


Taking Steps . . .

towards a more



Number 7


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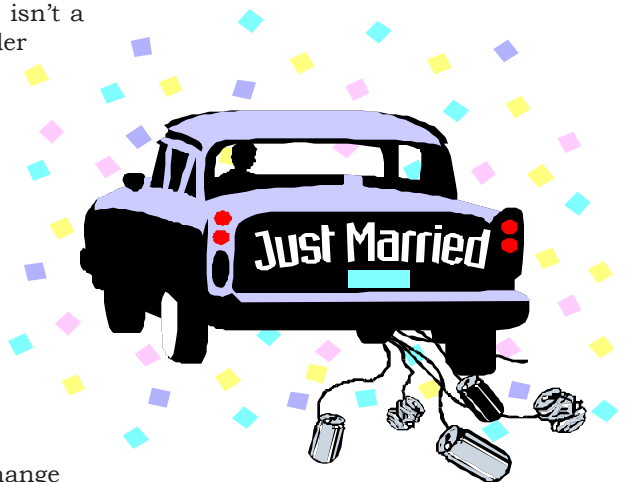
model village 

Is the honeymoon over?

It is definitely quite true that [most] North Americans love their cars, and Edmontonians are among the most passionate. While we are very much married to our cars, and are likely to remain so, some of the items we will feature this issue lead us to believe the cute and oh-so-accommodating young thing we happily hitched up with a few decades ago has turned into a demanding partner that seems to want everything to itself! Divorce isn't a viable option, but is it time to consider renegotiating the terms of the relationship? Perhaps separate bedrooms, so to speak?

Among other things, we'll see in this issue how an innovative traffic engineer is using some radical ideas to try to make the automobile behave better when out in public. At the other extreme, some folks are willing to give *anything* to their cars . . . including the kitchen sink.

There *are* Edmontonians trying to change their relationship with the car, and we'll feature personal stories from two readers who are trying to reduce their auto-dependence. We also have information on how you can join with [perhaps] thousands of other Edmontonians in making a similar statement. Read on . . .



Planning charrette coming up in Highlands-Bellevue

Dan Burden will be returning to Edmonton in early April to lead a neighbourhood-based design charrette in the Highlands-Bellevue area. Because this has been planned as a "working" event, it will not be open to the general public, but we will feature extensive coverage of the charrette in our next issue of *Taking Steps*. We will also have links to documents and recommendations produced during the working sessions.

Walkable Edmonton is hosting the charrette, with assistance from **Go for Green**, the **involved communities**, Edmonton's **Smart Choices** program, the **Transportation & Streets** and **Community Services departments**, and from **Councillor Janice Melnychuk's community revitalization initiative**. We hope that this pioneering effort will be only the first of many opportunities for Edmontonians to contribute to making a more walkable, safer and more liveable Edmonton. We are committed to ensuring that the skills, experiences and neighbourhood empowerment gained are passed along to other communities and individuals.



Meet Ed . . .
Click on him and he'll
walk you to the
particular article or
website.

Please pass this newsletter on to a friend or colleague

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Walking backwards into traffic

This is one safety rule your mother probably didn't feel she had to include when she said "Don't run with scissors, don't take candy from strangers, and don't jump off a bridge just because some other kid tells you to" . . . but this is just the sort of thing **Hans Monderman** will do to demonstrate how safe his "naked streets and intersections" are.

Monderman is a traffic engineer in Friesland, the most northerly province in the Netherlands. In small towns



like Oosterwolde, shown above, and in larger cities like Drachten, Monderman has removed sidewalks, curbs, traffic lights and signs and even crosswalks from some streets to restore the human element as a way of improving safety. An article in [Wired](#) describes how Monderman walked backwards into traffic in Oosterwolde. Because the street had been redesigned to force all users to use eye contact, body language and the many other sometimes chaotic and unwritten subtleties of common human interaction, the flow of cars, bicycles and other pedestrians calmly slowed down and eased around him as he backed across. Nobody honked. Nobody yelled obscenities. Nobody made hand gestures. Try that on the Whitemud Freeway at 4:45 on a Friday afternoon!

