

Mill Woods Mosaic

February 15, 2026

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The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast

Independent • Non-partisan • Interdenominational

This month:

Love Thy Neighbor

We can learn a lot from small communities about getting along with our neighbors.

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Focusing on Positive

Ron Kuban is convinced that there is much to be grateful for, enjoyed and celebrated.

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Health for All

A former federal health minister proposes a four-part prescription for Canada's ailing health-care system.

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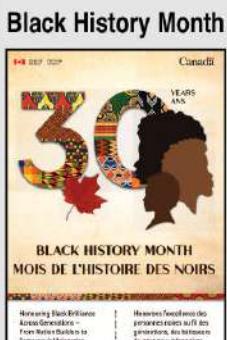
There may be a referendum about the future of Alberta, so what kind of future do we want for our province?

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Let's Be Kind

Random Acts of Kindness shape how a community feels, says Sharan Sandhu.

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The City of Edmonton celebrates the 30-year anniversary of Black History Month in Canada.

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Lunar New Year of the Horse

The Chinese Graduates Association of Alberta (CGAA) and Kingsway Mall hosted a Lunar New Year of the Horse celebration on Feb. 14. The celebration featured many Chinese Community Organizations showcasing their cultural displays, interactive activities, and performances, including spectacular lion and dragon dances, drumming, martial arts demo, cultural dance, instrumental music and singing. Photo: The God of Fortune shopping at Kingsway Mall.

Photo: Wei Wong

Canada exceeded its Francophone immigration target for 2025

Francophone and Acadian minority communities outside Quebec contribute to the economy, culture and vitality of the French language in Canada. Francophone immigration remains essential and aims to address labour needs and to support communities across the country.

On Jan. 19, the Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that, for the fourth year in a row, the Government of Canada has exceeded its ambitious Francophone immigration target for 2025, reaching about 8.9% of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec. This achievement reflects the success of the measures Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has put in place and is the result of close collaboration with the provinces, territories as well as community representatives.

As part of the 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan, we will continue to increase our targets for French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec. Starting in 2026, the Government of Canada will reserve 5,000 federal selection spaces to allow provinces and territories to designate French-speaking immigrants. These spaces will be in addition to the annual Provincial Nominee Program allocations and will help reduce the shortage of Francophone and bilingual workers by attracting top global talent.

Both the exceeding of the 2025 target and this new initiative that supports the provinces and territories outline the way to reach the 12% target of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec by 2029. Through the implementation of

measures such as the French-language proficiency category in the Express Entry system, the Francophone Mobility program, as well as the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative, the Government of Canada is continuing in its commitment to restore and increase the demographic weight of Francophone and Acadian minority communities.

These actions align with the Government of Canada priorities that were announced in Budget 2025 and reflect the importance of uniting our efforts to attract the best global talent, expand our economy and respond to workforce needs.

“Today, we reaffirm our commitment and ongoing efforts towards Francophone immigration,” said Minister Lena Metlege Diab. “French-speaking newcomers are an essential contribution to the economic vitality and strengthening of the workforce in Francophone and Acadian minority communities. They help our communities to thrive and promote our official languages, a symbol of our Canadian identity.”

Quick facts

- In 2025, the department set a target of 8.5% for admissions of Francophone permanent residents outside Quebec. According to preliminary year-end

data, the department admitted over 29,500 Francophone permanent residents, which represents 8.9% of all permanent resident admissions in Canada outside Quebec.

- As part of the 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan, we will continue to increase our targets for French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec, raising them to 9% in 2026, 9.5% in 2027, and 10.5% in 2028. These targets reflect the ongoing priority that Francophone immigration represents.

- The ongoing commitment of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to Francophone immigration is reflected in several successes from the past year: achieving 7.2% of permanent resident admissions of French-speaking individuals outside Quebec in 2024, increasing the number of communities participating in the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative from 14 to 24, holding successful promotional events, and funding several concrete projects through the Francophone Immigration Support Program.

- The Express Entry system is Canada’s flagship application management system for those seeking to immigrate permanently through the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program, the Canadian experience class, and a portion of the Provincial Nominee Program.

The next issue of the *Mill Woods Mosaic*

will be published on March 15, 2026.

The deadline is Wednesday, March 11, 2026.

Honouring excellence in service

Nominate a community hero for the Minister's Seniors Service Awards, celebrating those who make life better for Alberta seniors.

The Minister's Seniors Service Awards recognize individuals, organizations and groups who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to enhancing the well-being and quality of life of seniors.

"Seniors are at the heart of Alberta's communities and it's important we recognize those who work every day to support them," said Jason Nixon, Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services. "The Minister's Seniors Service Awards are an opportunity to honour the Albertans who go above and beyond to ensure seniors are supported."

Awards will be presented to individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations. This includes the Alice Modin Award, which recognizes a senior individual or couple for exceptional commitment to their community and the province through their long-term volunteer service. This award is given in honour of Alice Modin, who campaigned for Seniors' Day and paved the way for the annual provincewide Seniors' Week.

A Special Service Award will also be presented in 2026. The Stronger at Every Age Award will honour those that have created inclusive, accessible and connected communities where Albertans can live and age well. This includes building age-friendly infra-

structure, improving accessibility and transportation, fostering intergenerational connection, reducing social isolation and integrating local services that help seniors remain active and independent.

