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A GUYS IN DISGUISE PRODUCTION



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By Darrin Hagen

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# **TORNADO MAGNET**

By Darrin Hagen



# Featuring: **Darrin Hagen**

Set & Costume Design: Trevor Schmidt

Lighting Design: Scott Peters

Composer/Sound Design: **Darrin Hagen**Stage Manager & Makeup Artist: **Neon** 

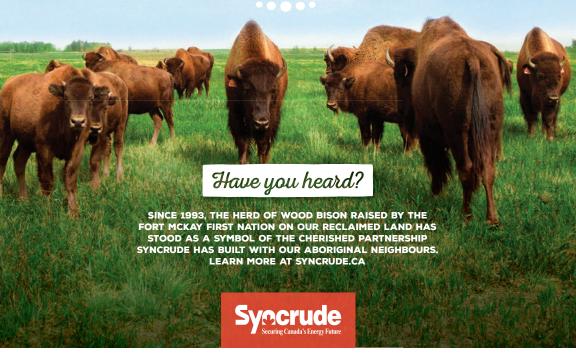
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Guys in Disguise Producing Manager: Kevin Hendricks



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# MESSAGE FROM THE **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Tornado Magnet by Darrin Hagen is the first production of our 2016/2017 Mainstage Season, where we start on the road of rediscovering the meaning of the word 'home'. Much has changed since Dotty Parsons first invited us into her kitchen 20 years ago to share her excellent coffee and the truth about life in a trailer court. This anniversary production is our chance to look at what was, what is and what's to come as we hear stories about family and friends from supermom Dotty, now supergrandma.

It is amazing to think of the progress that has occurred over the last twenty years, much of it has changed our lives for the better, but it does come at the cost of the past. When cities progress that means that old buildings and neighbourhoods are knocked down and in some cases a way of life is forever removed. Moving forward is mostly a good thing, however with advancement there can be the loss of what we value.

I think of Theatre Network's situation as we work towards a new Roxy Theatre building and how a new arts facility will have all the things we lacked before; lack of space, the lack of a shop, the lack of a loading dock, the lack of proper power, and the lack of office and rehearsal space.

However I will still mourn the old Roxy Theatre even when a new one is erected in its place. The old Roxy was a place of warmth, a place of family and it stood as a beacon of light on the street illuminating our lives and the manner we chose to share our stories on its stage.

You can never go back, but you can hang onto the things that matter and that help make our lives richer when we share our hearts in a safe place. Sometimes richer is not just a newer version, but the old made new again for all to share.

Bradley





# 30th Anniversary

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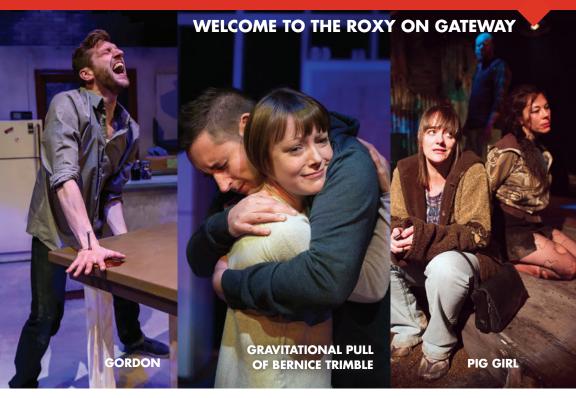


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# **TALK-BACK NIGHT**

Friday November 18, 2016 Following the Performance 9:30pm

Join Darrin Hagen & Bradley Moss for a discussion about the trailer-court world of *Tornado Magnet* in a post-show talk-back on Friday November 8. The team will talk about the history of *Tornado Magnet*, its connection to Darrin's life and why Theatre Network chose to visit Dotty Parson's kitchen as part of their 42nd Season. The talk-back is free of charge and open to anyone who has seen the show. Dotty will have a pot of her world-famous coffee ready to go!



