

issue 123

THE

July/August 2026



BOWEST'NER



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Why the BCA Has a New Logo

Over the years, the Bowness Community Association's logo has changed every couple of decades. The most recent logo has featured a stylized "B" inspired by the curves of the Bow River—a symbol that reflects one of the natural features that has shaped our community's history and identity.

As the BCA continues to grow and evolve, we felt it was time for a fresh look that better reflects who we are today and where we are headed. In 2024, through strategic planning and community discussions, the BCA adopted a new vision: BCA – The Heart of Bowness.

Our new logo brings that vision to life. Rather than using a standalone symbol, the logo now proudly spells out Bowness Community Association, with a heart replacing the "O" in Bowness. The heart is more than a design element—it represents the people, connections, and sense of belonging that make Bowness such a special place to live, work, and gather.

B♥WNESS
C O M M U N I T Y
A S S O C I A T I O N

The heart also gives us flexibility to reflect the values and priorities of our community. While the logo often features a Pride heart to celebrate inclusion and belonging, it can also be adapted for other important occasions and initiatives. The heart may appear orange in recognition of Truth and Reconciliation, red for community campaigns, or in other colours that help share messages that matter to Bowness residents.

At its core, the new logo is a simple reminder that the BCA exists to serve the people of Bowness. By placing the heart directly within the name of our community, we're embracing our vision and celebrating what has always made Bowness strong: its heart.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

By: Shaun Heffel, Chair of Planning & Development Committee

Hi Bowness,

My name is Shaun Heffel, and I'm your new Chair for the BCA Planning and Development Committee (P&DC). My background is outlined on the BCA website, but in short: I began volunteering with the P&DC in 2023, became a voting member in 2024, and later served as secretary. In 2025, I joined the Board of Directors and was ratified that November. After long-serving Chair Jeff Riedl stepped down, I was nominated and accepted the role.

Many people ask why I chose to step into this position during such a volatile time for development in Bowness. Here's a short answer.

The City of Calgary website states that community associations "provide valued programs and services... advocate and represent their residents... and respond to community needs in partnership with The City." That mandate matters, especially when planning policies shift and community voices risk being overlooked.

A few years ago, I went to the central public library in search of the original 1995 Bowness Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP). The document wasn't available online, and no one I contacted had a copy. On the shelf, I found not only the ARP but also a 100-page companion volume, *Supporting Information to the Bowness Development Plan*, which contained the "Community Point of View." It detailed how residents, the BCA, and local businesses collaborated over four years to shape a community vision.

Yet in every ARP update leading up to 2018, this entire section went without revision. When the City introduced the Mainstreets policy in 2018, proposing amendments to the ARP and land-use bylaws, changes moved quickly through Calgary Planning Commission in January 2019 and Council in February 2019. The 100 pages of community-generated material were removed, and the updated ARP was repositioned so it no longer stood alone; it now "must be read in conjunction with" the Developed Areas Guidebook, a policy document shaping how City planning staff interpret density, built form, and redevelopment principles. Only four Bowness residents spoke at Council's public hearing that day. The video remains available online in the City archives.

This is why the BCA's role matters. The City routinely sends the BCA notifications about policy updates, engagement opportunities, land-use changes, development permits, and city-owned land sales, and requests meetings with Council and administration. The Board, committees, the Ward 1 Councillor, and our Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator all interact regularly.



Because the BCA is a key point of contact, it helps share information with residents and communicate community priorities to the City. That role is strongest when residents stay informed and involved.

The P&DC is not an exclusive group; it is an extension of Bowness. Its effectiveness depends entirely on resident participation. When only a few volunteers carry the work, our community becomes reactive. But when more residents lend their voices, we build the collective strength needed to proactively guide development and protect what makes Bowness unique.

I volunteer for that reason, and I hope many more will join us. Please explore the resources at the bottom of mybowness.com/planning-development/ and consider emailing planning@mybowness.ca to get involved.



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ACROSS THE BOARD

Building the Neighbourhood You Want

*By: Harv Matchullis, Board Member and Chair,
HR/Nominating Committee*

We moved to Bowness in 2021 because of the quality of life and sense of community that drew us in. We also knew from living in other communities across Canada and internationally that strong communities don't happen by accident—they happen because people choose to get involved.

Hundreds of you already do that. At the Bowness Community Association, we have at least 250 active volunteers on our list contributing in many ways. The truth is, there are many hundreds more helping shape our community through local associations, sports clubs, faith communities, schools, neighbourhood groups, and by simply being good neighbours. That collective involvement—whether recognized on a volunteer list or not—is what makes Bowness both liveable and loveable.

One volunteer opportunity that can seem intimidating at first but is incredibly important to the future of our community, is serving as a Board Member. It's not a role for everyone, but it is a role that benefits everyone.

Bowness has always been known for its strong sense of community. It's a place where people look out for one another, support local events, and take pride in their neighbourhood. The Bowness Community Association helps make many of those things happen—and it is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors.

What does a board member do?

The Board of Directors is collectively responsible for advancing the mission of the Bowness Community Association through strategic leadership, sound governance, and financial stewardship.

In practical terms, this means helping guide the long-term direction of the organization, approving budgets and major decisions, supporting membership growth, setting governance policies, overseeing the Executive Director, and ensuring the organization remains financially and legally responsible.

Board members are not responsible for running day-to-day operations. That's the role of BCA staff working under the Executive Director. Our role is governance and policy, all of which help to shape the future direction of the organization and community. Board service is voluntary and unpaid.

*News straight from the Bowness
Community Association Board of
Directors!*

What skills or experience do you need?

You don't need previous board experience or a background in community planning to get involved. Community association boards work best when they include people with different experiences, perspectives and skill sets, and who demonstrate an active commitment to community life.

Every contribution matters. Right now, we are especially interested in adding people with backgrounds in legal services and facility management, but above all, we're looking for people who want to contribute to the future of Bowness.

How much time does it take?

Our Board meets a minimum of 10 times per year, with meetings typically lasting 1.5–2 hours each. Board members also participate in committees or working groups focused on specific projects or priorities.

Beyond meetings, board members are encouraged to help support major community events throughout the year—events like Run Bowness, Holiday Dinner, and other community initiatives. This adds a few extra volunteer hours throughout the year, but it also creates opportunities to be boots-on-the-ground in the community and connect directly with residents. Yes, it is an active commitment—but it is also incredibly rewarding. Serving on the Board is an opportunity to help shape the future of the community while working alongside people who care deeply about Bowness.

Bowness is a special place, and its future will continue to be shaped by the people who choose to participate in whatever way they can.

If you'd like more information about becoming a volunteer board member, visit our website at mybowness.com/team and scroll down to "Board Nomination Process" to read more or scan the QR code below.

See you around the neighbourhood!



SCAN HERE

Thank You!

Issue 123
July/August 2026

Welcome to the 123rd issue of *The Bowest'ner*!

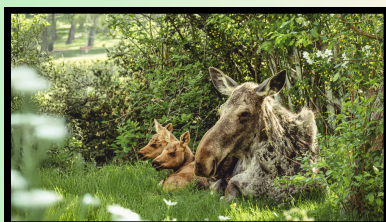
Thank you to all the runners, staff, and volunteers who helped make Run Bowness such a success this year.

Here are some of our favourite photos from the event.