The scene in the picture above looks very tranquil, but that roadway carries over 5,000 cars per day, yet there have been no serious accidents since the street setting was redone in 1999. By the way, that is Hans Monderman standing next to the white van, with his back to the camera.



Consider the evolution that has taken place in our streets since the following street scene was common:



Lights, signs, lines on the roadway and rules now govern our behaviour in the street. How many times have we all seen a pedestrian blindly start across an intersection the moment the light turned green, *without* looking for cars? How many of us assume that because we are crossing in a marked crossing the automobile drivers see us and intend to stop? Hans Monderman contends that by removing all the "control and safety" mechanisms, in effect by making the street appear more dangerous and uncontrolled, he makes drivers, cyclists and pedestrians start looking at other people on the street instead. Cars slow down. People make eye contact before they proceed.

The following street scene, one of Monderman's designs, is actually much like the one from the late 1800s shown above.



The following is how one Friesian bicycle commuter feels about the changes in his streets:

My time is really an essence of time, as a fanatic cyclist I pass the wonders of Mr. Monderman 6 times a day cycling to work as I live in Drachten, a busy dutch town transformed by him. Even my 11 year old son has no problem cycling along and over it. It is all about eye contact

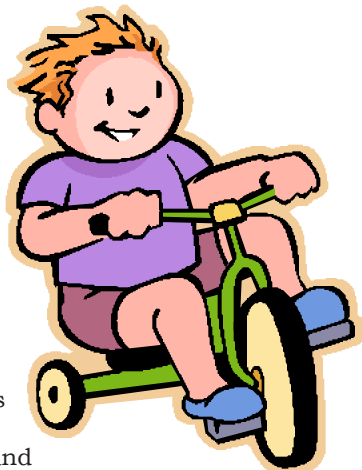
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with the other users of the road. No one has a right to cross first, you look around, see and deal with the others, that's possible because everybody slows down approaching these crossings. A green traffic light gives you a deceptive feeling of safety. ✖

Earlier, we [rather unfairly] used the Edmonton example of Whitemud Freeway at 4:45 on a Friday afternoon. Monderman's ideas are not intended for this type of high-volume, high-speed roadway, but they could work in small-scale commercial areas, or semi-residential streets. His ideas have received wide attention, as any Internet search will quickly demonstrate. His designs have been put to use in several European countries. Would they work on parts of Whyte Avenue, 124 Street or stretches of Jasper Avenue?

A few of the many articles on Monderman's work:

- Naked streets - Toronto Star ✖
- Changing Public Behavior - radio interview ✖
- Oosterwolde, Friesland ✖



Home Zones

Home Zones are people-friendly residential streets, a concept very closely related to the ideas of Hans Monderman. Home Zones have been used in Germany, Scandinavia and the Netherlands for many years and have helped make residential areas safer. Home Zones are typically based on the following four principles:

- Pedestrians are given priority over vehicles;
- Speed limits are kept low -- around 15 km/h;
- The structure of the street is changed, with traffic calming modifications, street furniture, and signage; and
- The support and involvement of local residents. ✖

Bob's lunchtime legislature loop

Working downtown has led me to explore various walks whether it is during my lunch hour or on my way to a meeting. My favourite lunch hour walk has also doubled as my running route. From the Revillon building South on the tree lined 104 Street to 99 Avenue. West along 99 Avenue in front of Dick Mather memorial park to 107 Street. South on 107 Street gives me access to the Legislative grounds and then I can walk around the legislature a short loop or a longer one. This walk allows me to see lots of trees and gives me choices to stop and relax and stretch at the memorial park or the Legislature grounds. It is particularly good all year round as the Legislature sidewalks are well maintained. In my mind this walk is between one legislature and the other as I understand that the first legislature sat in the building that is now Edmonton Public Schools archives and museum.



Bob Marvin

Edmonton place names: Revillon Building

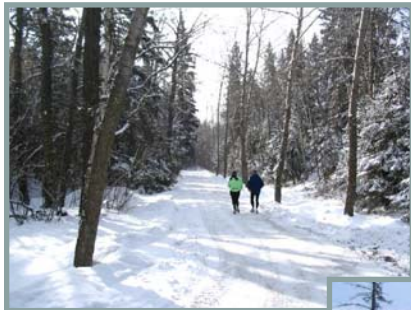
The fur-trading firm of *Revillon Frères* was established in Paris in 1723. They chose Edmonton as their Western Canadian headquarters in 1902, and built the Revillon Building in 1912. When new, it was the largest and most sophisticated warehouse in western Canada, with elevators, an automatic telephone exchange and numerous other technological advances. In 1986, the Revillon Building and the adjacent Ross Brothers Hardware Building were joined to form the Boardwalk.

