

Mill Woods Mosaic

July 15, 2025

Volume 17/No. 203

Tel. (780) 465-7526

The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast

Independent • Non-partisan • Interdenominational

This month:

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Carved in Stone



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Happy Canada Day in Mill Woods!

Thousands of people enjoyed the Canada Day celebration at Mill Woods Park on July 1. As every year since 1990, many dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors have made this celebration possible.

Photo: Mill Woods Presidents Council's beloved Canada Day Moose sharing a festive elbow bump with City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright of Ward Sspomitapi. More photos on page 9.

Photo: Sangeetha Vasanthkumar

Canada launches measures to support victims of wildfires

As Canada's climate continues to warm faster than the global average, extreme weather conditions will become more frequent and severe. This will contribute to increased drought and wildfire risks, which threaten the health, safety and economic stability of people and communities in Canada. The Government of Canada is committed to supporting those affected across the country.

On July 2, Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced special measures to help people and communities affected by wildfires. Canadian citizens and permanent residents whose passports, citizenship certificates, permanent resident cards or other Canadian travel documents were lost, damaged or made inaccessible by the wildfires can apply for free replacements. If they already paid to replace documents because of the wildfires (on or after April 1, 2025), they can request a refund.

Temporary residents, including international students, temporary foreign workers and other visitors, who were directly affected by the wildfires can replace their status documents and apply to restore or extend their status in Canada, or to renew their work or study permit free of charge. The requirement for temporary residents to apply for the restoration of their status within 90 days of losing their status will also be waived for those impacted by wildfires.

Additionally, as of June 11, 2025, application and biometric fees are being waived for foreign emergency services personnel coming to Canada to help fight wildfires.

These measures are in effect until November 30, 2025, providing time for people to secure necessary documents and focus on recovery and safety.

Learn more about who is eligible, how to apply and what replacement documents are covered under the 2025 special

measures for wildfires:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/special-measures/emergencies-canada/wildfires-2025.html>

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New MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie

The provincial constituency Edmonton-Ellerslie, which is located in the southeast part of the city, has a new Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Alberta.

The candidate of the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP), Gurtej Singh Brar, won the byelection on June 23 with 4,327 votes (50.84%). He defeated the candidate of the United Conservative Party (UCP), Naresh Bhardwaj (38.06%) who was MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie from 2008 until 2015, and the Liberal candidate Manpreet Tiwana (4.82%).

The byelection was called after the resignation of Rod Loyola, who was MLA for the area since 2015.

Brar was born in India and came to Canada from New Zealand in 2011 and made his home in southeast Edmonton. Until his election, he worked as a radio/TV host on Connect FM, OMNI TV, CAN TV and several other media outlets, and for the past 14 years, he has also worked in the oil and gas industry in quality control.



Gurtej Singh Brar

Photo: Office of MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie

Please read Brar's column on page 6

Zoning Bylaw Renewal Review

Council wrapped up for summer recess this past week after dealing with a number of time-sensitive items. For one item in particular, I want to provide some background, along with the facts, that led us to the 4-day public hearing marathon taking action on the Zoning Bylaw Renewal (ZBR) Review.

In 2023, after many years of consultation and development, this Council approved the Zoning Bylaw Renewal with direction to Administration to come back with a one-year review for us to assess, and consider possible amendments. That work was completed and presented at the June 3rd Urban Planning Committee meeting. There we heard from over 60 speakers on the ZBR Review and limited Councillor questions to two minutes per round. After hearing from speakers and asking questions of Administration, a few motions were tabled and debated in order to bring forward to Council at a public hearing tentatively scheduled for June 30th. To meet the timelines for advertising prior to the public hearing, Committee continued into the evening to complete the item and adjourned just after 11 p.m.

A public hearing was legally required as Committee was recommending changes to the bylaw. In anticipation, the Office of the City Clerk reached out to Councillors on May 15th to determine their availability for this and other time sensitive items that needed to come before Council.

The agenda for the Public hearing was posted on June 12th, and as the speakers list began to grow, the Clerk's office once again reached out to request Councillor availability. As noted by Travis Pawlyk, Branch Manager for Development Services,

Administration is required, under the Municipal Government Act (MGA), to put forward to Council all zoning applications as they are completed.

Jo-Anne Wright

**Edmonton
City Councillor
for Ward
Sspomitapi**



Unfortunately, the exact numbers can't be anticipated nor can we limit the number of speakers on each item. And as I understand it, historically the volume of applications tends to increase in the months leading up to a municipal election.

We arrived in Chambers on June 30th with 32 items on the agenda. 12 were not selected for debate, 12 were postponed to the August 18/19 public hearing – which will also require additional time . . . and that was already being planned for by the Clerk's office, subject to Councillor availability. Under the Council Procedure Bylaw, 18155, "If all agenda items are not completed by the scheduled or extended end time, the Council or Standing Committee meeting will continue on the next business day unless a motion is passed specifying an alternate date."

Seven items were dealt with on June 30th – although with the two items related to District Planning, some of the speakers were left confused as to what they were actually speaking to.

There were rumours of a motion, that would be illegal under the MGA, to place a moratorium on development in the City.

That left us with only one item to debate – the ZBR Review. It was the further evolution in city building as we plan for the future. It was intended to be a gentle transformation over time to increase density, and thereby tax revenue, rather than continuing with costly urban sprawl. But for some, it did seem like too much, too fast.

I appreciated being able to hear from speakers and learn from their perspective as it helped me to arrive at my decision. It also gave me the time to reflect on growing up in Fulton Place – a now mature and redeveloping neighbourhood. In fact, it was a Golden home in which our multi-generational family of 11 lived. I've considered how I might react to an eight unit multi-family building going up next to my parents' home – if they were still there. In order to downsize, they needed to move out further into the suburbs to find something appropriate to accommodate their needs as they aged.

I realized that an 8-plex could bring back the children to the neighbourhood playgrounds and local pool, reinvestigate the schools in the area, and provide 8 new families the same opportunity I had to grow up in a bustling community. It could also provide

vide the option for older neighbours to age in place in their community, without the worry of home maintenance, and still stay connected to friends and familiar community activities.

I supported the recommendations dealing with design changes as that will help to ease some of the concerns noted by speakers. This bylaw review was not intended to address parking minimums, waste services or construction site safety. There is other work being undertaken to respond to those concerns. And by directing administration to complete a more thorough analysis on reducing the maximum number of units to six, will lead to a more data-driven approach. After all, their initial recommendation to the Urban Planning Committee was for 8 units.

I'd like to extend my thanks to all the speakers, staff and council members that have taken the time over the years to get us where we are today . . . and into the future.

If you have any comments or concerns, I encourage you as always to reach out to my office at 780-496-8148 or jo-anne.wright@edmonton.ca.

Under City Council's policy C618E, funding from the Ward budget for communications past May 31st in an election year is prohibited. Although this column is from the perspective of your Ward Sspomitapi Councillor, I want to be clear that the cost for it is paid for by me personally.

Canada launches measures to support those affected by 2025 wildfires

Continued from front page

"We remain firm in our commitment to support people and communities impacted by increasingly severe wildfires in Canada," said Lena Metlege Diab, federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. "These measures will make it easier for Canadian citizens, permanent residents and temporary residents to replace lost documents. They will also help foreign emergency services personnel come to Canada and begin their critical work more quickly, when they are needed most. I'd like to extend my gratitude to the emergency and first responders for their dedication to protect our communities."

"Wildfire season is in full swing, and Canadians are feeling its effects in every part of their lives," said Eleanor Olszewski, Minister of Emergency

Management and Community Resilience. "As first responders, the RCMP and volunteers work around the clock to protect communities, we're doing our part to support those affected. By replacing lost documents at no cost and waiving biometric fees for international firefighters, we're helping ease some of the stress during this difficult time."

Quick facts

- These measures do not apply to employer-specific work permit holders wanting to transition to an open work permit.
- Temporary residents applying to extend their status continue to benefit from maintained status and eligibility to work while applications are processed.
- In 2024, approximately 792 foreign emergency services personnel came to Canada to help fight wildfires.

The next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic will be published on August 15, 2025. The deadline is Friday, August 8, 2025.

Edmonton Arts Council and the City of Edmonton Present

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to learn more about Green Shack Shows and other Edmonton arts events!