Photos by Harsh Gulati

On the Cover:



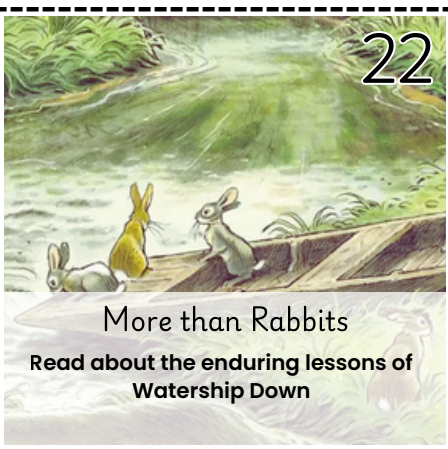
Bowness Moose Family
Photo by: Tasha Marie of After Exposure Studio



The Bowtanical Garden
"To dig or not to dig, that is the question"



In Defence of the Dandelion
Weeds or wildflowers?



More than Rabbits
Read about the enduring lessons of *Watership Down*



Saskatoon Season
Learn more about the saskatoon berry bushes in our community. Includes a saskatoon berry crumble bar recipe!

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BOWNESS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

At the Bowness Community Association, we believe the heart of a community is how it shows up for one another. We are proud to support our 2SLGBTQ+ neighbours and are committed to fostering a space where everyone feels safe, welcome, and respected. Community is strongest when people feel they belong—when differences are valued, and everyone is free to be themselves.

Whether you're joining us for a program, attending an event, volunteering, or simply stopping by, you are welcome here—exactly as you are.

We are always learning and working to do better. If you ever have an experience at the BCA that doesn't feel inclusive, we want to hear from you:
iheartbowness@mybowness.com



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BCA Events & Happenings

Events happening at the BCA and Arena | 7904 43rd Ave NW

Movie in the Park

Saturday August 22

Location: BCA Greenspace

No registration or fee required

Join us for an outdoor screening of the beloved 2008 Movie Musical Mamma Mia! There will be food trucks, and another feature film to be announced at a later date. This event is sponsored by Servus Credit Union and funded by the City of Calgary's Arts and Culture Microgrant.



Community Cookbook

Wednesday, July 22 | 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Location: BCA South Boardroom

Registration required: visit mybowness.com/hubs OR contact Clara Yuen at 403-370-7352

Come together to share recipes, food stories, and traditions to create a Community Cookbook. Each participant will contribute to the cookbook and take a copy home.



Wellbeing Series: Real Talk Workshop

Tuesday, August 25 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: BCA Community Room

Registration required: visit mybowness.com/hubs OR contact Clara Yuen at 403-370-7352

Learn how to recognize domestic abuse, understand its impact, respond to disclosures, and provide appropriate support and referrals.



Summer Skating Parties!

Friday, July 24 & August 28 | 4:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: BCA Arena

No registration or fee required

Join us for Summer Skating Parties—community evenings on the ice where you can cool down, connect with neighbours and skate your cares away. Skaters under 18 need a helmet to participate.



Lemonade, Conversation, & Craft

Every Friday from July 3 to August 28 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Location: BCA Community Room

No registration or fee required

Drop in to enjoy lemonade or coffee/tea, connect with neighbours, and work on your craft projects in a welcoming, relaxed space. Whether you knit, crochet, draw, or more, you're welcome to share & socialize with your community.



HoliGay Peanutbutter & Jamboree Summer Bonbon Bonanza Market

Saturday, July 25 | 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: BCA Main Hall

No registration or fee required

Join HoliGay Events YYC for a day of supporting amazing queer/ally artists and take in our fabulous vibe filled with love, laughter, groovy tunes, drag and a craft workshop.



Jewellery Making Workshop

Tuesday, July 28 | 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: BCA Community Room

Registration opens July 7

Join us for an evening of jewellery-making! We will be making beaded bracelets. Learn a fun skill and get connected with people in your community!



The City Resource Centre

Mondays & Wednesdays | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Tuesdays & Thursdays | 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Location: Through the main BCA doors, first door on the left

Chat directly with City staff about the BSFM project and get support during construction. Staff will be available to listen, answer questions, and share updates about the project.



Fall Book Club

Last Wednesday of each month | 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Location: The Landing at the BCA

No registration or fee required

This fall we will be reading Hyperion by Dan Simmons (September), The Best Laid Plans by Terry Fallis (October), & Red Notice by Bill Brower (November).



bowness

LIONS CLUB

*Call the Lions!
We're here to
help!*

contact:

daryl reinke

☎ 780.608.9884

✉ dwreinke@gmail.com

marilynne hall

✉ mrwhall@shaw.ca



*Do you have an idea
to enhance our
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BCA Drop-In Programs

These events take place at the Bowness Community Association (7904 43rd Ave NW)

Drop-In Skating Programs

The BCA offers drop-in skating for the community year round, but over the summer months we are excited to offer additional times this summer!

All programs are drop-in, no pre-registration required. Just show up, pay at the door (if applicable), and enjoy the ice.

For more info visit <https://mybowness.com/iceskating/>
For ice times visit : <https://mybowness.com/events/>

Public Skate

Enjoy a relaxed, open skate for all ages.

When: See calendar for full schedule

Where: BCA Arena (7904 43 Ave NW)

Cost: \$3 – Check the schedule for select free sessions!

Ages: All ages welcome (helmet required under 18)

Details: Bring your own skates; strollers permitted (wheels must be clean)



Adult Shinny

Drop in for adult shinny at the BCA Arena.

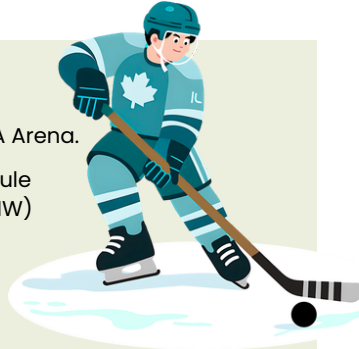
When: See calendar for full schedule

Where: BCA Arena (7904 43 Ave NW)

Cost: \$10 (pay at the door)

Ages: 16+

Details: Full gear required



Youth Shinny – New!

Join your friends for youth shinny at the BCA Arena.

When: See calendar for full schedule

Where: BCA Arena (7904 43 Ave NW)

Cost: \$10 (pay at the door)

Ages: 13–16

Details: Full gear required



Drop-In Figure Skating

A space to practice skills, routines, or enjoy time on the ice.

When: Mondays, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Where: BCA Arena (7904 43 Ave NW)

Cost: \$10

Details: Must be able to skate; bring your own skates; helmets required under 18



Stick & Puck

Work on your shot or enjoy some ice time in a relaxed setting.

When: Fridays, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Where: BCA Arena (7904 43 Ave NW)

Cost: \$5

Ages: All ages welcome (helmet required under 18)

Details: Must be able to skate and handle a stick; no game play or contact



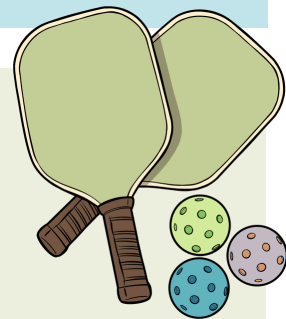
Drop-In Pickleball

Drop in play is open to anyone, beginner friendly, open play pickleball. Bring your own racket, all levels are welcome, games are not structured.

Currently Drop-In Play times:

- **Monday** 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- **Thursdays** 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

To register visit: <https://mybowness.com/pickleball/>



BCA Holiday Craft Fair – Vendor Applications are Open!

