BRENTWOOD bugle

THE OFFICIAL BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER





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by Anne Burke

The new City Nature YYC website will be online with information on the 2024 challenge (www.citynatureyyc. ca). The dates for the event are April 26 to 29. Follow @CityNatureYYC on Instagram. On May 6, local, national, and global results will be announced.

The Nose Hill checklist contains references to reptiles, fungi and lichen, amphibians, insects, shellfish, birds, and mammals. Sightings are in NW Calgary. This website features the chorus frog, the tiger salamander, the terrestrial garter snake, and more. There are 42 birds, among them hawks, blackbirds, sparrows, chickadees, starlings, wrens, geese, eagles, mallards, teals, kestrels, gulls, partridges, grebes, grouse, and vultures. Some other types are the northern flicker, downy woodpecker, and hairy woodpecker. The great horned, long-eared, and short-eared owls all appear in the list.

The May Plant Count is part of the annual May Species Count. The survey runs from May 25 to 31. The focus is on documenting the flowering status of native plant species across Alberta. This project promotes stewardship and appreciation of Alberta's natural areas. As a citizen scientist, you will collect data to be used for conservation. Here are the basics. Enter the location of your plant. Upload a photo. Enter the date of the observation. Add a report about the flowering stage. Choose the appropriate stage from those listed. There are many ID guides and checklists (in print or flipbooks online). Observations can be made manually on a data sheet and then submitted by email or snail mail. You would need to sign up for the mailing list and then receive data sheets and instructions (www.naturealberta.ca/-may-plant-count). are submitting observations online you will join the May Plant Count project for the flowering codes to be displayed in the iNaturalist phone app (www. inaturalist.ca/projects/alberta-may-plant-count).

Brentwood COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

www.brentwoodcommunity.com I Community Centre, 1520B Northmount Drive NW Mailing Address: 5107 33 Street NW T2L 1V3 • Email: office@brentwoodcommunity.com • 403-284-3477 Linda Van Holst – Office Manager • Steve Dietrich – Arena Manager

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Dear Brentwoodians,

It seems odd to be thinking about lawns and gardens just as Calgary is digging out from half a metre of snow that fell over the last few days – but by the time you are reading this, spring will be just around the corner. Our recent dump notwithstanding, there has been much concern expressed about the snowfall this winter in Alberta, and the provincial government has already been cautioning that water restrictions will likely be in place this summer – while rural municipalities are already declaring drought emergencies so that resources will be in place to cope.

This is something to keep in mind if you are planning to redo your yard, or even a portion of it, this spring. There is a growing trend away from the perfect, putting green lawn that so many of us take pride in, towards more sustainable and natural landscapes. One term for this is "xeriscaping", which emphasises the use of native plants and ground covers, as these are adapted to local climactic conditions and don't need extra watering. In fact, well-done climate-resistant gardens will retain rainwater and snowmelt instead of allowing the water to run off into the storm sewers. Other benefits of natural and low-water yards include greater biodiversity, including pollinators, less need for fertilizer and pesticides, and even carbon capture.

Better yet, it is a change that can be made gradually, which is a relief for those of us who don't have a green thumb or a big budget for landscaping. Start with a corner of your yard and go from there! In our next issue, I am hoping to bring some perspectives and advice from people who know more about gardening than I do (which is a low hurdle indeed), but in the meantime you can find inspiration from the City of Calgary's YardSmart web page at https://www.calgary.ca/water/programs/yard-smart-water-wise-plants.html.

Photo Contest

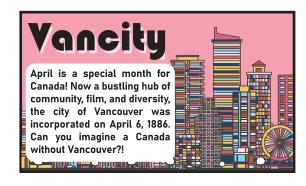
The *Bugle* is looking for Brentwood's best amateur photographers to provide cover images each month. If you have a great snap of our neighbourhood saved on your phone or posted on your social media feed, send it in for a chance to be featured on the cover of an upcoming issue! Photos must be 300 DPI or higher (i.e. from a newer model phone or good digital camera)

and 2400 x 1600 pixels minimum size. If submitting pictures of minors, please make sure that you have direct, express permission to submit the picture from a parent or guardian. Send your photos, or any questions, to bcabugle@telus.net.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Jucker

Editor, Brentwood Bugle





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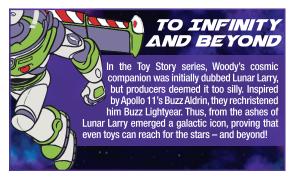
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Brentwood Cares - Little Food Library and More!

