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A Flower to Remember

Red poppy seeds can remain dormant in the soil for years. During the First World War, artillery and trench warfare disturbed the earth along the Western Front, allowing poppies to bloom across the landscape. The sight inspired Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae's 1915 poem "In Flanders Fields", helping the red poppy become an enduring symbol of remembrance.



BRCA
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New and returning members, please apply online at brcacalgary.org/membership or use this form and mail or drop off along with cheque made out to: **Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association**
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Or, please feel free to communicate with us about community events at events@BRCAcalgary.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Alex MacWilliam

I am writing this message five days before the final day of Referendum voting, in order to meet our publication deadline. I hope everyone exercised their right to cast a ballot.

This issue of the newsletter contains Deb Lee's story on the dedication of one of our recently named parks—Helen's Garden. Unfortunately, the story was not included in the October issue, so we are pleased to include it this month. Deb has also contributed a piece on the most recent park celebrations marking the naming of Annie Gale Park and Schule Park.

You will also find an item contributed by Allan McIntyre regarding the very successful innovative cigarette butt recycling program he and others on the BRCA Beautification Committee have been running since 2024. In addition to being a source of litter in our parks and streets, cigarette butts contain plastic, arsenic, lead, and nicotine, which contaminate ecosystems and represent threats to wildlife and people. We are most appreciative of the efforts of Allan and his team and the support they have received from the Bridgeland-Riverside BIA, City of Calgary Main Streets and Forest Lawn High School.

Due to the publication deadline, I am unable to report on our upcoming (October 15) Safe Community Committee Meeting, but I hope to provide highlights from that meeting in the December issue of the newsletter. Our Safe Community Committee has contributed an article on the Calgary Crime Stoppers program to this month's issue.

Even though our popular Farmers' Market closed for the season on October 1, you will have another opportunity to connect with local vendors when the Farmers' Market holds its popular Holiday Market at the Hall on Sunday, December 6.







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Senior's Exercise

CLASS SCHEDULE

ALL CLASSES ARE NOW $30

All classess take place at the downstairs BRCA Hall (917 Centre Ave NE). Class size is limited to 20 participants.

MONDAY
10:30-11:30AM

BEGINNER YOGA WITH VLADA
November 2 - December 7

BEGINNER STRENGTH TRAINING WITH KIM
November 3 - December 8

TUESDAY
2:30 - 3:30PM

WEDNESDAY
1:00 - 2:00PM

ADVANCED YOGA WITH VLADA
November 4 - December 16 - No Class Nov 11

QIGONG WITH KIM
November 4 - December 16 - No Class Nov 11

WEDNESDAY
2:30 - 3:30PM

FRIDAY
10:30-11:30AM

INTERMEDIATE STRENGTH TRAINING WITH KIM
November 6 - December 11

REGISTER ONLINE AT BRCACALGARY.ORG

You can also register, or ask to be put on a waitlist for a 2nd class, by calling 403-263-5755 or emailing programs@brcacalgary.org. Please reach out if you do not get a confirmation email from the Amilia system.

Classes are subsidized by grant funding. If you need financial support, please contact programs@brcacalgary.org. For cancelations, refunds minus 5% available for cancellations over 7 days; no refunds will be given for cancellations within 7 days of the start date.