Vendor applications have opened for the BCA's annual Holiday Craft Fair—**scan the QR code to register:**

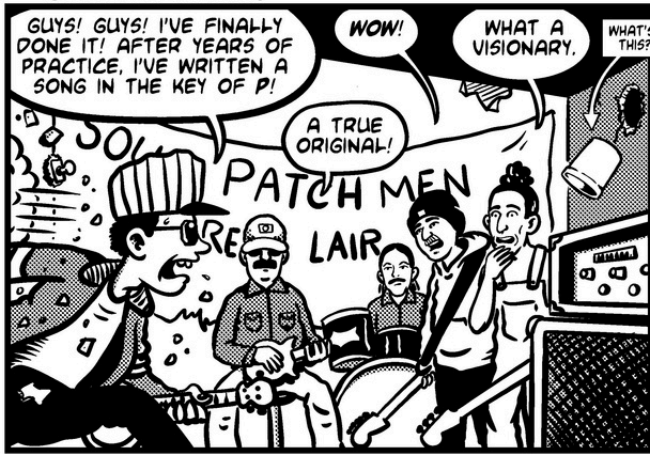
The Bowness Holiday Craft Fair prioritizes local vendors and handmade items. Vendors will be chosen based on product offerings, diversity, quality, and uniqueness of their product.

Questions about the event or registration can be sent to craftfair@mybowness.com

SCAN ME!



SOUR PATCH MEN!



The Sour Patch Men's new album *4/4 Waltzes* coming out summer 2026!

Bowness Community Events & Happenings

These events happen within the community of Bowness and NOT at the BCA

The Community of Bowness

Bowness is a vibrant, tight-knit community in Calgary with deep roots and a strong sense of local pride. Nestled along the Bow River, it blends natural beauty with a rich history, an independent spirit, and a welcoming, small-town feel—brought to life through a wide range of local events that bring neighbours together all year round.



Bowness Stampede Parade & Breakfast

Saturday, July 4 | Breakfast: 7:00 AM – 11:00 AM | Parade starts at 9:00 AM

No registration or fee required

Breakfast in the parking lot of the 'Bowness Mall'. Come enjoy some pancakes, live music & the community spirit. The Parade will start at the Shouldice/Hextall Bridge entrance into Bowness. It will continue down Bowness Road, and will end at the intersection of 79th Street & Bowness Road NW. Bring your lawn chairs, or sit on the curb to enjoy this traditional small town style parade.

For more info: www.bownesshall.com/stampedeparade



Mainstreet's Critters & Cowboys Stampede Party

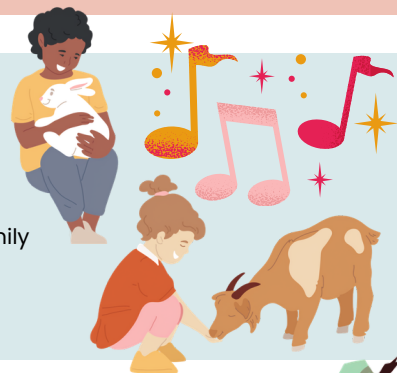
Saturday, July 11 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Location: Mainstreet Bowness – corner of Bowness Rd and 63 St.

No registration required

Join us for Mainstreet's Critters & Cowboys Stampede Party for a rootin'–tootin' afternoon of family fun! Bring the whole family, support local businesses, and celebrate Stampede with us!

Petting Zoo, Live Music, Crafts, and Giveaways!



Tour de Bowness Race & Festival

Monday, August 3 | 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: Mainstreet Bowness

Hosted by the Mainstreet Bowness Business Improvement Area (BIA) and Bow Cycle. A thrilling day of bike racing and street festivities. Whether you're a cyclist enthusiast or a frequent market goer, there is fun for the whole family! Bike races, street performers, live music, interactive games, 100+ Vendors, food trucks, & outdoor Patios.

For more info: www.tourdebowness.com



Neighbourhood Grant (starts September 1, 2026)

Do you live in Bowness, Montgomery, or Greenwood Village?

Small actions can make big impacts. The City of Calgary Neighbourhood Grant helps residents take action towards building inclusive neighbourhoods. Grants up to \$1000 are provided for or neighbourhood activities that focus on Social Inclusion, Economic Participation, Anti-Racism, and Truth & Reconciliation.

For more info: www-prd.calgary.ca/communities/grant-programs or contact **Clara Yuen** at clara.yuen@calgary.ca



Awaken Gardens!

Inside the Awaken Garden Collective

By: Chris Clark, Lead Pastor, Awaken Church

Twenty years ago, a small idea took root in Bowness.

What began as a way for a local church to be present in the neighbourhood and connect with its neighbours has grown, season by season, into something quietly beautiful: the Awaken Garden Collective, a community garden rooted in food, friendship, and care for the land.

The Awaken Garden Collective was founded with a vision of promoting soil health, food security, and community cohesion in Bowness and the surrounding Greenwood area. Those values continue to shape the garden today.



At its heart, the garden is practical. Gardeners grow food for both themselves and those who rely on the community's common cupboard. The focus tends to be on staple crops that can meaningfully feed people: potatoes, garlic, beans, peas, carrots, beets, broccoli, and tomatoes. But there is also room for experimentation and curiosity. If gardeners want to try growing something different, there is space for that, too.

We place a strong emphasis on soil health. Gardeners learn together about nurturing soil, growing sustainably, and working with the rhythms of the land rather than against them.



Community is at the heart of everything we do, and what better way to build community than through a community garden?

It's a kind of magic, working side by side with strangers who become familiar faces. When you get involved, this communal gardening experience creates space for conversation and incredible relationships built over watering cans and hard-earned tomatoes.

Don't think you have to be a seasoned pro, though. There are all kinds of different levels of gardeners, and beginners are most welcome. Actually, the Collective welcomes anyone who lives in Bowness or Greenwood, or anyone meaningfully invested in the neighbourhood, whether through work, volunteering, school, or participation in a local faith community.

And involvement can look however it needs to look. Maybe it's showing up for a single workday. Maybe it's becoming a regular helper. Maybe it's simply learning what grows in Calgary soil and sharing stories with neighbours.

This season, regular work days are every other Wednesday and Friday—please jump in at any time!

There's something hopeful about neighbours growing potatoes together. Community begins with something as simple as putting your hands in the dirt.

Email awakencommunitygarden@gmail.com to learn more or get involved!

Hi Bowness!

By: Calgary Tree Care Team

As a local, family-owned arboriculture company, Calgary Tree Care is grateful for the opportunity to work with homeowners throughout Calgary and the surrounding communities. Trees are an essential feature of our neighbourhoods. They provide shade, privacy, and help define the character of the places we call home. Caring for them is a responsibility we take seriously.

Our team brings more than 15 years of arboricultural experience to every project, from routine pruning and tree health assessments to storm damage response and removals. While every property is different, our approach remains the same: provide honest advice and perform quality work.

We feel fortunate to spend our days working outdoors and helping residents make informed decisions about the trees on their properties. Thank you to the homeowners, communities, and local businesses who continue to support Calgary Tree Care.

The Bowtanical Garden

"To Dig or Not to Dig, That Is the Question"

By: Beverley Sheridan



It started out as one of those perfectly pleasant conversations gardeners have over coffee. We've all had them: discussing tomatoes as if they were our children, who grew the biggest zucchini, and whether we'll get enough rain this season.

Then my friend asked if I still practiced no-dig gardening. "Yes," I replied, "and I encourage others to try it out." What followed was a debate that went from friendly discussion to courtroom cross-examination.

The thing about gardening is that we usually spend most of our time admiring or cursing what happens above ground. We fuss over our favourite blooms, celebrate the pounds of potatoes we harvested, and plot the capture and removal of every squirrel in the neighbourhood. What we forget, however, is that half of the action is under our feet. Soil is not just "dirt." It's an entire underground city composed of billions of microorganisms, fungi, insects, worms, and numerous other tiny creatures that are working around the clock to recycle and deliver nutrients to plants, improve soil texture, and create passageways through which water can flow. You might say that they are the real gardeners, and we just get the credit for all their hard work.

