

Cheap Thrills

BY LIESA EVANS

Through the open windows of our homes blows a fresh breeze that whispers to us a vague but familiar feeling. The shelves and floors of our coat closets are littered with toques and mittens haphazardly thrown in to be lost and forgotten for another year. Down on our hands and knees, we seek out our sandals in the farthest reaches of our bedroom closets or under our beds. As each new sign emerges, we become gradually tuned into the message.

It's time to take the family outside.

And we will tell you where to take them.

Bring your whole herd to **Hulabazoo** and enjoy a fun-filled day at the Calgary Zoo. It's a Zoo Out There! Proudly brought to you by 88.9 Shine FM & *Calgary's Child Magazine*. May 9, 10am to 4pm. Admission: One free child's admission with each paid adult admission (must present downloaded online discount coupon, visit calgaryschild.com, cjsi.ca or calgaryzoo.org for discount coupon). Free for Calgary Zoo Season Pass Holders.

Families will flock to Hulabazoo to enjoy a fun-filled day at the Calgary Zoo. There will be a Go Wild Scavenger Hunt, Calgary Zoo naturalists will be on hand for lively presentations throughout the day, our entertainment stage under the 'big top' will

feature interactive theatre, performances and more! Roving performers are sure to bring giggles to the whole gang and in the hands-on area there will activities for kids of all ages. Sponsors and exhibitors will be featured in the exhibition area on the Calgary Zoo grounds.

This year, the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary turns 80 years old and they have a flurry of 2009 activities planned. On Sunday, May 10, join them for the **International Migratory Bird Day Festival**. The free event, which runs from noon to 3pm, features walks, crafts and games for the whole family. It's a perfect way to celebrate Mother's Day. More details can be found in the 2009 Parks Program Guide at calgary.ca.

Or how about a day trip instead? On Sunday, May 24, The City of Calgary is offering **Family Frank Lake Tours**. Imagine you and your family crouched into a bird-blind in the middle of a 3,000-acre wetland just outside of High River, AB. Bring your binoculars and water-proof shoes as your day includes bird watching, dip netting for pond insects and a walk along the shoreline. Lunch and transportation on a coach bus is provided. And it's a great deal costing only \$35 for a maximum of five people, \$8 for each additional person. Meet location is the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary at 8:15am and you will be out for most of the day. Pre-registration is required by phoning: 403-268-3800. Refer to Course Number: 229717.

And with the seasonal weather comes the urge to don a bathing suit and splash around the water. Always a good deal in Calgary, the **Southland Leisure Centre** raises the bar making both Mother's and Father's Day an even better family deal.

On Mothers' Day, Sunday, May 10, start the day with a mom and child workout at 9am. As the workout ends, you will find yourself in the water park for some fun until 11am.

On Father's Day, Sunday June 21, start the day with a dad and child dodge ball game at 9am, then cool down in the wave pool until 11am.

The best thing about both days is you will be charged only the regular entrance admission. No extra fees for your special day. Further details can be found in the 2009 Recreation Program Guide at calgary.ca.

Other cheap thrills

Always a bit of a bargain hunter, Kaila Burke started clipping coupons innocently enough. She had just started a family and was trying to cut down costs. Now a mother of two, the 29-year-old has become a bit of an expert at tracking down a Calgary deal. For this issue, she shares with us a few of her ideas on affordable family entertainment for the spring.

Online coupons: Visit calgaryattractions.com for printable coupons for local attractions including the Calgary Zoo.


Click on our 'Coupons' category at calgaryschild.com for some great discount deals in the categories: baby & childcare; birthday parties; class, programs & camps; family fun, attractions & events; and shopping, services & photographers. You can also click on 'Play time' for some cheap thrills around Calgary that won't break the bank.

Discount movie theatres: To take your family of four to a discount movie theatre will set you back a mere \$30 including treats! Check show times at moviedomes.com and canyonmeadowscinemas.ca.

Festival fun: It's festival season in Calgary. There are many to choose from including the 4TH Street Lilac Festival on Sunday, May 31. Also, don't miss the 2009 Calgary International Children's Festival which runs May 19 to 23. More information can be found at 4streetcalgary.com/lilacfestival and calgarychildfest.org.

But until then, try to forget about all that cold weather gear you left abandoned in your closets. Let them get lost in the darkest corners of your homes as you embrace the season and enjoy some of Calgary's cheap thrills.

Liesa is a freelance writer based in Calgary. Soon to graduate from the SAIT journalism program, she has already written for some local publications including SAIT *Alumni Link* magazine. Samples of her work can be found at liesaevans.ca. **CCM**



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