

St. Albert  
Gazette

StAlbertTODAY.ca

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# Dead fish floating in Sturgeon River a concern for BLESS

BY JESSICA NELSON  
Staff Writer

The white underbellies of dead fish floating catch the sun and contrast against the murky Sturgeon River. About a dozen protruding bellies dot the water from the Ray Gibbon Drive bridge construction site to the boat launch at Riel Recreation Park.

Dave Burkhart, Big Lake Environmental Support Society (BLESS) secretary and board member, said he has never seen so many dead fish in the Sturgeon and he is concerned about why they died.

“To see this number [of fish] in this concentrated area, particularly with the construction activities in conjunction with that — it’s rare. It’s really rare to see that number of [dead] fish in one place,” he told *The Gazette* as he stood along the riverbank on Aug. 8.

Burkhart initially noticed the dead fish on Aug. 3. He said he counted about a dozen of them and reported the fish to the City of St. Albert, Office of the Environment, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Alberta Fish and Wildlife.

The environmental co-ordinator with the city and a fish biologist with Alberta Fish and Wildlife said this is an annual event compounded by angling in the area.

Melissa Logan, Sturgeon River and Natural Areas environmental co-ordinator with the city, said her contractor initially reported 20 dead fish around the construction area, which they investigated on Aug. 2.

Logan said she monitors the site weekly, and she isn’t concerned that silt due to the construction had anything to do with the fish deaths.

See “Fish deaths” page 7



ROCK’N IT — Sisters (left to right) Petranella, 4, Natanya, 6, and Odelia Darnhoorn, 4, sit in the driver’s seat of Tim Streisel’s 1941 Chevy pickup at the Rock’n August Show and Shine on Saturday. See more photos from Rock’n August on page 26.

# Flooding on Grandin street worries residents

BY JENNIFER HENDERSON  
Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Art Dack has lived in Grandin for more than 30 years and every time the forecast calls for rain, he gets a bit nervous.

If he is out running errands, he rushes home when a big storm moves in to make sure his property doesn’t flood.

When there is heavy rainfall, Dack, who lives on Grosvenor Boulevard, must work to make sure debris doesn’t get stuck in the storm water drains on his street, or the water will pool and back up onto his driveway.

On Aug. 1 a rainstorm rolled into St. Albert, forcing Dack and his neighbours to gather outside with hockey sticks and rakes to clear the tree debris from the streets so the water could flow into the drains.

“When you get that intense rain coupled with either wind or hail, it just knocks all the leaves and branches off the trees,” Dack said.

The branches and leaves fall with the water and get swept through the Grandin neighbourhood to the low-lying corner on Grosvenor Boulevard, where the storm drains quickly become clogged with debris, causing the water from the neighbourhood to pool into a lake.

“It’s packed so hard. It’s just like trying to remove sod,” Dack said.

A heavy storm Aug. 1 occurred right before garbage day, knocking over neighbourhood garbage bins as trash bags floated down the streets, said neighbour Evie Rastas, who took a video of the river of water surging down the boulevard and creating a small lake

in front of her house.

While the water only surged a few metres up his driveway during the Aug. 1 storm, Dack wants to permanently stop the water from rising, because in the past it has pooled up his driveway and down through his backyard, forcing him to file a \$150,000 insurance claim for the damages.

That storm in 2008 saw much of downtown St. Albert flooded from rainfall, and washed out Dack’s backyard while he was away on vacation. He arrived home to the destruction in his backyard, with neighbourhood debris piled up near his fence. The water had washed through his yard, ripping up bricks and stones and dragging them to the lowest point in a pool near the fence.

See “Flood risk” page 6

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