Activist History fun fact #1

As many great ideas start, the idea for the now famous ‘teddy bear catapult’ began over a few too many beers in a Whyte avenue bar. In 2001, the Summit of the Americas was being held in Quebec City and a wall was built to keep the leaders from those peacefully protesting. To counter this, a group of Edmonton activists proposed the building of a catapult, one that only had the strength of the average human arm. Meant to creatively mock the ‘medieval tactic’ of building a physical barrier, men and women dressed in medieval garb and flung various stuffed animals over the wall. After a Quebec activist who had nothing to do with the action was charged with ‘possession of a deadly weapon’, Edmontonians in an act of solidarity turned themselves and their ‘dangerous weapons’, teddy bears, into the police station. A similar act of solidarity occurred as Edmonton activists on their way back to Edmonton, smuggled teddy bears into parliament and threw them down onto MP’s. The catapult soon gained a reputation as one of Canada’s most creative and effective activist actions, so much so that there is a trivial pursuit card about it!

Activist History fun fact #2

The one-way street in front of the Sugarbowl on 109th and 88 Ave used to be a trap for cyclists heading to the university, resulting in the unfair ticketing of many students. So, in the middle of the night two Edmonton activists, armed only with a van and a bucket of paint, decided to create a bike lane. They issued a press release announcing the appearance of the ‘road doctor’ who would work towards making Edmonton bike friendly, one bike lane at a time. The city in its long tradition of clearing away anything not officially approved, came and did away with the newly popular bike lane. However, thanks to the tireless repainting efforts of the road doctor and his companions, the city relented and students can now bike without fear of being ticketed.