Edmonton arts council

Pathways to end gender-based violence

Alberta's government is launching the Community Pathways to Justice grant to support survivors of gender-based violence.

A responsive justice system is essential to ensuring survivors of gender-based violence are supported, and people committing these crimes are held to account. To support survivors of gender-based violence, Alberta's government is launching a new grant program to strengthen support services across the province.

Through the Community Pathways to Justice grant, \$1.25 million in one-time funding will be made available to help community-based organizations and Indigenous communities enhance access to justice and provide survivor-centered services. This initiative is part

of Alberta's 10-year strategy to end gender-based violence by preventing harm, holding offenders accountable and empowering those impacted. The grant supports programs that focus on victim support, education and awareness, legal navigation, system coordination and restorative justice.

"We are making this significant investment because gender-based violence has no place in society," said Mickey Amery, Alberta's Minister of Justice and Attorney General. "This funding empowers community programs to help survivors identify gender-based violence, know how to respond and have the support they need to move forward if they are impacted. Alberta's government is standing with survivors and the organi-

zations that support them."

"We are leading with action," said Tanya Fir, Alberta's Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women. "This grant delivers real support when and where survivors need it most, a key part of our made-in-Alberta strategy to end gender-based violence."

Funding will be awarded to eligible Alberta-based organizations, including registered not-for-profits, charities, and Indigenous communities. Grants range from \$50,000 to \$150,000 and must be used for operational activities. The application process will open on July 14 and will close on August 1.

"No one should have to live in fear of violence, and no survivor should have to face their journey to justice alone," said Rechie Valdez, federal Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism). "Supported by our National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence, this grant is a meaningful step in making sure more Albertans can access the support, advocacy and safety they deserve. Our federal government is proud to partner with Alberta to help build a future where gender-based violence has no place, and where every survivor knows they are seen, heard and supported."

Alberta's 10-year Strategy to End Gender-Based Violence builds on our province's strengths – across government and with community partners – to achieve our vision of a province

where every Albertan lives in safety, free from gender-based violence.

Quick facts

- For more information on eligibility criteria, funding priorities and how to apply, interested applicants may attend an upcoming virtual information session.

Details can be found here: www.alberta.ca/grant-to-support-survivors-of-gender-based-violence.

- The Community Pathways to Justice grant is one of the short-term actions identified in the 10-year Strategy to End Gender-Based Violence to support survivors and all those impacted where and when they need it.

- Funding for this grant is part of Alberta's four-year, \$54-million bilateral agreement with the federal government that was announced in 2023.

- Through Budget 2025, Alberta's government is committing \$188 million in direct supports to programs and services that address gender-based violence and support survivors.

- Gender-based violence refers to acts of violence, intimidation or coercion aimed at people where the victim's gender is a relevant factor, and can take many forms, including intimate partner and family violence, sexual violence, stalking, harassment, human trafficking, financial abuse and online exploitation.

**Discrimination and racism
have no place in our hearts,
our homes and our world.**

A Safer, Stronger, and More Inclusive Edmonton-Ward Karhiio

As your City Councillor, I am committed to addressing the pressing issues facing our community and ensuring real action for a better future. Here's how we'll move forward together:

1. Property Tax | Fairness for Homeowners

- Advocate against property tax hikes that are not in keeping with cost of inflation. Instead focus on fiscal prudence and cutting waste.
- Protect condo owners from mismanagement and surprise fees.
- Support seniors & fixed-income households—no one should be priced out of their home
- Affordable spending every tax dollar must deliver real value

2. Crime & Safety | Public Behaviour

- More police patrols & community-led safety programs
- Stricter enforcement of public behaviour bylaws
- Safer transit with zero tolerance for harassment and drug use
- Better lighting & surveillance in high-risk areas

3. Transportation | Reliable & Safe Transit for All

- More security on LRT to deter crime
- Better bus routes—shorter wait times, expanded service
- Affordable fares and clean, well-maintained transit

4. Business Development | Empowering Local Entrepreneurs

- Business hubs in every ward—because success shouldn't be limited to downtown
- Simpler permits & faster approvals for small and home-based businesses
- Inclusive growth—ensuring newcomers and diverse communities get fair opportunities
- Keep local dollars local—prioritizing Edmonton's economy first



*Together, We Can Build a
Better Edmonton-Karhiio*



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VOTE ON OR BEFORE MONDAY October 20

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Mill Woods Mosaic

The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast
Published on the 15th day of each month

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The Mill Woods Mosaic publishes a variety of opinions.
Unsigned editorials express the view of the publisher.
Signed pieces express the views of the writers only.

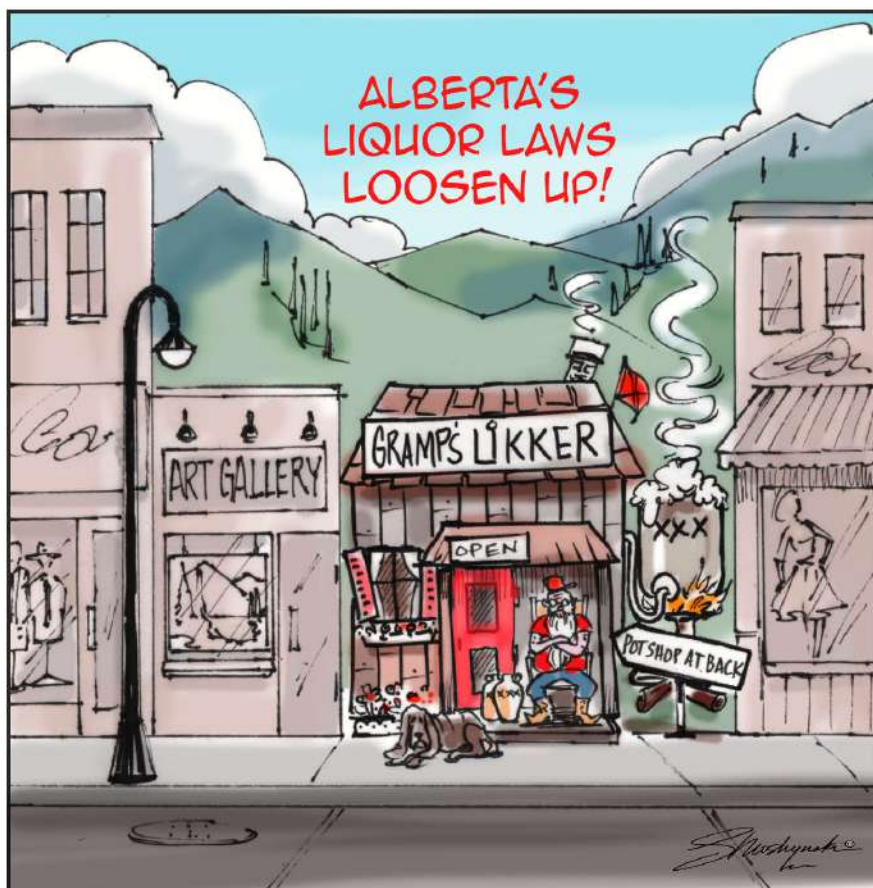
Our Opinion

A slippery slope

Alberta's conservative government wants to ban books from school libraries it deems sexually explicit. Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides announced new rules governing books in school libraries will come into effect on Oct. 1. He said that the move is about putting rules in place for schools that until now have had no standard for selecting age-appropriate books for its libraries.

This is a slippery slope. What exactly is the definition of "age-appropriate books", and who will decide which books must be *verboten*?

There are far more urgent issues the minister should be focused on – like the fact that, under this government, Alberta students are funded at the lowest level in the country, or the looming teachers' strike, the overcrowded classrooms, and the lack of educational assistants to support students with complex needs. These are the issues facing our education system that deserve the most focus. Of course, materials in schools should be age-appropriate. But once again, the minister is inserting himself into decisions that should be made by educators and librarians – if this government actually funded schools enough to keep them in the building. Our kids don't need political theatre and press conferences about books. They need teachers, and a government that actually funds public education.



Alberta uncorks new rules for liquor and cannabis use. Alberta's government is giving a boost to local liquor producers by allowing them to own, operate and sell their products on large-format bikes, commonly known as "party bikes."

Cartoon by Susan Moshynski (www.bythebay.squarespace.com)

A missed opportunity for Premier Smith

Alberta's healthcare system faces numerous shortcomings, including high costs, access limitations, staffing shortages, and quality concerns. One of the biggest problems are the long wait times for surgeries and in emergency rooms.

