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JANUARY 2024

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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In Our City

Councillor Report

I hope everyone had a restful holiday season. My best wishes to you and your families for 2024!

Budget

As of the time I write this, deliberations on The City's budget have only recently concluded. Council approved a 7.8% increase to property taxes.

Residential Parking Permits

Through the budget, Council approved lower fees for residential parking permits than originally proposed. As a reminder, the new fees only apply to areas where permits are already required. There are no plans to impose permits or fees on new areas automatically. Visit calgary.ca/rpp to learn more.

Property assessment

Property tax assessment notices are mailed out this month. The customer review period runs from now until March. Questions or concerns? Contact The City's Assessment department at 403-268-2888 or visit calgary.ca/assessment.

Calgary Awards

Nominations for the Calgary Awards to recognize outstanding individuals, groups and businesses in our community are now open. Visit calgary.ca/awards to learn more and nominate someone for their contributions to our city.

Sidewalk clearing

A reminder that sidewalks must be cleared by property owners or occupants within 24 hours after a snowfall. Be a Snow Angel! Consider helping out a neighbour by clearing their walk.

Outdoor activities

January is a great time to get outside to enjoy all of the best that winter has to offer, like pleasure skating, hockey, crokicurl, cross-country skiing and tobogganing right here in Ward 1. Visit calgary.ca/parks to find activities near you!

Sonya Sharp, Councillor, Ward 1

Christmas Tree Composting Program

Help keep Christmas trees out of the landfill by using your green cart.

Put your cut up tree in your green cart

- Remove all lights, ornaments, tinsel and tree stand
- Cut your tree into small pieces
- Place in your green cart (make sure lid can close)
- If your green cart is full:
- Put cut branches in paper yard waste bags and roll tops closed
- Set bags 0.5 metres (2 feet) from side of your cart
- **Please note:** Trees that are not prepared properly will not be collected.



Christmas tree drop-off locations – open Dec. 26 to Jan. 31

Take your tree to a temporary drop-off location. This program is for residential use only.

- Remove all ornaments, lights, garland, tinsel and tree stands
- Do not wrap, tie or bag your tree, even if the bag is labelled as compostable or biodegradable.
- If you wrap or bag your tree to transport it, remove the bag before dropping off.

Visit <https://www.calgary.ca/waste/residential/christmas-tree-recycling.html> for a list of drop off locations.

*City of Calgary,
Waste & Recycling Services*



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Sledding Safety

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) would like to remind parents and children about a few toboggan/sledding safety tips. Injuries may result from collisions with stationary objects on the hill, such as trees, poles, rocks, or even collisions with other people. Unprotected falls can also result in more serious injury if you lose control at high speeds. However, everyone can be safe and have fun on the toboggan hill by following these reminders.

Equipment

- Always ensure your toboggan, or sledding device, is in good repair. Inspect it for any damaged or missing parts before each use;
- Be certain the operator is fully capable of staying in control of the sled at all times;
- Wear a ski helmet designed for use in cold weather and high speeds.

Hazards

- Avoid hills that are too steep or icy;
- Choose hills free of all obstacles such as trees, rocks, utility poles, benches, or fences;
- Beware of loose scarves, or clothing containing drawstrings, which could present a strangulation hazard if they become caught or snagged;
- Look out for others. Move quickly to the side after finishing a run and stay to the side of the sliding path when walking up the hill;
- Children should be supervised by an adult; try not to toboggan alone;
- Sledding at night is not advised.

Plan ahead

- Anticipate weather changes and plan accordingly;
- Wear warm, insulating layers closer to the body, and wind/waterproof layers on the outside;
- Consider bringing extra sets of gloves and toques to exchange wet garments for dry ones;
- Take breaks out of the cold to warm up;
- Even when properly protected from the elements, the finger tips, toes, ears, the tip of the nose, and other high points on the face such as the forehead and cheek bones can be affected by frostbite; therefore, attempt to cover up any exposed skin at all times;
- If frost bite has occurred, treat it by first getting out of the cold environment, or at least sheltered from any wind-chill;
- Gently warm the affected skin by placing a warm hand over it, or by placing the affected part in warm - not hot - water, until re-warmed.