World Cleanup Day in Bridgeland

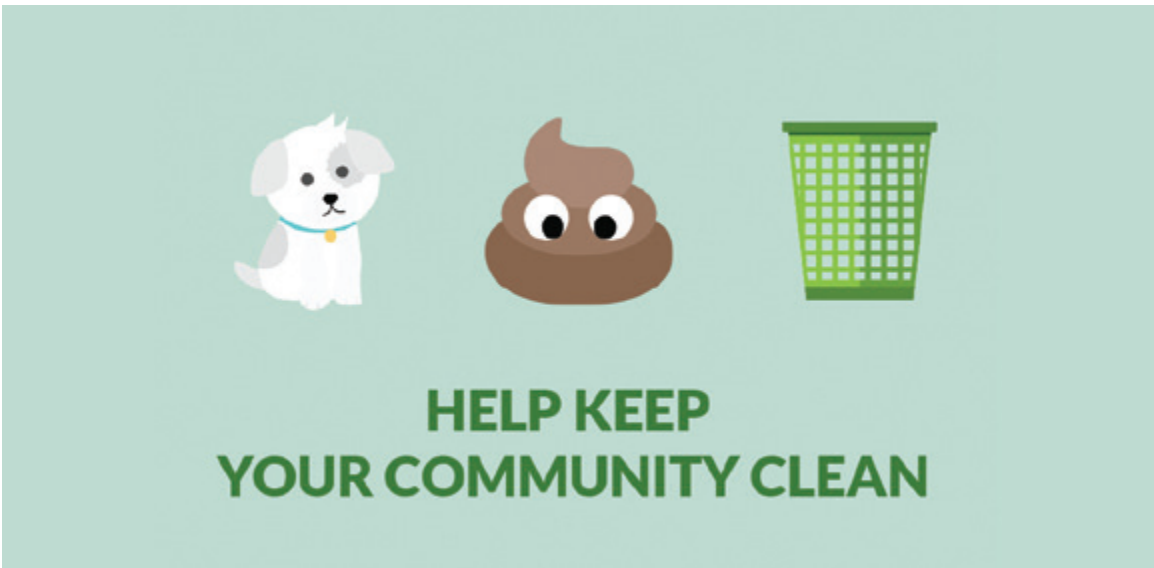
by Allan McIntytre, BRCA Beautification Committee

The United Nations declared September 20 as World Cleanup Day, an annual global initiative to combat environmental pollution. The Beautification Committee participated by organizing litter sweeps from July to September. In addition, a big thank you to eight volunteers from the energy services company SLB, who did a litter sweep in Bridgeland on September 22.

Thank you to all volunteers for your litter sweeps in Bridgeland Riverside. So awesome!







Helen's Garden Celebration

by Deb Lee, BRCA Heritage Committee



Despite the cool, gloomy weather on September 12, more than 50 people gathered to celebrate Helen's Garden Park. The park was named in honour of much-loved community resident Helen Jusic, who became well known across Canada and even internationally during the COVID-19 pandemic. Helen regularly stood at the corner of 12 Street and 1 Avenue, greeting passersby with air hugs and kind words. Her warmth and encouragement lifted the spirits of many people who were struggling with the social distancing restrictions of that time. Although Helen passed away in late 2025, her spirit was certainly present throughout the celebration.

Several speakers shared their personal experiences and memories of Helen, including Alex MacWilliam and Deb Lee from the BRCA, Juliette Morgan, a longtime friend, Ja'net Barchard-Smith from Silvera for Seniors, and Paul Lau, who led the crowd in singing Helen's favourite song, "Jesus Loves Me."

What many people may not know is the extraordinary extent of Helen's caring efforts over the years. She worked for three decades at the Calgary General Hospital as a service aide, supporting in many different departments. We have all heard stories of the hospital employee who stopped to offer a kind word to a patient, provided extra support during a difficult moment, or found a more comfortable pillow. That was Helen, always going out of her way to help others. Following her retirement, Helen continued her commitment to service by volunteering with numerous organizations in Bridgeland, including Silvera for Seniors, the Rehab Society, George Boyack Nursing Home, Christine Meikle School, and many others both within and beyond the community.

When Helen was first approached about having a local park named in her honour, she was overwhelmed and insisted that she was simply an ordinary person doing ordinary things and did not deserve such recognition. She was eventually persuaded by the many stories demonstrating how her "ordinary" actions had made an extraordinary difference in the lives of countless people. Her legacy reminds us that ordinary people can do extraordinary things which profoundly impact others' lives.