The deadline for nominations is April 30. Nominations can be submitted online, through mail and email. Details, including past recipients, can be found online. Recipients will be honoured at an in-person ceremony this fall.

Quick facts

- Since 1998, the Minister's Seniors Service Awards have recognized and celebrated outstanding individuals and non-profit organizations for their service to seniors.
- To date, the Minister's Seniors Service Awards have honoured almost 200 groups and individuals of all ages.
- The Special Service Award was introduced in 2021 and is a category that changes yearly to highlight an area of particular importance.
- In 2025, recipients were selected from 93 nominations, based on the following criteria:
 - The positive impact nominees have on seniors and their communities.
 - The need for the service they provide.
 - The quality, diversity and originality of their service.
- More info: <https://www.alberta.ca/ministers-seniors-service-awards>

2027 – 2030 Budget Planning Process

Edmonton City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright

This coming December, Council will approve a new multi-year budget for 2027 – 2030 and the planning for that has already started. A few weeks ago, we approved the process that will be undertaken and I am excited about the many opportunities that will be available for public input.

While our Administration has been conducting their own qualitative and quantitative research to learn what information Edmontonians need to know and how to deliver it, Council has been working on developing a strategic plan focusing on what we heard from residents during the municipal election, our current financial position and Edmonton's long-term funding needs.

Starting in March, Administration will deliver their Capital and Operating Financial Updates and begin their presentations of branch and department reports providing an overview of key cost drivers that impact budgets and service levels.

Over the coming months, as part of the community engagement, there will be opportunities for the public to provide input. These include digital options through Engaged Edmonton and drop-in/pop-up sessions for those who prefer in-person interactions, along with workshops and focus groups with targeted groups represen-

ting a cross-section of communities of interest. I am especially looking forward to the in-person Ward sessions that will be held with each Councillor and Mayor Knack.

In June, the City of Edmonton Corporate Business Plan will be published and in September, the summary

of the research and public engagement will be presented in a "What We Heard Report." Council will then hear from our Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) regarding their 2027 – 2030 budget needs.

From all these inputs, Administration will prepare and present their proposed operating, capital and utility budget reports by early November. The public will again have opportunity to speak to the proposed budget during a Non-Statutory Public Hearing scheduled for November 23 and 24, 2026. To learn how to "Register to Speak" please go to Edmonton.ca/meetings.

The process wraps up by mid-December when Council dedicates seven and half days to budget deliberations to approve the 4-year budget.

As always, if you have any comments or concerns, I encourage you to reach out to my office at 780.496.8148 or jo-anne.wright@edmonton.ca.



Coun. Jo-Anne Wright

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Edmonton celebrates 30 Years of Black History Month in Canada

February is Black History Month, an important time to recognize the legacy and contributions of African, Caribbean and Black communities in Edmonton. This year marks the 100-year anniversary of Black History Month celebrations globally and the 30-year anniversary of Black History Month in Canada.

Edmonton's local theme for 2026, "Hidden Histories and Bold Futures," focuses on the leadership, innovation and resilience of Black Edmontonians, who continue to shape our city.

The Black History Month Initiative Fund, delivered in partnership with the Africa Centre, the Edmonton Community Foundation and the Edmonton Heritage Council, continues to support local community organizations that host commemorative events and activities throughout February. The Black History Month Initiative Fund Event was hosted at City Hall on Feb. 2 to celebrate the 2026 recipients, featuring cultural performances alongside presentations by Edmonton's Poet Laureate and Historian Laureate.

"February brings numerous opportunities to learn about the vibrant and long history of African descent communities in Edmonton, and their remarkable contributions. The Black History Month Initiative Fund Event is a powerful showcase of community-led progress, giving us a chance to meet the talented individuals turning their visions into reality. This initiative



Deborah Borahuz performing an African cultural dance at the Black History Month Initiative Fund Event.

Photo: City of Edmonton

is an important part of the City's comprehensive Anti-Racism Strategy, and we must continue to work together to ensure the promise of a bright future is accessible to all," said Mayor Andrew Knack.

The City encourages Edmontonians to celebrate Black History Month and

reflect on the role each of us plays in making Edmonton a welcoming, inclusive home for everyone.

For a list of community events and learning opportunities, please visit edmonton.ca/BlackHistoryMonth.

The 2026 Initiative Fund Recipients are:

- Family Advancement Association
- Mesh of Mothers Foundation
- Hands Lifting Hearts Initiative Society
- Black Canadian Women in Action
- Colour Me Comedy Festival
- The Resilient Immigrant Foundation
- Gambian Community Association
- Cameroonian Association of Edmonton
- Foundation for Oromian Culture, Education and Arts Services
- Aspire Youth Canada Foundation (Aspire Youth Canada)
- Congress of Black Women of Canada Edmonton Chapter
- KAYANOU
- Liberia Friendship Society of Canada
- Masterstroke Atelier
- Feed the Soul YEG
- Izwi lethu Arts Society
- Solara Vision House
- GED - Generation Empowerment Network
- Performing Beyond Dreams Foundation
- Living Hope Community Services Canada
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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

The value of school resource officers

The shooting at a school in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. on Feb. 11, which resulted in nine killed and at least 25 injured people, is the deadliest attack connected to a Canadian school in nearly 40 years. In 1999, a 14-year-old Grade 9 student shot three students, killing one, at a high school in Taber, Alberta, and there hasn't been any shooting at a school in our province since then.