With your donations and support, we continue to stock the Brentwood Cares Little Food Library twice daily, for use by people of all ages and circumstances, from elders to students.

Unopened, sealed items can be dropped off in the library itself or in the box beside the door at 3624 Boulton Road at any time. Hats off to Brentwood for your continued support!

Liza and the Brentwood Cares Team

Buy Nothing Brentwood

Give freely; share creatively! Post anything you'd like to give away, lend, or share; ask for anything you'd like to receive or borrow.

Check out the Buy Nothing Brentwood/Charleswood/ Collingwood Facebook page, or buynothingproject.org.

Calgary Police Service on Nextdoor!

Calgary Police Service now has a dedicated space to engage with community residents.

You can expect to see posts on the following topics:

- Awareness and updates: events, initiatives, and updates in our community
- Crime trends and prevention: education, resources, and tools
- Community engagement: a place to share concerns, ideas, and feedback
- Emergency alerts: immediate notifications that affect our area

You can find the Calgary Police Service's space on Nextdoor here: https://ca.nextdoor.com/agency-detail/ab/calgary/calgary-police-service/.

Your Representatives in Brentwood

City Councillor: Sean Chu (Ward 4): ward04@calgary.ca; 403-268-3727.

MLA: Luanne Metz (Calgary-Varsity): Calgary.varsity@assembly.ab.ca; 403-216-5436.

MP: Len Webber (Calgary Confederation): len.webber@parl.gc.ca; 403-220-0888.

BRENTWOOD DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

You Don't Know What You've Got 'Til It's Gone

Submitted by Melanie Swailes on behalf of the Development and Transportation Committee



With respect to Joni Mitchell, you sometimes don't know what you've got ... until it might be rezoned to R-CG. The BCA has heard from many concerned residents opposing the City's proposed blanket rezoning which will apply not only to existing homes, but also to some of the edges of the park space along John Laurie Blvd. The strips of land in question are currently zoned R-C1, probably dating back to the 1960s, and would be rezoned R-CG (a Land Use designation which allows building forms ranging up to rowhouses). In response to many queries, the City website has been updated with this response: "... While these parcels are being proposed for rezoning (i.e., from RC1 to RCG), this does not mean they are being proposed for development. They will remain park spaces even if they are rezoned."

In response to these concerns, the BCA board has sent a formal letter to the City to request a change in designation for the park spaces to S-SPR, Special Purpose - School, Park, and Community Reserve District, with the sites declared as Municipal Reserve on the land title. If the intention is to keep all the spaces as park area, this redesignation would provide significantly more assurance than the blanket rezoning to R-CG.

The blanket rezoning proposal includes another major change: if approved at Council on April 22, all residential

R-C1 lots would be rezoned to R-CG. This means that on most Brentwood lots, a rowhouse with up to eight units (four main + four basement suites) could be built. The building envelope could be up to three storeys (11m or 36 feet) high, with 60% of the lot covered by the house and garage, not including patios, decks, concrete steps, sidewalks, and other impermeable surfaces. By comparison, single detached houses can cover only up to 45%, and many Brentwood homes built in the 1960s cover far less than even the 45% maximum.

Why blanket rezoning? The City website, https://www.calgary.ca/planning/projects/rezoning-for-housing. html?redirect=/rezoningforhousing states that "This change will help increase the supply of housing to meet demand. Also, it reduces the costs and timelines for permit approvals. Finally, it allows for greater housing variety and options to suit your needs." Almost everyone agrees more housing needs to be built, especially housing that is "affordable" to either rent or purchase. The proposal for blanket rezoning arose from the Housing Affordability Task Force (HATF) recommendations. However, blanket upzoning of existing R-C1 homes does not include any requirement that new buildings be affordable: densification alone does not automatically equal affordability.

The biggest question is how any new R-CG buildings will fit into our area, especially in terms of how they might impact the adjacent homes. Going from a bungalow or split-level to three-story rowhouses covering 60% of the lot is a substantial change, with impacts on shadowing, massing, overlooking, parking, and other concerns. To be clear, proposed redevelopments will still need to go through the development permit and approval process, but the applicant will not be required to "rezone" the property. The right to build various housing forms up to a rowhouse will already exist so you will not be able to oppose that aspect.