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# THEATRE NETWORK BIOS



# **Darrin Hagen** – *Playwright, Dotty Parsons, Composer/Sound Design*

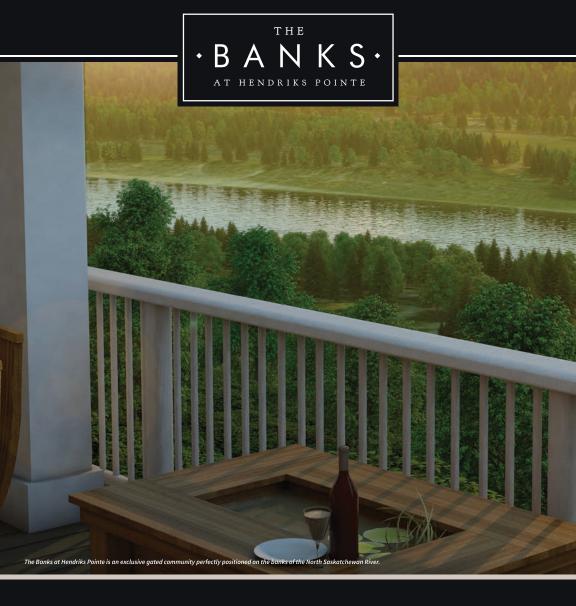
Darrin Hagen is an award-winning playwright, composer and drag artiste. He is the author of THE EDMONTON QUEEN, which won a Sterling Award and was published in book form by Brindle & Glass Publishing. Darrin is the Artistic Director of Guys In Disguise, which is celebrating three decades of creating drag comedies that have toured across North America. He has received 7 Sterling awards and 40 Sterling nominations for his work in the Edmonton theatre scene. He also received the AMPIA for Best Male Host. Other plays by Darrin include WITH BELLS ON (nominated for Outstanding New Play); WITCH HUNT AT THE STRAND (nominated for Outstanding New Fringe Work); BUDDY (nominated for Outstanding New Play); BITCHSLAP!; THE NEO-NANCIES: HITLER'S KICKLINE; and TORNADO MAGNET: A SALUTE TO TRAILER COURT WOMEN (published by Brindle & Glass), Recently, Darrin and his cohort Trevor Schmidt debuted the world premiere of KLONDYKES as part of the Theatre Network season, garnering 5 Sterling nominations. Other plays by Darrin and Trevor include FLORA & FAWNA'S FIELD TRIP! (Sterling Winner: Outstanding New Fringe Work, Calgary Critics Award: Best Touring Production), PSYCHOBABBLE, TRIPLE PLATNUM, DRAGULA, and the recent Fringe hit PREPARE FOR THE WORST! (all produced by Guys In Disguise). Other collaborations include TYPHOON JUDY (co-written with Christopher Peterson; nominated for Outstanding Production of a Musical): PILEDRIVER! (co-written with Wes Borg, nominated for several Sterlings); MEN ARE STOOPID, WOMEN ARE CRA-AZY (co-written with Chris Craddock). Plays by Hagen have been produced in Seattle, West Hollywood, Key West, Orlando, Minneapolis, Rehoboth Beach, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Regina, and many other smaller Canadian cities. WITH BELLS ON in 2014 marked the debut of his work in Europe as part of the Ireland Drama Competition. For 20 years Darrin also directed and curated the legendary LOUD & QUEER CABARET, and is the editor of Queering the Way: The Loud & Queer Anthology, a collection of many of the writers that had been mentored by this unique event. In 2005, Hagen was named one of 100 Edmontonians of the Century. To the best of his knowledge, he's the only Drag Queen on that list. He is among the inaugural inductees to the Edmonton Queer Hall of Fame, and in 2013 he was inducted into the Q Hall of Fame Canada for his lifelong contribution to the quality of life for Canada's LGBTQ community. And last month he was named one of the 25 Most Influential Alberta Artists by the AFA. Darrin Hagen is a member of the Playwrights' Guild of Canada.