The tragedy in Taber could have been much worse, if there wouldn't have been a school resource officer (SRO) who arrested the shooter before he was able to do more harm.

This was an example that the presence of a police officer in a school is not only educational but can also prevent violent crimes.

The Edmonton Public School Board suspended its SRO program in 2020, but the program was reintroduced into six high schools last year, and seven more were added in the fall of 2025, including J. Percy Page High School in Mill Woods and Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School in The Meadows.

We are lucky to live in a country which has stricter gun laws than the USA where 77 school shootings took place last year, but more needs to be done to prevent these horrible massacres, because one killed student is too many.

When I grew up in Germany, our family lived in a two-bedroom apartment in the City of Cologne (Köln) which was about the size Edmonton is today. We did not communicate much with our neighbors, and most tenants minded their own business. Our biggest neighbor was the headquarters of Cologne's fire department, and when I was a child, I had a front row seat in our bedroom from where I could watch the firefighters practising which I found quite interesting.

When I studied at the University of Hamburg, I rented furnished rooms, shared kitchens and bathrooms with roommates, and we often partied together. Later, I had my own small one-bedroom apartment, which was located in a mature neighborhood not far from the university campus, until I decided to emigrate to Canada in 1989.

Our first home in Canada was in the small town of Cardston in southern Alberta where I worked as a reporter for the community newspaper and my wife Susan found a nursing job at the local hospital. Having lived most of my life in big cities in Germany where many people didn't know their neighbors, I was irritated when our neighbors in Cardston were friendly and reached out to us, because I was not used to that. One time in the winter, when our old car didn't start, our friendly neighbor across the street

approached us and offered to give us a boost, and when we moved, another neighbor let us use his pickup truck to haul our stuff, so we didn't have to rent a U-Haul truck. Those friendly neighbors taught me not to be a hostile city

ted in 2020 and many people were confined to their homes, two of our neighbors knocked on our door and offered to get groceries for us, which was a nice gesture, and one of our neighbors, who had a snowblower, often cleared our driveway, so we didn't have to shovel. That's the Canadian way!

It is our experience that what goes around comes around which means if you are kind to your neighbors, they will be kind to you, but we have to make the first step. Don't wait for your neighbors to reach out to you. Maybe they are too busy or don't want to be bothered. If they are secluded and don't respond, it should be respected, because not everybody is a social butterfly.

There is also this saying "Good fences make good neighbors", and there is some truth to this. It is good to have fences, because they provide boundaries and privacy, but they should not be too massive, like the Berlin Wall with barbed wire on top. That's the German way!

On the subject of fences, our fences had to be replaced last summer, because they were 24 years old and started to fall apart, and we wanted something more durable, because the climate here in Edmonton is quite harsh. Since we have five neighbors with whom we are sharing the fence, we tried to "invite" them to share the

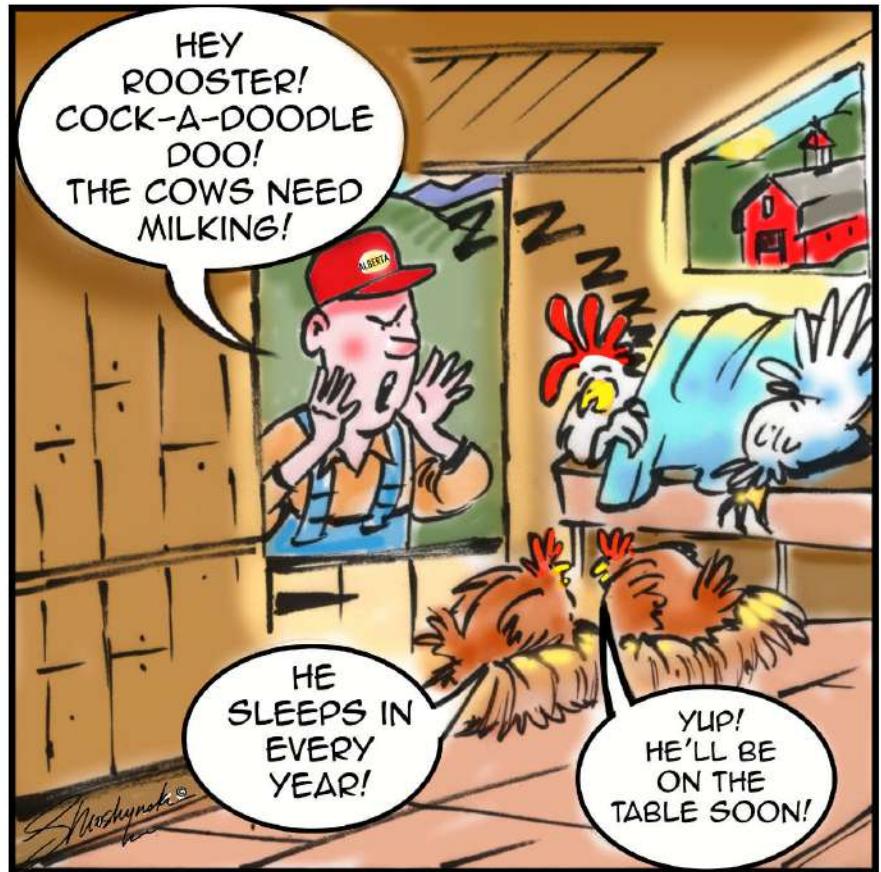
cost of the new fence, but only two of them responded and paid their share. We were a little disappointed, but didn't want to argue, and we looked at the bright side that two of our neighbors did the right thing.

