

FEBRUARY 2014

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## REDISCOVERING EXERCISE?

**PAGE 11**



SCHOLARSHIPS  
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# Elbow Valley is minutes away from:

- Strathcona Shopping Centre
- West Hills/Signal Hill

- Chinook Centre
- Downtown core

## SCHOOLS

*(S) denotes Separate (FR) denotes French Immersion Schools*

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Elbow Valley Elementary (FR) K-4	403.242.1117
Banded Peak School (K-8)	403.949.2292
Holy Spirit Catholic School (S) K-9	403.500.2065
École la Source (FR) K-9	403.255.6724
Ste-Marguerite-Bourgeoys (S) (FR) K-12	403.240.2007
Springbank Middle School (FR) 5-8	403.242.4456
Manachaban Middle School (FR) 5-8	403.932.2215
Bow Valley High School 9-12	403.932.9005
Cochrane High School 9-12	403.932.2542
Springbank Community High (FR) 9-12	403.246.4771
École de la Rose Sauvage (FR) 10-12	403.230.3112

## WORSHIP

Springbank United	403.288.9086
Westlife Church	403.242.3431
Mountainview Lutheran	403.242.5000
Valley View Presbyterian	403.249.6006
First Lutheran	403.242.4544
Rockpointe Church - Westhills Site	403.851.0011
Richmond Hill Baptist	403.242.1256
Westside Kings Church	403.777.0800

## COMMUNITY

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Signal Hill Library	403.260.2600
Newsletter Advertising Sales	403.263.3044
Springbank Heritage Club	403.242.9350
244168 RR#33	


news@great-news.ca

**Editorial  
Content  
DEADLINE**

**1<sup>st</sup>**  
of each month  
for the next  
month's  
issue

FYI

**Banff Park Museum**, built in 1903, is the oldest and grandest natural history museum in Western Canada. It is home to more than 5,000 natural history specimens with exhibits and displays, and includes an extensive taxidermy collection.





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avenue  
magazine

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*Residents of Elbow Valley, as part of the MD of Rocky View, are eligible for a yearly membership at the same fee scale as residents of Cochrane. To obtain a library card visit in person and show a valid picture ID and address ID.*

## PROGRAMS

*Register at the Circulation Desk or by calling 403-932-4353. Further program details may be found online.*

- **Wiggles and Giggles** (age 0-1/parented).  
Thursdays from 1:00-1:30 PM.
- **Hickory Dickory Tots** (ages 0-3/parented) on  
Fridays from 11-11:30 AM.
- **Dramatic Story and Craft Time** (ages 3-5/parent  
ed) on Wednesdays from 10 - 10:45 AM.
- **Musical Mites** (pre-school) on Wednesdays from  
11-11:30 AM.
- **Sleepytime Program for Parents and Tots** for  
ages 0-3 (parented). Thursday February 13  
from 6:30-7:15 PM.
- **Teddybear Picnic** for ages 3-5 on Wednesday  
February 19 from 10:30-11:15AM.  
Cochrane Humane Society visits to the li  
brary. Watch for upcoming dates in the  
New year!
- **Easter Party** on Saturday April 12 from  
2:00-3:00PM.

## ADULT PROGRAMS

- **Book Club: Hungry for a book family?** Sign up  
to become part of our book club. We  
bring the snacks and drinks. Sign up or phone  
the circulation desk or check on our website.

## BRAIN GAMES

# SUDOKU

	6	7			3			4
			7				5	
4	3	9	2					
		1						
7	4		3		9		6	2
						8		
					1	2	4	3
	2				5			
1			4			7	9	

**FIND SOLUTION ON PAGE 14**

# ONLINE

You're just a click away  
from some interesting and  
informative websites

[www.twistedgifter.com](http://www.twistedgifter.com)  
[www.meetways.com](http://www.meetways.com)  
[www.onthesnow.com](http://www.onthesnow.com)







# Conversation Hearts

Sweethearts or Love Hearts, are imprinted with short, sweet sayings like “Be Mine” and “I Love You”. They date back to the 1860s, when NECCO (New England Confectionery Company) began printing sayings on candy.



# Family Day

Family Day occurs on the third Monday in February each year. It was declared a statutory holiday to recognize the values held by the proud pioneers who built Alberta.

On Family Day, banks, schools and government offices are closed, and public transportation runs on a reduced holiday schedule. To avoid any disappointments, be sure to call ahead to restaurants, stores and attractions to confirm their hours of operation.