Alberta Health Services



St. Sylvester School News

Winter is an exciting time at St. Sylvester School in Silver Springs. Our children have sung all their Christmas Carols on repeat for the past few months and performed their personal bests at our annual Christmas Celebration on December 7th.

On December 20th the staff and students at St. Sylvester celebrated the last day of school before Christmas break. As a bonus everyone wore their wacky and fun Christmas sweaters. Our hopes for all to have a safe and restful holiday season and return back to school on January 8th, 2024.

The registration for Fall 2024 student enrollment is open on January 8th. It will be a first come, first serve basis. Please do not hesitate to call the school for any questions and concerns that you may have.

Progress reports of the students will be issued on January 18th followed up with Parent Teacher Conferences on January 25th and January 26th. Our teachers are available throughout the year for appointments should you or your child need to address their specific learning needs.

Nicole Deutscher, St. Sylvester School Parent

Calgary Coyotes

It's dusk and a grey shadow flits across a greenspace in your neighbourhood. Its tail is pointed down as it runs. Just before it disappears into the brush, its yellow eyes glance your way.

Coyotes are elusive as they are present in our city. Weighing between 9 to 23 kilograms, (roughly a medium-sized dog), coyotes are one of the larger predators adapted to our urban habitats. What brings them into our city? Can we co-exist with them?

Food is the primary reason coyotes settle in our city. Their natural diet includes small mammals like mice, squirrels and hares, and larger ungulates like deer. They will also feed on berries and other vegetation, as they are omnivores. Their natural rodent-consuming habits are a coyote-positive aspect of their presence.

They are opportunistic feeders, and alternative food sources can include unsecured garbage, birdfeeders, pet food, pet feces, and small, off-leash or free-roaming pets. Coyotes do not always eat garbage or birdseed themselves, but the other prey species that this food attracts, like mice and other small mammals. Keeping your yard clean of attractants will reduce the wildlife traffic in your area.

Coyotes are monogamous, staying with the same mate for several years. They live in small packs, though will hunt



in smaller groups or even alone. Their mating season is in February and March with pups being born in April and May. Litter size depends on available food sources, but the average is three to seven pups. Coyotes are protective of their young and will feel threatened if off-leash pets are near their den with young pups. Coyotes exhibit escorting behaviour during this time. This is where a coyote will follow people who have crossed into their territory, escorting them at a distance until they exit their territory as a protective measure of their young.

While coyote-human conflicts are rare, coyotes are wild animals and can be dangerous. If you encounter a coyote and it seems to be focused on you, make yourself big, make loud noises, and throw sticks or rocks (not with the intention to hit, but scare) to deter the coyote. Do not run away from coyotes as this can trigger their instinct to chase. Coyotes can run over 60 km/hr, so running isn't a great plan! Help coyotes stay shy by making them uncomfortable when near humans. This helps us co-exist! Coyotes who are bold and desensitized tend to result in more conflicts.

Coyotes have over eleven types of vocalizations! Their yipping howls are easily recognizable at night, though exact meanings continue to be as elusive as the animal itself.

Found injured or orphaned wildlife? Please contact Calgary Wildlife at 403-214-1312.

Calgary Wildlife



DID YOU KNOW?

The coldest temperature ever recorded occurred in Antarctica, -144 Fahrenheit, as reported by researchers in a scientific journal in 2018.



Single-Use Items: Bylaw Coming into Effect

Calgary’s Single-Use Items Bylaw starts January 16, 2024. Single-use items such as plastic shopping bags,



utensils, straws and napkins are designed to be used only once before being thrown away. The bylaw aims to lessen what will end up as litter or go into landfill.