We love our neighborhood. It is a quiet cul-de-sac in a peaceful suburb, near a trail where many people walk their dogs and I do my regular walking. When our house was built in 2001, our pie-shaped property was at the edge of the city with an open field south of it, but the city has grown tremendously since then. The good news is that we have many amenities not far from our home, especially the beautiful Meadows Community Recreation Centre on 17 Street where my wife Susan often goes to exercise. It has an indoor swimming pool, two NHL-size ice rinks, a fitness centre, a gym, and a branch of Edmonton Public Library.

And last but not least, our neighborhood has several supermarkets, bank branches, restaurants, coffee shops and other businesses which makes shopping and dining convenient.

Some people don't like suburbs, but they can be small communities in a big city if all of us do our part to be good neighbors.

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



Daylight saving time will start in Alberta on March 8. That means that we have to advance our clocks by one hour to make better use of the longer daylight available during summer so that darkness falls at a later clock time, but dairy farmers don't like it, because it disrupts dairy cow routines, causing stress and temporary distractions in milk production.

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

Love Thy Neighbors

**Arnim
Joop**

**From the
Desk of the
Publisher**



dweller and become more community-minded.

After we moved to Edmonton in 1996, we lived five years in a rented house in Mill Woods and then had a house built in The Meadows. When we moved to our new house, which is located in a cul-de-sac, we introduced ourselves to our new neighbors, and my Filipino wife Susan gave them some goodies, and when she later had a vegetable garden and some fruit trees, she always shared some of her harvest with our neighbors. That's the Filipino way!

When the COVID-19 pandemic star-

Focusing on the Positive

In my last column, I wrote about my New Year's resolution. Simply stated, it was to be happy. In her feedback to me, a dear friend, Wanda, recounted a ritual she performs at the start of each year, which I found both intriguing and worth considering.

Wanda described a routine where, at the end of each week, she inscribes on a piece of paper a summary of her key activities during the just completed week, and her related accomplishments. She then places that slip of paper in a designated jar and repeats the process week after week throughout the year. At the start of the following year, she reads her collection of weekly notes and derives much pleasure recalling what she was engaged in and achieved during the previous year. She noted that the process helps her focus on the positive aspects of her life and keeps her motivated to tackle new challenges or issues. Her approach is creative and has potential benefits for us, on many levels.

One of the key benefits, and perhaps the most immediate, is the concrete recording of one's undertakings and successes throughout life. This is necessary, but not for vanity's sake or bragging rights. As we know from experience, most of our actions and successes are rarely taken or achieved instantly. However, when we are reminded of them, as well as the challenges we overcame, they become an irrefutable indication that we were actively and successfully engaged in the task of living. As such, this compiled record of our undertakings is bound to be emotionally and spiritually uplifting. As my friend noted, her review of the past year gives her per-

spective about her progress to date. It also keeps her focused on the positive aspects of her life, without the common temptation to fixate on her fail-

**Ron
Kuban**

**Time
Passages**



ures, incomplete or unmet personal expectations, and much more.

While note taking is useful in enhancing our memory, I think the more critical component is our point of focus. Wanda's approach helps her to maintain a positive attitude about herself and others, as well as the prospects she is contemplating.

Upon reflection, I believe this strategy or approach, with or without the associated note taking, is also useful in many interpersonal relationships. Admittedly, it is quite easy to fixate on the things that currently frustrate us regarding the behavior of those who are part of our life. In that case, current feelings of frustration or even anger tend to overshadow, overwhelm or even negate many prior positive experiences. By focusing on our current irritations, we potentially risk ignoring the many upbeat aspects or experiences which initially attracted us to other people and then also helped to preserve our relationship with them.

The concerted effort, to recall the initial essence of our relationships and their highlights, applies to and is beneficial for all types of interpersonal connections, from friendships and marriages to family affiliations and business associations. In essence, it reorients our focus from the negative to the positive. Additionally, when we recognize the foundation upon which each of our relationships was built and preserved, we may find the justification and strength to overcome the challenges they currently experience.

This mindset or approach is equally applicable in the context of much larger associations such as in politics. For example, individuals in power or leadership roles are often smeared and dismissed at the slightest point of dissatisfaction with their conduct. Often ignored are the many great actions they have taken previously or the reasons we found them engaging in the first place. In doing so, we run the risk of removing or discarding otherwise successful leaders or political representatives because of a current disagreement or displeasure, which may be momentary or of minimal importance in comparison to their otherwise longer positive track record.

The more I thought about this concept, the more its importance grew. For example, I think of the initiatives to separate Quebec and Alberta from our confederated nation. Those who promote such separation rely heavily on a set of dogmatic grievances. These are

repeated as justification for a rather decisive and impactful set of intended actions. It is clear to see that the demand for independence is focused on negative feelings and perceived unmet expectations. However, these intended separatists neglect to balance their grievances against the many benefits that have brought Quebec and Alberta into the Canadian confederation, and the countless advantages which still underpin that relationship.