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## in & around your community

### February Is Heart Month

Alberta Health Services

Do you know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and what to do if someone experiences these? Knowing can make the difference between life and death.

Recognizing and responding immediately to the warning signs of a potential heart attack can significantly improve survival and recovery. **February is Heart Month** - take the time to be heart safe and learn how you can reduce your risk.

#### **What to do when seconds count**

- Call 9-1-1 immediately. Early treatment can greatly reduce heart damage and make the difference of life and death.
- Treatment starts the moment EMS arrives. Paramedics can provide oxygen, start an intravenous and perform an electrocardiogram (ECG).
- Paramedics can also administer important medications in the early minutes of a heart attack to lessen heart damage.
- During transport, EMS will also share information with the hospital so definitive treatment can begin immediately on arrival.
- Take a CPR/AED (automated external defibrillator) course. Training is widely available from many reputable organizations. It's easy, inexpensive, and only takes a few hours.

#### **Know the signs of a heart attack**

(Any or all of these signs and symptoms may occur)

- Chest pain described as crushing, squeezing, pressure or chest heaviness
- Pain that moves beyond the chest such as shoulder, arm, neck or jaw pain
- Shortness of breath, sweating or nausea and vomiting

#### **Reduce your risk**

Heart attack risk factors include:

- Obesity
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Age / Gender
- Family history

Speak with your doctor about how to treat your modifiable risk factors and learn to be heart safe.



## Calgary Kiwanis Music Festival

February 24 to March 15

The Festival's daily sessions and evening concerts provide a number of entertainment options to Calgarians at little to no cost. Be inspired by performers with passion and dedication to excellence in classic and contemporary music and speech arts. With 19 different categories of performing arts, Festival guests can enjoy a full range of fine arts performances from students of all ages and skill levels. Daily sessions are open to the public and admission is free. The Festival schedule is available at [www.calgarykiwanisfestival.ca](http://www.calgarykiwanisfestival.ca).



**Where would you like to be in five year's time?**

## CROSSWORD

Created by  
B.G.Rose

### ACROSS

- 3 City in France and in Canada
- 4 February cherub
- 7 Five fresh water lakes
- 9 With ice cream (3 words)
- 11 A cracker and a bivalve
- 13 Greek god of love
- 14 Disney inspired castle
- 16 Seasonal weather forecaster of AB fame (2 words)
- 17 Part of a snowman's attire (2 words)
- 18 Sailing ship
- 19 Toto travelled to this city 50 years ago

### DOWN

- 1 "We're off to see the \_\_\_\_"
- 2 Dwelling for books
- 5 Famous Ontario groundhog (2 words)
- 6 One of the most romantic instruments
- 8 Pasta "pillows of love"
- 10 Last shot of each end or round of curling
- 12 Red retriever (2 words)
- 15 Will you be my \_\_\_\_?
- 16 First national park in Canada

**Across:** 3.Parts 4.Cupid 7.Great 9.a la mode 11.oyster 13.Eros 14.Neuschwanstein 16.Balzac Billie 17.top hat  
18.Clipper 19.Emerald **Down:** 1.wizard 2.library 5.Warrior  
Willie 6.harp 8.ravioli 10.hammer 12.Irish Setter 15.valentine  
16.Banff



## BRAIN GAMES

# Speed Up Mortgage Payments or Contribute to an RRSP?

Davis Dai, Financial Advisor, CIPF

Consider the following, taken from a poll conducted on behalf of Edward Jones in Canada:

- 48% plan to pay down debt; of this group, 13% want to pay down their mortgage faster.
- 20% plan to increase their contributions to an investment account, with 10% saying they will contribute more to their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP).

Paying down your mortgage and saving for retirement are two worthy goals. But can you work toward them at the same time? Ask yourself: *Is it a wise move to make extra mortgage payments or should I put that money into my RRSP instead?* Let's consider the pros and cons of making larger-than-necessary mortgage payments. First, the "pro" side:

- *You'll pay less in interest over the long term.* Over the course of a few decades, the interest you pay on your mortgage could equal, or exceed, the mortgage amount itself. The sooner you pay off your mortgage, the less you'll pay in interest.
- *You'll realize more equity when you sell your home.* The less you owe on your house, the greater the equity in your pocket when you sell it.
- *You could get a psychological benefit.* If you can pay off your mortgage, you may feel as though a burden has been lifted.

