflect on their long-time neighbourhood

By Dave Rumbold

Smiles and laughter come quickly as Diane Dunn and Pat Collins reminisce about the formative years of Riverbend Community League (RCL). The league was originally incorporated as Riverbend-Brookside Community League in 1970. The reference to Brookside was dropped as the league grew over the years to include the new neighborhoods of Brander Gardens, Ramsay Heights and eventually Rhatigan Ridge. Pat, Diane and their families, along with many other residents, were integral to the growth of the RCL from an idea to a highly functioning neighborhood sports and social hub.

I wanted to learn more about those early days and sat down with the two women to hear

some of their memories. They said residential development in Brookside began in the mid 1960s at the south end of the present-day neighborhood, with the middle and north filling in towards completion in the early 1970s. By the time the league was formed in 1970, there were still no other residential neighbourhoods west of the Whitemud Ravine, the Quesnell Bridge was brand new and the Whitemud Freeway as we know it wasn't built yet. Access to the city was either north on 142 Street (down the hill past Fox Farm) to Whitemud Road beside the river, leading to Keillor Road and 76 Avenue in Belgravia, or residents could head south on 142 Street to 45 Avenue eastbound. Forty-fifth was gravel in those days and the bridge over Whitemud Creek



Diane Dunn (left) and Pat Collins were two of countless people who were instrumental in building thriving community leagues in Riverbend.

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was one lane. Pat recalls having to wait for cars coming the other direction to pass! The bridge was soon expanded to two lanes (still in place by Snow Valley), and was soon replaced by the Whitemud Freeway.

The early residents of Brookside were isolated from the rest of the city geographically and responded by creating a strong, thriving community league. With a growing neighborhood of young families, the league served as the social hub of the neighborhood, with extensive programming focused on kids' activities, sports and adult social functions.

Eileen Hurshowy started the league newsletter in 1970 focusing on community building efforts such as recruiting parents to organize hockey and playschools, and fundraising for community rinks. Within a couple of years of the league's founding, two rinks were in place and a league building and tennis courts were being planned.

Jack Brown led the planning and construction of Brookside Hall, which opened in 1978. It was funded by \$30,000 in casino proceeds and \$55,000 in neighborhood investment certificates. Matt Collins organized the adjacent parking lot and landscaping, recruiting neighbours and Brookside students on recess to assist with sod rolling! The main room at Brookside originally served as the skate shack during winter months. Doug Peterson co-ordinated the addition of better rink lighting in 1984 for use on dark winter nights. The four league tennis courts were opened in 1980, and soon a tennis professional was hired and the club had 325 active members!

Along with hockey for both kids and old-timers, early league programming grew to include softball, baseball, fastball, soccer, basketball, tennis, karate, ringette, figure skating, dance, pedal pushers and baton.

Pat worked to establish a French immersion kindergarten at Brookside School around 1974.

This amazing list of activities speaks to the extraordinary efforts of all the early league volunteers. Also in place early on was Neighborhood Watch. The league was active at City Hall, with Diane leading a committee responding to concerns about a video arcade in the nearby Riverbend Shopping Centre in the early 1970s. The neighbourhood also pushed back on early plans to build a shopping centre on the south side of 53 Avenue, where the Mormon Church and Temple are now. Stan's Shell operated at the southeast corner of 53 Avenue and 143 Street until it was replaced by houses in the late 1990s. Stan lived in the neighborhood and was always supportive of league activities.

The original newsletters reveal a focus on family-oriented activities, which grew into an amazing variety of events. Everything from annual ladies luncheons at the Derrick Club, spring flings, Christmas socials, themed dances, craft sales and an annual fall hockey tournament filled the calendar. League AGMs were large events, held at the Four Seasons Hotel. The league newsletter became the Riverbend Ragg-Times in 1983, with a circulation of 3,000 thanks to the efforts of Marcel Heschuk. A Ragg-Times re-naming contest was held in the late 1990s but in the end the name wasn't changed!

There are countless anecdotes and stories arising from the early days of RCL, and so many names to thank that aren't mentioned here. The thriving community league and infrastructure that exists today owes its existence to the foresight and efforts of these founders.

Thank you, Pat and Diane, for your invaluable contributions.

Riverbendonline.ca

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RCL Board Note



Swing into Spring

Like new buds on trees, opportunities to get involved in our community are all around

By Miep Raedschelders, President, Riverbend Community League

Spring is in full swing in our beautiful community. I love saying hello to our neighbours old and new as well as their pups out on walks! If you are new to Brookside, Brander Gardens, Ramsay Heights or Rhatigan Ridge, welcome to this gem of a neighbourhood and check out your community league at riverbendonline.ca!

The Riverbend Community League (RCL) has opportunities to get involved in neighbourhood events and initiatives through our social committee. Block parties, family game nights, and tasty ways to get to know our neighbourhood restaurants are being explored but need event-planning volunteers and participation!

If you prefer to contribute your time in print form as a budding journalist, poet, photographer, artist or wordsmith, the Ragg-Times newspaper welcomes editorial submissions! E-mail info@riverbendonline.ca and we'll loop you into all current volunteer opportunities.

