



## **A Love Affair in Green**

Written by Katie Wallbaum

The North Saskatchewan River valley in Edmonton has a unique ability to connect the people of the city, not only physically but emotionally as well. Both pedestrian bridges and vehicular bridges serve to connect the city of Edmonton across the vast river but the river itself connects the people of Edmonton in a special way. Whether one is an average Edmontonian who enjoys a sunset stroll through the river valley parks with a loved one or whether one is an avid runner, perhaps training for a marathon, the river valley is equally intrinsic to each citizen's love of the city. As Lou Hetke writes in the introduction to his river valley walk-run guide, "when I moved to Edmonton in 1975, I instantly fell in love with the river valley and to this date I still feel this same passion. For most people when you mention Edmonton they think about our prime amenity - the river valley."<sup>1</sup> The river valley, whether used as the backdrop for a romantic first date or as a training ground for runners and cyclists, is a treasured piece of Edmonton's geography. From the Wild Rose Ramblers, a walking group which travels the river valley, to Lou Hetke and his cohort of runners, the river valley has a devoted group of followers who want to share their passion for the "jewel" of the city. Both the Ramblers and Hetke have published books marking their favourite walking or running paths through the valley. These will not be the last books printed on the subject, as Edmontonians have an affinity for the the "ribbon of green" which stretches beautifully through the city and wish to share that joy with other citizens and people from around Alberta, and even the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Lou Hetke, *Run Around Edmonton*, (Care Publications: Edmonton, 1993), 5.