New paper and reusable shopping bags will only be provided on request and there will be minimum fees: \$0.15 for paper and \$1 for reusable. Bring your own reusable bags to avoid the fees and reduce waste or skip the bag when practical. This applies to in-store, takeout, drive-thru and delivery orders. Keep a small box, reusable bag, or lunch bag in your vehicle to hold your food while you drive. For delivery, indicate “no bags” on your order and provide instructions to put the order in boxes or bags you have set out.

Foodware accessories, such as cutlery, condiment packets, napkins and straws will only be provided on request. This also applies to dine-in, take-out, drive-thru and delivery. Use reusable utensils and straws where you can and only ask for them as needed.

By saying “no thanks” or using reusable options, we will use fewer single-use items. Download the handout (calgary.ca)

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Calgary's First Mall

With the Christmas and holiday season behind us, let's reflect on the buildings that help us get it all done: the shopping mall.

The word “mall” can refer to different destinations, such as outdoor pedestrian promenades or covered markets. For now, let's focus on large, enclosed shopping centres. These began popping up in North America as suburbs developed after WWII. One of the first opened in a Minneapolis suburb in 1956.

Originally called “Calgary Centre”, North Hill Centre is Calgary's first mall. It opened in 1958 in Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill. The area was subdivided and annexed by the City in 1906 and was established as a neighbourhood in 1953. It was homesteaded by Thomas Riley and Georgina Hounsfield Riley in 1888. Their lodge was located on the site of Bethany Care Centre, which opened in 1946.

North Hill's original freestanding anchor tenant was Simpsons-Sears. This was the first Sears in Calgary and one of its first A-class stores in Canada (Sears closed in 2018). The mall was billed as the largest in Western Canada at the time, with 30 stores and services in one place, including a grocery store and bowling alley. In 1973, North Hill's strip mall feel was eliminated when the anchor stores were enclosed with the other shops, forming one building. Chinook Centre (built in 1960) was next to arrive in Calgary, an open air complex anchored by Woodward's department store. It was merged in 1972 with Southridge Mall (built in 1965). By 1974, Market Mall, Northland Village and Southcentre Mall were all operating. Large malls have seen plenty of alterations over the years as tastes have changed and competition for our entertainment dollars has increased. In the mid-1990s, North Hill's grocery store, bowling alley and theatre were demolished, replaced by more retail spaces and

restaurants. I remember in 2000 when my first job as a grocery clerk transferred across the mall to the newly built Safeway. By 2004, twin 8-storey condo towers were completed. This ushered in a new era for North Hill as a mixed-use residential and services hub, preserving a key anchor of Calgary's urban growth.

Anthony Imbrogno is a volunteer with The Calgary Heritage Initiative Society/Heritage Inspires YYC

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To discover more about Calgary's heritage, visit:

HERITAGE *inspires* **YYC.org**



Aerial view of northwest Calgary, 1957 (Glenbow Library and Archives Collection)



Hounsfield Lodge, 1905-1906 (Glenbow Library and Archives Collection)



North Hill Centre, 2023 (Anthony Imbrogno)



Thomas Riley farm, Hounsfield area, 1895-1899 (Glenbow Library and Archives Collection)



View of North Hill Shopping Centre, 1960 (City of Calgary Archives)

How to Chase the Aurora Borealis in Alberta

Leave the city lights (and your bed) behind and go see the aurora borealis with tips from a lights show pro.

- The aurora can be seen year-round across Alberta.
- Weather and solar activity forecasts make it possible to predict aurora.
- Even amateurs can see and photograph the northern lights here.

Alberta is in an aurora sweet spot. Our long, dark nights mean more opportunities to spot the light show year-round.

The emerald aurora borealis is the result of charged particles smashing into gases in Earth's magnetic field. The lights are especially brilliant when solar wind activity is high.

A bucket-list light show

Seeing the northern lights was on Prerana Chitlangia's bucket list after she saw a friend's photo of them glowing above Norway. The dream started to seem more possible when she moved to Calgary from Texas. Chitlangia joined the Alberta Aurora Chasers group and started reading the posts. She learned where to go and the solar factors to consider before heading out.