Now, an emergency physician in Edmonton has challenged the province's Premier Danielle Smith to join him on shift to see the frustration of patients jammed for hours in hallways and the moral injury of doctors looking into the eyes of those who wait. Dr. Warren Thirsk, who is the head of emergency medicine for the Alberta Medical Association (AMA), said in an interview: "It's this kind of vicarious trauma, this inability to help when we're helpers, that is causing us to leave. Unless you experience it, you don't really get it."

The AMA represents about 95% of the province's practising physicians in Alberta, as well as resident physicians and medical students.

When asked for a response from the premier, her press secretary e-mailed this statement to the Mill Woods Mosaic:

"The Premier is committed to improving our health care system to ensure every Albertan can get the care they need, when and where they need it. That's why our government held engagement sessions across the province to hear directly from Albertans and

health care workers to gather input on the health system refocus. MLA Chelsea Petrovic has continued this important work in her role as the Parliamentary Secretary for health workforce engagement."

Arnim Joop

From the Desk of the Publisher



So, the premier is not going to take up the challenge. This reminds me of an experience I had 35 years ago when I worked as a reporter for a community newspaper in the small town of Cardston in southern Alberta. There was a local resident whose wife had to use a wheelchair since she was seriously injured in a car accident. The woman was not able to enter several buildings, including the post office, because they were not wheelchair accessible. Her husband challenged the mayor of Cardston to spend a day in a wheelchair to experience the hardships persons with disabilities have to

deal with every day.

The mayor, Stan Johnson, who owned a local car dealership in Cardston, did not hesitate to take up the challenge and promised to spend one day in a wheelchair as a learning experience, and we agreed that I would accompany him, take photos and write an article for the *Cardston Chronicle*.

So, we borrowed a wheelchair, and "His Worship", the Mayor of Cardston, Alberta, kept his promise and spent a whole working day in that wheelchair. We spent some time together in his office at town hall, we visited some businesses on main street, dropped by at his car dealership, and picked up his mail at the post office.

The mayor experienced what it means to depend on a wheelchair to get around from morning until evening. He was unable to get out of his house without help, because there were stairs. He needed somebody to drive his car. He could not use the washroom at his business, because the door was too narrow. And he had a hard time picking up his mail at the post office, although the building had a wheelchair ramp, but when he arrived at the entrance, he had to pull the door, and there was not enough space on the landing to do that safely without help.

Mayor Johnson took this "exercise" very seriously and did not cheat. He

used the wheelchair the whole day and didn't even get out of it during his lunch break. At the end of the day, he was a little exhausted and had a sore back from sitting in the wheelchair all day, but he was thankful for the learning experience.

"It was an eye-opener for me," he said. "I appreciate the fact that I can walk on two legs more than ever, and I hope that I will never forget to be thankful for that." He reported to Cardston Town Council about his experience and made some recommendations how to improve wheelchair accessibility in his town, like putting in ramps when street corners are redone with new sidewalks to accommodate wheelchairs.

I admired the small-town mayor for doing this, and I wished our premier would have the guts to do something like this. She is a busy person, of course, but she missed a great opportunity to show that she really cares and is not afraid to meet some hard-working healthcare workers and patients in person and get a taste of the stressful situation these people are in on a daily basis. You can gather and digest as much information as you want, but nothing can replace a hands-on experience with real people.

Arnim Joop is the founder, publisher and editor of the Mill Woods Mosaic. He also publishes the *Albertan* which is the only German language newspaper in Canada.

Oh, the Music We Created

Human beings have long enjoyed rhythmic sounds and visual patterns which they then incorporated into the many aspects of their life including dancing, singing, paintings, pottery or garment making, and of course music. Starting with simple percussion instruments like drums and cymbals, humans have refined the composition of their musical arrangements into increasingly more complex styles, each with its own sounds and purpose. These were meant to catch our attention, summon or alert us, and stimulate our senses, from excitement to relaxation and everything in between. Over time, the beat of the music was augmented by the inclusion of lyrics. This too had a purpose. Lyrics explained, taught, entertained or simply complemented the music's rhythmic beat.

We, who truly enjoy music, are likely to have favorites among the many genres, and these often give us joy. Indeed, music has the power to bring us to tears, uplift our spirits, inspire or energize us to action, connect us to our past or to other people, and much more. In many ways, the effect of music on people, regardless of age, and even on animals, is truly magical and its impact is experienced in uniquely personal ways.

Many of us today have a playlist of our favorite songs or tunes, which are readily accessible on any of our electronic gadgets. My own playlist is rather eclectic although much of its content originated in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. It includes both hard and soft rock, Reggae, and folk music. As I listened to it recently, I thought: This music, especially its lyrics, should be heard more widely, not because everyone should listen or like my songs. Rather, I believe that these tunes or others like them could help us improve our current social interactions. These songs influenced us in the past and it appears we need them again now.

To make my point let me start by tweaking your memory with a sprinkling of titles of powerful songs from many decades ago. They include: *In the Ghetto* (Elvis Presley); *Waiting on the World to Change* (John Mayer); *Another Day in Paradise* (Phil Collins); *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother* (The Hollies); *Eve of Destruction* (Barry McGuire); *If I Had a Hammer*; *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?* and *Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream* (Pete Seeger); *The Boxer*, and *The Sound of Silence*

(Simon & Garfunkel); *War*; *Wake Up and Live*, and *Buffalo Soldier* (Bob Marley); *There But For Fortune*, and *North End Blues* (Joan Baez); *The*

**Ron
Kuban**

**Time
Passages**



Times They Are A-Changin', and *Blowin' In The Wind* (Bob Dylan); *Who'll Stop the Rain* (CCR); *Refugee* (Tom Petty); *Streets of Philadelphia* (Bruce Springsteen); *When the Night Was Young*, and *Broken Arrow* (Robbie Robertson); *For What It's Worth* (Buffalo Springfield); *In Your Time* (Bob Seger); and, *A Little Good News* (Anne Murray).

I encourage you to listen to any of the above songs and pay careful attention to their lyrics. Doing that, you are bound to discover a common theme among them. They call for social justice, end to war, compassion for the needy, and consideration for the weighty issues that concerned us decades ago. In a way, these songs reflect a bygone era of social tension and turmoil regarding poverty or economic inequality, racism or bigotry, and war to name a few. The songs called for collective action.

The songs from the Vietnam War era serve to illustrate my point. They galvanized and perhaps motivated a profound social movement. Right or wrong, the music spoke to the people of that period, and whether the songs or the movement came first makes no difference, because the two were intertwined. One energized the other and together they empowered significant social changes leading to heightened awareness of the issues, increased social engagement, changes in policy and legislation, and the creation of programs to address perceived needs.

One would think that these changes would become a strong foundation for a more caring society. Initially, that was the case. However, the progress achieved through social action so many decades ago is now being rapidly and systematically erased or coun-

termanded. Current events, not only in Canada or North America, but across the world, seem to reflect a regression in the level of tolerance afforded to those who are different, powerless, disenfranchised, or simply tagged as undesirable outsiders. Their voices are stifled. Worse yet, the voices of the judiciary, academia, the media, law enforcement, and others are also being curtailed.

And so, once again we need grassroots movements to stand up, voice their concern, and reclaim the civil rights which were so dearly fought for decades ago. These very rights, and the civil society they strove to create, are truly in peril now. I believe we need to remember the old ballads and their inspirational lyrics. They should remind us that we

have been here before and managed to improve things. We also need a new crop of inspirational songs that will become a call to arms for the current generation to protect civil rights from those who would rather minimize or stifle them.

Music cannot achieve all of that alone, but it is a powerful messenger. As the brief list above illustrates, many songs and singers have already inspired action. We need more of these songs. However, nothing will happen until we closely listen to their lyrics and contemplate their meaning to our today. In that regard, I suggest the classic song *Imagine* by John Lennon.

Feedback is welcome at
rkuban@shaw.ca

Ron Kuban is a long-time community volunteer and builder.



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We must create a community in which we feel safe

Thank you Edmonton Ellerslie for giving me the honour of a lifetime to represent you, in our community and in the legislature. I am excited about the work ahead and what we can accomplish together.