Will an R-CG rowhouse be constructed next to you? Maybe, maybe not. On April 22, if the proposed blanket upzoning is approved by council then yes, Brentwood's large lots will be desirable places for redevelopment. Developers will still be able to build or renovate single-family houses, but alternately can choose to build a rowhouse with up to eight units.

The City asserts that change within a community will be gradual, but in the words of one homeowner, "it is always about the stakes and not the odds." When the imposition is right next to you the odds are very cold comfort indeed.

I wanted to see first-hand what the impact of an R-CG next door might be. In recent weeks, two homeowners in other communities allowed me to visit their backyards to view the massive rowhouse (R-CG) developments recently constructed next door. In one case, a mere 1.2m (four feet) away from the homeowner's fence was a three-storey, 11m (36 feet) high building towering over us as we stood there. In both cases, the homeowners were near tears as they told me how devastated they felt because they could have never imagined something like that being allowed next door. Both lamented the loss of sunlight and privacy: in one case, 13 windows look directly into the neighbour's backyard. Although it was winter, both backyards were still filled with planters, back decks with outdoor furniture and perennial or vegetable beds just waiting for the summer months, except now they won't get much sunlight. One of the homeowners pointed out four sets of air conditioners on the new complex next door, directly facing her property.

This is the reality of what an R-CG townhouse can look like next door. A 36-foot wall filled with windows and noisy AC units, along with a few newly planted narrow columnar trees in place of the large spruce trees so common throughout Brentwood. Residents who are concerned at this prospect should not be dismissed as NIMBYs (Not In My Backyard).

Our community is not a blank slate. Opposing unsuitable development is not NIMBYism, it is a legitimate planning concern. When the building next door overshadows, overlooks, and negatively impacts your use of your yard, it is simply not good enough to claim that there is some greater good in allowing for poorly conceived development without referring to the safeguards and standards that already exist.

The City of Calgary has Infill Guidelines, Established Area Guidelines, and sections of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) that all refer to the importance of "sensitive" and "contextual" redevelopment that takes into account

the impact on existing homes. Some examples: The MDP, Section 2.2.5, "The City promotes infilling that is sensitive, compatible, and complementary to the existing physical patterns and character of neighbourhood." The Infill Guidelines' key concept for Context is that "New development should be designed in a manner which is responsive to the local context." For Building Mass, "New development should respect the existing scale and massing of its immediate surroundings." For Placement of Windows, "The privacy of adjacent residences should be respected". But these guidelines were not followed or enforced in the cases of the homeowners whose properties I visited.

Whether it is the park along John Laurie Blvd or a blanket rezoning of every house in our community, speak up now if it matters to you. We often hear people say, "why bother?" or "the City will just do what they want anyhow." Maybe, but residents do have an enshrined right to participate and be involved in decisions that affect them.

April 22. Let your voice be heard.





A Centennial Celebration

by Lee Hunt

On February 24, the family and friends of former long-time Brentwood resident, Mary Makuk, gathered to celebrate Mary's 100th birthday.



Photo by John Makuk

At the event, there was a slideshow reflecting Mary's life – from her early days in Ontario, to moving to Calgary, meeting and marrying Steve, and then in 1971 buying a Brentwood home in which to raise their three children (Maureen, John, and Patrick).

The celebration had a Hawaiian theme with everyone wearing colourful leis. To add to the island theme, the musicians – Harmonica Tableau – performed the song "Tiny Bubbles" and used two hand-held bubble makers to add to the atmosphere.

There were three large birthday cakes – but not 100 candles! Only ten candles per cake which Mary blew out with the aid of a grandson.

There was a table with framed special greetings from such dignitaries as Governor General Mary Simon, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Mayor Jyoti Gondek, and even one from King Charles!

I was honoured to have been invited to join with four generations of Mary's family, plus the folks from Mary's seniors' residence to help celebrate the 100th birthday of a very special woman.

All the best, Mary!



4H in the City?

by Lee Hunt



Left to right - Thomson Gairns, members of the 4H group at Brentwood. Lori Nielsen

If you are like I was and assume that the 4H Club is strictly a rural entity – think again!