RCL needs Board members. If you have considered a leadership role in your community, this is the perfect time to reach out and make it happen. The RCL offers an organized and well-run board with administrative support and an active membership base. Community Leagues offer a rewarding opportunity to gain experience in civics and leadership, to network and make a real difference close to home! Contact president@riverbendonline.ca for more information.

Thank you to the RCL Tennis/Pickleball Courts Re-Development Committee, and with specific kudos to Georgia Dewart, Krista Frolich and Michelle Smith, for exploring the feasibility of tennis courts in Brander Gardens. A sobering review of the business case for the program was presented to the RCL and the replacement of the courts will not take place at this time. RCL thanks the committee for their dedication, time and energy.

Brookside Hall has been selected as a site for the City of Edmonton's Pop-up Garden program. The Brander Community Garden at the cage will continue to bloom this summer and friends of the garden held RCL's annual compost sale on May 4. This sale funds the garden and other RCL activities and we are grateful for your support.

Riverbend will see Green Shacks in Brander Gardens, Brookside, Ramsay Heights and Rhatigan Ridge this summer. Each site will also be supplied with a porta-potty to support outdoor enthusiasts and family park time. There are so many ways to get out and enjoy this amazing neighbourhood! Follow us on Facebook or Instagram for info about the Green Shack schedule, the TRAC Run/Walk, updates on events and initiatives and so much more! In-person or online at riverbendonline.ca, your league is here to celebrate your community! Please support us by purchasing a membership!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANTED - WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Riverbend Community League is looking for dedicated individuals to join us in planning events to make a positive impact in our community.

Please email president@riverbendonline.ca to learn more about this exciting volunteer opportunity.

JOIN NOW

www.riverbendonline.ca

PEANUT BUTTER & JAM PLAYGROUP

A parent cooperative playgroup for families with children from infants to 5 years old

Join us this Spring at Brookside Hall!

Volunteer Program Coordinator needed for 2024-25:

PB&J Playgroup is a volunteer-run program. Build your résumé, skills and community! Please email info@riverbendonline.ca for details.



riverbendonline.ca/peanut-butter-jam-playgroup/

How to be Climate Optimist

Author Chris Turner makes the case for optimism based on the world's extraordinary progress, particularly in green energy technology

By April Fair, Sustainability Director, Riverbend Community League

I recently attended an excellent EPL Speaker Series talk by Canadian journalist and author Chris Turner, who spoke on the topic of his latest book, *How to be a Climate Optimist: Blueprints for a Better World*.

Turner began by emphasising that he in no way wishes to downplay the scale of the climate crisis, but that he'd like to tell the other, less discussed side of the story; the case for optimism based on the world's extraordinary progress, particularly in green energy technology. He believes that while the climate crisis is far from solved, the solutions that will get us there now exist or are close to viability.

Turner noted that while 2023 was the hottest year on record, records were also broken in the deployment of renewable energy. Worldwide new solar capacity last year was upwards of 444 gigawatts, which is equal to almost 27 times Alberta's total installed capacity. (Sidenote: Brookside Hall, with its newly installed 12.1kW solar array, will be included in the 2024 figures!)

Virtually all analysts, including the International Energy Agency, have continued to massively underestimate the rate of new solar energy capacity, which has accelerated at a staggering and exponential rate. (A person only has to look around their own neighbourhood to

see evidence of this). Solar is now the cheapest electricity source; even countries that don't prioritise climate action are widely adopting this technology owing to it being more financially viable than traditional energy sources. Turner mentioned that he's not discouraged by the Alberta government's attempt to slow down the pace of new solar installations, as the momentum behind solar is now unstoppable.

Turner gave more examples of how green technology is exceeding predictions in effectiveness and scale of adoption. In 2020, only about four per cent of new car sales were electric, while in 2023, that number was 20 per cent. Geothermal energy technology is rapidly improving, and methods to produce low-carbon concrete and aluminium are being developed, driven in large part by net-zero goals of large corporations like Apple.

Turner pointed out that at the city level, zoning reform is the single most effective means of reducing emissions. Zoning has a direct impact on land use, auto-dependency, available mobility choices, kilometres driven (as well as cost of living, equity, and residents' overall well-being). With its recent zoning policy updates, Edmonton has been a leader on this front.

Lastly, Turner reminded listeners that the



New solar capacity – from large solar farms and small-scale rooftop – is increasing at a staggering rate.

most effective way an individual can help is to not go it alone, but rather collaborate with others to push for systemic change. Join groups that lobby governments to make better policy, or do what you can to promote forward thinking in your workplace or other organizations of which you are a part. If you're not the group-joining type, write letters to your representatives at all levels of government. And don't forget to take stock of what's already been accomplished; staying optimistic will be essential to continue building towards a better world.

Brookview Community League Update Bringing our community together.