# Neon - Stage Manager, Makeup Artist

Neon is so happy to be a part of this production. Tornado Magnet is one of her favourite shows to stage manage. She is a founding member of Guys in Disguise. Her Stage Managing credits include: EDMONTON QUEEN, WITH BELLS ON, TYPHOON JUDY, TORNADO MAGNET (original production) and KLONDYKES, all with Guys in Disguise. Neon is also a makeup artist with credits that include: HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH (Theatre Network), Edmonton Opera (2000-2006), Edmonton Musical Theatre (2001-2015), DRAGULA (Guys in Disguise), KLONDYKES (Guys in Disguise), OH SUSANNAH

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# THEATRE NETWORK BIOS

### Neon – Stage Manager, Makeup Artist (continued)

(2000-2014). She has the great pleasure of working as the Hospitality Coordinator for the Edmonton international Street Performers Festival for the last 17 years. She sang with the legendary girl group *The Divas* for over 15 years. Neon is also proud to be a part of the Theatre Network team, working in the box office. In her spare time Neon enjoys sleeping and collecting awesome jewelry. Sometimes she also gets to socialize with her amazing friends and family. She truly hopes you enjoy this show!



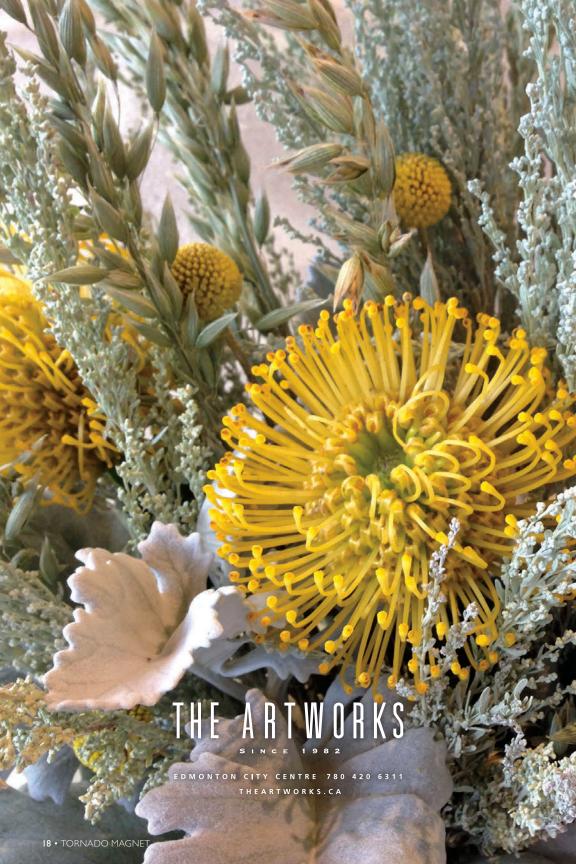
# Scott Peters – Lighting Design

Scott first started working with Darrin and Guys in Disguise in the early 1990's on shows like POPPY, FRANKENSTEIN (Leave It To Jane Theatre), WALKING THE DEAD (Phoenix Theatre), and LOUD N QUEER (Catalyst Theatre). Since then he has worked with Darrin on many shows, including BUDDY, KLONDYKES, ARMSTRONG'S WAR, THE LEISURE SOCIETY (Theatre Network), LITTLE ORPHAN TRANNY, WITH BELLS ON (Guys in Disguise), and many others. Scott's recent design credits include TEN OUT OF TWELVE (Wild Side Productions), LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, ROMEO AND JULIET (Freewill Players), GORDON (Theatre Network), and Sterling Award winning set and lighting design for BURNING BLUEBEARD (Edmonton Actor's Theatre). Scott and Darrin also share a birthday, but one is a year older.