The plaque displayed in the park tells Helen's story: who she was, where she came from, and the contributions she made throughout her life. Be sure to visit the park and take time to read it. Helen is an important part of our community's story, and as we remember her, let us each strive to follow her example by accepting others, reaching out with kindness, and sharing a joke to bring a smile to someone's face. Helen was truly a gem who warmed our hearts and inspired us. Your acts of kindness in her memory ensure she is always remembered.

We would also like to thank those who supported the BRCA Park Naming Project and the Celebration of Helen's Garden Park. Special thanks to a local supermarket for donating the beautifully decorated cake, a local coffee shop for contributing coffee, and the Bridgeland Business Improvement Area for its ongoing support. We are also grateful to Lucia and Allan McIntyre and their team of volunteers: Judy, Bertina, Tony, Janet, Cath, and Ron, whose efforts ensured the event ran smoothly and was enjoyed by all.



Welcome to

HELEN'S *Garden*



"So nice to see you! I'm sending you love!"
To honour and recognize a local resident angel, this park is named for Helen Jusic (1936–2025).

Helen became a beloved figure in Bridgeland-Riverside during the COVID pandemic lockdown (2020–23). In her mid-80s, she was the friendly greeter on the corner of 12th Street and 1st Avenue NE. Rain or shine, her waves, cheery hellos, and "air hugs" lifted the spirits of those passing by in the challenging time of social distancing and cancellation of community gatherings. Helen's warm greetings were well-received near and far via traditional and social media.

Helen (Jelica) grew up in Croatia; life was difficult. In 1961, she bravely escaped, making her way to a refugee camp in Austria before eventually moving onwards to Canada and settling in Calgary. Jobs were hard to find in the late 1950s, especially if one could not speak English. Helen spoke Croatian, Hungarian, and German, but English language classes were not available at that time. Nonetheless, this did not hold her back in her service aid job at the Calgary General Hospital, where she communicated through the universal languages of kindness and caring. She attributed her ability to handle life's challenges to her strong faith.

Helen married Nezir Jusic, and together they had one daughter, Ferida. After 29 years at "the General," she retired in 1992, but did not slow down. With much still to offer the community, she volunteered at George Boyack Nursing Home, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Rehab Society, and Christine Meikle School. Helen made people feel better. She also enjoyed sharing her baking and gardening creations.

In 2021, the Top 7 Over 70 committee presented Helen with the Noble Neighbour Citation —an award recognizing seniors' community efforts during the pandemic.



Fire Chief Dongworth and the crew from Fire Station Number One visited Helen to thank her for her community spirit.

Thank you, Helen, for being an amazing Bridgelander whose kindness and generosity continue to inspire.

The Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association commissioned several informative panels in 2026 to connect our locally named parks to community history, geography, and notable people.

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Annie Gale Park and Schule Park Celebrations

by Deb Lee, BRCA Heritage and Park Naming Project Committees

Following the celebration of Helen's Park on September 12, in September we unveiled plaques at two more locations: Annie Gale Park and Schule Park. We were fortunate to enjoy beautiful fall weather, sharing delightful afternoons of lively conversation and community connection.

Annie Gale Park



Located at the foot of the 7A Street stairs, just north of McDougall Road, Annie Gale Park is a welcoming green space that features mature spruce trees and two benches. It is adjacent to the Vacant Lot Garden Heritage Park.

Annie Gale immigrated to Calgary from England with her family in 1911. Concerned about the quality of the City's fresh food supply, she became involved in efforts to improve conditions. Her skills were quickly recognized, and she was encouraged to run for City Council. In the first election since women had gained the right to vote, Annie Gale won. She was the first woman elected to a City Council—in Calgary and Canada. Annie went on to provide competent, caring, and visionary leadership during her six years in office.