Winter Festival Another Winter Festival in the books! 250 kids, parents and friends enjoyed sleigh rides, hot chocolate, toasting marshmallows, milk jug curling, robotics and more. Many thanks to EPL and to our volunteers who made this wonderful event possible!



City Pop-Up Dog Parks Not Proceeding for 2024 It is unfortunate news that the City of Edmonton will not be proceeding with another pop-up dog park this year. The BCL board is welcome to any interested pet owners to explore other alternatives for continuing this community-gathering initiative.

BCL Community Swim Sundays 5 pm – 7 pm Looking for a family activity on Sunday evenings? Come to the Terwillegar Recreation Centre for the BCL Community Swim (and Facility Access). A

current BCL membership card is required.

Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball is here! The courts are open! You should have received an email from BCL Membership informing you of the new code. For't forget, you need to be a BCL member to use the courts. Hours for tennis/pickleball are posted at our website. We are open to changing hours based on interest.

Thanks (again) to our volunteers! Thanks to our community members who participated in the community clean up on April 29. We were able to pick many bags of garbage from the winter and spring season. The board appreciates our members who put so much pride in the cleanliness of their community.

BCL Website Confused between BHOA and BCL functions? Curious about the progress of our Arena upgrade project? Interested in Green Shack programming? Check out www.brookviewcommunityleague.ca



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Spring and its Not-so-welcome Visitors

Many breaks-ins are crimes of opportunity, so make it hard for that to happen

By Eilish Lemieux, Neighbourhood Watch

It's that hopeful time of year when you start seeing more birds, berries, buds and bikers! The warmer weather brings many lovely things with one major exception: intruders. You've likely seen doorbell-cam videos of people (usually in the wee hours) trying to open car doors, garages or sheds, or you've heard anecdotes from someone who knows someone who experienced a break-in. Maybe it's happened to you.

These crimes are scary, upsetting and infuriating. You may feel like there is nothing you can do, but that is not true. While nothing is foolproof, there are steps you can take to help protect yourself and your property.

Don't make things easier for would-be thieves. Many breaks-ins are crimes of opportunity, so make it hard for it to happen. Use outdoor lighting at night (motion activated if possible). Locking all doors and windows seems obvious but it's often forgotten. If you have an alarm, use it.

Don't unwittingly provide extra information to others – close your blinds at night, wait until collection day to put out flattened boxes of expensive items, and ensure expensive tools and items are not lying around or visible in your car. Use crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) measures – keep lines of sight open around your home. When you're away, leave lights on (on timers) and have someone look after your home and pick up mail and deliveries.

Be observant of cars and cyclists idling or slowly circling your

neighbourhood. I apologize in advance to legitimate door-to-door canvassers, but be aware that sometimes these people are scammers trying to case your house, its occupants and security measures.

Sadly, despite our best measures, crime still happens. Best thing to do if it happens to you? Report it. For property theft, damage and mischief, report online at edmontonpolice.ca, through the EPS mobile app or by dialing the non-emergency line (780-423-4567 or #377). Call 911 for life-threatening situations or crimes in progress. Also, tell your neighbours – share it via your local social media group, email/text chain, or even word-of-mouth. Sharing this information with your neighbours alerts them to be aware or may even remind them that they saw something that didn't register at the time, but now seems relevant.

It may seem futile to report these thefts and break-ins to the police, but it isn't. It's extremely useful. You may have heard the expression, "Without data, you're just a person with an opinion," and it's true. Without data, crime stats remain anecdotal. When crime is reported, police can use it to see a larger picture or pattern. If they see a lot of crime in one particular area, they can target it with extra resources. That information can better help them to make arrests too.

So, to sum up; be aware, take preventative measures and report all crime. I wish you a safe and sunny spring and summer.

Political Posturing Trumps Solutions

Bill 18 prevents municipal leaders from doing their jobs and mires decisions in red tape

By Rakhi Pancholi, MLA, Edmonton-Whitemud



Spring is here and with it comes the possibility of fresh starts and optimism for the months ahead!

I want to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to those of you who offered your support

to me as I put my name forward in the Alberta NDP leadership race. While I have chosen to put my endorsement behind another candidate, I am proud of the vision for Alberta, grounded in hope and opportunity, that my campaign put forward. It reflected what I heard from many of you in recent years and I will continue to lead with that vision in mind.

Back in the Legislature, it has been disappointing to see the focus of the government continue to be on telling a small story about Alberta – one focused on political posturing rather than on the priorities of Albertans. One example is Bill 18, which requires provincial

approval before municipalities, post-secondary institutions and other designated provincial entities can enter into agreements or receive funding from the federal government.

In an ideal world, all levels of government would be partners in building critical infrastructure and affordable housing. But in recent years, the provincial government has failed to support the infrastructure and housing our cities need. If the federal government is willing to provide funding for a project and the provincial government is not, our elected municipal leaders should have the right to proceed. Bill 18 prevents them from doing their job and mires decisions in red tape.

Bill 18 also gives the province the right to sign off on federal funding for academic research at post-secondary institutions. Today, those grants are decided free from political interference by independent bodies. Despite a lack of evidence of any bias in how these grants are awarded, the Premier wants the right to personally pick winners and losers.