# Trevor Schmidt – Set & Costume Design

Trevor is the Artistic Director of Northern Light Theatre for the past 13 years, and been involved with NLT for the past 18 years as a performer, director, designer, and playwright, as well as being a multiple Sterling award winner. He has been awarded twice as a playwright (THE WATERMELON GIRLS, and CHANGE ROOM), twice for directing (the Canadian premieres of THE 4TH PRESENT AN UNNAMED LOVE-SUICIDE and Carol Anne Duffy's THE WORLD'S WIFE). He received the Outstanding Fringe Performance award for the one-man show COFFEE DAD. CHICKEN MOM. AND THE FABULOUS BUDDHA BOI, penned by Nick Green which toured to New York as part of the FRIGID FESTIVAL. As an actor, he has been seen in ANGELS IN AMERICA Part 1: Millennium Approaches, LOVE! VALOR! COMPASSION!, WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN, THE BUSY WORLD IS HUSHED (Outstanding Male Lead Actor nomination) and created the role of Bette Davis in the international touring success BITCHSLAP!. His plays have been produced across Canada and far away as Australia (MABEL STARK!). He has created and choreographed a one-woman dance piece entitled MARKED for the Expanse Dance Festival that was extended and nominated for a Sterling for Outstanding New Work. Most recently, he was awarded the DIALOG Award for Excellence in Artistic Direction as part of the Mayor's Evening for the Arts. He sits on the advisory boards of the Grant MacEwan University Theatre Arts and Red Deer College Theatre Performance and Creation programme and is an Artistic Associate of GUYS IN DISGUISE Theatre company, where he was last seen in FLORA & FAWNA'S FIFI D TRIP!





# A CONVERSATION...

# Colleen Murphy

# With Colleen Murphy

For our 2016/2017 Season Theatre Network has invited Governor General Award Winning Playwright Colleen Murphy (ARMSTRONG'S WAR, PIG GIRL, THE DECEMBER MAN) to interview each of our writers as part of the Mainstage Season.

First up, we hear from TORNADO MAGNET playwright Darrin Hagen.

# Your writing is often wildly funny and bitingly dark and provocative but it never strays far from your big heart. Where do you get your tremendous heart?

I always thought heart was the product of the experiences you live through. I was an outsider in many ways – as painful as that was at times, I am grateful now for the fact that it allowed me to view the world from the sidelines.

I tend to write about real people, which means you can't be cavalier or flippant when you put them on a page or a stage. There's a real memory there and that demands a certain respect from a writer.

# In Tornado Magnet you play your own mother. How easy or how hard is not only to write the character of your mother growing up with you and your brother, but also to perform her as well?

I performed this play for 5 years before I allowed Mom to come see it. The thought of her being upset or insulted by it terrified me. I actually invited other moms in Edmonton to come and see it so I could quiz them about how they would feel about the play if that was their life being performed by their son. Their answers made me feel better about it – but it was still very strange to be telling those stories when I knew she was sitting in the audience.

Dotty doesn't look a thing like my mom – but she sure sounds like my mom.

Writing the stories was actually pretty simple, as my mom is a natural teller of tales, and I could hear her voice so clearly as I wrote. And I was the kid that liked to listen to her talk to all the neighbour ladies – mom used to accuse me of "sittin' at the table with your ears flapping". Nowadays mom is always impressed by my memory of details from my early childhood – so much of that is because she told such fun stories.



# BETWEEN PLAYWRIGHTS

You call the social class in *Tornado Magnet* 'trailer trash'. We don't see enough plays from this class or from the 'working class' or the 'working poor' or the 'welfare class'. Why do you think they have, for the most part, disappeared from our stages?

When I saw 5 minutes of *Trailer Park Boys* it made my blood boil. It takes very little imagination to create insulting stereotypes.

To draw people that live under the poverty line, or in the lower-class, you need to have an insight into why they are in that situation in the first place. Empathy and insight keep you from having fun at their expense. Context is everything though – I once submitted a comedy song about Christmas in the trailer court to a CBC call for submissions, only to be told they wouldn't accept it because it wasn't fair to make fun of poor people during the holidays. I had submitted something that was 100% real and true; I had found humour in the pain. And they assumed I was insulting the lower class. I had to remind them that I had grown up in that world.

I love that the view Dotty sees through her window never changes. She says, 'I would never find a better view.' It roots her to the trailer and to the earth. What roots you, Darrin, because to be as prolific as you are, there must be something strong and steady in your creative life?

My view has always been important too. I'm facing the window as I type this.