Now, let's examine the "cons" of paying down your mortgage early:

*You might sacrifice investment returns.* If you paid off a fixed-rate mortgage of 5%, you are essentially "earning" a 5% return. But if you could find an investment - such as the securities held inside your RRSP - that earned more than 5%, you might be better off putting your money there. Of course, there's no guarantee on the earnings you'll get from your RRSP, but your returns will, in effect, be boosted by the RRSP's tax-deferred environment. Furthermore, you get an immediate tax break on your annual contributions.



- *You'll tie up cash in an illiquid investment.* If your employment should be threatened or you face some large, unexpected expenses, you may need quick access to a large amount of cash - and it's harder to get money out of your home than it is from your savings and investments.
- *You'll risk being under-diversified.* If you put all your money in your house, and the housing market slumps, your net worth might suffer more than if you had spread your money among a variety of assets, such as stocks, bonds and mutual funds. While diversification, by itself, cannot guarantee a profit or protect against loss, it can help reduce the effects of volatility.

Clearly, paying down your mortgage early offers some significant benefits - but it could also incur some significant costs, particularly in the area of saving for retirement. And since you could be retired for two or three decades, you may want to take full advantage of your RRSP, your Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) and other retirement savings vehicles.

Ultimately, the mortgage-versus-retirement question is a highly personal one and does not lend itself to easy solutions. But it's not necessarily an either-or situation. You could, for example, increase your RRSP contribution and use your tax refund to make an extra mortgage payment each year. It's your choice - so make it a good one.



# Rediscovering Exercise?

## Take the SMART Approach!

By Dr. Alma Nenshi, DC

Artists who work with glass or metal know that you should not try to bend or shape the material while it remains cold and brittle. Glass will shatter and metal will break or quickly show signs of fatigue and damage. Our bodies also need to be warmed up to change. They need the tender, loving care of an artist to reshape them. You are that artist. And sculpting your new body takes time, patience and persistence. And yes, it takes hard work.

Using the following SMART approach to exercise will help you get back into an exercise routine and allow you to reach your goals:

**Specific** - Set exercise goals that are well defined rather than vague. If you want to be trim, define your goal along with the feeling you want to go with it. "I want to be 165 pounds of muscle and vibrant energy!"

**Measurable** - Measure your activity and your progress in an objective way such as recording your data in a journal. For example, instead of just walking more, a 30-min-

ute, brisk walk is measurable. If you've only walked 25 minutes, you know you're not done.

**Action-oriented** - You have to put your dreams into action, and exercise is all about physical movement. Keep your exercise interesting by varying your activity between stretching, light endurance, vigorous strength and other types of exercise. This helps to prevent heart attacks, sprains and other maladies from pushing too hard, too fast.

**Realistic** - Never let anyone tell you something cannot be done. Still if you are not realistic in your goals, you may set yourself up for failure. Short-term goals should be small and attainable. Achieving these will give you the confidence and motivation you need to set your goals a little higher each time.

**Time-related** - Set deadlines. This helps to keep you challenged so you keep moving forward. Naturally, any deadline needs to be realistic. You should not expect to be running marathons in one month after a couple of decades of deskwork or in-car commutes.

## FEBRUARY MOON CALENDAR



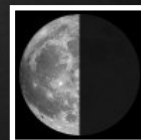
First  
Quarter  
Feb 6



Full  
Moon  
Feb 14



Last  
Quarter  
Feb 22



New  
Moon  
Mar 1



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## A Creed to Live By

Don't undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others.

It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Don't set your goals by what other people deem important,

Only you know what is best for you.

Don't take for granted the things closest to your heart.

Cling to that as you would your life, for without them life is meaningless.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or future.

By living your life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life.

Don't give up when you still have something to give  
Nothing is really over...until the moment you stop trying.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect,

It is the fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risks,

It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's impossible to find.

The quickest way to receive love is to give love.

The fastest way to lose love is to hold on too tightly,

And the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't dismiss your dreams. To be without Dreams is to be without hope.

To be without hope is to be without purpose.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget where you've been,

But also know where you're going.

Life is not a race, but a journey to be savoured every step of the way.

*Author Unknown*

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# ME 'N YOU

Ain't hankerin' to see the world  
It's too darned big and wide;  
Give me one spot  
Where joy can reach,  
'N me 'n you sittin' side by each,  
'N I'll be satisfied.