I can remember my father, armed with a shovel and garden fork, taking part each spring in the ritual of digging, turning, and generally attacking the earth in our back garden. My sense was that the garden was not properly prepared for a new season until the soil had been flipped upside down, broken apart, and beaten into submission. Fortunately for all those subterranean creatures, the idea of no-dig, no-till gardening has gradually gained popularity over several decades. The no-dig philosophy argues that every time we till or dig deeply, we significantly disrupt that underground community that is doing the heavy lifting for us.



The idea itself is not new, as Nature has been doing it for millions of years without asking anyone to sharpen a spade. Forest floors are not rototilled by squads of determined squirrels, though I suspect the ones that terrorize every new planting in my garden could likely take on that job without much effort. Organic matter, mostly in the form of leaves, falls to the ground, breaks down, feeds the soil, and life carries on. No-dig advocates, and I include myself among their ranks, argue that excessive digging disrupts these natural systems and is likely causing more damage than benefit. Turning soil can break apart fungal networks, expose microorganisms to conditions they dislike, break up small water channels, and bring dormant weed seeds to the surface. Those seeds quickly germinate and become your new problem—and yes, they will.

Luckily, it's easy for home gardeners to support the diverse community in our soil and directly help produce healthy plants without using a shovel. The vast majority of soil-dwelling organisms live in the top few centimetres of soil. By mimicking nature's recycling strategy, we can help them thrive—just add organic debris to the soil surface and let the underground herd break it down. This can be added in the form of composted animal manures or shredded/chopped plant matter. As readers of this column know, I am a huge advocate for mulch in my garden: leaves, shredded bark, wood chips, grass clippings, chopped straw, anything I can get my hands on and preferably not have to pull out my wallet for. It always amazes me how quickly a new four-inch top dressing of mulch disappears. I guess the soil creatures know what they are doing.

No-dig gardens can also improve moisture retention because undisturbed soil helps water move and stay where the plants need it. During our regular Calgary dry spells, this can mean a lot less watering and healthier plants. Better soil structure also helps improve drainage, and if you have lots of clay in your garden soil, you know what lack of drainage can do. Being the lazy gardener that I am, the no-dig concept gives me a scientifically sound excuse to do less work, and my back and knees are very appreciative.

No-dig gardening does not mean never disturbing the soil under any circumstances. When planting new trees and shrubs, creating new flower beds, or dealing with severely compacted ground, some digging remains necessary. Simply placing a new seedling on the top of the soil will not result in anything but a dead seedling in a few hours. Like many things in life, no-dig is a philosophy rather than an absolute rule. There is definitely something appealing about allowing nature to do more of the work and, for me, understanding that success comes from not controlling every detail but from cooperating with processes that already exist.

A Bite of History

Fire, Food, and BBQ

By: Chef Emad H, Owner of Flame & Bite

Picture a warm July afternoon in Bowness. The sun hangs bright above the Bow River, children laugh in nearby yards, and music drifts softly through the neighbourhood like a passing breeze. Beside a barbecue grill, a homeowner tends a sizzling steak. Flames flicker beneath the grates, and the scent of grilled beef rises into the air, wrapping the backyard in a familiar summer spell. Family and friends gather nearby, trading stories and laughter while waiting for dinner.

Now imagine that same scene unfolding thousands of kilometres away.

In the deserts of the Middle East, a family gathers around a goat slowly roasting over glowing coals beneath a sky crowded with stars. In Argentina, gauchos prepare an asado over wood embers, letting time and smoke work their quiet magic. In South Africa, families come together for a braai. In Korea, diners cook marinated meats over tabletop grills, each bite carrying the flavour of fire and gathering. Across North America, pitmasters spend long hours tending smokers filled with brisket, ribs, and pork.

Different cultures. Different landscapes. Different flavours. Yet all of them are joined by one ancient force: fire.

Barbecue is one of humanity's oldest cooking traditions. Long before ovens, modern kitchens, or written history, our ancestors discovered that fire could transform food into something safer, richer, and more nourishing. Anthropologists believe early humans began cooking with fire hundreds of thousands of years ago. What started as necessity gradually became tradition, then ritual, then culture.

As civilizations grew, so did the many forms of barbecue. Some roasted meat on spits. Some cooked in underground pits. Others learned to smoke food, not only to preserve it but also to deepen its flavour. The woods, spices, animals, and landscapes of each region shaped the traditions that followed. In the southern United States, pitmasters may swear by hickory or mesquite. Here in Alberta, ranching roots have helped make Alberta beef famous around the world. From backyard grills in Calgary to ranch cookouts across the Prairies, barbecue remains woven into the rhythm of local life.

Even the word itself carries a fascinating journey. "Barbecue" is believed to come from "barbacoa," a term used by Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean for a wooden framework used to cook meat over fire. European explorers later adopted the word, and it travelled across oceans and continents, evolving as it encountered new cultures and traditions.

Today, barbecue means many things. For some, it is the taste of summer in a backyard near Bowness Park. For others, it is a family tradition passed down through generations like a treasured recipe card. But wherever it appears, barbecue still speaks the same language: the language of fire, food, and community.

So the next time you light a grill in Bowness, watch the smoke rise into the Alberta sky and remember that you are part of something far older than summer itself. The flames beneath your steak once warmed ancient campsites, fed early communities, and brought people together across generations and continents.

From ancient campfires to modern backyard barbecues, the story remains remarkably unchanged. One fire. One meal. One human story.

And in this issue, my traditional Egyptian kofta (kebab) recipe (on pg. 24) adds one more flavorful chapter to that story.

The Importance of Gardening in the Community

By: Bowness Seniors' Centre

In a world that moves faster every year, gardening offers something very valuable. It gives us a reason to slow down and reconnect with nature, with our food, and with our community. Whether it's a few herbs on a windowsill, backyard flowers, or a shared community garden, growing plants helps people get outside and reconnect with the things that are truly important in life.

Gardening supports physical and mental health by

encouraging activity and reducing stress. Environmentally, gardens support pollinators, reduce food transportation, and promote more sustainable habits such as composting.

Most importantly, gardening brings us together. Community gardens create shared spaces where neighbours of all ages can learn, build relationships, and take pride in caring for the place they call home.

No matter the size, every garden helps make our community greener, healthier, and more connected.



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☎ (403) 286-4488

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GRAND OPENING

COMMUNITY GARDEN

**BBQ &
BAKE SALE**



DATE:

Saturday, August 29

TIME:

Grand Opening: 11:00 AM

BBQ: 12:30 PM

LOCATION:

**6422 35 Ave NW,
Calgary, AB T3B 1S6**

4610 Bowness Road NW

011 0110 1010 1010 1010 1010

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Join us this summer to celebrate the opening of our community garden! The celebration will involve a ribbon cutting and entertainment including music and dancing.

BBQ is \$7.00/meal and there will be a bake sale as well!

We hope to make this a community event, perfect for the whole family. See you there!

In Defence of the Dandelion

The Surprising Benefits of One of Nature's Most Misunderstood Plants

By: Zoë Decker

Every spring, bright yellow dandelions burst across lawns, parks, sidewalks, and empty lots. To some people, they are a cheerful sign that warmer days have finally arrived. To others, they are one of the most hated weeds in North America. Few plants create as much debate as the humble dandelion.

The controversy around dandelions largely comes from the modern obsession with the "perfect lawn." For decades, people have been encouraged to keep lawns uniform, green, and free of weeds. Dandelions spread quickly and are incredibly resilient, making them frustrating for homeowners who want pristine grass. Their fluffy seed heads can travel long distances in the wind, meaning they seem to appear overnight no matter how often they are removed.