On September 17, tables and chairs were arranged in the park to create a hospitable setting for the celebration. Deb Lee welcomed community members and described the BRCA Park Naming Project, including the process that led to Annie Gale's name being selected for the park. Lana Bentley, CEO of the Women's Centre of Calgary, located nearby on 4 Street, offered greetings and reflected on the important role women continue to play in public life and politics. In the spirit of Annie Gale and her era, guests enjoyed tea served in elegant porcelain cups, delicious cake, and time together in conversation.

Schule Park



The name Schule (pronounced shoo-luh) recognizes two important aspects of Bridgeland-Riverside history. First, it honours the Germans from Russia, who were among the community's earliest settlers. They arrived in large numbers, beginning in the late 1890s, after being forced from their villages in Russia. Their presence was so significant that the area became informally known as "Germantown".

Second, Schule, the German word for "school," acknowledges the historic Bridgeland School, where local children were educated from 1921 through the 1980s. Students from many cultural backgrounds learned and played together there, helping to build the diverse and welcoming community we know today.

On September 27, following a one-day postponement due to poor weather, we gathered to celebrate Schule Park. We met close to the plaque, located near the pathway in the grassy park east of Delta West School at 11A Street and 2 Avenue.

Deb Lee also recognized the contributions of Marlene Michel, a former resident and author of Usu Leut, Our People: The Germans from Russia Who Settled in Bridgeland-Riverside. Without her work, much of our knowledge of the people and stories that shaped our 116-year-old community might have been lost.

Uli Anhorn, President of the Calgary Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia,

shared greetings and reflected on both the challenges and achievements experienced by these early settlers. A display of historical memorabilia helped bring those stories to life.

Guests of all ages enjoyed cake and traditional refreshments, including kvas, as well as rye bread with butter and homemade raspberry jam. To further add to the diversity of the day, ceremonial coffee was prepared by a local Eritrean coffee shop.

Special thanks go to the organizers and volunteers who helped make these events possible: Lucia McIntyre for the Annie Gale Park celebration and Janet Pittis, a former teacher at Bridgeland School, for the Schule Park event. We also extend our gratitude to the City of Calgary's Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant program for funding the plaques, M2 Designs for bringing the stories to life, and to the Parks Infrastructure crew for installing the plaques.

Be sure to take a walk, visit these parks, and admire the new colourful plaques. Next year, we look forward to unveiling plaques and celebrating three more named parks in our community.



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SCAN ME



Yielding to Emergency Vehicles

by Alberta Health Services



For everyone's safety, it is important motorists understand how to correctly yield right-of-way to emergency vehicles when their lights and sirens are activated. You can help all first responders navigate roads quickly and safely by following these basic rules.

When an Emergency Vehicle Approaches with Lights and Sirens Activated:

- If you're in the middle of an intersection, safely clear the intersection and then pull over to the right curb.
- On a one or two-lane road, motorists should move to the right side of the road, slow down, and then stop, remaining parallel with the road. Remember to signal.
- On one-way streets move to the nearest curb, either the right or left, and stop.
- On a road with three or more lanes, motorists should move to the nearest side of the road and stop. If driving in the centre lane, move to the right side of the road and stop. Remember to signal.
- Come to a complete stop and wait for the emergency vehicle to pass. Shoulder check for more emergency vehicles before re-entering traffic flow. Remember to signal.
- Emergency vehicles might use any available road space to maneuver. This could include shoulders or turning lanes, etc., in order to safely pass other traffic.

When Operating a Vehicle:

- Reduce speed to 60 km/h or the posted speed, whichever is lower, when passing any stopped roadside vehicle with flashing lights (emergency vehicles, tow trucks, maintenance trucks, etc.). This law applies to the lane immediately next to the stopped vehicles. If you're not in the lane next to the stopped vehicles, it's recommended to reduce speed and leave lots of space between yourself and emergency personnel.
- Do not break the rules of the road in order to give right of way to an emergency vehicle. This could include proceeding through a red light or making an illegal turn. Actions such as these jeopardize all motorists in the area.
- Drivers must place their full attention on the road and the safe operation of their vehicle at all times. The fine for distracted driving in Alberta is $390.00 and three demerit points.
- Do not follow within 150meters of an emergency vehicle with its siren and/or flashing lights on. For reference, 150m is nearly 1.5 times the length of a football field.