For one year, 4H is running a pilot project offering sixweek sessions to youth ages 9 to 17 in various Calgary communities in hopes of eventually establishing permanent clubs.

Both the rural and urban clubs strive to follow the 4Hs in the name – Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. To this goal, both stress the development of life skills, but rather than having a focus on agriculture, the urban clubs will emphasize public speaking, crafts, baking, and gaining confidence. There may also be some sessions with a focus on sports. There has already been one intro club with sessions that explored engineering through LEGO.

I caught up with Lori Nielsen (Senior Program Coordinator for Intro Clubs) and Thomson Gairns (Junior Program Coordinator for Intro Clubs) when they were offering a six-week course at Hope Lutheran Church in Brentwood.

As most of the participants did not know one another, a typical class would begin with some "icebreaking" games, then off to the kitchen. In previous classes, the participants had made fudge brownies and zucchini brownies. For another class, rather than bringing in flour, Lori brought in actual wheat kernels so that the members could get an idea of "where their food comes from". The members then ground up the wheat and proceeded to bake with it.

Each week, the group makes smoothies – sometimes with pie filling other times with fresh fruits so that they can compare the two. Lori especially recalled one member being horrified at the thought of putting spinach in smoothies – only to discover that she loved the taste!

Some of the participants have enjoyed their initial six-week session so much, that they signed up for a second! The cost for each session is \$120.

Thomson commented on "how well the participants interact with one another." Many arrive as total strangers, but through the icebreaker activities, working together in the kitchen, plus public speaking at the end of each class, they gain confidence and become a close-knit group.

Future six-week courses will be available in other communities. For additional information, contact Lori Nielsen at lori.nielsen@4hab.com.

Condolences

We at the *Bugle* note the passing of Hugh Brown on December 27, 2023.

Hugh's family moved to Calgary in 1943 when he was five years old, and he did all his schooling here including attending Mt. Royal College (as it was named at that time) and SAIT.

According to Hugh's obituary, "He began his automotive career in Brentwood at Hugh Brown and Sons Shell Station where he worked as an Apprentice, a Licenced Mechanic, and Manager." The Shell station, which was started by Hugh's father, was located on Brentwood Road "about where The Village and the BDC Dental office are today" according to Hugh's son, David.

Writing about Hugh, his friend Donald commented that, "He always had a smile and a kind word... a man of strength, character, and integrity".

Hugh and his wife Pat (deceased in 2022) had three children – David, Sandi, and Shari. Our condolences to Hugh's family and friends. May you find comfort in your joyful memories of Hugh.

April Message from MLA Luanne Metz

Happy spring, Calgary-Varsity!

I hope you have been able to enjoy this Easter long weekend, spending some time with loved ones or taking some time to relax—however you choose to use the time!

Spring has officially started, and though it may be nice to be done with the Calgary winter cold, there are many things you should be prepared for as a hot and dry summer approaches.

Wildfire Season

On February 20, Alberta Forestry and Parks declared an early start to the 2024 wildfire season. This unprecedented early start date to the season, in combination with serious drought conditions, serves as a good reminder to be prepared for emergency situations. While we never hope that an emergency will occur, it is always good to be prepared.

Ensure you are prepared for an emergency, by doing the following:

- Make sure you are aware of any fire bans, advisories, or restrictions which may be in place.
- Maintain an emergency kit stocked with supplies such as water, food, battery-powered or crank radio and flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Store important documents such as passports, birth certificates, banking information, and insurance papers in a safe place in an above-ground location.
- If you have a vehicle, keep the tank full in case fuel stations lose power or close down. Keep a vehicle emergency kit and include an extra phone charger with necessary adapters.
- Make sure to stay informed, and visit www.alberta.ca/ wildfire-preparedness for more information, or call 3-1-1 for Calgary-specific information and updates.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the provincial government, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and the Calgary-Varsity Constituency Office at Calgary.Varsity@assembly.ab.ca.

Best wishes this April,

Dr. Luanne Metz

MLA Calgary-Varsity

Off the Bookshelf

by Rosemary Brown

Rehearsals for Living is a powerful and extremely thought-provoking book, one which challenges much of what many of us consider to be the norm. It was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award in 2022.