This is a threat to academic freedom at

post-secondary institutions and a risk to future economic growth.

As well, after working closely for months with families and seniors from Devonshire Village who have been waiting for up to three years for the return of their life savings from unregulated life leases with Christenson Developments, I was disappointed that the government's Bill 12, proposed life lease legislation, failed to include any protections for these families to get their money back. The Official Opposition will be proposing amendments to Bill 12 that would satisfy the needs of both current and future life leaseholders. I remain hopeful that the government will listen to the hundreds of Albertans who have written to us asking for changes to this bill.

As always, thank you for reaching out to share your views. Please continue to contact Edmonton.whitemud@assembly.ab.ca with your thoughts. I look forward to reconnecting with many of you in person this summer at community events.

Meet at the Market!

Farmers' market set to launch May 15

We are so excited to be back again this year for our 13th season of the Southwest Edmonton Farmers' Market! There are so many exciting things we will be bringing to the Terwillegar neighbourhood, so let's get started!

Our season starts on Wednesday, May 15 from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. rain or shine in Lot E (Front Lot) at the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre. SWEFM is a make, bake or grow market with a variety of amazing vendors to supply our community with fresh products and handmade goods.

The most exciting news we have for this season is that we are pleased to announce that the much loved Sprouts Program will be continuing! This is a free nutrition program for children ages 4-12 that gives them the opportunity to purchase fruits, vegetables and food plants with a Sprouts Token. The purpose of the program is to introduce kids to nutritional food choices, empower children to make their own healthy eating choices, educate them about where their food comes from, and encourage them to

lead a healthy lifestyle. Part of running the Sprouts program is community sponsorship. If you or a company you think might want to proudly sponsor this fantastic program please contact the Sprouts Coordinator at: swefm.sprouts@gmail.com.

Other news is that we will again have the Community Tent Program. This tent is available for not-for-profit organizations who wish to introduce themselves into our community to help raise their profile. For more information stop by swefm.ca.

SWEFM is always looking for volunteers to help with our market. This is a great opportunity for high school students or retirees to support their community and be part of our amazing market.

Again this season, we will be offering our Young Vendors Program. Last season our Young Vendors were an enjoyable addition to our market each week. This program recognises young entrepreneurs between the ages of 13 and 17 who want to explore farmers' markets to sell their products. For more information, stop by swefm.ca and click on Young Vendors.

Are you any good at retirement?

Seniors Connection News for those 55+

By Colleen Crozier

There's a question! If you're asked if you are good at cooking, or playing golf, or sticking to a budget, or speaking a language, the answers come easily. You either are or you aren't. But when it comes to retirement, how can there be a clear answer?

The primary definition of retirement is, "the act of retiring or of leaving one's job, career or occupation permanently, usually because of age." That moment in time is reserved for those who had a job, a career, or an occupation. That excludes all those who didn't, and it's only a moment in time. Were you any good at it? Did you leave proudly, sporting your long-service award watch? Or did you exit reluctantly because you had reached mandatory retirement age? Were you good at this definition of retirement?

There's a second definition: "The portion of a person's life during which a person is retired." That's more than a moment in time. This is when we, not a job, determine how we spend our time and resources. A common expression among retirees is, "You need a reason to get out of bed in the morning." And the answer is no longer, "to go to work."

Whether we are "good" at retirement or not is entirely in our own perception. We come to retirement like we do any other project: with or without training, preparation, resources, vision and plans. Some of Canada's largest employers provide mandatory "retirement preparation" classes. Most of us prepare on our own, watching and learning from others, researching, and pondering as we near the day. Our ideas change over time as reality sets in and circumstances alter.



Friendship breaks down language barriers. SWESA members and Norquest College ESL students at a special "Coffee and Chat".

A major contributor to our being "good" at retirement is our ability to choose meaningful activities. We can live the dream of what we envisioned for ourselves, or modify the plans owing to changing health or resources or happily jump into something completely new. No matter how it goes, we seek a sense of satisfaction that will allow us to say, "Yes, I'm really good at being retired!"

South West Edmonton Seniors Association would love to be part of your retirement. Learning, socializing, having fun and giving back are built into all our programs. Come, join us! We're in our new location within the William Lutzky Y.



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To Roam or Not to Roam?

Cats are the second leading threat to birds... and the one most easily solved

By Caelen Campbell

Like many Riverbendians, we chose to purchase a home in this area a few decades ago because of the proximity to natural areas like the river valley and the ravines. We love the wildlife and particularly enjoy the birds that come to our yard.

We are part of an amateur group of nature enthusiasts who have become increasingly concerned about the many threats facing our local bird visitors, including the ongoing issue of roaming pet cats. It turns out that roaming cats are one of the leading threat to birds... and the one which is the most easily solved.

With the nicer weather, many cat owners are wondering how to respond when their cat is at the door meowing to go out. Here are some things to consider before giving in to that plaintive cry.