Allow me to introduce myself. I was born in India and came to Canada from New Zealand in 2011 and made my home, along with my wife, in southeast Edmonton. We knew this was where we wanted to raise our children, make friends and put down roots. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunities Canada has given us as a family.

Until my election, I worked as a radio/TV host on Connect FM, OMNI TV, CAN TV and several other media outlets on which I interviewed people and discussed issues of importance to our community. For the past 14 years, I have also worked in the oil and gas industry in quality control.

Over the years I pursued several hobbies; acquiring and reading several

**Gurtej
Singh Brar**

**MLA
for
Edmonton-
Ellerslie**



hundred books and learning skills like computer building, website development, video/photo editing and photography. In 2020 I produced a documentary about the abuse of temporary foreign workers in Canada, an issue of importance to many in our community.

People told me throughout the campaign that they want better health care for our families, good schools for our kids, a more affordable life and safe streets in our community.

I promise you I will fight every day for those goals. Danielle Smith and the UCP has been failing us on all those fronts. Along with Naheed Nenshi and my colleagues we will never stop fighting for these important issues for our families.

My commitment, and that of my leader Naheed Nenshi, and my colleagues in the Official Opposition Caucus, is to build an Alberta in which better is possible. I will work hard every day to ensure our community is safe. We must create a community in which we feel safe in our homes, our businesses, our shops and on our streets. I will keep fighting for the building of a south Edmonton hospital. Every family should feel secure in the knowledge that health care will be available to them and their families

when they need it. I will continue to advocate for the end to the school lottery system. All of our children deserve access to quality education, in whatever community or neighbourhood they live. And I will continue advocating for measures that will make life more affordable for you and your family.

This summer you will see me all around our community, attending events, listening to you, your family members and your friends. I will also continue to knock on doors to hear directly from you. I want to hear your concerns and your suggestions for solutions.

Thank you for putting your trust in me. Let's work together for everyone in this beautiful province.

Gurtej Singh Brar is the Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for Edmonton-Ellerslie. The address of his constituency office will be announced soon. The e-mail address for the constituency is:

Edmonton.Ellerslie@assembly.ab.ca



Gurtej Singh Brar doorknocking in Edmonton-Ellerslie with his favorite Oilers jersey and his wife Devinder.

Photos: Office of MLA Gurtej Singh Brar



Gurtej Singh Brar (right) visiting with shops in the community with Edmonton-Meadows MLA Jasvir Deol (left) and Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi.



The Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in southeast Edmonton (from left): Gurtej Singh Brar (Ellerslie), Christina Gray (Mill Woods), and Jasvir Deol (Meadows) at the Canada Day celebration in Mill Woods.



Brandnew MLAs: Naheed Nenshi (Edmonton-Strathcona) and Gurtej Singh Brar (Edmonton-Ellerslie), who won byelections on June 23, were sworn in as new Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on July 14.

"I am YEG Arts" Series: Arsene Arcand

Interview by Jamie Chapelsky
Edmonton Arts Council

Arsene Arcand is a stone carver from Kipohtakaw (Alexander First Nation #134) in Treaty No. 6 Territory who has been named the City of Edmonton's fourth Indigenous Artist-in-Residence. Through this program, the City showcases the work of talented Indigenous artists in partnership with the Edmonton Arts Council, the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Relations Office, and Indigenous artists and Knowledge Holders. In this month's I Am YEG Arts feature, we chatted with Arsene about how he got his start as a stone carver, where he draws inspiration for his work, and what motivated him to apply to be the City's next Indigenous Artist-in-Residence.

Congratulations on being named the City of Edmonton's next Indigenous Artist-in-Residence! What is it about this opportunity that drew you to apply?

I try to go about my life following my intuition and following what feels right, and that's what pulled me to apply for this program. I was looking at [the program], and it was really wonderful to see the work the EAC and the City did for the past artists in residence. I really felt like my work would be a good fit and that the opportunity reflected what I'm trying to accomplish with my work – being inclusive and trying to add to a community. That's what drew me to that program in the first place. The program is tailored to the artist for the sake of art.

Is there anything that you're really excited to explore or try during your residency?

I'm excited to try some new materials. I want to try getting into



Arsene Arcand is the City of Edmonton's newest Indigenous Artist-in-Residence.

Photo: City of Edmonton

some wood carving. It's a little different and it has some challenges and its own demands within the discipline. And working with different stones would be really amazing too. We'll see where the residency takes me. Maybe there will be a couple exhibitions in the near future.

You've said before that you draw on traditions and your cultural background as a nēhiyaw (Cree) artist. How does your Indigenous heritage influence your artistic practice and what's the creative

process like for you? Where do you usually begin?

Typically, I start from where the stone is; as an artist, I try to meet the stone where it's at, and I try not to put my preconceived ideas onto the stone. It's got its own shape and colour, and I feel that it's very important as an Indigenous artist to respect that and to honour that I'm working with a spiritual thing that comes from the earth.

I'll take a look at the stone and discover what the different parts look like and how they connect. I'll go through that process, and then I'll wipe it clean and start again until it feels right. Drawing from my background, a lot of inspiration comes from stories that I grew up with, stories from my late grandfather and his buddies – who I adopted as my mushums, as my grandfathers. A lot of inspiration comes from sitting in ceremonies and on the land with those old guys. I refer to them a lot when I talk about my work and the inspiration that comes with that.

Tell us about the materials you work with and why you're drawn to them. How did you learn the craft of stone carving?

Continued on page 8



Soapstone carving by Indigenous artist Arsene Arcand

Photo: Provided by the Artist



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"I try to keep the process as natural as possible"

Continued from page 7

I learned stone carving from my uncle when I was eight. I would go and sit with him, and I'd hang out and just watch him. There's a word in our language, *nôhcâwis*, it means "my little father" which is kind of like that uncle that has the responsibilities of a dad, but on a smaller scale. He was like that for me, and he still is. He got me to start my first piece when I was eight, and I procrastinated and procrastinated. It took me two years to finish it; I just couldn't sit still. I gave that piece to my mom. I really feel like my mom appreciated what I did at the time when I was just a kid, and I fed off of that a lot as an artist throughout the years. That's one project that contributed to my practice in a really meaningful way.

As far as the materials go, typically the workability of the stone is so nice, to the point that it is almost like carving wood, but with the stiffness and rigidity of stone. It's got this really cool quality about it that I really like. On top of that, there's a lot of different lines and specs of different minerals and colours in the stone that I really enjoy working with. I love bringing that out, especially towards the end of the process.

What inspires your work? What role does storytelling play in your carving?

Every time I pick up a stone to make something I try not to go in with too much of a plan, and I try to bring out whatever the stone already is. I try to keep the process as natural as possible, meaning the colours and the shape of the stone will dictate the project. I try



Soapstone carving by Indigenous artist Arsene Arcand

Photo: Provided by the Artist

to keep a certain flow to the piece and make sure that all the different portions of the artwork connect with each other. I think as far as storytelling goes, it's really about symbolism. Symbolism is very important in all cultures, and sticking to those symbols within my artwork, especially with the Indigenous scope and lens, is really

important to who we are as a people.

Where can people see your work in Edmonton and the surrounding community?

I have a lot of work at the Bearclaw Gallery downtown. Jackie Bugera and the team are wonderful. I would

recommend going to see them and seeing all of the wonderful artists that they support and showcase. You can also see my work in Canmore at the Avenus Gallery. Betty is a wonderful human being as well; the team there is wonderful and they have an assortment of incredible artists in the gallery. I'm just happy to be part of those amazing galleries.

About Arsene Arcand

Arsene Joseph Alexander Arcand is a *nêhiyaw* (Cree) Indigenous Artist from Kipohtakaw (Alexander First Nation #134) in Treaty No. 6 Territory. Arsene utilizes his background of traditional and cultural experience to draw inspiration into his art form and style. He was introduced to soapstone carving from his uncle, artist – Leo W Arcand; and has utilized many different forms of art since his childhood, including painting and sketching.

Arsene was raised with the *nêhiyaw* (Cree) way of life by his late grandfather, spiritual leader and hereditary chief of Alexander First Nation, Arsene Joseph Arcand Sr. Since then, Arsene has had multiple carvings commissioned from organizations and various other projects for personal collections. Arsene continues to work with a soapstone medium to express the story of each stone as it comes to be told and shared with others around Turtle Island.