The book consists of an exchange of letters between Leanne Betasamossake Simpson and Robyn Maynard during the COVID-19 pandemic. It begins when Maynard reaches out to Simpson with her concerns about the state of the planet and society. The letters are rich with personal stories, and analyses of the world we are living in.

Simpson is a Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg educator, author, and musician. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba and has taught and lectured at universities across the country. She is a member of the Alderville First Nation in Ontario, and she has been engaged in land-based education for over twenty years.

Robyn Maynard is an Assistant Professor of Black Feminisms in Canada, in the Historical and Cultural Studies Department of the University of Toronto-Scarborough. She is an award-winning author and best known for her book *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Preston*.

The correspondence begins with a discussion of the current climate crisis and its consequences: forest fires, flooding, droughts, and famine. They critique the use of the word human in the definition of the "anthropocene", which states that the climate crisis is caused by "human" activity.

They ask who is included in the term "human", and who has been excluded historically through slavery and settler colonization; and they point out that it is only a very small portion of humanity which has engaged in activities leading to the current climate crisis and death and destruction.

This small portion is symbolized by the stock exchange and the head offices of the logging, mining, and oil and gas companies which are more concerned with profits than the value of life: plant, animal, and human. They also point out that when land becomes private property and a commodity through the dispossession of Indigenous lands, then a complex system of control, including the

use of police, is developed to keep that property in the hands of the colonizers. The disproportionate number of deaths experienced by Black and Indigenous peoples at the hands of police, and the disproportionate number of Black and Indigenous peoples incarcerated in the prison system, are the result.

Their scope is also global, drawing on many historical and current examples of the ravages of resource extraction on Indigenous and Black communities from within Canada, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Many of the headquarters of these companies are to be found in Canada.

As they write back and forth, Simpson and Maynard seek a way forward for their communities, ways which would benefit most of us. If settler colonization, slavery, and capitalism are at the root of the current economic crisis, then the solutions are to be found in alternative social and political systems, many aspects of which can be found in precolonial societies. These include collective ways of being and doing, restorative justice, consensus, sharing, respecting all forms of life, and a different relationship with the land.

They say we need to be filled with curiosity about what an alternative vision for the future could be, and to engage our imaginations in creating those alternatives. They state that "abolition and anti-colonization is imagination work". We need to end not only colonization but the structures that it created. They include a rich discussion of the nation-state as opposed to nation, of home space as opposed to home, and of efforts to reimagine among Black and Indigenous communities throughout the work.

Simpson and Maynard share that it takes courage to engage in this work, but it is necessary for the survival of Black and Indigenous communities that are at the forefront of the impact of the climate crisis. I would argue that if we are truly opposed to colonization and anti-Black racism and seek a healthy, life-enhancing world, we will engage in this work also and follow the lead of Indigenous and Black communities. We can start by reading *Rehearsals for Living*.



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Calgary Confederation Len Webber, MP 2020 – 10 St NW Calgary, AB T2M 3M2

403-220-0888

≥ len.webber@parl.gc.ca

Don't Be Fooled

As we come to the end of tax season, scammers and fraudsters are just starting to get busy as they look to trick taxpayers with the latest scams. Canadians eager to get their tax refunds are often the victims of these seasoned criminals.

Taxpayers should be vigilant when they receive any communication that claims to be from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Many of these are seeking your personal information such as a social insurance number, credit card number, bank account number, or passport number.

The CRA will only communicate with you via traditional mail to the address on file and if you are uncertain as to the validity of any mail, give them a call at 1-800-959-8281 to verify it is real. They will never threaten to 'send the police to arrest you' and will never ask for payment by interact transfer, bitcoin, or gift cards.

The CRA will only email you to say you have a message in your MyAccount and you should not use the link in the email but instead type Canada.ca/MyAccount into your browser. The CRA will never text you – ever!

These scammers usually insist that personal information is needed so that the taxpayer can receive a refund or access a benefit payment. Often, calls and emails also involve threatening or coercive language to scare individuals into paying a fictitious debt to the CRA. Other communications urge taxpayers to visit a fake CRA website where the taxpayer is then asked to verify their identity by entering personal information. These are scams and taxpayers should never respond to these fraudulent communications or click on any of the links provided. When in doubt, stop communicating.

The fraudsters are becoming more sophisticated and the CRA has a website to help you identify and protect yourself against these scams. It can be found at www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/security/protect-yourself-against-fraud.html.

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