*Bert Bailey*



**BRAIN  
GAMES**

## SUDOKU

5	6	7	1	8	3	9	2	4
8	1	2	7	9	4	3	5	6
4	3	9	2	5	6	1	7	8
6	9	1	5	2	8	4	3	7
7	4	8	3	1	9	5	6	2
2	5	3	6	4	7	8	1	9
9	7	5	8	6	1	2	4	3
3	2	4	9	7	5	6	8	1
1	8	6	4	3	2	7	9	5

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# Claws on Kitty to be or not to be?

In a perfect world cats would always use the scratching post or we would all have enough money to replace our furniture and carpets on a whim. Unfortunately this is not a perfect world and often cat owners are forced to make the difficult decision to declaw their pets. There are many things owners of destructive felines can do to avoid this.

Cats do scratch to defend themselves, and use their claws to catch prey. But more often a cat leaning up the back of a chair and scratching is marking territory with their scent. While doing this they sharpen their claws and shed old nail material peeling off.

Teach your cat to tolerate nail trimming. Short nails don't damage carpets and furniture. Start early teaching a kitten to use a scratching post. Make the scratching post attractive by using catnip or honeysuckle wood to scent it. Some cats prefer horizontal scratching posts, others prefer vertical scratching posts. Immediately use deterrents if the kitten scratches in an inappropriate location. A loud unpleasant noise or a water pistol may help. Bring the cat to the acceptable scratching post. Be consistent and persistent!

There is a feline pheromone product available known as Feliway. As an air dispenser plugged in a wall socket, or as a spray in your house, this product dispenses a synthetic pheromone making the cat think that the whole area is marked as his territory. In multiple cat household every cat thinks the scent is theirs and they marked their territory. This alleviates spraying urine as well as territorial scratching while it decreases anxiety in nervous cats. On the other end, some foil tapes and repellent

sprays can be applied to the surfaces you do not want scratched while retraining your cat.

Another option to protect your house from kitty's claws are small plastic covers that can be glued over a cat's claws throughout its lifetime. These "soft-paws" are labor intensive. The cat's claws must still be trimmed regularly and the plastic covers re-applied.

Declawing is the removal of the last joint of each toe with its accompanying claw. With very rare exceptions only the front paws are done. The younger and the lighter the pet, the better and quicker healing seems to occur, but adequate pain control following surgery is still an absolute.

Declawing a cat is a difficult decision for some owners but in extreme cases an owner is forced to have a pet declawed or lose their pet. With better surgical methods complications are rare, and cats rapidly return to normal behaviors. It is critical to remember that once you have removed the cat's ability to defend itself and flee up a tree effectively, a cat should never be allowed to roam at large. An unfortunate side effect of declawing some cats is an increased propensity to bite rather than scratch.

Cats come with claws, teeth, and best of all, attitude. That's why we love them and immortalize them as Garfield, Sylvester, and my current favourite, "Bad Kitty". I have always had dogs and cats, and as a veterinarian have only very rarely seen a cat scratch to harm a canine housemate, usually they live in perfect harmony if the dog learns respect... as it should be.

*Jennifer L. Scott, D.V.M.*

# WORD SEARCH

B E H P F W B U B B L E G U M N A B Y L  
 H B X E L T T I R B F J N U Y D N A C Q  
 K J D K H X S E B U J U J R A I S I N S  
 I C E C R E A M D C M J G P R A L I N E  
 B O N B O N S B D A L O V E H E A R T S  
 N O J K O L I C O R I C E T Z G P A L S  
 A F O J F E C R W A E T A L O C O H C E  
 P L O L L I P O P M V R K P T F S Q K I  
 I P T P Z T G I L E C V N R V N F N C K  
 Z D S N A E B Y L L E J G U L P X E G O  
 R F L Y H D A O M B S C Y H V H D I E O  
 A L C J S T A E R T T E E W S U E G I C  
 M A C A R O O N S X C U P C A K E O Q V  
 X Y D B J E B R O W N I E S Q S B M E E

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 TOFFEE  
 MARZIPAN  
 PRALINE  
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 BONBONS  
 CANDY  
 COOKIES  
 ICE CREAM  
 BROWNIES  
 LOVE HEARTS  
 MACAROONS  
 CUPCAKE  
 RAISINS  
 LOLLIPOP  
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# The Black-Billed Magpie

by Katie Fisher

Our backyard can prove to be the busiest and sometimes, most exciting place to observe our local wildlife. A frequent visitor comes dressed in his tuxedo coloured feathers but more often than not, is not a welcome guest. The black-billed magpie has been a Canadian resident within our communities, the open woodlands and thickets in the rangelands and foothills and along the babbling brooks for more than 20,000 years.