Some of the people who now work in the Revillon Building will tell you that they suspect that at least one of the 1912 elevators is still in place, working intermittently.

Walks with Winnie

With the currently mild weather, my wild intrepid Shih Tsu, Winnie, and I have been pacing the trails. Our favourite walks include walking north on 105 street, crossing Saskatchewan Drive and taking the steps down to Queen Elizabeth Pool and then following a forested trail west to the Walterdale Hill and on across the bridge. We then proceed around back (south) of the EPCOR plant and the water treatment plant, east of Rossdale, under the James Macdonald Bridge, under and up onto the Low

Level Bridge and south across the river again. We then go under that bridge and come up in Skunk Hollow. We walk along the edge of the river with a great view of downtown. There are several benches here so we usually take a rest stop. The trail rises behind the Old Timers' Cabin and we can either continue along the river or take



a hard left to cross Scona Hill and walk through the houses east of 99 Street and into Mill Creek Park. There is a great off-leash park immediately east of the end of 92 Avenue. We then go down hill to join the trail and take the fork up to Whyte Avenue by the Mill Creek Pool and reward ourselves with a fresh muffin at the Mill Creek Cafe. This adds up to about 10,000 steps for me and probably 100,000+ for my adventurous canine escort Winnie.

P.S. After falling twice over the Christmas period I purchased some ice-grip overshoes from The Running Room. They cost \$44 but saved me from further falls. I wear them any time I go near ice, every day it seems. Winnie has worn out his Mutt Luks this winter. He wears them on ice and salt and relates them to walking so doesn't mind them one bit.

Judy Berghofer

Edmonton place names: Skunk Hollow

Edmontonians who grew up on the South Side anytime from the turn of the century to the fifties and sixties generally referred to the cluster of houses just east of Queen Elizabeth Park below Saskatchewan Drive as Skunk Hollow. Although no origin for the name is recorded, it is now known *officially* as Lavigne, and is probably Edmonton's smallest and perhaps least known community.

Send us your favourite walk

Prizes, prizes, prizes!!

Albertans take on the World!

Albertans are challenging the Guinness World Record for the **Most People Walking Simultaneously** on Thursday, May 26th at 10 am MST. Your school or community can join thousands by walking at least one kilometer and sending us your results. SHAPE (Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere) is an Albertan organization that promotes the Active & Safe Routes to School programs in Alberta. They are joining forces with organizations and groups around Alberta to take on the world.

Register on-line at www.shapeab.com or call 780-406-8530 and a registration package will be sent to you with more details and how to verify your results for Guinness.

It's as easy as 1, 2,3

1. Register – details, response forms and ideas will be sent to you!
2. Participate – get as many students, staff and community members to join you
3. Submit Results – all activities for Guinness World Records must be verified so be sure to have a witness for your event!

Come on Alberta – together we can take on the world!!



Alberta Active Living Challenge Day May 26, 2005

WHO?

Any Albertan!! Spread the word...Get your school, community, or workplace involved.

WHAT?

Any Activity! Let's get as many people participating in physical activity as we can. All physical activities count!

WHEN?

Anytime on May 26, 2005

HOW?

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- Decide on a physical activity event that your whole school or class can participate in for at least 10 - 30 minutes.
- Participate in ANY activity on May 26, 2005
- Forward your school's participation numbers to the Be Fit For Life Centre in your area by using the form below.


Need an idea for your schools participation??? The Be Fit For Life Network and SHAPE have been working closely with various active living partners to create support for school participation during this year's Alberta Active Living Challenge Day on May 26, 2005. Participate in the Guinness Challenge on May 26, the special event for this year's AALCD or use some of the ideas listed in this resource to get your school involved in this year's Challenge Day.