After five chases, Chitlangia saw her first aurora. Now she's hooked. "We waited, waited, waited, and then there was this sudden green thing, and I couldn't believe my eyes," she says.

She started taking photos with her iPhone, to make sure her eyes weren't playing tricks on her. For about two hours, away from the glow of city lights, Chitlangia watched the lights flare and fade.

"We're lucky to live in a place where you can see aurora, and I want to make the most of it," she says. Aurora chasing might mean a chilly night, but it can pay off in heart-stopping ways.

No guarantees in aurora-chasing

On a crisp fall night, Ratzlaff is at Hiller's Dam. It's a recreation area an hour's drive north of Calgary's bright lights where he's hoping to photograph the aurora and its reflection on the water.

It's quiet, dark and clear. The sky is filled with stars. Clear skies are just one factor. Watching the sun is also important, Ratzlaff explains, because activity such as coronal holes — dark spots on the surface of the sun — drives northern lights.



Ratzlaff is out here tonight because recent solar events gave hope for aurora activity. "Now we're crossing our fingers, we're watching and we're waiting," Ratzlaff says.

But when crossed fingers, watching and waiting reveals no aurora, Ratzlaff remains cheerful. He's been on enough hunts to know aurora chasing involves both wonder and frustration.

Plus, even on a night without aurora, there's a boundless sky full of stars. He's enjoyed the milky way and shooting stars. A fine consolation. "Look up often, day and night," Ratzlaff says. "It's amazing what you'll see."

Aurora tips from experienced chasers

The most important thing: Get away from city lights! Some favourite spots from the Alberta Aurora Chasers Facebook group include Elk Island National Park, Ghost Lake parking lot, and Aspen Beach Provincial Park near Red Deer.

The northern part of the province is home to two of the largest dark sky preserves in the world: Wood Buffalo National Park and Jasper National Park, where artificial light pollution is restricted to promote clear night sky views. The Jasper Dark Sky Festival runs every October, with astronomy events and speakers.

Smartphone photos can't capture the lights' full glory. Ratzlaff recommends starting with a 15-second exposure on a DSLR. Set the aperture as wide open as possible. Then adjust the ISO as high as possible without getting too much noise. From there, shoot, adjust and have fun.

Learn the basics of the solar wind, Ratzlaff says, such as how the speed of the solar wind and its magnetic field strength affects aurora. He also recommends monitoring solar activity with the SolarHam website, where space weather data is shared in real-time.

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Underground Utility Relocation is on Track as we Make Way for the Green Line

If you've been in the downtown or Beltline area of Calgary, you may have noticed the Early Works construction being carried out by Green Line. The Beltline Downtown Utility Relocation Project (BDURP) is an ongoing construction program expected to be completed in 2024. Its purpose is to relocate underground, street-level and overhead utilities, which is an essential step towards building the Green Line tunnel and stations in the downtown and Beltline.



in infrastructure renewal and new relocated utilities will be built to accommodate the expected increase in population in the area in the future. This will contribute to the growth of Calgary's future development. To date, the Green Line Beltline work is 80 per cent complete for deep and 63 per cent complete for shallow, while the downtown work is 54 per cent complete. This progress is significant, completing this work now will help make the construction of the Green Line more time and cost efficient.

The utility lines that run underneath the streets of downtown Calgary, such as water, natural gas and electricity, are being moved to new locations, away from the future Green Line tunnel. The BDURP Early Works construction is a significant investment

Learn more about BDURP construction:
<https://www.calgary.ca/green-line/green-line-construction/green-line-featured-construction-project.html>.

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Understanding Mental Health

Mental Health is complicated. There are so many ways to talk about it and it can get confusing. To better understand, Mental Health Literacy developed a tool known as “the pyramid” that consists of 4 layers. The base of the pyramid is the largest, which is related to the number of individuals in this state. Therefore, as the pyramid gets smaller so does the amount of people who may experience this state. Let’s take a closer look at what the 4 levels of the pyramid are:

1. No Distress, Problem or Disorder:

This is the bottom level and the largest of the pyramid. This is when everything is okay and you are not experiencing any mental distress, problems of disorders.