But while dandelions may be unpopular in manicured lawns, they provide surprising environmental benefits. One of the biggest advantages is that they are among the earliest blooming flowers in spring. In places like Calgary and Bowness, where winters are long and cold, pollinators such as bees often emerge before many native plants begin flowering. Dandelions provide an important early food source rich in pollen and nectar when little else is available.

Their deep taproots also help loosen compacted soil and bring nutrients closer to the surface. As dandelions die and decompose, those nutrients become available to surrounding plants. In this way, dandelions quietly help improve soil health. Dandelions are also entirely edible. Their leaves, flowers, and roots have been used for centuries in teas, salads, medicines, and even wine. Long before they were considered weeds, they were valued as useful plants brought to North America by European settlers.

Perhaps the biggest reason to reconsider dandelions is what their presence says about our relationship with nature. A lawn filled with nothing but grass offers little support for insects or biodiversity. Allowing some dandelions to grow creates small pockets of habitat and food for pollinators struggling in increasingly urban environments.

The next time a patch of yellow appears in your yard, it may be worth asking: are dandelions really weeds, or are they simply wildflowers growing exactly where nature intended?



Photo by Tasha Marie



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Run Bowness Results

Photos by Harsh Gulati. Instagram: [_harshgulati13](#)

Kids' Mile

- 1 Christian Kielbasinski | 6:48.7
- 2 Waylon Risling | 6:51.5
- 3 Archer Lunse | 6:52.4

5K Non-Binary

- 1 Peirce Ackroyd | 24:33.7

5K Women

- 1 Stephanie Fraser | 15:37.6
- 2 Breanne Everett | 16:05.8
- 3 Allegra Rushford | 16:45.7
- 3 Aarin McNeil | 16:45.7

5K Men

- 1 Calder Watrich | 14:44.3
- 2 James Major | 16:09.4
- 3 Robbie Black | 16:33.9

10K Women

- 1 Fiona Weiler | 38:28.2
- 2 Mirka Navratilova | 40:59.6
- 3 Annika Richardson | 42:57.6

10K Men

- 1 Austin Jones | 34:45.9
- 2 Michele Bertelli | 35:00.9
- 3 Mark Fewster | 39:43.5





Money Made SIMPLE

By: Tietje White

Saving and Investing
for Your Future



Saving and investing are where your day-to-day money habits begin building something bigger. If a spending plan helps you manage your present, saving and investing help you care for your future.

For many Canadians, this step can feel intimidating. There are new terms, unfamiliar accounts, and a sense that you need to 'know more' before getting started. But you don't need to have everything figured out before beginning—a few simple concepts can go a long way.

In earlier articles, we looked at understanding your financial starting point, creating a spending plan, and using credit more intentionally. Here, we're building on that foundation.

IMPORTANT

Quick note about me: I'm a recently retired midwife who now enjoys helping people with their personal finances as a certified financial coach. Having navigated my own bumpy road to financial independence, I hope to make the process more approachable and less intimidating for others.

Start With Saving: Your Safety Net

Before investing, it helps to have some money set aside for the unexpected in an emergency fund. It's there for things like:

- Car repairs
- Medical expenses
- Changes in income

A common guideline is three to six months of essential expenses, though that can take time to build. Starting with even \$500 or \$1,000 can make a difference.

Why Investing Matters

Saving helps protect your money and keeps it accessible, but over time, inflation gradually reduces its purchasing power.

The key advantage of investing comes from compounding: your money earns returns, and then those returns begin earning returns of their own.

Over time, this can create meaningful growth—even with modest, consistent contributions.

Scan to check out the Wealthsimple
TFSA RRSP FHSA Flowchart



Understanding a Few Key Canadian Accounts

Canada offers several accounts that make saving and investing more efficient from a tax perspective.

TFSA (Tax-Free Savings Account)

A flexible account where investment growth and withdrawals are tax-free. It can be used for both short- and long-term goals.

RRSP (Registered Retirement Savings Plan)

Designed for retirement. Contributions reduce your taxable income, and investments grow tax-deferred. Withdrawals are taxed later, often at a lower rate.

FHSA (First Home Savings Account)

For first-time homebuyers. Contributions are tax-deductible, and withdrawals for a home purchase are tax-free.

Looking for help choosing the right account? Try this online decision tree: [Wealthsimple TFSA RRSP FHSA Flowchart](#)

Keeping it Simple

You don't need to pick individual stocks or follow the market closely to get started. Many people begin with simple, diversified options like index funds or all-in-one ETFs. Robo-advisors are another reliable option that can manage investments for you at low cost.

What matters most is making a start and consistency—not perfection.

Your Takeaway

Choose one small step this week:

- Open or review a TFSA
- Spend some time learning about one type of account or investment platform
- Set up an automatic savings or investment contribution

Saving and investing are long-term habits, and the best time to start is now. Your future self will thank you! With time, consistency, and a bit of curiosity, these habits can become a steady source of confidence, flexibility and meaningful financial progress.

Next time, we'll look at planning for bigger goals—like retirement, a home, or education—and how to connect your everyday choices to your long-term plans.

Questions or feedback? Feel free to reach out:
tietjewhite@gmail.com

Awaken The Gems

From Trade Shows to Mainstreet Bowness

By: Zoë Decker

When Shauna Vowel opened Awaken The Gems on Bowness Mainstreet, it was about more than crystals and collectibles—it was about creating a place where people feel welcome.

For many years, Vowel operated Awaken The Gems through trade shows and events across Western Canada, building relationships with customers and communities along the way. Before entering the retail world, she worked in social work, an experience that shaped her belief in the importance of connection, listening, and creating spaces where people feel accepted.

“Opening a storefront gave me the opportunity to combine my passion for rocks, minerals, fossils, and unique treasures with something equally important to me: community,” says Vowel.

That community focus is evident the moment visitors step through the door. While the shop is known for its crystals, minerals, fossils, jewelry, and metaphysical products, it also offers an eclectic mix of collectibles, books, artisan-made goods, Hot Wheels, Funko Pops, vintage treasures, games, and home décor. The result is a space that feels part crystal shop, part gift store, part curiosity shop, and part community hub. Bowness was a natural fit for the business.



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BOWNESS MEN'S SHED

CONNECT • SHARE • CONTRIBUTE

Men's Shed is joining the Bowness Stampede Parade!

Keep an eye out for our banners and say “Hi!” to the guys handing out info along the route.

We've got a launch event coming up soon, along with some great hands-on projects you can get involved in.

Learn more on our Facebook page: @bownessmensshed or email us at mensshed.bowness@gmail.com.

Harv, Curtis, Carey & Tom

BOWNESS STAMPEDE PARADE AND BREAKFAST RETURNS JULY 4!

One of Bowness's most cherished summer traditions is set to return on Saturday, July 4, 2026, as the community celebrates the 35th Annual Bowness Stampede Parade and Breakfast.

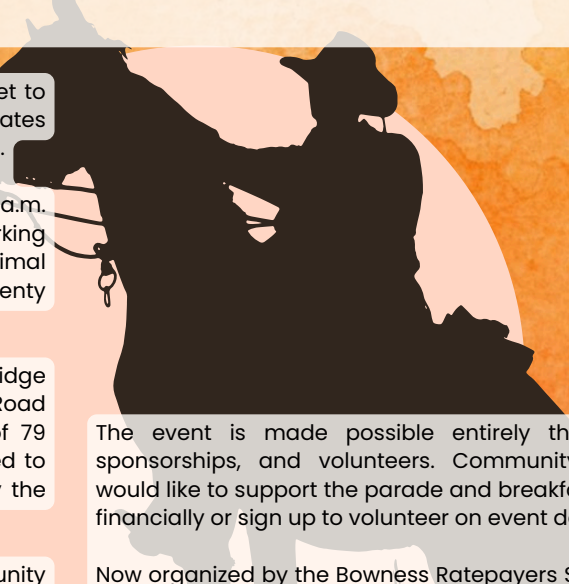
The day begins with a free pancake breakfast from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (while supplies last) in the Bowness Mall parking lot, home to Bowness Pub, 7-Eleven, and Bowness Animal Hospital. Residents can enjoy pancakes, live music, and plenty of community spirit before the parade begins.