You may think your cat is the most adorable thing on four legs, but chances are many of your neighbours don't share that viewpoint and are not waiting to welcome your cat into their yards. The truth is, many consider your beloved pet to be a nuisance.

After all, who wants to put up with someone else's cat spraying urine on doorways, shrubs and other surfaces? Or using sandboxes, gardens and flower beds as litter boxes? Or scratching the bark on tree trunks? They can also terrorize and drive off, birds, squirrels, rabbits and other small wildlife.

According to Edmonton's Animal Control bylaw, it is a violation for your cat to be in anyone

else's yard unless that property owner has given you their consent.

But frankly, cats are much more than a nuisance. They are a leading cause of the decline of bird populations. Birds are already under threat from a host of issues, including habitat loss and climate change.

Keeping cats indoors would go a long way to addressing this major conservation problem. Unfortunately, bells and fabric collars are not effective in preventing cats from preying upon birds, especially when it comes to baby birds and fledglings who are helpless against the claws and teeth of a cat.

Cats are genetically programmed to hunt, and even well-fed pets view the outdoors as their personal hunting grounds. Many cats will be triggered to stalk and attack virtually anything smaller than themselves that moves. Cats are not native to our area, so when they take out birds and small animals they are actually negatively impacting native predators who rely on these creatures for their survival.

Roaming cats have been called eco-disruptors as their hunting negatively impacts the food chain. Some have even shared that cats create "landscapes of fear", terrorizing and driving away birds and small animals from a particular area where they roam.

Roaming cats are more likely to contract illnesses and pick up parasites which they can then pass on to other animals and even to humans.



Nils Jacobi - Canva

One of the most alarming of these is a parasite called toxoplasma gondii. Fetuses, young children and adults with compromised immune systems are most at risk. Some owners feel that allowing their cat to roam is better for the health of their pet. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. Roaming cats have significantly shorter lifespans because of all the threats they face, including being hit by a car, attacked by coyotes and other animals, ingesting poisoned rodents or other toxins and contracting diseases and parasites that they can pass on to their owners and others. So you may have gathered by this point that the answer to the question in the headline posed here is a resounding "No, don't do it." Keep Fluffy safe inside, or outside on a leash or in a yard enclosure such as a catio. It's better for cats, it's better for birds, wildlife and the environment, and it's better for people too.

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All summer attractions open May 31
Find us just off Whitemud Drive and 119 St.
www.snowvalley.ca/aerial-park

News from EPL

Intergenerational storytime

The Riverbend Branch of Edmonton Public Library is providing a unique opportunity for our youngest and oldest community members to connect through songs, rhymes and stories. Together We Grow is an intergenerational storytime at the MacTaggart Place Retirement

Residence (5149 Mullen Road NW) Mondays from April 22 to June 3 at 10:30 a.m.

Families with children under three are encouraged to join the storytime and visit with the participating residents for a fun and rewarding storytime experience.



115 Haddow Close, Edmonton AB

A 1,295 sq/ft unit built out as a doctor's office located on Haddow Close in the neighborhood of Riverbend is for lease. This completely finished main floor space is in excellent condition and offers:

- Main floor front door entry with wheelchair accessibility.
- Reception area with quartz desk, ceramic tiles, mahogany doors.
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For further information please email: gillp@sutton.com

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Help Your Child Shine in School

Even small kids need a big backpack (and other hot tips from the teachers who know)

By Becky, Laurel, and Lita (Teachers at Riverbend Playschool)

Did you hear the one about the teacher who always wore sunglasses in class? Her students were all so bright!

But, seriously, there are a few things that you can do to help your child really shine in school! Here are a few of our favourite ways that you may not have considered:

Set your child up for success with basics that work. Even a small child should have a big backpack. A lunch bag, indoor shoes, a library book (some are big), works of art, snow pants/mitts/hats and more will *all* need to fit in that bag easily. If it's too hard to get it all in and zipped closed then your child is bound to feel frustrated and lose things.

Make good footwear unconditional. If your child wants to come to school in their pyjamas, or their Cinderella party dress, or a Batman cape, let them. As long as everyone is OK with it getting dirty, then it's ok. Let them choose. But draw the line at dress up/party/flip flop footwear. The playschool/Kindergarten/primary grades are precious times for play. The wrong footwear can create a barrier to safe and vigorous play. Recess and outside play is a time to run, jump, climb and dance! Say, "Those sneakers look fast!" and send them on their way! Oh, and no lace ups if they can't tie them themselves. (There's no rush. Velcro was good enough for the moon landing and it's good enough to get your kids to school!).

Send them with lunch bags and containers that they can open and close themselves! Practice at home. You'll thank us every time you open their backpack and it's *not* swimming in spilled water and yogurt!

Label everything; every shoe, bag, container and item of clothing. The labels you order are great but a permanent marker will do just fine. Kids lose things. A lot. And since it's inevitable that at least one other child will have the exact same snowsuit/boots/backpack it will *really* help your child's teacher sort out mix-ups if everything has your child's name in it.