Want more YEG Arts Stories? We'll be sharing them here and on social media using the hashtag #IamYegArts. Follow along!

For more information about the Edmonton Arts Council, visit the new website edmontonarts.ca.

Medgine Mathurin named Edmonton's 11th Poet Laureate

The City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Library and Edmonton Arts Council are pleased to announce Medgine Mathurin as Edmonton's next Poet Laureate.

Mathurin is a Haitian-born spoken word artist and advocate. Her multilingual upbringing in French, Creole and English encouraged her to explore the magic of language and nurtured a deep love of poetry. Her works are driven by her personal experiences, reflecting life as an immigrant, a woman with chronic illness and a voice for marginalized communities.

"Twelve-year-old me, sitting in ESL classes, would've never believed she'd one day become the Edmonton Poet Laureate," said Mathurin. "I came to Edmonton 19 years ago in search of my voice — and along the way, poetry found me. It showed me that I had a voice, and that it had power. I'm incredibly honoured to give back to the city that nurtured me and to share that gift forward."

Mathurin's work has been featured on CBC, Global TV, at SkirtsAfire Festival and at the Edmonton Poetry Festival. She received the 2023

Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund Award, is a two-time award recipient from the National Black Coalition of Canada, and the author of multilingual chapbook *Waiting in the Land of the Living / Attendre dans le monde des vivants*.

"For more than two decades, Edmonton's Poet Laureate program has given voice to our collective experiences. As we look to the future, Medgine's work reminds us that language is more than words. It's culture, identity and a force for change," said Mayor Amarjeet Sohi.

The role of Edmonton's Poet Laureate is to reflect the life of the city through readings and poetry. As an ambassador for the literary arts, the Poet Laureate brings poetry into a range of official and informal city events.

Mathurin will serve a two-year term as Edmonton's 11th Poet Laureate beginning July 2. Stay connected with Mathurin's work and events by following along on Instagram and on her website.

For more information:
edmonton.ca/PoetLaureate
edmontonarts.ca/Poet-Laureate



Medgine Mathurin is a Haitian-born spoken word artist and advocate.

Photo: Emmanuel Tuyishime



Under Malavika Venkatsubbaiah's wonderful guidance, the youth from Natyam Dance Academy absolutely amazed on the Mill Woods Canada Day stage! Their red and white attire was a beautiful tribute to Canada Day 2025, and their performance radiated elegance, pride, and incredible talent.



The Korean group HanBeat Samulnori brought the Mill Woods Canada Day celebration to life with their electrifying performance.



The vibrant spirit of Indonesian culture truly came to life at the Mill Woods Canada Day Celebration 2025, thanks to the Sundara Dance Group.



Volunteer Jemma Manthirikumar distributes Canadian flags.

Mill Woods celebrates Canada Day

Thousands of people enjoyed the Canada Day celebration at Mill Woods Park on July 1. As every year since 1990, many dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors have made this celebration possible. There were many ethnic dance groups and singers entertaining the crowd, children's activities, food trucks, and spectacular fireworks at the end of the day.

Photos: Sangeetha Vasanthkumar / Mill Woods Presidents' Council



Yalena Chwok (left) and Emma Kryschuk of the Viter Ukrainian Dancers and Folk Choir performed at the Canada Day celebration in Mill Woods.

Meet Ndapota Grace Mhlanga, unit manager, operative services, Grey Nuns Hospital

By Covenant Health Communications

When Ndapota Grace Mhlanga joined the nursing staff at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in 2019, she felt something unexpected - like she was coming home. As a new Canadian, she had dealt with challenges when it came to getting around in a new city and adjusting to a northern Alberta climate. But when it came to work, her team at the Grey Nuns helped make the transition easier by making her feel truly welcome.

"There is just something about this place," says Grace. "The people are lovely. They genuinely seem to care about you - not just as a nurse, but as a person."

Grace followed in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother by becoming a nurse, but she credits the labour and delivery nurses who supported her during the birth of her first two children with inspiring her to enter the field.

"There's something about having a couple of kids that makes you want to care for people - especially when the people caring for you are so fantastic. I wanted to be one of them," she says.

While her family is African, Grace was raised in England, where she completed her nursing training and worked as an operating room (OR) nurse. She and her family emigrated to Canada in 2016, and she began working in healthcare right away as a service attendant in the OR at the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton while completing the Bridge to Canadian Nursing program. After completing the program, she worked as a graduate nurse before taking time away to welcome the birth of twins. She returned to work as a registered nurse on the front line at the Grey Nuns and was soon promoted to an assistant head nurse position.

Grace says she found the shift from working in England to working in Canada to be relatively easy; hospital procedures in Canada, particularly those in the OR, are like hospital procedures in England. And she was



Ndapota Grace Mhlanga finished a master's degree in education in 2024 partly focusing on why minority nurses do not often seek leadership roles.

Photo: Peter Rybar

"I only stepped up because they asked me to, but I stayed because I'm loving it - loving being a leader who learns from my people. My people are very, very smart. I am absolutely fed by my people."

**Ndapota Grace Mhlanga,
Unit Manager, Operative
Services at Grey Nuns
Community Hospital**

already used to walking the lines between different cultures, coming from an African family and being raised in England. That experience made it easier for her to ask for help, she says.

"Being African, you're taught to be quiet and respectful, but I was raised in England where I learned to speak up for myself. When I was struggling (at work), I spoke up and people respond-

ed, but I can understand how challenging it might be for other international nurses.

Nurses from overseas often don't want to speak up because they are afraid of making mistakes, says Grace. "They carry the weight of the world - trying to prove they belong, and it's hard to ask for help when you feel like you're already being tested."

Grace finished a master's degree in education in 2024 partly focusing on why minority nurses do not often seek leadership roles. In October of that year, encouraged by her colleagues, she applied for the role of interim unit manager for operating services at the Grey Nuns hospital. Though she initially hesitated to move into leadership, she reconsidered when other minority team members told her, "If you do this, I might believe I can do it too."

Since taking on the role, she has found leading a team to be both challenging and rewarding.

Now leading a team of about 50 employees, Grace still usually wears scrubs to work, even though much of her current role is spent behind a com-

puter. "If you wear scrubs, you're ready to jump in," she says. "And I believe leaders should always be ready to help."

Grace's advice for other international nurses coming to Canada is to "give yourself space to fail, room to grow and permission to ask for help. You are not alone," she says.

When asked her thoughts on working with Covenant Health, Grace says it is an organization that lives its values.

"I love it here, truly. They walk the talk. You feel the values in the air."

This story was first published on the website of Covenant Health: <https://covenanthealth.ca>. Covenant Health is one of the largest Catholic health care providers in Canada, employing over 15,000 staff, physicians and volunteers in 17 facilities in 12 communities across Alberta in cooperation with Alberta Health Services, including Grey Nuns Community Hospital, Misericordia Community Hospital, and St Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital in Edmonton.

2025 Anti-racism Grant Program applications open

Applications are now open for the City of Edmonton's 2025 Anti-racism Grant Program, a key action under the City's Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Strategy.

Through this program, the City is providing \$1.7 million in funding to support community-led efforts that build understanding, challenge discrimination and strengthen connections among Edmontonians. These grants empower local leaders, not-for-profit organizations and grassroots researchers to develop initiatives grounded in lived experience and driven by local priorities.

The CSWB Strategy recognizes that safety and well-being are about more than the absence of harm. They require inclusive systems, community leadership and meaningful steps to address inequity. One of the strategy's seven pillars is anti-racism, which calls on the City to work in partnership with communities to confront racism and create lasting change.

Now in its third year, the Anti-racism Grant Program supports education, storytelling, innovation and community connections across the city. Projects may focus on shifting public perspectives, celebrating cultural knowledge, breaking down systemic barriers or building leadership capacity in racialized communities.

Funding is available through five streams:

Community Activation (Up to \$15,000 and \$325,000 of total funds available)

Supports community events and projects led by and for youth or seniors. Prioritizes initiatives that bring people together across cultures and generations to build relationships and advance anti-racism learning.

Local Anti-racism Capacity Building/Innovation (Up to \$30,000 and \$450,000 of total funds available)

Funds initiatives that reduce barriers, promote healing and support systemic change. May include advocacy training, organizational development or partnerships between diverse communities.

Local Community Participatory Action Research (Up to \$40,000 and \$375,000 of total funds available)

Supports research led by communities affected by racism to identify local needs and develop community-informed responses.