The parade starts at 9:00 a.m. at the Shouldice/Hextall Bridge entrance into Bowness and travels along Bowness Road through Mainstreet before ending at the intersection of 79 Street and Bowness Road NW. Spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or find a spot along the curb to enjoy the small-town-style celebration.

Participation in the parade is free, and businesses, community organizations, clubs, families, and groups are all welcome to register a float. Organizers ask that entries remain family-friendly and community-focused.

The event is made possible entirely through donations, sponsorships, and volunteers. Community members who would like to support the parade and breakfast can contribute financially or sign up to volunteer on event day.

Now organized by the Bowness Ratepayers Scout & Guide Hall Association, the parade and breakfast continue a 35-year tradition of bringing the community together to celebrate Stampede season in true Bowness fashion.





NESSIES

★ BCA Annual Volunteer Awards ★



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A Message from The BRFM

By: Patti Gutek, BRFM Member

Flood mitigation and land use bylaws have been hot topics at provincial and municipal levels lately.

In May 2025, Alberta updated provincial flood hazard maps. In response to this update, City administration is proposing changes to land use bylaws for properties within flood zones.

Will this affect you?

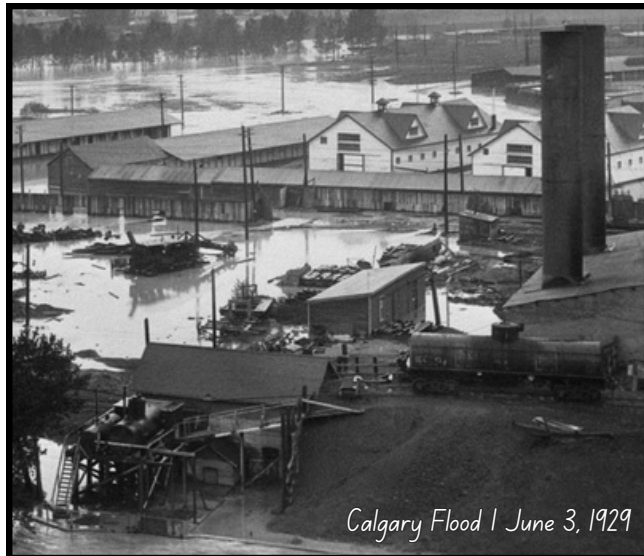
It could—large areas of Bowness fall within various flood zones and each zone has restrictions under the proposed bylaws. Approximately 400 homes just within the High Hazard and Flood Fringe alone, many of those blocks away from the river.

What bylaw changes are proposed?

The restrictions depend upon which zone the property is in. Some of the restrictions include:

- no new buildings except on existing footprints is the exception of new buildings on empty lots with specific requirements (High Hazard);
- no subdivision or increase in dwelling units (a bungalow cannot become a duplex) (High Hazard);
- no new "occupied spaces" below flood levels including, basements, bedrooms, living spaces, kitchens, etc. (Flood Fringe and High Hazard);
- no basement secondary suites (Flood Fringe and High Hazard);
- In new builds, or additions with a >75% increase to the gross floor area, there are regulations around restricting windows, building entrances and building envelope penetrations below flood levels (all zones)

The above are just a few examples of the potential bylaw changes. It is important to refer to the proposed bylaw for a full understanding of all the restrictions and requirements for new buildings as well as various sized renovations and the different flood zones.



Is this really a big deal?

In some circumstances these changes may have a negative effect on property values. In certain areas the footprint of small bungalows cannot be expanded or single homes cannot be redeveloped into duplexes and large lots cannot be subdivided. Imagine the potential possible reduction in property value that one may have been relying on to fund their retirement.

Is this necessary?

The Bowness Responsible Flood Mitigation Society ("BRFM") has serious concerns with the proposed restrictions as well as the lack of community engagement so far.

On April 15, 2026, BRFM and community members presented to City Council's Infrastructure and Planning Committee. A vote was passed to recommend City Council direct the bylaw update project be taken back to the community for more engagement before the issue returns to the Committee (in Q4 of 2026).

As a result, the City project team has shared that targeted engagement will begin in September 2026. As this may have a significant impact to you or your neighbours, it is important to get informed. BRFM's updated website has background info, links to resources including how to find your flood zone, concerns to consider, and more, which can be found at bownessrfm.ca

What is BRFM's position, in a nutshell?

1. BRFM believes the true solution is to keep the water out of the City with upstream mitigation, limiting the Bow River's flow rate to 800 m³/s (eliminating the need for most building restrictions).
2. Any building restrictions put in place to protect the community should be necessary, sound and fair – based on engineering data that is location specific, not blanket changes without a proven need for restriction.
3. BRFM does not support government overreach through restrictions aimed at protecting personal property; that's for owners to decide.

For more details on the City's proposed changes, see BRFM's website as well as the Calgary River Valleys Project website. And get involved in community engagement to be sure you're heard!

 bownessrfm.ca
 info@bownessrfm.ca

A response from City of Calgary
on page 27

A Note from the BCA:

The Bowness Community Association (BCA) supports equitable flood protection for all Calgary neighbourhoods in the river valley. We maintain a neutral position on specific flood mitigation options and encourage all Bownesians to do their research in this area. As we do with all matters of planning and development, we encourage residents to seek out reputable information on project proposals and make their voices heard to the City of Calgary.

More Than Rabbits

The Enduring Lessons of Watership Down

By: Zoë Decker & Lynn Hauer

Richard Adams' *Watership Down* is often remembered as a story about rabbits fleeing danger in search of a new home, but beneath its pastoral surface lies a profound meditation on community, survival, and the cost of change. Though populated by animals, the novel wrestles with deeply human questions: what makes a place worth protecting, how communities respond to outside pressures, and whether growth can exist without losing identity. More than fifty years after its publication, it remains a remarkable and deeply relevant classic that readers should absolutely revisit—or discover for the first time.

Throughout their travels, the rabbits encounter communities that have responded to danger in very different ways. Some trade freedom for security, while others survive through fear and strict control. In contrast, Hazel and his companions attempt something far more difficult: creating a community built on trust, cooperation, and mutual responsibility. Leadership in *Watership Down* is portrayed not as domination, but as stewardship and care.

The natural world itself also becomes a character within the novel. Fields, rivers, hillsides, and quiet spaces are described

with immense affection and reverence. Adams reminds readers that landscapes are not empty backdrops, but living places filled with memory, identity, and meaning.

Ultimately, *Watership Down* endures because it balances sorrow with hope. It is a story about resilience, friendship, and the difficult task of carrying forward the values that matter most during times of change. For anyone who loves stories about community, belonging, and the ties between people and place, this classic novel is well worth reading.



Source: *Watership Down - The Graphic Novel*

Illustration by James Sturm and Joe Sutphin

At the centre of the novel is a memorable cast of characters, each representing different strengths needed for a healthy community to survive. Hazel, the quiet and thoughtful leader, succeeds not through force but through empathy, collaboration, and practical wisdom. Fiver, his smaller and fragile brother, is guided by instinct and intuition, sensing danger before others can see it. Bigwig embodies courage and determination, while Blackberry's creativity and problem-solving help the rabbits adapt to unfamiliar challenges. Together, the rabbits succeed not because they are individually powerful, but because they rely on one another's unique abilities.