Music is my blood. My relationship with some of the artists I listen to goes back over forty years. I have a vast collection and it fires up my brain in so many ways – I almost always listen to something while I write. Because I'm a composer, whatever I hear is constantly getting dissected and analysed – like math in motion; formulas, scales, key changes... even while I'm doing something else, it's always happening. Strangely, lyrics often get past me. I sometimes don't even notice them because my brain is following beats and structures and instruments. But it means my brain is always intensely working through something, like a machine in the background. It keeps my memory sharp to for acting. And I believe it creates a way of thinking that's moving on several levels in different directions simultaneously.

continued on page 24







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# ... CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION



Solitude is important as well. I think people still think of me like I'm some wild party animal, but in reality I'm up early, and I spend most of my time at home working. If I'm not working towards a deadline, I just create music or start writing something. It will always come in handy later.

Laughter is my oxygen. Saying something out loud and listening to waves of laughter in response to something you wrote – that's better than applause.

And of course, having a partner that sticks with you through your formative years as you figure out your artistic course.... That's essential.

I have not yet seen Flora and Fawna's Field Trip but hear it's hysterically funny and very moving at the same time. You and Trevor Schmidt created it and star in it and rumor has it there's a sequel on the way – hurray. Your wit is a gift – how has it protected you from the world and also given you the courage to open up completely to the world?

Humour is born in pain. I hated being the one being made fun of. Even as a kid, I knew I could be funny. I just needed to get away from the unfunny bullies that seemed like they were everywhere. Being in drag in the 80s at Flashback is where I really learned the power of humour... and it's how I got addicted to making people laugh.

I have had the great pleasure of working with you as a playwright and a composer. You're also an actor, a drag queen, a teacher, a director, an activist and one half of *Guys in Disguise* with your partner Kevin Hendricks. Given all your talents, if you could do one thing to change the world, what might that be?

I'd make everyone in the world write a book, because there's no end to what you will learn about yourself spending that much time thinking about life. And I think that kind of introspection makes for a better person. The very act of telling your story changes you forever.

Every life is a work of art, and every piece of art changes the world.

# **BETWEEN PLAYWRIGHTS**

You were chosen one of 100 Edmontonians of the Century and, more recently, named one of Alberta's 25 most influential artists. What do you imagine could entice you to ever leave this city?

I don't think I would leave now... maybe the right opportunity, although being a freelancer I'm not really looking for a job. I would love to be able to afford a place in the country someday and split my time between the city and the country. But Edmonton is a place where good things keep happening to me. And now — at this age — I'm getting more and more rooted in Edmonton. It's hard to imagine living anywhere else now.

### What are you looking forward to working on next?

As I type this I am racing towards deadline for the new incarnation of *Witch Hunt at the Strand*. And then I have a few months of well-deserved time off. I have a play in my head called *10 Funerals* that I am dying to write, as well as a new comedy for the festive season. I also have several plays that are sitting waiting for finishing touches. So the next few months is all about hibernating, writing, and baking.









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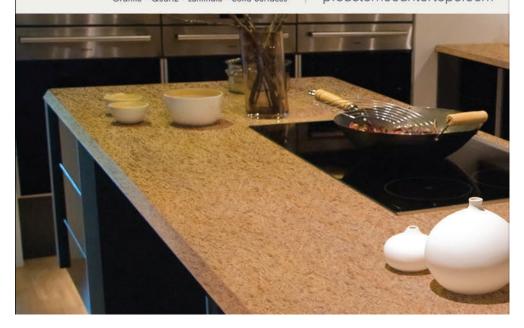








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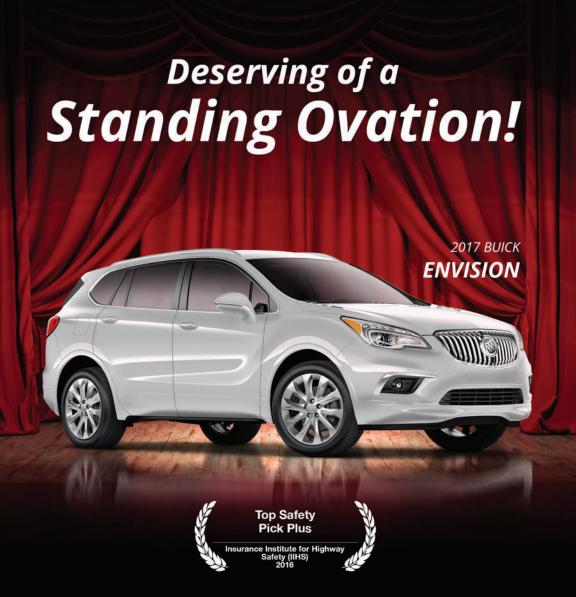
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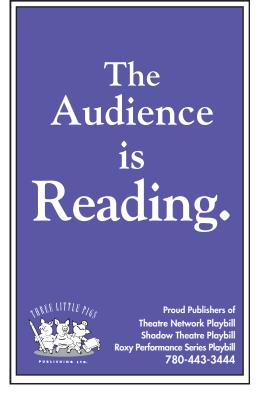
We would like to extend a warm thank you to all of our volunteers that have helped us in the past. Also, to those who continue to volunteer with us we appreciate your dedication and commitment to the success of Theatre Network. Bravo!