Give them words! A language rich environment is often cited as the



greatest single predictor of future academic success. Read stories, talk to them about your day and ask them about theirs, learn things together, talk about feelings, tell jokes, sing and play.

Send them in with a Can Do attitude! It's not unusual for children to feel nervous, or sad, about leaving their grown ups, but make sure *your* face radiates joy and confidence in them as you send them out the door. They can do hard things!

In the next Ragg-Times we're going to share ideas on raising resilient, "whole" children. It's not easy, but it's worth it. *They* are worth it.

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Edmonton's Ballooning Budget

Defeating the increase would have resulted in a deficit budget, which is not permitted under provincial law

By Tim Cartmell, Councillor, Ward pehêsiwin



On Wednesday, April 23, Edmonton City Council approved an increase in property taxes which is going to be really hard to swallow.

And I mean that. There are many that simply cannot afford another increase in their household expenses. Property taxes do not discriminate, there is no test to determine who can afford them and who cannot.

Here are the numbers. City taxes will go up 8.9 per cent, education property taxes will go up 2.7 per cent and the average total tax bill will go up 7.3 per cent. But no one pays the average, and if your property value assessment goes up, your taxes go up that much more.

Voting against this increase was not a realistic option. Defeating this increase would have moved us back to the 6.6 per cent approved in November, but it would have resulted in a deficit budget, which is not permitted under provincial law.

In the meantime, I moved a motion that might see some relief come fall. That motion asked City Administration to consider a reduction in annual capital spending: Stretch what we intend to spend in the next three years over five or six years instead, and really think about what we want to do versus what we have to do.

This budgeting process clearly shows why we need to take the time to

build a completely new budget. Taking a budget and corporate structure from 20 years ago and tweaking it here and there with the expectation that we will get meaningful results is folly.

What we need to do is tear this budget down to the studs and rebuild it for the city of today.

Call it Zero-based Budgeting, call it Priority-Based budgeting, call it whatever you want. But the time has come for a clean sheet and a budget built from the ground up, a budget built with the input of our frontline staff and our union partners.

I have been saying it for years: Before you can change the budget, you have to change the structure that drives it.

Ultimately, these changes in our approach to budgeting will create a need to examine our workforce, starting with our out-of-scope and middle-management employees.

I know our management employees are feeling targeted, and I don't feel real good about that.

But I have been asking questions about the size and distribution of our workforce since I was first elected. And when I have asked those questions, I have repeatedly been given unsatisfactory answers. Time is up. We need to fix this.

As always, please feel free to contact me at 780-496-8130 or at tim.cartmell@edmonton.ca with any of your city-related concerns.




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For the Love of Lifelong Learning

Courses on cults, archaeology or the arts: The choice is yours

By Deborah Forst

Harry Wagner, a retired teacher, has always been interested in learning. When his cousin recommended that Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA) had some interesting courses, Harry registered for his first spring session. That was 10 years ago. What he liked about it then – the diversity of courses available – he still likes about it now.

“I took Tai Chi and classes on the oil sands, social media and photography... and just loved it,” he says. “You can follow your heart and take courses in areas that interest you, or delve into subjects that you have no background or experience in, just to find out more. Last year I took a course on insects, and I have no science background.”

Now, Harry is the Chair of the Program Development Committee that determines the courses offered during the winter online and upcoming spring session at the University of Alberta. “I think what sets ELLA apart is it’s entirely a volunteer-driven organization,” he says. “Our committees look at suggestions from our members to identify topics that might be possible. The speakers are people in our community who have interesting things to say.”

ELLA’s spring session includes new classes on cults, archaeology in Alberta and Inuit arts. Returning favourites include issues in animal agriculture (complete with field trips), and Wonders of the Night Sky for people curious about the stars above. There are nearly 40 courses

available covering intellectual, artistic and physical-activity realms.

Harry acknowledges it’s a bit of a commitment to travel to the university to take classes, but the payoff is the positive social aspect. “It’s a chance to socialize with people who have similar interests,” he says. “And we’ve responded to people’s needs. Maybe you can’t commit to a full day, but the morning is available. Now you can register for two, three or four courses – whatever works for you.”

What works for Harry is the continuing opportunity to learn. “It’s so important to remain curious and engage in lifelong learning,” he says. “At least it is for me.”

To learn more or register for courses, visit my-ella.com.



“You can follow your heart and take courses in areas that interest you, or delve into subjects that you have no background or experience in,” says ELLA’s Harry Wagner.

Brander Gardens Community and Schools Work Together

Traffic around schools continues to be a concern to many

By Deann Stein Hasinoff

At a recent Riverbend Community League meeting, discussion turned to ongoing school traffic issues in Brander Gardens. Civics Director Dave Rumbold suggested a meeting between the schools and the Brander Gardens Traffic Committee. In early April, members of the traffic committee and Councillor Tim Cartmell met with administrators from Tempo School and Brander Gardens School, as well as a representative of Edmonton Public School Board’s infrastructure department.