The story begins with displacement. After Fiver senses catastrophe approaching their home warren, a small group leaves behind everything familiar and journeys into an uncertain landscape. Their search is not simply for shelter, but for a place where they can preserve a way of life rooted in connection, safety, and belonging. Adams captures the grief that comes when beloved landscapes disappear, especially when change happens quickly and without consideration for the creatures already living there.

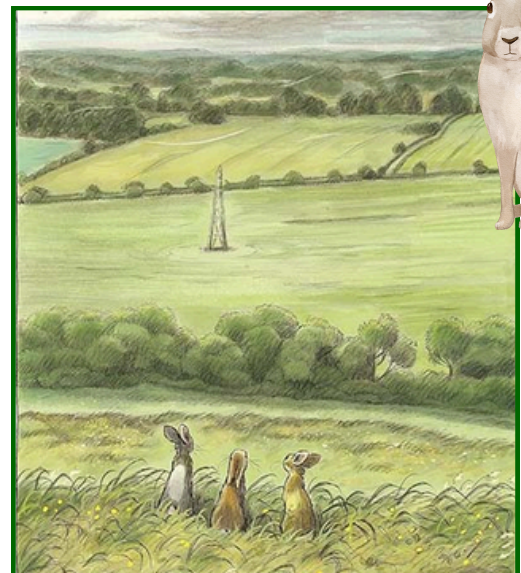


Illustration by James Sturm and Joe Sutphin



Moose Sighting

The Artist Behind the Front Cover

By: Zoë Decker

The stunning photograph featured on this month's cover—a mother moose and her two calves taking refuge in a Bowness backyard—is the work of local photographer Tasha Marie, a talented artist who has called Bowness home for more than eight years.

Born and raised in Calgary, Tasha is both a commercial and landscape photographer with a Bachelor of Design from the Alberta University of the Arts. In 2022, she and fellow photographer Jay Chrohm launched After Exposure Studio, a commercial photography studio located right in the heart of Bowness. Together, they have built a reputation for creating high-quality advertising, branding, and product photography for clients across Alberta and beyond.

While much of her professional work focuses on commercial photography, Tasha's passion for the natural world shines through in her landscape and wildlife photography. Living so close to nature in Bowness provides endless inspiration, and encounters with wildlife—including coyotes, bobcats, and the occasional moose—are part of what makes the community so special to her.



When she's not behind the camera, Tasha enjoys exploring Alberta's landscapes, gardening, crocheting, and spending time outdoors with her partner and young daughter.

The beautiful cover image is just one example of the incredible artistic talent that exists within our community. In fact, readers may recognize several of Tasha's photographs scattered throughout this issue of The Bowest'ner.

Learn more at afterexposurestudio.com or follow Tasha (@teapalm), Jay (@jay_chrohm), and After Exposure Studio (@after.exposure) on Instagram.



Reliquary Cards

By: Nicholas Scurfield

Since 2021, Bowness Arts has been growing as one of the newest businesses in our beautiful neighbourhood. Starting as a used book and music shop, we've constantly followed the demands of our customers to become what they needed most. Our first expansion into selling board games came during our first Christmas season in 2022, which gave me a strong signal about our customers' interests. The following year, the opportunity to move into the main floor of the building gave us the space to fully commit. Bowness Arts quickly grew into one of Calgary's largest game stores. We came to specialize in trading card games like Magic: The Gathering and Pokémon, hosting daily tournaments and attracting attendance that rivals the other major card shops in Alberta.

Bowness Arts had become a trading card store. While we still sell books and vinyl records, our primary client base is overwhelmingly made up of Magic players. Our original name was meant to signal arts of all varieties, from literature and

music to the literal art gallery on the main floor. The gallery hall had become our gaming and tournament room, and our non-game sales were stagnating. We had to make a change for the better. I spent time brainstorming ideas with my staff, designed our new logo and brand identity, and prepared for our big announcement.

Introducing Reliquary Cards! Now, the vast majority of our customers know what to expect when they walk in. We also launched a new website at reliquary.cards for the sole purpose of selling Magic cards online. With these changes, our sales have been growing faster than ever.

I plan to continue growing Reliquary Cards. We are buying collections of Magic cards from the public to expand our inventory at an increased rate, and we will soon expand into national online sales and buylisting. My hope is that soon, when people think of Magic: The Gathering in Canada, they will think of Reliquary Cards.

Questing Beast, illustrated by Omar Rayyan

Chef Emad's Traditional Egyptian Kofta (Kebab)

Ingredients:

- 1 kg medium ground beef
- 1 large onion, grated
- 1 cup parsley, finely chopped
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp allspice



Instructions:

- Grate the onion and squeeze out the juice, reserving it for later.
- Mix the beef, onion, parsley, salt, pepper, and allspice.
- Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
- Using the reserved onion juice to wet your hands, shape the mixture around metal skewers. **If using wooden skewers, soak them overnight in water.
- Grill over medium-high heat for 8-10 minutes, turning occasionally, until cooked through.
- Serve with pita bread, grilled onions, tomatoes, and tahini sauce.

Chef's Tips:

- Shape the kofta into thin, even skewers for the best results.
- A little ground lamb mixed with the beef adds extra flavour.
- Great Egyptian kofta is all about good meat, fresh parsley, onion, and the smoky flavor of the grill.

SPOOKY SEASON, BOWNESS STYLE

Two Bowness Events on Their Way to Becoming Annual Traditions

By: Holly Kerr

The women of Bowness held a fun event last October that they plan to bring back again this fall: the Bowness Witches' Walk. Think of it as a pub crawl with witch costumes.

The goal of this hopefully annual event is to bring people together while supporting the beloved businesses along Bowness Road. Attendees dress up in any style of witch attire—whether you go all out or keep it simple—to celebrate the fall season and an early Halloween. Friends are welcome, and participants do not need to be Bowness residents.

As they visit participating businesses along Bowness Road, the witches travel from one establishment to the next, enjoying refreshments and good company. Leopold's Tavern, Salt & Pepper, Brewsmith's, and Mikey's Juke Joint all welcomed the witches during the inaugural event, with some offering special spooky libations and staff joining in the fun by dressing up as well. Beginning in the late afternoon and continuing into the early evening, the event is pay-as-you-go, allowing participants to enjoy food, snacks, alcoholic beverages, or non-alcoholic drinks at their own pace.

"The Bowness Witches' Walk is a great opportunity for people who like to dress in their evil finery, make some friends, celebrate the season, and support the local businesses of Bowness. We know the businesses in Bowness work hard to make our community one of the best in Calgary; we want to show our appreciation and support them in a creative way," says Bowness resident Terry Fullerton.

The organizers plan to make the Witches' Walk an annual tradition and will announce the date for the 2026 event soon.



This same group of Bowness residents also launched some spectacular scarecrow displays in their front yards last fall, from October 1 to November 1, and they hope even more residents will participate this year.

The Scarecrows of Bowness initiative is all about fostering community spirit and bringing a little extra joy to the neighbourhood.

"Scarecrows can be easy to make—using some wood, straw, old clothes, and a hat. Watching people stop to admire these creations brings smiles to everyone and inspires return visits and photo opportunities from walkers and cyclists alike," says Bowness resident Betty Jacobs.

There are countless examples and do-it-yourself ideas available online. Straw can be found at most garden centres, and many participants stuff their scarecrows with items such as empty plastic pop bottles and bags before adding a layer of straw for the finishing effect.

All Bowness residents are invited to take part in this fun, creative, and community-building activity.