Complete form information can be submitted 3 ways:

1. Called in to 1-866-900-4255 (toll free)
2. Emailed to your local Be Fit For Life Centre
3. Faxed to your local Be Fit For Life Centre

ALL INFORMATION MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 6:00 PM, Monday, MAY 30, 2005

School Name:	_____
Address & City:	_____
Postal Code:	_____
Activity Participated in:	_____
Age Range of Students:	_____
# of Students:	_____ Males _____ Females
# of adults (18 and over):	_____ Males _____ Females
Teacher Contact:	_____
Phone Number:	_____
Email:	_____
I would like to receive more information on future Be Fit For Life physical activity events	Yes No

Challenge a rival school in your area to compete against on May 26, 2005, challenge a rival town's schools to participate, challenge staff and students, invite community members or families to get involved, the options are endless! Just get moving! *Last year more than 35,000 Albertans registered their participation in physical activity on Challenge Day. With the support of Alberta Schools we hope to double that number!* 

Please contact your local Be Fit For Life Centre for more information.

Grande Prairie Regional College
(780) 539-2816 (780) 539-2042 (fax)
bffl@gprc.ab.ca

Lakeland College Vermilion
(780) 853-8474 (780) 853-8711 (fax)
robin.schwartz@lakelandc.ab.ca

Keyano College Ft McMurray
(780) 791-8916 (780) 715-3929 (fax)
lifestyle@keyano.ca

Lethbridge Community College
(403) 382-6919 (403) 317-3557 (fax)
befitforlife@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca

Portage College – Lac la Biche
(780) 623-5542 (780) 623-5675 (fax)
amanda.murphy@portagec.ab.ca

Red Deer College, Kevin Sirois
(403) 342-3140 (403) 343-8840 (fax)
denise.klein@rdc.ab.ca

Medicine Hat College
(403) 504-3548 (403) 504-3533 (fax)
zmorrison@mhc.ab.ca

University of Calgary
(403) 220-8011 (403) 284-5867 (fax)
bfit4lif@ucalgary.ca

University of Alberta
(780) 492-0758 (780) 492-0764 (fax)
lindsay.wright@ualberta.ca

NOTE: If you register your participation numbers for the Guinness Challenge with SHAPE they will automatically count towards the Alberta Active Living Challenge Day total. You only need to register once!

Walk safely on ice

With the onset of warmer weather, ice surfaces in the Edmonton area are becoming unsafe. Edmonton's Park Rangers urge everyone to avoid going near any body of water, and to keep their dogs off as well. This includes ponds, creek and rivers.

The Park Rangers suggest avoiding the following bodies of water:

- The North Saskatchewan River;
- Mill Creek;
- Whitemud Creek;
- All creeks that feed into local ponds or the North Saskatchewan River;
- Man-made lakes such as William Hawrelak Park pond, Hermitage ponds, Rundle Park ponds, Gold Bar pond, Lake Beaumaris, Jackie Parker pond or any other storm management lake; and
- Storm sewage run-off ditches and ponds located around Edmonton.

Ice strength is dependent on many factors, and it is almost impossible to judge the strength of ice by its appearance.

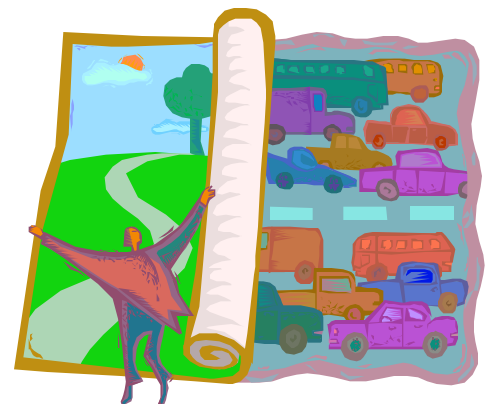
Agricultural lands planning charrette held in NE Edmonton, March 4-5

A planning charrette was held recently to examine future options for a select group of agricultural lands on the northeast edge of Edmonton. These lands are among the very best growing areas in the province, but are within the city limits and could be developed as residential neighbourhoods within the foreseeable future.