In preparation for the meeting, a short survey was circulated via social media and email groups. Ninety-six per cent of the survey’s 172 respondents identified traffic as a challenge during school drop offs and pick ups and 92 per cent said driver behaviour is a concern for pedestrians and other drivers alike. The complete results can be viewed on Riverbend Community League’s website under Programs/Civics/Advocacy.

Members of the traffic committee shared

their experiences with the volume of school traffic and problem driver behaviours observed during school drop-off and pick-up windows. It was noted that traffic-calming measures have helped in certain areas, but ultimately the neighbourhood was not designed for this volume of traffic and problems persist. There is concern in the community about the lack of a bussing option at Tempo School and its increasing enrolment, which will further exacerbate the problem. A variety of ideas were discussed with the goal to move traffic away from Brander Gardens and/or decrease it significantly. Everyone agreed that the way forward is for the schools to tackle the issue from a variety of angles. The traffic committee proposed a goal of reducing school traffic in Brander Gardens by 50 per cent within six months.

The group plans to meet again in June, giving the schools time to gather some information about their populations, which will help when



There is concern in the community about the lack of a bussing option at Tempo School and its increasing enrolment.

discussing different options and developing a plan.

The Brander Gardens Traffic Committee appreciates the schools’ willingness to engage with the community, and thanks Councillor Cartmell for his ongoing support and guidance.

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The Ridge Community League

Serving the neighbourhoods of Falconer Heights (Terwillegar Hill Estates), Henderson Estates (River Ridge, Eagle Ridge, Promontory Point) and Haddow (Riverside, College Woods)

By Jim Bradshaw

Volunteer Appreciation Night On April 6, The Ridge Community League (Ridge CL) held its first volunteer appreciation night to thank the volunteers who make community leagues and their facilities and programs possible. These invaluable people included our board, skating rink maintenance, casino event and festival volunteers. Drinks, pizza and an opportune Oilers game on a big screen gave a chance for everyone to come together, meet some new people and be recognized for their contributions to making our communities better places to live. Of note were that not all the volunteers were from The Ridge CL area and they had a wide range of ages and abilities; however, all with the common goal of helping out. Thank you!



The Ridge CL Winter Festival On March 3, The Ridge CL held its annual Winter Festival under bluebird skies, albeit on the quite cool side. The hardy souls that came out to celebrate enjoyed horse-drawn sleigh rides, skating, snowshoeing, team skiing, milk jug curling and games inside to warm up. They could also get their skates sharpened for free! Big Wayne's Food Truck came out to take the edge off with delicious mini-donuts and hot chocolate.



New Programs at The Ridge Community Centre Check out theridgeonline.ca for the full list of programs we offer.

Arts and Crafts Classes The children's art classes on Friday evenings, offered in conjunction with Greater Windermere CL, have been so well received that we are renewing and expanding them.

The 5:15 p.m. class is geared towards children aged three to five (including kindergarteners) who have an interest in arts and crafts and can generally follow directions given by an instructor. However, they must attend with their parent or guardian; you must stay with your child for the entire class. If you are interested in registering an older sibling as well, this class will offer appropriate skill development for a child up to age eight.

The 6:00 p.m. class is geared towards children aged six to eight who have an interest in arts and crafts and can generally follow directions given by an instructor. If you are interested in registering a younger or older sibling as well, this class will offer appropriate skill development for a child up to age 10. A younger child could complete projects with adult assistance. A sibling aged three to five is welcome to register and attend with a parent or guardian.

The 7:00 p.m. class is geared towards older elementary school-aged children (nine to 12) who have an interest in arts and crafts and can follow directions given by an instructor. If you are interested in registering a younger sibling as well, this class could accommodate a mature seven or eight year old who can work independently. We do not recommend this class for children under the age of seven.

To register for one of the classes, visit theridgeonline.ca and, under the Programs/Sports tab, click on "Arts and Crafts Classes."

Arts & Crafts Classes

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See you there!

GREAT NEWS!

The Ridge CL has been successful in our grant for a Canada Summer Jobs Student position. If you are a senior high school or post secondary student (between the ages of 18 and 30), a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident and may be interested in an eight-week position, we are looking for someone with the following qualities:

- self motivated
- independent, hard worker
- experience with mowing/weeding/watering, painting, cleaning and various other assigned duties

This position is based on seven work hours per day, five days a week, for eight weeks. Salary \$18 per hour. If interested in application details, contact Charlotte at 780-435-1723.

Multi-Use Courts Are Open! The rink space is now available for drop-in ball hockey, basketball, lacrosse, and pickleball. This shared space is open to all Ridge Community League members. We ask that you have a shoe tag or membership card with you. Memberships may be purchased online at theridgeonline.ca/memberships.

Community Garden News All interested gardeners are invited to meet at the Ridge CL on Thursday, May 23 at 7:00 p.m. Junetta Jamerson from Sustainable Foods Edmonton will give a presentation on garden basics. Our lottery draw for pop-up garden beds in Henderson Park will be done this evening for all interested Ridge CL members.