2. Mental Distress:

The next layer up is mental distress. Distress releases a signal from our brain indicating the need to adapt to our environment and that there is a problem to solve. Triggers of distress are unavoidable, but the process is necessary for life-skills promoting and building resilience. An example is having an argument with your boss. Once you figure out a solution the mental distress goes away.

3. Mental Health Problem:

The layer second from the top is mental health problems which is an indicator that we are having difficulties and may need external help such as, counselling or community support. This can arise from a stressor of great amount, such as the death of a loved one.

4. Mental Disorder/Illness:

Located at the top of the pyramid is mental illness. This occurs when there is disruption in usual brain functioning. This disruption is the result of our genes and our environment from the time of conception and throughout the lifespan. Examples of this can be the diagnosis of ADHD, Clinical Depression, and Anxiety.

Now that we have a better understanding of these terms, here are everyday things you can do for your mental health, also known as the Big 5 to Thrive!

- **Exercise:** This could be a walk in the community or a session at the gym
- **Sleep:** The optimal amount needed varies for everyone. Put away your phone and snuggle up for a good night’s sleep.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Develop and maintain



positive relationships with family, friends, and community. Surround yourself by those who lift you up.

- **Nutrition:** Incorporate healthy foods that are easy to make and taste great!
- **Helping Others:** Get involved in your community coalitions or volunteer with local charities.

It has been shown that improving even one of these areas translates to improvement in the other areas. Consider steps that are realistic to you to better your mental health!

*Community Health Promotion Services Team,
Alberta Health Services*

Did You Know... These Facts About January

- January's birthstone is garnet, which represents constancy.
- The zodiac signs for January are Capricorn (December 22 - January 19) and Aquarius (January 20 - February 18).
- The flowers of January are snowdrop & carnation.
- The name January came from the Roman god Janus.
- January was known as the wolf month to the Anglo-Saxons because in winter, wolves came into the villages to search for food.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, January is the warmest month.

Preventing Cumulative Stress

Imagine running a marathon. Now imagine running another marathon immediately after with zero recovery time. Then another. Then another.

Cumulative stress is a bit like running consecutive marathons, except in this case there is little to show for it. Instead, chronically stressful situations with no reprieve have a harmful impact on your body and mind.

Cumulative stress has been defined as a common experience for people who work in chronically stressful situations. It can be the result of an accumulation of a heavy workload, poor communications, multiple frustrations, coping with situations in which you feel powerless, or the inability to rest or relax. It can be experienced in both work and personal lives and exacerbates stress levels in both areas of your life.

Moderate and contained stress can be a source of motivation, inspiration, and energy. However, prolonged and negative stress stimulates the level of stress hormones that can impact your emotions, thoughts, and physiological responses.

Possible Cumulative Stress Reactions

If you are experiencing cumulative stress, here are possible reactions you may notice:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, and cynicism
- Sleep disturbances and chronic exhaustion
- Irritability and angry eruptions
- Chronic criticism and blaming of others
- Withdrawal from others
- Depression and anxiety
- Increased substance use/abuse

What can you do?

There are many things you can do to improve your stress levels. Keep in mind that resilience should be a key part of a well thought out self-care plan that supports your ongoing personal and professional wellness needs.

Here are some suggestions or ways of reframing your thoughts:

- If possible, can you spot the silver lining? Researchers suggest that perception plays a key role in how we manage stress.