About 40 persons - among them area residents and landowners, land developers, current and former City Councillors, staff from a diverse range of municipal, provincial and federal government agencies, and representatives of several not-for-profit groups gathered for two days to talk about future options for use of these lands. Participants heard a presentation on a nature-friendly development that has been built on farmlands in the Chicago area. Other speakers talked about the threats facing Canada's agricultural lands, as well as alternatives society might consider for future development of our cities.

The charrette employed an abbreviated version of a process called 'townscape analysis.' This is an approach developed in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary based on first understanding the make-up and characteristics of a place in order to make design decisions.

Charrette participants identified a set of guiding principles for future use/development of the area, and went on to map a variety of existing characteristics of the study area - soils and agricultural suitability, known significant natural areas, settlement patterns, historical sites, transportation corridors, valuable wildlife and recreational areas, as well as utility infrastructure. A detailed report on the outcomes of the charrette will be produced in the near future. *Taking Steps* will keep you posted on where you can obtain a copy, and how you might become involved in future work on this area.



Warning signs to look for:

- Ice on moving water such as the North Saskatchewan River, creeks and runoff ditches is not uniformly thick – moving water makes the ice very thin in places.
- Sudden drops in temperature weaken the ice surface.
- Snow cover insulates the ice and reduces ice strength.
- Inconsistent temperatures – fluctuations of warming and cooling may weaken the ice.
- A depression or slump on a flat snow surface may indicate soft ice underneath the snow.
- Dark ice indicates thin ice.
- Waterfowl, fish, beavers, and muskrats will weaken the ice.
- Logs, stumps, rocks or an object sticking out of the ice generates heat from the day and will create soft ice surrounding the object.

What to do if you fall through the ice:

Self-Rescue Steps:

- 1) Float on your stomach facing the shore.
- 2) Slowly reach forward onto the ice - do not push down on it.
- 3) Kick your legs to slowly push your torso onto the ice.
- 4) Crawl or roll away from the hole.
- 5) Get medical help immediately.
- 6) If you cannot climb onto the ice, float in the water and call out for help.

Helping Others:

- 1) Stay on the shore! Do not go out on the ice to pull the person out.
- 2) Immediately call **9-1-1** or use a **Blufone** if you are in a city park.
- 3) Watch and talk to the person.
- 4) Yell out the **Self-Rescue Steps** to the person in the water.
- 5) Wait for help from emergency crews.
- 6) When help arrives show them where the person is or where you last saw them.

The best protection for you and your family is to stay off the ice!



Some folks *really* love their cars

Watchers of MTV's *Pimp My Ride* know that some automobile owners go as far as installing faux fireplaces, satellite dishes and clothes dryers in their cars. On the season opener March 6, the custom shop gang outfitted some lucky person's back seat with a hot tub.

We've turned the automobile into just another living room. Cars today have entertainment zones, they have telecommunication possibilities, they have food, they have all of the things we once had at home -- to the point where we feel as though we shouldn't have to interact with anyone else [on the road]. And that leads to all sorts of problems.

Char Miller, Director of Urban Studies,
Trinity University, San Antonio

University of Miami planning a model village

The University of Miami wants to create an antidote to suburban sprawl amid a rare pine forest in South Miami-Dade County. The university's proposal envisions an old-fashioned, walkable village of up to 1,200 small homes clustered around a new public K-12 school, library, parks and neighborhood shops. University officials say the project would serve as a model for what suburban development might be -- smart, not wasteful, ecologically friendly and civic-minded.

The village's compact plan and small lots would make efficient use of land and encourage strolling. Kids could walk to school and recreation, and parents could forgo use of their automobiles for many daily activities -- from basic shopping to working out at the gym, from seeing a doctor at a UM-run medical clinic to attending courses. Officials hope it will also nurture a close sense of community missing in many conventional subdivisions. 'It would not be the typical suburb where residents leave in the morning, come back at night and close the door or close the gate, and that's it.'

*There is only one solution to intensifying traffic congestion --
Fundamental Change in human settlement patterns.*

E M Risse
SYNERGY/Planning

If you would like to have your name added to our electronic mailing list, please click on the following icon:



If you do not have an email connection we can send you copies by mail. Please drop us a line at:

Walkable Edmonton, c/o Kate Gunn
Edmonton Community Services
P.O. Box 2359
Edmonton, AB
T5J 2R7