My point is this: We often tend to focus on the things that do not work for us, or the aspect of a relationship that, at this point, we find irritating. There is much to be gained by taking stock of our life over a larger period than the present with its current frustrations and seemingly incomplete achievements. By viewing life from its broader perspective, we are bound to see that we have achieved a great deal, were generally happy, and in turn have much to be pleased about. Such a holistic view could also help us have a more positive and productive association with others. I suspect that it would make our life a little less stressful too.

I am convinced that it matters greatly what we choose to focus on. Being pragmatic, I recognize that not everything is good, enjoyable or successful. Nevertheless, I am convinced that there is much to be grateful for, enjoyed, and celebrated. That is my focus.

Feedback is welcome at
rkuban@shaw.ca

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

Letters to the editor welcome

We invite you to write letters to the editor. A maximum of 275 words is preferred. Letters must carry a first name or two initials with surname, and include an address and daytime telephone number. All letters are subject to editing. We don't publish letters addressed to others or sent to other publications. Send to: The Editor of the *Mill Woods Mosaic*, mwmosaic@telus.net

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Standing Together: Against Separatism, For Workers, and With Tumbler Ridge

As I write this, our country is mourning one of the worst tragedies in Canadian history. On February 10, a mass shooting at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in British Columbia killed nine people, including five students between the ages of 12 and 13, and a teacher. More than 25 others were injured. This is the deadliest school shooting in Canada in nearly 40 years.

To the families and community of Tumbler Ridge, all of Canada stands with you. To the RCMP officers who rushed into that school, the paramedics, the teachers who shielded their students – your courage in the darkest of moments showed the very best of our country. As we grieve, we must also commit to doing everything in our power to ensure our communities remain safe.

At a time when Canadians need to stand united, the threat of separatism is pulling us apart. Danielle Smith and her UCP government have repeatedly changed the rules to give separatist

**Jasvir
Deol**

**MLA
for
Edmonton-
Meadows**



movements momentum, including passing Bill 14 to allow unconstitutional petition questions to proceed. When Alberta's NDP asked every MLA to sign a pledge affirming they are proud Albertans and proud Canadians who oppose separatism, every NDP MLA signed without hesi-

tation. Danielle Smith and her UCP caucus refused. Their silence speaks volumes.

Separatism doesn't lower the cost of living. It doesn't build ER beds, attract healthcare workers, or create jobs. What it does is scare away investment. The Alberta Chambers of Commerce have confirmed that uncertainty around separatism is already hurting our economy. Worse, separatist leaders are actively working with members of the Trump Administration to push their dangerous agenda of breaking up our country. Separatism also threatens the constitutionally protected treaty rights of Indigenous peoples under Section 35. Alberta's NDP caucus stands in solidarity with

First Nations who have brought legal challenges to protect those rights.

Meanwhile, the UCP government quietly cut health coverage for some temporary foreign workers holding legal permits. Communities like Banff, Jasper, and Lake Louise – whose tourism economies depend on sea-

nal workers – pushed back immediately. The government has since paused the change, calling it a "premature decision," but workers and employers are still waiting for clarity. With the busy summer hiring season just weeks away, this uncertainty threatens both workers' well-being and the businesses that rely on them. Stripping healthcare from people who live and work in our province is not just bad policy – it's wrong, period.

Whether it's protecting our communities from violence, defending our place in Confederation, or ensuring every worker in Alberta has access to healthcare, these challenges demand leadership that puts people first. I, along with Leader Naheed Nenshi and Alberta's NDP caucus will continue fighting for a province that is safe, united, and fair for all.

Jasvir Deol is the Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for Edmonton-Meadows and Official Opposition Critic for Infrastructure.

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MLA Jasvir Deol in his Canadian spirit during a Canada Day event from past year.

Photo: Office of MLA Jasvir Deol



MLA Christina Gray (second from left) poses with team members from the Newcomer Centre at the Mill Woods Resource Fair which was held at Mill Woods Town Centre on Jan. 31. The staff are (from left to right) Joseph Luri, Carol Strid, Noha El Husseini and Veronica Huynh.

Photo: Office of MLA Christina Gray

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

Serving to “Inquire, Promote and Connect”

The University of Alberta in Edmonton, which ranks among the top five teaching and research universities in Canada, has more than 40,000 students and is governed by a Board of Governors, a Chancellor and the U of A Senate. Established under Alberta's Post-Secondary Learning Act, the Senate forms an important link between the U of A and the community.

The Senate has 62 members, including 30 publicly elected Senators. One of these publicly elected Senators is long-time community activist Leigh Makarewicz who is serving her first three-year term on the Senate since June 2023.

In an interview with the *Mill Woods Mosaic*, Senator Makarewicz talks about her experiences as a Senator, what she has learnt, and why she wants to encourage more people to apply to serve in the role to “Inquire, Promote and Connect.”

Why did you decide to apply to the Senate although you don't have any academic experience?