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Flood Risk and Land Use in Bowness: An Update from The City of Calgary

The City of Calgary is updating the Land Use Bylaw to ensure planning decisions reflect current flood risk, recent flood mapping, and significant investments in flood mitigation. These updates aim to support long-term safety and resilience in river communities such as Bowness.

After reviewing the proposed Land Use Bylaw updates in April, City Council requested additional engagement with affected communities.

We appreciate the time and extensive input shared by residents and community groups to date. Previous engagement, including in-person sessions, online events, surveys, and targeted outreach, helped shape the proposed approach and next steps.

Understanding Flood Risk & Land Use Regulations in Bowness: Key Facts

- **Bowness remains exposed to flood risk**

Updated provincial mapping and City modelling confirm exposure to both river flooding and groundwater impacts in Bowness. Updated flood mapping can be viewed at maps.calgary.ca/riverflooding.

- **High Hazard Flood Fringe reflects severity of risk – not new risk**

A significant portion of Bowness is identified as High Hazard Flood Fringe (HHFF), a new provincially designated zone, where water is deeper and faster-moving. HHFF represents areas with more dangerous flood conditions similar to the Floodway, requiring a more cautious approach to development.

- **Development can increase community-scale flood impacts**

Increasing building size in HHFF areas can displace floodwaters, contributing to higher water levels that may affect neighbouring properties and the broader community.

- **Density increases flood exposure and emergency response needs**

Adding more homes, suites or people in HHFF areas increases potential safety concerns and damage during flood events.

- **Basement flooding is the costliest and highest-risk impact of flooding**

National research shows residential basement flooding drives the majority of flood-related damages in Canada and can create serious safety risks, including, in worst cases, life-threatening conditions. In Calgary, the only fatality in the 2013 flood occurred in a basement suite, underscoring the importance of limiting below-grade exposure in the highest-risk areas.

- **Managing shared risk is essential**

The proposed bylaw changes aim to reduce cumulative impacts and limit increased risk across the community.

Why This Work Matters

Without updated mapping and regulations, development decisions may not reflect real risk conditions, increasing the likelihood of property damage, public safety concerns and long-term recovery costs. In Bowness, where no large-scale structural flood barrier is in place and where upstream solutions are at least 10+ years off and will not fully mitigate risk, land use and building-level measures play an especially important role in reducing risk over time. The intent of these updates is not to prevent redevelopment or unnecessarily restrict property use. Calgary's land use framework allows flexibility, including a relaxation process that allows development proposals to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This ensures site-specific considerations can be addressed while maintaining an overall risk-based approach.

Next Steps & Staying Informed

The City will continue targeted engagement with communities in the HHFF and groundwater flood fringe in September 2026. To receive updates, subscribe to the Calgary's Rivers e-newsletter at calgary.ca/floodinfo.

Saskatoon Season

The Prairie Berry with Deep Roots in Western Canadian History

By: Zoë Decker

Long before grocery stores sold them frozen in neat little bags, saskatoon berries grew wild across the Prairies, tucked into river valleys, grasslands, and forest edges. For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples across the Canadian Prairies relied on these small purple berries as both food and medicine. Sweet, hardy, and packed with nutrients, saskatoons became an important ingredient in pemmican—a high-energy mixture of dried meat, fat, and berries that could last through long winters and journeys.

The berry itself is deeply woven into the history of Western Canada. In fact, the city of Saskatoon was named after it. The Cree word *misâskwatômina* refers to the berry, and early settlers quickly adopted both the fruit and its name. Before roads and railways carved across the Prairies, saskatoon bushes were already thriving in the tough prairie climate, surviving droughts, harsh winters, and wild temperature swings with remarkable resilience.

Despite their delicate appearance, saskatoon berries are surprisingly rugged. They belong to the rose family and grow on shrubs that can live for decades. In spring, the bushes explode with white blossoms that resemble clouds drifting across the landscape. By summer, those blossoms transform into deep blue-purple berries with a flavour somewhere between a blueberry, almond, and cherry.

Here in Bowness, we are especially lucky to have so many saskatoon berry bushes growing naturally along the banks of the Bow River and throughout the community's more hilly and natural areas. In early summer, careful walkers can often spot the berries peeking out between leaves along pathways and slopes, quietly connecting the neighbourhood to the prairie landscape that existed long before the city grew around it.

For many prairie families, picking saskatoons is more than gathering fruit—it is tradition. Buckets balanced on knees, purple-stained fingers, and warnings to watch for bears are all part of the experience. Recipes for pies, jams, syrups, and wine have been passed down through generations, often scribbled onto worn recipe cards splattered with berry juice.

Today, saskatoon berries are experiencing a quiet revival. Chefs prize them for their rich flavour, local farmers cultivate orchards devoted entirely to them, and scientists praise their high antioxidant content. Yet even with their growing popularity, saskatoons still feel tied to something older and wilder—a berry shaped by prairie winds, riverbanks, and history itself.

Perhaps that is why they remain so beloved across the Prairies. Saskatoon berries are not just fruit; they are a taste of place, memory, and resilience.

Saskatoon Berry Crumble Bars

Ingredients:

Filling

- 6 cups saskatoon berries (fresh or frozen; blueberries can be substituted)
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons water (for frozen berries)
- If using fresh Saskatoon berries, use ¾ cup water
- ⅔ cup white granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ¾ teaspoon almond extract

Crust

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups quick oats
- 1½ cups brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup unsalted butter

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350°F (176°C) and grease a 9 × 13-inch baking pan.
- In a saucepan, combine the berries, water, sugar, cornstarch, and lemon juice. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until thickened, about 15–20 minutes. If needed, add 1 more tablespoon of cornstarch and cook for 5 minutes longer.
- Remove from heat, stir in the almond extract, and allow the filling to cool.
- In a large bowl, combine the flour, oats, brown sugar, and baking soda. Cut in the butter until the mixture is crumbly.
- Press half of the crust mixture into the prepared pan.
- Spread the cooled berry filling evenly over the crust.
- Sprinkle the remaining crust mixture over the filling and lightly press it down.
- Bake for 35–45 minutes, or until golden brown. Allow to cool before cutting into bars.

Recipe by FoodMeanderings

Construction for Stage B of the Bearspaw South Feeder Main replacement project is coming to Bowness.

Stay connected, informed and engaged every step of the way.

Visit the community resource centre

located at the *Bowness Community Association*

7904 43 Ave. N.W.

Open:

Mon. and Wed., 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Tues. and Thurs., 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Meet with your Construction Liaisons

at the Bowness Community Association on Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.



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Phone 311 to ask questions, learn more, or share your thoughts.

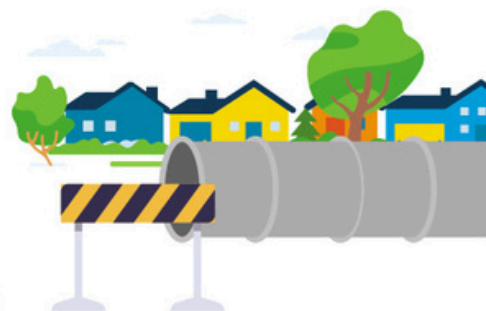


Visit calgary.ca/bearspawfeedermain

to learn more about area construction impacts and find community updates.



Thank you for your continued support



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Office Hours

Monday - Thursday | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Friday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

The Landing

Daytime Drop-in:

Monday - Friday | 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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Temporarily Closed

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The Bowest'ner Volunteer Contributors

Every issue, amazing volunteers and local Bownesians use their creativity to bring *The Bowest'ner* to life. If you'd like to contribute to a future issue of *The Bowest'ner*, email editor@mybowness.com.

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