Shifting the Perspective (Up to \$50,000 and \$350,000 of total funds available)

Open to not-for-profit media and storytelling organizations. Supports projects that amplify underrepresented voices, challenge harmful narratives and foster understanding through journalism, film or digital media.

Countering Anti-Black Racism (Up

to \$50,000 and \$200,000 of total funds available)

For community groups looking to advance actions in the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan through collaborations and/or partnerships.

The deadline for applications is 11:59 p.m. on September 11. Interested organizations can apply at www.edmonton.ca/AntiracismGrant

About CSWB

The City of Edmonton's CSWB Strategy is a long-term commitment to building a more inclusive, connected and equitable city. Approved by City Council in 2022, the strategy focuses on addressing the root causes of social issues through seven pillars, including anti-racism, reconciliation, equitable policies, and safe and inclusive spaces. The CSWB Strategy guides how the City works with communities to improve quality of life and create conditions where everyone can thrive.

Trustees Share Tips to Empower Families and Communities

Edmonton Public School trustees have launched a series called "6 Tips from Trustees."

These tips have been shared on Trustees' social media pages and through Schoolzone. The goal of these short messages is to strengthen understanding of the public education system and empower families and community members to effectively use their voices. Each tip offers practical advice and explains how individuals can get involved in decisions that impact students, schools, and communities.

Tip 1: Introduction to Advocacy

The first tip introduces the role of trustees as local representatives who engage with the public on matters of education. The series aims to clarify responsibilities across different levels – school staff, trustees, the school board, MLAs, and the provincial government. A common question from families is: "How can we advocate to make our voices heard?" This series answers that.

**Jan
Sawyer**

**Edmonton
Public Schools
Trustee
(Ward I)**



Tip 2: Budget Advocacy

Trustees help approve the annual budget based on strategic priorities. Advocacy in this area includes encouraging the provincial government to increase funding and sharing local perspectives on how current funds should be used. Families can help by contacting MLAs and attending school events or board meetings.

Tip 3: Infrastructure Needs

The Board is actively advocating for more new and modernized schools.

Thirteen projects are currently underway, and trustees have requested ten more for the upcoming budget. Families are urged to stay informed and share their experiences to help support these efforts.

Tip 4: Childcare Spaces

While Edmonton Public Schools supports having childcare programs through rental partnerships, it doesn't receive direct funding for them. With enrolment growing, some childcare spaces have been converted to classrooms. Trustees continue to advocate for dedicated childcare in or near new schools, and families can help by sharing their stories with elected officials.

Tip 5: Mental Health

Mental health and well-being are key priorities in the Division's Strategic Plan. Services range from universal to individualized supports, but additional

advocacy is needed for broader government collaboration. Families can speak with educators, trustees, and government officials to promote more mental health funding and resources.

Tip 6: Staying Connected

Although the Board doesn't meet during the summer, trustees remain active and accessible. Staying in touch with your trustee helps shape public education policies and advocacy efforts. Trustees welcome communication year-round through email, phone, school councils, and public board meetings.

These six tips offer valuable insight into how families and communities can make their voices heard and support strong public education. Whether it's by attending meetings, reaching out to officials, or simply staying informed, every action counts. Trustees are listening – and your input matters.

As always, if you have questions about this, or anything else, please feel free to contact me:

trustee.jan.sawyer@epsb.ca

The next issue of the *Mill Woods Mosaic* will be published on August 15, 2025. The deadline is Friday, August 8, 2025.

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Experience Nature and History in Edmonton's Southeast

Edmonton summers go by so fast. I hope you can take an afternoon or a morning and enjoy the warm weather by walking along Mill Creek. Its ravine, filled with bushes, trees and walking paths, is a woodland oasis in the modern city. Along its route one finds parks and roads whose names honour prominent people of Edmonton's past. When one walks through the Mill Creek ravine, you are, in a manner of speaking, taking a walk through history while also taking a walk through nature.

The city maintains a network of walking paths along the banks of the historic Mill Creek. The name Mill Creek comes from a water-powered flour mill that once operated on the creek far away where it flows into the North Saskatchewan River near today's downtown Edmonton. From there, the creek's waters mix with the waters of the North Saskatchewan and flow eastward to the Hudsons Bay in northeastern Manitoba.

The mill was operated by William Bird who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Edmonton back when the HBC Fort Edmonton was pretty much all that was built in the area, back in the 1870s. The creek's banks provided camping places for the seasonally-nomadic First Nations families that populated the area at that time. Deer and rabbits, moose and were common visitors. Perhaps beaver were caught along the creek. Owls, foxes, coyotes and bears were more common than people.

This was how things once were. And might be yet again. The book "The World Without Us" by Alan Weisman, published in 2007, actually considers how animals will likely move in again if humans move out of the way. We saw a bit of that during the Covid outbreak when it took some animals just a couple days to start to move into streets and public places abandoned by humans. But right now, trees and non-threatening small animals are likely all that you will have to share your walk with.

You can access Mill Creek from 33rd Avenue just west of 26th Street. A green strip, the right of way of a pipeline, runs north from 33rd Avenue a short distance to the Mill Creek ravine. Neighbourhoods in The Meadows are named after trees, flowers and plants that are native to Alberta. South of the creek is the Silver Berry neighbourhood; north is the Wild Rose neighbourhood. In the past, part of Wild Rose bore the name Meadowbrook due to the creek. The name of the Meadowbrook Lake at 34 Street and 38th Avenue is proof of that.

If you follow the creek downstream (westward) and cross 34th Street, you find that the Creek runs past the neighbourhoods of Minchau, on the south, and Kiniski Gardens, to the north.

August Minchau and his wife Caroline farmed this land starting in the 1890s. The Cree Papaschase "Indian" reserve was being disbanded and the land sold just at the time that Minchau and many other Russian immigrants were getting off the train at Edmonton. People with the Minchau name, descendants of these pioneers, are still around the area even today.

Kiniski Gardens is named after Julia Kiniski who served on city council in the 1960s. In this year of a city election in Edmonton, it is interesting to consider her career. She ran unsuccessfully for city council first in 1945. She was 46. She was unsuccessful but that

**Tom
Monto**

**A
Different
Perspective**



did not stop her from running again in 1946. Back then the city held a city election every year to elect half the spots on council. Unsuccessful again in 1946, she ran again in 1947, and again and again. Finally on her 15th try, when she was 64 years old, she was successful. Surely this set some sort of record in dogged determination.

But once on city council, Julia was in for good. She was re-elected in 1964, 1966 and 1968. Once a reform candidate like her can get elected, their policies, it seems, strike a chord among voters. It is the difficulty of getting over that first obstacle that stunts so many careers. And it certainly stunted hers – by the time she was first elected, she was no youngster and she died only six years after her first success.

Following the flow of the creek you will come to where 39th Street meets the ravine. Just west of there, on the south edge of the ravine is Barbara Danelesko Park. This is near the Minchau School.

Barbara Danelesko was a devoted wife, mother and active community

volunteer. She was living in the Minchau neighbourhood, on 42nd Street not far from where the park that bears her name is located, when she fell victim to a brutal break-and-enter in 1994.

Three youths intent on stealing music CDs broke into the house where Barbara and her family were sleeping. Barbara woke up and was stabbed in the neck. The thieves ran from the house. A police dog tracked their trail through the nearby ravine, and they were apprehended. Barbara's attacker, a 16-year-old, went down for second-degree murder. He has been in prison ever since, other than five years when he was out on a failed attempt at parole.

Colleen Ring, a teacher at the Mary Hanley Catholic Elementary School, located nearby on 34th Avenue, felt and saw the angst caused by Barbara's tragic death. She helped start a program called Kids for Kindness, where students at her school were rewarded for acts of kindness. Colleen's sister, teacher Debbie Riopel, saw the benefits of the program, and in 1996 the two of them got the mayor of St. Albert to proclaim a Random Acts of Kindness week, the first time that the U.S.-born custom was brought to Canada. Other Canadian cities adopted it as well. This grew into the Random Acts of Kindness week that happens every February across Canada. (In 2026 it will happen Feb. 15-20.) And since that tragic night in 1994, the World Kindness Movement has been formed, with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Perhaps that is enough walking but if one proceeds, Mill Creek crosses the line of another pipeline at about 47th Street. You know you have gone too far if you arrive at where the ravine

park meets 50th Street. At about 47th Street, a green strip, built on another pipeline right of way, goes to the northeast right up to the intersection of the Whitemud and 34th Street. Likewise, in the other direction from Mill Creek ravine, there is nice walking, mostly away from car traffic, right down to 34th Avenue at 58th Street.