The magpie has long been associated with people. They were frequent followers of hunting parties of Plains Indians and would feed on the remains of bison kills. Today, we can find them wherever we look; whether they are stealing eggs or nestlings from the nests of unsuspecting birds or hanging out along our community roads. The magpie, along with the rest of the Corvid family, is known as nature's clean up crew because they will gobble up animal remains. When they aren't along the roadside cleaning animal remnants, they can be found constructing their large nests. The nests, which are constructed deep in a tree, can take up to 40 days to build. Magpie nests can be found in various locations, from the tree in front of our window to deserted barns that spot the countryside.

As a member of the Corvidae family, they are smaller than their brother raven, yet larger than their other brother, the jay. Like their family members, they enjoy different kinds of food. Typically, magpies will feed on grains, fruits, and insects like grasshoppers and beetles, and various small animals. They also enjoy eating ticks that are found on the backs of large mammals, like elk and caribou. A prominent food source for the magpie is carrion, or decaying flesh, usually found from the kills of coyotes or fox.

The magpie can be seen all year round because they don't typically fly south for the winter like geese and

robins. We can usually see them perched atop fence posts or circling the sky in open areas. With no prominent migratory patterns, the magpie will store any excess food they find for later consumption, much like we keep a collection of canned goods in our pantries.

An interesting fact that many people do not know: Much like humans, magpies have been known to conduct "funerals" upon the discovery of a dead magpie. In this case, a magpie will begin calling other magpies to his location, attracting up to 40 birds, before dispersing and flying off silently.



Flag Day in Canada commemorates the inauguration of the Canadian national flag, which features a red maple leaf on a red and white background. The anniversary of this date is officially called "National Flag of Canada Day", but is often shortened to "Flag Day".



# CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

This is a simple and delicious chicken noodle soup – the perfect comfort food for the winter season!

5 cups of chicken stock or water

*(If you don't make your own chicken stock, you can use two chicken bouillon cubes or a quarter cup of powdered chicken bouillon to create a stock. These products are quite salty, so be cautious using additional salt in the soup without first tasting it.)*

3 boneless chicken breasts, or deboned thighs, diced small  
 3 stalks celery, diced and divided into two equal, separate portions  
 2 large carrots, diced and divided into two equal, separate portions  
 1 small onion, diced  
 2 cloves garlic, smashed  
 ¼ cup vegetable oil (approximate)  
 1 cup of your favourite pasta  
 Salt and pepper to taste

## Method

In this case, we have divided the vegetables into two separate portions, so they can be used effectively: first to create a base for flavour with the mirepoix (onions, carrots and celery), and as a topping, added at the end.

In a medium sauce pan, heat the oil on medium heat, and when it is heated, add the onions, garlic, and one portion each of the carrots and celery. Saute until the onions are translucent and you can smell the garlic, making sure the garlic and onions do not turn brown. Then lower the heat to medium-low and add the chicken, sautéing it until just cooked.

Add the chicken stock (or the water and bouillon) and bring the whole mixture to a boil. Season with salt and pepper, and taste.

After bringing it to boil, add the pasta and simmer until the pasta is al dente (when it is soft, but still a bit firm) – about 10 minutes. Then add the rest of the vegetables and simmer for an additional 5 minutes. Adjust the seasoning and serve immediately.

## TIP:

Make the soup without the pasta until you're ready to use it. This allows you to cook the pasta separately, and add it to the soup at the time of re-heating, eliminating any concern of over-cooking the pasta.

*Gladys Serrano, Le Cordon Bleu trained chef*

# COMMUNITY READERS RECOMMEND...



## Fiction

- The Book Thief- Markus Zusak
- Dear Life - Alice Munro
- The Valley of Amazement - Amy Tan
- The Cuckoo's Calling - J.K. Rowling
- Raising Stream - Terry Pratchett

## Non-fiction

- Long Walk to Freedom - Nelson Mandela
- The Reason I Jump - The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism - Naoki Higashida
- Robert Plant: A Life - Paul Rees
- 50 Canadians Who Changed the World - Ken McGoogan
- Provence, 1970 - Luke Barr

## Children's

- Little Blue Truck - Alice Schertle
- Plant a Kiss - Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- 13 Little Blues Envelopes - Maureen Johnson



Quickly becoming a history making hockey game, the **NHL Heritage Classic** will be played on Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at BC Place in Vancouver. The Vancouver Canucks will face off against the Ottawa Senators at 1:00 pm, and both teams will be sporting their "retro" jerseys.