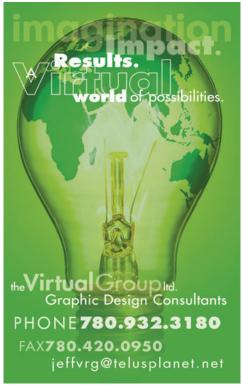
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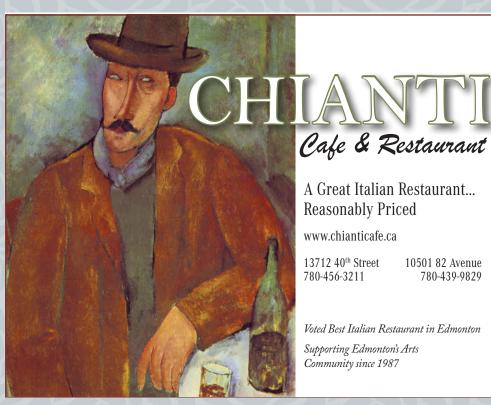
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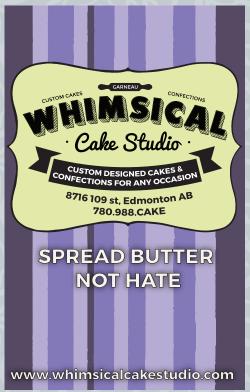
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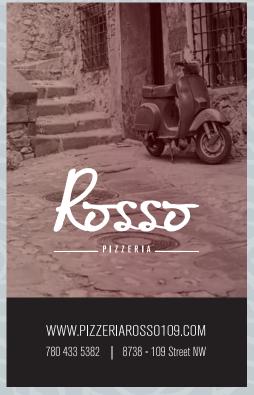
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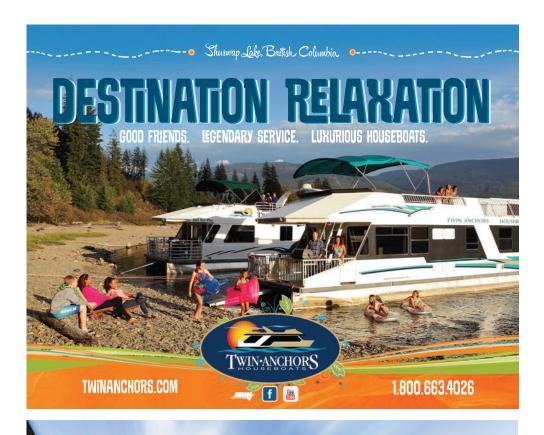
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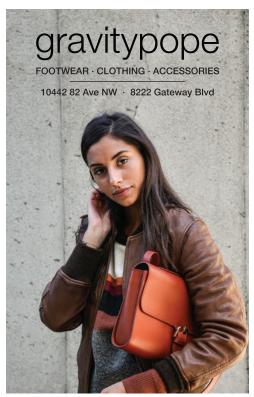


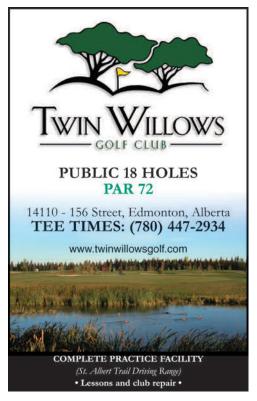












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