Green spaces are abundant in Mill Woods. The Graunke Park Natural Area, at 34th Avenue and 50th Street, might serve as a nice picnic site, or perhaps a place to find shade if temperatures climb high this summer. We shouldn't hardly complain about the heat, what with the deep cold that will be coming all too soon. But of course we do complain!

I hope you get the chance to get some exercise, stretch your legs, and take the time to appreciate the history and nature that is all around us in Mill Woods and The Meadows.

Tom Monto is an Edmonton historian and author of Old Strathcona – Edmonton's Southside Roots and Protest and Progress – Three Labour Radicals in Early Edmonton. He is the author of the blogsite Montopedia.

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Growing American Interest in Canadian Immigration: A Look at Available Pathways

As an immigration lawyer practicing in Canada, I often find myself observing emerging trends in immigration patterns. One notable trend I've been witnessing lately is a noticeable increase in Americans exploring – and taking concrete steps toward – relocating to Canada.

Americans seeking to establish themselves in Canada have several potential pathways available to them, ranging from temporary work arrangements to permanent residence and, in some cases, direct citizenship claims. The route that makes sense depends largely on individual circumstances, family history, and professional qualifications. Here's an overview of some of the main options available to U.S. citizens considering a move north.

Reclaiming Canadian Citizenship

For some Americans, the path to Canadian status may be shorter than expected. U.S. citizens who have parents or grandparents born in Canada may be eligible to reclaim Canadian citizenship, even if they've never lived in the country.

Previously, Canadian citizenship law included what's known as the "second-generation cut-off," which prevented Canadian citizens born abroad from passing citizenship to their children if those children were also born outside Canada. However, recent legal developments have significantly expanded eligibility. The landmark Bjorkquist court case successfully challenged this limitation, opening the door for many people who were previously excluded from Canadian citizenship.

Proposed federal legislation is working to formalize expanded access, potentially allowing second-generation Canadians born abroad to claim citizenship where they couldn't before. While it waits for that legislation to be passed, the government has introduced interim measures that allow those affected by the second-generation cut-off to apply for discretionary grants of citizenship.

This development is particularly significant for Americans due to historical migration patterns and our shared geography. Many families have cross-border connections spanning generations, perhaps a grandparent who moved from Alberta to Washington, or

**Nathan
A. Po**

**Immigration
Lawyer
in
Edmonton**



who crossed from Ontario to Michigan for work opportunities. These historical family ties mean that a substantial number of Americans may discover they have legitimate claims to Canadian citizenship that they never realized existed.

Canadian Permanent Residence

For those who don't have the advantage of claiming citizenship through family connections, permanent residence remains an option, though Americans don't receive any special preference in this process. U.S. citizens must qualify through the same programs available to all foreign nationals.

Family sponsorship represents one pathway for Americans who have Canadian spouses or common-law partners. This stream allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their partners for permanent residence and even allows Canadian citizens (but not permanent residents) to make their sponsorship applications while residing abroad so long as they can demonstrate an intention to return to Canada when their spouse or partner's permanent residence application is approved.

The economic immigration streams present more challenges. Programs like the Canadian Experience Class, Federal Skilled Worker Program, and various Provincial Nominee Programs, including Alberta's Advantage Immigration Program, operate under competitive intake systems. As the federal government has moved to reduce overall immigration numbers, these programs have become increasingly competitive. Like other foreign nationals,

Americans are finding it more difficult to secure permanent residence through economic streams, with higher score requirements and longer processing times becoming the norm.

Canadian Work Permits: The CUSMA Advantage

For Americans who don't immediately qualify for permanent residence, work permits often provide an accessible entry point – and here, U.S. citizens do enjoy certain advantages thanks to trade agreements.

The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), which maintained the immigration provisions from the former NAFTA, creates facilitated pathways for American workers.

It's worth noting that this is a reciprocal arrangement; Canadian workers enjoy similar facilitated access to employment opportunities in the United States through CUSMA.

CUSMA includes a specific list of professions eligible for streamlined entry into Canada. These CUSMA professional categories include roles such as engineers, accountants, lawyers, architects, scientists, and many healthcare professionals. Generally, CUSMA Professional applicants need a relevant university-level degree, and a job offer from a Canadian employer.

CUSMA also facilitates intra-company transfers for Americans working for U.S. companies with Canadian operations. Employees who qualify as specialized knowledge workers or hold executive or senior management positions can transfer to Canadian branches, subsidiaries, affiliates, or parent companies.

CUSMA work permits offer several significant advantages over standard work permit processes. Most importantly, Canadian employers hiring through CUSMA are exempt from the technical and time-consuming requirement of first obtaining a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). The LMIA process typically requires employers to demonstrate that no qualified Canadian worker is available for

the position and can take several months to complete. This exemption makes hiring via CUSMA much more attractive to Canadian employers and creates faster pathways for qualified Americans.

In addition, since the United States is on the list of countries whose citizens can travel to Canada without a visa, Americans can make their work permit application at the Port of Entry and do not have to wait to have their applications processed at a visa office abroad. Generally, the only advance requirement is that their Canadian employer must register the job offer through the federal Employer Portal and pay a \$230 employer compliance fee.

This streamlined process means qualified Americans can often obtain work authorization and enter Canada easily and quickly, provided they have proper documentation and meet the program requirements.

Looking Ahead

Whether driven by political considerations, economic opportunities, or family preferences, the growing American interest in Canadian immigration reflects the close ties that our countries and people have with one another. While each pathway has its requirements and challenges, the range of options available means that many Americans can find a route that matches their circumstances and goals.

For those considering such a move, understanding these various pathways early in the planning process can help identify the most suitable approach and avoid common pitfalls. As always, immigration law involves complex requirements that are constantly changing, so I would suggest that anyone considering this significant life change carefully review the current requirements and consider consulting with an experienced immigration professional.

Nathan Po is a partner at McCuaig Desrochers LLP, a general practice law firm with Edmonton's largest group of immigration lawyers (www.mccuaig.com). This article is intended to provide general information only and should not be relied on as legal advice or opinion.

City evolves playground zone traffic safety strategy

As the 2024 - 2025 school year came to end, the City is evolving its approach to playground zone traffic safety.

Since July 1, mobile photo radar is no longer used in playground zones. The decision reflects the City's ongoing commitment to Vision Zero and its longstanding use of data-informed, sustainable strategies to improve traffic safety.

"Playground zones are some of the most sensitive spaces in our transportation system, and they have always been – and will continue to be – a priority for the City," said Jessica Lamarre, Director, Safe Mobility. "Since 2015, every elementary school in Edmonton has been assessed for safety needs, and since 2019, the City has invested over \$6 million in upgrades like new crossings, traffic calming and visibility improvements. These upgrades have helped make playground zones spaces that have some of the

lowest rates of speeding and collisions in the city."

Until now, enforcement in playground zones was made possible through revenue generated by photo radar deployed on Edmonton's high speed roadways. However, new restrictions under the Government of Alberta's Automated Traffic Enforcement Guideline have significantly reduced where photo radar can be used. Without that broader revenue stream, continuing enforcement in areas with low rates of speeding is no longer financially sustainable.

Instead of scaling back efforts, the City is redirecting resources into physical upgrades and creative solutions that respond to the broader safety concerns regularly raised by students, families and school communities.

"Speeding is only one part of the challenge," Lamarre said. "We routinely hear concerns about traffic flow, crossing safety and poor driver beha-

viour in playground zones from the public. While automated enforcement is incredibly effective at reducing speeds, it doesn't target this wider range of challenges. Reinvesting these funds allows us to respond more directly to what people are experiencing every day and to make playground zones safer in a more lasting, visible way."

The change took effect July 1, with the start of summer break. This timing gives the City time to share the new direction with school communities and prepare for the 2025 - 2026 school year.

The decision supports the City's commitment to Vision Zero, the goal of eliminating traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. By continuing to rely on data, community input and built-in safety improvements, Edmonton is taking another step forward in creating safer streets for everyone.