A project I was working on introduced me to someone involved with the University of Alberta Senate, and through their outreach for Senate recruitment, they identified me as someone who could help strengthen the University's connection to the broader community. While I don't have an academic background, the Senate is meant to represent all aspects of the province, sharing the University's story with the public while also ensuring the University hears the needs, concerns, and realities of the communities it is mandated to serve. Applying was not an immediately comfortable decision, and without strong encouragement I likely would have let the opportunity pass by. As I learned more about the role, I wanted to fully understand what would be expected of me. Taking on a volunteer position, especially one as important as Senator requires honesty about the time and commitment involved. I quickly realized that this would involve a significant commitment of time for plenaries, committee meetings, and events, as well for me, building relationships with an entire ecosystem that I was unfamiliar with. I came to appreciate what a unique experience it would be and how I could play a role in making others feel connected to and welcome within the University which is such a vital part of Edmonton.

What was your first impression when you attended your first meeting of the Senate? Did you feel intimidated, or were you confident that you would be able to contribute with your experience as a long-time community activist?

The University has such a rich history as an institution. It is hard to imagine someone who doesn't have a sense of awe as they walk into Convocation Hall where the Senate Chamber resides on the third floor. Opened in 1915, the historical significance is in



Senator Leigh Makarewicz
Photo: Supplied by Larry Billings

every step, pillar, and intricate plaster-work detail. While the Senate Chamber itself no longer holds all Senators at once, it is a warm and inviting space that hosts new Senators for orientation and committee meetings. This space allows for all of the reverence of the role within the institution as well as the modern connectivity requirements that allows for Senator participation from everywhere in the province.

Each new Senator is assigned a mentor to guide their first experiences and I was made to feel so welcome and comfortable by mine. I hope that I have had a similar impact on those that I have mentored since. I called my first year of my three year term my “listening year”. I felt that I had much to learn and even those who were deeply entrenched within the university were just starting to appreciate the new structure of colleges and faculties that had been implemented as part of an academic restructuring. One of the many wonderful things about being on Senate is the flexibility to participate where you have skills or interest. There is so much going on in every nook and cranny that you can immerse yourself in certain areas or learn more broadly how the university touches many areas. I came to learn very quickly that the best every Senator had to offer was their perspective. My experience is what I am able to contribute in our role to *Inquire, Connect, and Promote*. This is the roadmap that we each use to fulfill our unique roles in working towards the Senate's strategic priorities to support student experience, drive social innovation, and expand community connections.

What do you think is your biggest accomplishment in your first term on the Senate?

In year two, I was approached to head the Social Innovation Working Group for the Senate. This was being created to continue the work of Chancellor Emerita Peggy Garrity under the leadership of Chancellor Nizar Somji. It was clear that the research being



Senate members visit Triffo Hall, home of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and the Graduate Students' Association, for their September 2025 Plenary meeting.

Photo: University of Alberta Senate

done at the University surrounding social innovation was not receiving the same level of support and acknowledgement as other areas of research. At this point in time where societal needs are being recognised as foundational keys to betterment, it seemed that there was a direct correlation between the objectives of the Senate and the gap that existed. In an effort to highlight the importance of such work, we have been working to create a lasting legacy that will support the work of the researchers and the contributions of the community to their outcomes. The work I have gotten to oversee to that end has been very invigorating and I look forward to publicly announcing the results in March 2026 at our Social Innovation - Problems and Solutions Fair 7:30 p.m., March 11, 2026 at the University Commons Atrium. Everyone is welcome to join us and see how the University and community can work together to benefit the whole people.

What was the biggest challenge for you, and how did you manage to deal with this challenge?

I think the biggest challenge for me is the desire to do everything and not

always having the resources to do so. This is a volunteer position and while you may want to attend every event and engagement opportunity, there are limitations. I have really had to look at where best I can contribute or learn what is most valuable while balancing my other commitments. The perk of having parking privileges while attending the University activities as a Senator has definitely helped!

Why are you encouraging more people to apply to the Senate?

Being a U of A Senator has been a wonderful experience for me personally and I know that we have a lot of hidden insight that can continue to elevate the work being done at the University of Alberta. I didn't know that this was accessible and we know that we have a lot more to do to share the value of the Senate. I want to encourage people to think about the benefit to themselves and the University if they think outside of their bubble!

Applications for the U of A Senate will be open through the U of A Senate webpage (ualberta.ca) until Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, noon.

Living Portraits: Celebrate local Black artists at City Hall

Living Portraits, an art exhibit curated by Darren Jordan featuring 20 local Black artists, was unveiled at City Hall on Jan. 31.

Living Portraits is a public art exhibition celebrating Black artists in Edmonton through a journey of visibility, curiosity and connection. Across five curved panels, viewers will encounter portraits of Black artists that unfold in three stages:

1. LOOK: Presents portraits of the artists that convey dignity and stillness, asking viewers to reflect on how Black presence is perceived in public spaces.

2. APPROACH: Reveals more personal images that highlight the artist's individuality, joy and creative practices.

3. ENGAGE: Invites conversation through augmented reality, where the artists speak in their own voices about their lives, neighbourhoods and culture in Edmonton.

"This exhibition moves beyond representation toward relationships. It affirms that visibility alone is not enough – true belonging begins with attention, proximity and listening," said Darren Jordan.

Edmontonians are invited to visit the exhibit at City Hall to celebrate Black artists and honour the contributions of the Black communities that help shape our city. *Living Portraits* will be on display at City Hall until the spring.