- Manage your stress levels by regularly putting time aside through your day to relax your nervous system (i.e. by using breathing exercises, taking your breaks or a walk at lunch, etc.)
- Re-assess any self-blaming or negative thoughts patterns and instead, look for one or two positive aspects of your day that you have control over.
- Connect with your family, friends and/or coworkers. Human connection has been shown to be a key factor in supporting resiliency.
- Get some physical exercise. Exercising stimulates the release of stress-relieving chemicals (such as dopamine and endorphins) into our system.
- Find something that will help distract you from intrusive thoughts. Some people find it helpful to be engaged in leisure and social activities. Returning to daily routines can also be helpful.
- Maintain good sleeping habits. Avoid using electronics (i.e.: cellphone, tablet, laptop, etc.) at least one hour prior to bed. Having healthy sleep patterns will support your recovery.
- If you find yourself re-experiencing distressing thoughts or images, it's recommended to use grounding techniques and diaphragmatic breathing to keep you in the present moment. Information on these topics can be found on credible and well-known web sites.
- Avoid comparing your recovery to that of your coworkers. We all recover differently based on our connection to the event, our interpretation of the incident and our life experiences.
- Connect with your leader at work to discuss your source of stress: they might be able to help and accommodate your needs during that time.

Reducing Cumulative Stress

Experiencing Cumulative Stress for a prolonged duration of time can have a negative effect on your wellbeing, impacting everything from decision making to your immune system. Fortunately, there are several options you can choose from to bring yourself to a better and more positive head space and find your healthy balance. The key is implementing your chosen strategies consistently, and to review your self-care plan on a regular basis to ensure it is working.

If you are struggling, you are not alone. AHS has resources and services available to help you. For information on supports in place to help, visit our support site at AHS.ca, or call the Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-303-2642.

Alberta Health Services

Sleep Hygiene:

What is it and Why Do You Need it?

Sleep profoundly impacts our physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and is just as vital to our health as a balanced diet and exercise.

Sleep hygiene is a term that encompasses a set of practices, habits, or routines that can help you achieve restful, high quality sleep each and every night. By adopting good sleep practices and making them part of your daily routine, you can support your body and mind in functioning at their best.

Why is good Sleep Hygiene important?

Getting a good night's rest can do wonders for pretty much every function in our body. It's important for physical health, aiding in the body's repair and rejuvenation and muscle recovery. Sleep can improve our immune systems and help us fight off illnesses, including infections and viruses. Adequate sleep helps us maintain a healthy weight and good heart health; enhances our ability to think clearly and make sound decisions; and helps us with mood and emotional regulation. We perform better and are more productive.

Ensuring good sleep hygiene can help improve the quality of our sleep and, in turn, helps us achieve a better quality of life!

Improving your sleep hygiene

Here are some practical tips to help you improve your sleep hygiene:

- **Create a Consistent Schedule** – Anchor your wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Consistency, particularly with the time that you wake up, helps regulate your body's internal clock.
- **Create a comfortable sleep environment** – Ensure your bedroom is conducive to sleep. This means a cool, dark, and quiet room with a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- **Limit screen time** – The blue light from screens can disrupt your body's natural sleep-wake cycle. Avoid screens at least an hour before bedtime.
- **Be mindful of your diet** – Avoid heavy or spicy meals, caffeine, and alcohol close to bedtime, as they can interfere with your sleep.
- **Exercise regularly** – Engaging in physical activity during the day can help you sleep better at night.



However, try to finish exercising at least a few hours before bedtime.

- **Relaxation techniques** – Consider trying relaxation methods in a quiet area of your home such as deep breathing, meditation, or gentle stretches to calm your mind if you find yourself wakeful when you would like to sleep.
- **Switch it up!** – Try to avoid lying awake in bed if you remain wakeful despite trying to sleep. Sometimes, leaving the bedroom to do something relaxing in a low light environment and returning to bed when sleepy can help to improve sleep continuity.
- **Limit Naps** – While short power naps can be rejuvenating, long or irregular daytime naps can disrupt your sleep patterns.

Sleep hygiene is a cornerstone of our health and well-being. By adopting good sleep practices and making them a part of your daily routine, you can enjoy the numerous physical, mental, and emotional benefits of a well-rested life. Prioritizing sleep hygiene is an investment in yourself and your future, and it's a simple yet effective way to enhance your quality of life.

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