NEW SENIORS FITNESS CLASSES STARTING THIS SPRING in April AT RIDGE COMMUNITY HALL

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STRONG BODY HEALTHY CORE CLASS STARTS APRIL 24
WEDNESDAYS 1:30pm - 2:30pm 10 CLASSES for \$100 or DROP IN's for \$12 per class.

This class is designed for seniors of all abilities who want to improve their overall health and fitness level by focusing on core exercises to train the muscles of pelvis, lower back, hips, and abdomen to work in harmony. This will lead to better balance, posture, and stability, whether on the playing field or in daily activities. During the class you will use light weights, elastic bands, bender balls, and your own body weight. The class is CHAIR FRIENDLY.

STRONG BODY BALANCE AND STRETCH CLASS STARTS APRIL 25
THURSDAYS 10:30am - 11:30am 10 CLASSES for \$100 or DROP IN's for \$12 per class.

This class is designed for seniors of all abilities and fitness levels who want to improve their overall strength. We will work on all major muscle groups of upper and lower body to improve posture, balance, mobility and flexibility. The class will also include gentle cardio, stretch and balance exercises. We will use light weights, elastic bands, bender balls. The class is CHAIR FRIENDLY.

TO REGISTER FOR THE 10 CLASS SESSIONS PLEASE EMAIL:
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A Little TLC for your HVAC

The Riverbend Ragg-Times talked with the pros at First Call Heating about those oft-neglected household workhorses: heating, ventilation and air condition systems

Riverbend Ragg-Times: What is the most common problem people have with their HVAC systems?

Dirty filters are a top issue, often causing havoc when clogged with dust and debris. Refrigerant leaks and dirty coils can also disrupt harmony, leading to higher energy bills or even system failure if left unaddressed. But fear not! Regular check-ups by qualified HVAC professionals can keep your system running smoothly. Use changing seasons as a reminder to schedule maintenance, showing your HVAC system some love. After all, it's what keeps you comfortable through all of Mother Nature's moods!

RRT: What advice do you give people concerned about the effects of wildfire smoke?

It's all about prioritizing indoor air quality to safeguard your family's health. Staying informed and minimizing outdoor exposure are your initial steps. But why stop there? Transform your entire home into a clean air sanctuary. Seal windows, doors, and vents, and let air purifiers equipped with HEPA filters work their magic. Don't wait for smoke to roll in – be proactive! It's better to act early than be caught off guard.

RRT: What steps do you recommend for people who want to improve the air quality in their home?

Combating poor air quality can feel daunting and many people don't know where to start! We



suggest first identifying the signs of unclean air – sniffles, lingering pet odors, pesky static shocks, dry skin, and even snoring. Sound familiar? If so, it might be time to consider enhancing your home's comfort and your family's well-being.

From humidifiers to media air cleaners, advanced air purification systems, along with whole-house filtration and ventilation systems, there are options available to boost your indoor air quality. Remember, investing in cleaner indoor air isn't just about comfort – it's about your well-being.

RRT: What options are available to reduce the GHG emissions associated with home heating and cooling?

Energy-efficient HVAC systems are true champions – saving you money while shrinking your carbon footprint. Modern systems like high-efficiency furnaces, heat pumps and air conditioners work smarter, not harder, to keep you comfortable. Look for Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) and Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) ratings for the best efficiency.

But let's not overlook the power of small changes – like programming your thermostat, flipping on those ceiling fans, and giving your HVAC system some TLC with regular maintenance. These simple steps can make a big difference in your energy use.

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A Common Sense Solution

Every Canadian should have access to mental health resources during times of crisis

By Matt Jeneroux, MP, Edmonton Riverbend



As we enter May, much of the House of Commons' focus will be on Budget 2024. Despite this, Parliamentarians continue to be active on a variety of matters. I wanted to highlight two initiatives.

To begin, an area I'm pleased to see progress on is in the area of mental health. My private member's motion has now officially been tabled as Motion 116. As mentioned in my last letter, every Canadian should have access to mental health resources during times of crisis, and I believe this motion is a common sense solution to ensure that support is readily available to

those in need. You can read more about it on my website at mattjeneroux.ca.

Further to my advocacy efforts, I was pleased to have recently concluded a trip to Washington, D.C. with a few colleagues. I was able to sit down with the bi-partisan Congressional Men's Health Caucus. The work they've done to raise awareness for men to take care of their health is remarkable and I look forward to furthering cross-border collaboration and knowledge sharing. Mental health is a concern which affects many people, including in our community. I'm pleased to see progress in these areas.

In other news, I recently had the good fortune to tour the Chalk River Laboratories, the largest science and technology laboratory in

Canada. The research they do in nuclear energy is quite impressive and lends its support to sustainable alternative energy. As conversations around affordable energy supply and Canada's role in exporting surplus energy continue to be had both here in Edmonton and around the province, it was quite useful to learn about practical implementation for industry and how it can benefit consumers. Affordable electricity continues to be top of mind for many in our community and I look forward to seeing how these initiatives relieve this concern.

As always, should you have any questions on these or any other federal matters, please do not hesitate to contact my office at matt.jeneroux@parl.gc.ca.

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