This art exhibit is presented in partnership with the Edmonton Arts



Twenty local Black artists contributed to the project "Living Portraits" which will be on display at City Hall until June 26.

Photo: Samuel Mensah (@samjayco)

Council as part of the City of Edmonton's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. The feature supports the Plan's call to include cultural and artistic programming from diverse Black communities at City Hall during Black History Month.

For more information:
edmonton.ca/BlackHistoryMonth
edmontonarts.ca/event/exhibition-launch-living-portraits



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Help shape the future name of the Covenant Community Health Centre.

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Scan to RSVP



<https://tinyurl.com/mtzsct4z>

RSVP to attend



Feb. 19
 5 - 6:30 p.m.



Community Health Centre
 7319 29 Avenue NW,
 Edmonton, AB T6K 2P1

The Power of School Councils

At our Board meeting on February 10, Trustees received a summary of the 2024-25 *School Council Annual Reports*. The report highlighted the work of 179 school councils and principal advisory committees across Edmonton Public Schools. What stood out most was not just the volume of activity, but the depth of commitment shown by families in every corner of our Division.

School councils are composed primarily of parents and caregivers. Their legislated role is advisory. They provide feedback to principals and Boards on school plans, budgets and results, and they serve as an essential communication bridge between families and school leadership. That advisory role is powerful. When school councils speak, they bring the lived experience of families into our governance work.

This year, councils supported everything from literacy and numeracy nights to cultural celebrations, career days and student well-being initiatives. Many advised principals on school education plans and results reviews.

The Edmonton Public School Board had a day of professional development on Feb. 5 which was hosted by the Public School Boards Association of Alberta. Trustees were treated to workshops on innovative inclusion of newcomers, how locally elected trustees form highly effective governance boards, public boards embracing alternative programming, and meeting efficiency. The keynote presentation was by Carrie Rosa on school board communications and how trustees can engage with their constituents.
Photo (left to right): Trustees Nickela Anderson, Sherri O'Keefe, Saadiq Sumer, Sarah Doll, Carrie Rosa (Managing Director, EPSB Communications), Julie Kusiek, Jan Sawyer, Holly Nichol and Linda Lindsay.

Photo: Edmonton Public Schools

**Jan
Sawyer**

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



Some advocated for traffic safety, infrastructure improvements and community supports. Others focused on strengthening parent engagement and improving communication so that more families feel welcome and informed.

The report also shared honest reflections. Some councils struggled with participation or leadership transitions. Others worked hard to clarify the difference between advisory work and

fundraising. These challenges matter, because they remind us that a strong parent voice does not happen automatically. It takes effort, structure and support.

As Trustees, we rely on school councils to help us understand what is working and where we need to pay closer attention. Their insights inform our advocacy at the municipal and provincial levels. Their

questions sharpen our thinking. Their partnership strengthens our schools.

Public education works best when it is a shared endeavour. School councils embody that partnership. They represent parents who choose to lean in, ask thoughtful questions and work collaboratively for the benefit of all students.

To every school council member who volunteers their time, thank you. Your voice matters. And it makes our Board stronger.

As always, if you have questions about this, or anything else, please feel free to contact me trustee.jan.sawyer@epsb.ca.



Visit a school OPEN HOUSE

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and learn about courses and programs.**

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EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

openhouse.epsb.ca

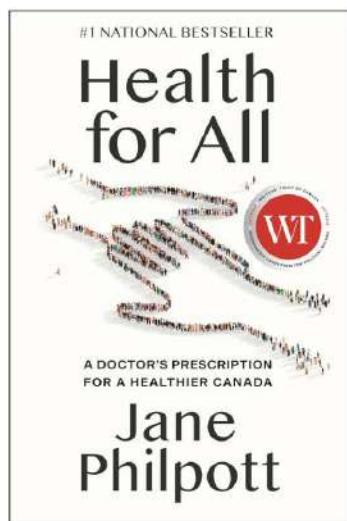
Health for All: Doctor's Prescription for a Healthier Canada

By Vamini Selvanandan

"Health is not the only thing but it is the mother of everything." With her understanding of an old West African proverb, Jane Philpott imparts a lifetime of lessons learned as a family doctor, politician, mother and person of faith. Through vivid storytelling and sharing her personal and professional experiences, Philpott engages the reader intellectually and emotionally to understand what is needed to create a healthier Canada.

Canada's healthcare system was built on the principle of equity—guaranteeing those who live in this country universal access to publicly funded medical care based on need, rather than ability to pay. Yet it is falling short on delivering on many of these promises. More than six million Canadians don't have a family doctor, those who have one are unable to obtain timely access, and private clinics are taking hold in many provinces, undermining the public system.

A former federal minister of health, Philpott proposes a four-part prescription for Canada's ailing health system. First, she articulates a bold and clear vision to improve health service delivery through universal access to primary care services for every Canadian. Analogous to every child having universal access to K-12 public education, Philpott recommends a system in



which every person living in Canada will be guaranteed access to a primary care provider – a family physician or nurse practitioner. As the foundation of a well-functioning health system, Canadians' "primary care home" will include a team of other professionals such as physiotherapists, social workers and mental health counsellors to provide services customized to local needs.