The Heritage Classic honours the tradition of hockey being played on an outdoor rink, and still transports most fans back to the roots of hockey, and the love of the game – one that is truly Canadian, and one that all Canadians can be proud of.

## Laugh a Little!



The secret of success is to go from mistake to mistake without losing your enthusiasm.

- Anonymous

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HOME GARDENING WITH BARBARA

# WEARY OF WINTER?

## LOOK TO OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

by Barbara Shorrock

*Our guest columnists this month are Wayne and Joan Walker, who are serious birding enthusiasts.*

Most of us living in Calgary would agree that it is indeed challenging to endure our elongated winters, often interspersed with days of bone chilling temperatures and scattered flurries that transform our city into a marshmallow world. But, quite by chance, we have found a little slice of nature that makes this season quite bearable and absolutely entertaining. Our winter birds, fluffy, energetic, winged-warriors, consistently bring joy, anticipation and pleasure to this blustery, unpredictable season. Best of all, these courageous warriors are as close as the nearest window.

To truly appreciate the vivid splendour and dramatic details of each species' plumage, a pair of binoculars is highly recommended. Although not essential, a field guide is also helpful. Now that you are ready to begin, look no further than your own yard. You may readily identify the usual permanent residents - Black-billed Magpies, House Sparrows and the always cheery Black-capped Chickadees. On closer investigation you might also observe Red and White-breasted Nuthatches, kissin'cousins to the Chickadee, strutting straight down the tree trunk or merrily hanging upside down, gleaning seeds from a branch. A rosy glow to those feathers, could indicate a variety of species. The smallest has a yellow bill and a red cap, hence the name Common Redpoll. Delicate House Finches congregate in flocks feeding on tiny seeds from shrubs and trees. The largest of our rosy friends, the Red and White-winged Crossbills, feast exclusively in conifers. If you notice pieces of bark falling to the ground, look high up and you may spot these busy characters carefully prying cones with their uniquely designed bills. Pine Grosbeaks are a charming couple. Overall, these sedate birds have

rather large gray toned bodies. The head and neck of the female is a deep yellow-green in colour, while the male's head, tail and breast are a rich reddish-orange tone. On a snowy day, these two are a stunning sight!

On the ground you might spy a small flock of chubby fellows hopping about. These Dark-eyed Juncos, proudly sport a snow-white tummy, slate-gray back and baby-pink bill. Many industrious woodpeckers hoard food in summer and fall for the long cold days ahead, supplementing their winter diet with seeds and bark. Frequent backyard visitors include the striking black and white Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. Occasionally you may glimpse a Pileated Woodpecker. Easily identified, this handsome crow-sized bird, boasts a brilliant red crest. Another favourite in the Woodpecker family is the Northern Flicker, with its long pointed beak stretching over a tidy black bib and polka dot breast. In flight, the under side of the wings and tail are a magnificent salmon pink, making this bird a show stopper! If you are suddenly startled by a harsh, shrill screech, search the area for a Bluejay. Flashing a brilliant blue upperside, with white tail and wing patches, this cheeky fellow bullies anyone and anything in its path. And finally, here is something that may surprise you. Keep your eyes peeled for Robins! Yes, brave (or perhaps foolish) Robins do stay with us throughout the winter. It is thought that they survive by modifying their diet to one of seeds in order to avoid the stress and danger of migration.

These are but a few of the delightful treasures that winter offers those who bird-watch. And just think, we have only looked out the window. By exploring our many wonderful local parks and taking a short drive beyond the city limits, we can find many, many more splendid and fascinating species, including Snowy Owls! We truly agree with Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, when he states that "Nature is candy for the soul." Happy Birding!

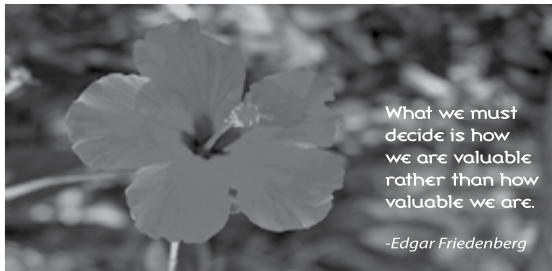


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