For more information: edmonton.ca/Enforcement

Important addresses for immigrants and other newcomers

If you are new to Edmonton and don't know anybody, it can be tough to find a place to stay, a job, the right school for your children or good health care services, but there is plenty of help available.

Here are some of the main agencies specializing in helping immigrants and other newcomers in the Edmonton area:

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

11713 - 82 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5B 2V9
Tel. (780) 424-7709
Website: www.emcn.ab.ca

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers offers a wide variety of programs for newcomers and helps immigrants to find a place to live, a job and English classes.

Welcome Centre for Immigrants in Mill Woods

Suite 200, Tower II, Millbourne Mall
7609 - 38 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6K 3L6
Tel. (780) 462-6924
Website: <https://newcomercentre.com/program/settlement-information-orientation/>

The Welcome Centre for Immigrants in Mill Woods offers many programs and services for immigrants, including settlement assistance, language and educational counseling, employment assistance, citizenship classes, English classes, computer classes, public speaking classes, and youth programs.

Changing Together Centre for Immigrant Women

3rd Floor, 9538 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0T7
Tel. (780) 421-0175
Website: www.changingtogether.com

Founded in 1984, Changing Together is a non-profit, charitable organization operated by immigrant women for immigrant women. Its mission is to help Edmonton and area immigrant women and their families overcome personal and systemic barriers that keep them from participating fully in Canadian Society.

Catholic Social Services

8212 - 118 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T5B 0S3
Tel. (780) 424-3545
Website: www.catholicsocialservices.ab.ca

For more than 50 years, Catholic Social Services has welcomed immigrants and refugees to Alberta. The services are free and offered in both official languages and more than 50 other languages. In the Meadows, CSS runs a drop-in group for women of all ages and backgrounds. Participants connect through diverse activities like speaking English, sharing cultural experiences, learning to use computers and connecting with useful resources. The program, called Tea Connections, runs every Friday from 10 a.m. to noon, in the room of The Meadows Community League on the 2nd floor of the Meadows Community Recreation Centre, 2704 - 17 Street. For more information, contact Raminder Dhindsa at raminder.dhindsa@cssalberta.ca or 780-391-3204.

Family Futures Resource Network

5704 - 19 A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6L 1L8
Tel. 413-4521
Website: www.familyfutures.ca

The Family Futures Resource Network (FFRN) is a non-profit organization providing support to families and parents in the areas of early childhood education, child and youth, family and adult support and

parent education. The FFRN has three separate locations in Mill Woods: Millhurst Site (5704 - 19 A Avenue), Knottwood Site (1733 Mill Woods Road) and Millbourne Community Site (3756 - 78 Street).

Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

9538 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0T7
Tel. (780) 423-1973
Website: www.mchb.org

The Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative is a registered worker's co-operative with members from immigrant and refugee communities, providing culturally and linguistically relevant prenatal education, post-natal outreach, parenting support, family liaison and community development support to immigrant and refugee families.

Indo-Canadian Women's Association

9324 - 34 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 5X8
Tel. (780) 490-0477

The Indo-Canadian Women's Association is a not-for-profit organization for enthusiastic volunteers committed to full participation of immigrant and visible minority women and men in economic, social and political life in Canada.

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women

(formerly Multicultural Women & Seniors Services Association)
329 Woodvale Road West
Edmonton, Alberta
T6L 3Z7
Tel. (780) 465-2992

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women (SCSW) is a non-profit organization. The focus is to provide service and programs for immigrant women and senior men and women. Program goal is to promote and enhance the well-being and self-reliance of seniors and women especially those at risk and isolated before a crisis situation occurs. SCSW provides social support, information sessions, and skill building classes, home and hospital visits, as well as translation, and referrals to other service providers. It also offers family support and crisis intervention. For youth, there are Urdu and math classes and homework help, and there is also an Urdu library with more than 2000 books. The SCSW is open from 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Youth Empowerment and Support Services

9310 - Whyte Avenue (82 Ave.)
Edmonton, Alberta, T6C 0Z6
Tel. (780) 468-7070
Website: www.yess.org

The Youth Emergency Shelter Society is a not-for-profit organization serving young people between the ages of 15-18 who are in crisis, at risk or homeless.

Alberta Employment Standards

Edmonton Office - Main Floor Sterling Place
9940 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2N2
Tel. (780) 427-3731
Website: www.employment.alberta.ca

Alberta Employment Standards is a provincial agency responsible for the administration and enforcement of employment standards in Alberta.

AES has publications available for temporary foreign workers and their employers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under Alberta's employment standards and workplace health and safety legislation. These publications are available in Chinese, English, French, German and Spanish.

NorQuest College

10215 - 108 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 1L6
Tel. (780) 422-2020
Website: www.norquest.ab.ca

NorQuest College is a public college offering many programs, including English as a Second Language classes and employment programs for immigrants.

Alberta Health and Wellness

Edmonton Office
Telus Tower North, Main Floor
10025 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Tel. (780) 427-1432
Website: www.health.alberta.ca

Alberta Health and Wellness answers any questions about health care and health care insurance coverage in Alberta.

Immigrant Access Fund Canada

45, 9912 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 4M9
Tel. (Toll Free) 1-855-423-2262
Website: www.iafcanada.org

The Immigrant Access Fund provides micro loans to internationally trained immigrant professionals, trades people and skilled workers so they may obtain the Canadian licensing and/or training that will allow them to obtain employment in their field.

Other important phone numbers:

Edmonton Police Service

Emergency calls only 9-1-1
Police - Fire - Ambulance
Life & death, injury accident, crime in progress

Non-emergency calls
(Dispatch) 780-423-4567
Report of suspicious activity, calls for assistance, advice, etc.

Poison Centre 1-800-332-1414

Hazardous Material Spills 9-1-1

Utility Trouble Calls Only:

Power Emergency 780-412-4500
Within Edmonton

Gas Emergency 780-420-5585
Edmonton & Area

Drainage Trouble 780-496-1717

Sewer Trouble 780-496-1717

Wastewater (odour hotline) 780-469-8176

Water Emergency Service 780-412-6800

The next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic will be published on August 15, 2025 The deadline for advertising and editorial is Friday, August 8, 2025.



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School of New Work

Mill Woods Mosaic - mwmosaic@telus.net

What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

- July 2 - Aug. 21** - Green Shack Shows 2025
Free concerts and performances
More information: www.edmontonarts.ca/event/green-shack-shows-2025
- July 16, 23 & 30** - Mainstreet Cruisers
Informal gatherings for people with an enthusiasm for the car hobby
Wendy's at Mainstreet Mall
66 Street and 28 Avenue NW, Mill Woods
- July 17 - 27** - Taste of Edmonton
The eleven day festival offers a delicious sample of Edmonton's finest restaurants, arts and culture!
Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton
Sundays to Thursdays: 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Fridays and Saturdays: 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
More information: www.tasteofedm.ca
- July 18 - 27** - K-Days - The best 10 Days of Summer!
Edmonton EXPO Centre & Exhibition Grounds
7515 - 118 Avenue, Edmonton
More information: edmontonexpocentre.com
- July 19** - Open House at Meadows Fire Station 26
with interactive events for the whole family
2803 - 34 Street NW
Noon - 4:00 p.m.
- Aug. 2 - 4** - Edmonton Heritage Festival - The world's largest three day celebration of multiculturalism
Exhibition Grounds and Borden Park
Saturday, Aug 2: 12:00 noon - 9:00 p.m.
Sunday, Aug 3: 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Monday, Aug 4: 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
More information: www.heritagefest.ca
- Aug. 12** - Dehydrating Summer Fruits and Vegetables
Preserve your homegrown fruits and veggies with home dehydrating!
Workshop with instructor Cindy Suelzle
Millhurst Community League
Sakaw Gardens Hall
5820 - 11a Avenue NW, Mill Woods
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
More info & registration: www.millhurst.ca

*Do you have a community event in Mill Woods to announce? Please send us the information, and we will include it in this community calendar in the next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic.
Tel. (780) 465-7526 or e-mail to: mwmosaic@telus.net
The next deadline is Friday, August 8, 2025.*

Life is a story. Tell it well.



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**Do you have
any story ideas
for the *Mill
Woods Mosaic*?
Give us a call at
780-465-7526
or e-mail to
mwmosaic@telus.net**

***Mill Woods
Mosaic***