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Three Simple Ways to Tell a Better Story

by Robert McLeod

A good story doesn't need to be dramatic.

It might be something funny that happened at work, a lesson you learned, a conversation that surprised you, or a small moment you still remember years later.

Being able to share those experiences clearly can make presentations more engaging, conversations more memorable, and ideas easier for others to understand.

Here are three ways to strengthen your storytelling:

1. Give Us Somewhere to Begin
Instead of starting with lots of background information, bring your listener into a specific moment. Where were you? What was happening? What changed?

2. Don't Tell Us Everything
Good storytelling is often about deciding what to leave out. Focus on the details that help the listener understand the moment rather than trying to include every part of the story.

3. Share What Changed
Ask yourself why this particular story is worth telling. Did you learn something? Change your mind? Make a mistake? See something differently? That change often becomes the heart of the story.

You don't have to consider yourself a natural storyteller to get better at it. You simply have to practice.

High Riser Toastmasters gives people a friendly place to practice storytelling, public speaking, communication, and leadership. We meet every Thursday from 7:15 to 8:15 pm at the Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association Hall.

Guests are always welcome for free.



Cigarette Butt Recycling 2026

by BRCA Beautification Committee

Beautification Committee volunteers installed 10 cigarette butt collection boxes in June 2024. Today we have 14 boxes up and running. This worthwhile program protects our environment by keeping this harmful litter off the ground to prevent toxic chemicals in the filters from leaching into soil and water. We have had a positive response from smokers who use the boxes, and we see fewer butts on the ground.

In 2026 we moved collecting boxes from park benches to free-standing posts supplied by the Main Streets Project. This improves environmental quality at the benches. Also in 2026, we shipped a total of 55,000 cigarette butts to the Terracycle facility in Ontario, where the filters are processed into plastic timbers for park benches and picnic tables.

As part of the Canada-wide Unsmoke Butt Blitz campaign, Bridgeland-Riverside is number six on the leaderboard of participating communities... truly awesome! We are also very excited about our collaboration with Forest Lawn High School welding students, who will fabricate Calgary-designed boxes thanks to a generous grant from Bridgeland Riverside BIA. These boxes will go up in 2027.

Why not join us to keep this environmental project going for years to come. Email your interest and suggestions for future box locations to: beautification@brcacalgary.org.



Winter Green Cart Schedule Starts in November

by the City of Calgary, Waste and Recycling Services

Starting in November, your green cart will be collected every other week. This seasonal schedule helps match service to the lower volumes of yard waste during colder months.

Weekly collection will return in April 2027, when spring cleanup season begins.





Create More Memories and Less Waste this Holiday Season

by the City of Calgary



The best holiday memories aren't found under the tree. They're made with the people we spend time with.

During the holidays, Calgarians generate about 25% more waste from wrapping paper, packaging, and leftover food. As you get ready for the season, here are a few simple ways to create more memories and less waste:

- Gift experiences instead of things, like tickets, memberships or a day out together.
- Make a gift with a personal touch, such as homemade cookies, a photo book or a handmade gift.
- Shop locally to reduce shipping materials and packaging waste.
- Borrow, swap or share decorations with neighbours, friends or family.
- Reuse gift bags and bows or wrap gifts with fabric.
- Stick to a grocery list, use leftovers or send extras home with guests.

For more holiday waste reduction tips, visit calgary.ca/our-city/articles/calgary-conversations-podcast-015-howland-wark.html.

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- Identify any potential problems or deleterious habits
- Show you and your child how to properly clean his or her teeth at home
- Answer your questions or concerns



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