Studies show that countries with

strong primary care systems produce better health outcomes at lower cost and have increased accessibility and equity. However, access to health care is a necessary but not sufficient condition in achieving health. The concept of health extends beyond the physical realm to include mental, spiritual and social well-being and requires the cultivation of hope, purpose, meaning and a sense of belonging. Philpott illustrates the importance of each of these concepts using touching personal stories, evidence from research studies and examples of existing community programs.

No discussion about health is complete without an exploration of the social determinants of health – the conditions in which people live, work and play. Adequate housing, income, education and employment are examples of social determinants that can create conditions for optimal health. As Philpott writes, "Attention to the social determinants of health matters because these issues are the building blocks of a peaceful and productive society."

Politicians and governance systems play a key role in both the design and the delivery of health, and in providing access to those "building blocks." In the final section of the book, Philpott turns her attention to the political determinants of health. From her past experiences as a federal minister, she provides critical insights into why the

current way of doing politics is preventing Canadians from achieving health for all. Drawing on her knowledge and experience in medical education, she outlines a number of skills, knowledge and attitudes that are transferable from the world of medicine to that of public office. While it may be a bitter pill for politicians to swallow, they would be well advised to heed the constructive solutions she offers as a path forward: engage in professional development, increase capacity for collaboration and firmly commit to equity.

Health for all may sound like a lofty goal, but in a democratic, well-resourced country such as Canada it can certainly be achieved through political will, investment and decisive action, especially if we, the electorate, demand it.

Vamini Selvanandan is a family physician and public health practitioner in Alberta.

Health for All – A Doctor's Prescription for a Healthier Canada by Jane Philpott, SIGNAL 2024/\$34.95/296 pages, ISBN: 9780771011726

This review was originally published in the October 2024 issue of *Alberta Views*. The review is online here: <https://albertaviews.ca/health-for-all/>

Letters to the editor are welcome

We invite you to write letters to the editor. A maximum of 275 words is preferred. Letters must carry a first name or two initials with surname, and include an address and daytime telephone number. All letters are subject to editing. We don't publish letters addressed to others or sent to other publications. Please e-mail your letter to: The Editor of the *Mill Woods Mosaic*, mwmosaic@telus.net.

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CHECKSTOP



The Loss of Papaschase Indian Reserve No. 136

This is the second in a series of articles about the history of Mill Woods that will continue throughout 2026 as I write a comprehensive history of the community. The first chapter will be about Indigenous history – the Edmonton Stragglers or Beaver Hills House People, the overlap between the 40-square-miles of the Papaschase Indian Reserve and the 9-square-miles that is now Mill Woods. This article focuses on how the Papaschase band lost their land and their descendants' struggle for recognition.

In 1877, when Papaschase (aka Quinn, Passpasschase) adhered to Treaty 6, the government recognized him as Chief of the Cree band living on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River, opposite Fort Edmonton (which historically sat where the legislative buildings are now). Settlers moving into the area did not want to live near a reserve and with the help of Frank Oliver at the *Edmonton Bulletin* were able to have it located further south. The survey took place at a time when relations between Indigenous people and the growing numbers of settlers were strained. The decline of the buffalo between the 1869-1870 Red River Resistance and the 1885 North-West Resistance led to starvation. The Papaschase band did not participate in either event, but settlers were uneasy, nonetheless. The government began surveying the reserve in 1880 but did not complete it until 1884 because Papaschase questioned the reduction in size from his initial expectation. It took seven years to secure the reserve, and only five years later it was 'surrendered' in questionable circumstances. Oliver also played a role in forcing the surrender as he used his then political influence to eliminate the reserve altogether.

In his 2004 article, "Edmonton Pentimento: Re-Reading History in the Case of the Papaschase Cree," in the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, Dwayne Donald argues that after 1880, Edgar Dewdney, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, decided to use the hunger crisis to bring the Cree under government control – even if it meant violating the treaties – and withheld rations and support such as agricultural tools and training. Dewdney was aware that Papaschase Band members were so destitute that settlers in the area felt compelled to feed and clothe them. Two federal government policies introduced at the time undermined the sovereignty of the Papaschase Band: Métis scrip and land surrenders.

Métis scrip was introduced as a means of limiting the government's obligations to a one-time recognition of rights rather than an eternal commitment like the treaties. In 1888, band

Catherine C. Cole

History of Mill Woods



members including Papaschase and his brothers withdrew from the treaty, identified as Métis, and accepted scrip. They forfeited their treaty rights in exchange for a payment of 160-240 acres of land or \$160-\$240. Dewdney initially objected to them claiming Métis status, but they argued for scrip – a bird in the hand for starving people. Unfortunately, the money disappeared quickly.

Twelve Papaschase families joined the Enoch Band and others Alexander, Samson, or Ermineskin. The last Papaschase treaty pay list was in 1886, the same year that Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton was appointed to settle the west, the 'Last Best West'. European settlers in South Edmonton lobbied for a surrender. Speculation around plans to build the Calgary and Edmonton Railway (C&E) through the reserve fueled their urgency.

In a 2017 oral history interview, elder Fernie Marty, a great-great grandson of Chief Papaschase, argued that those who surrendered,

were tricked into it. They were hungry and they said, 'Well you come here and sign this and we'll give you food.' Well, little did they know what they were signing was the surrender of the land. They didn't understand that, and because they're hungry, they're gonna do what they're gonna do to try and feed their families. So, they were literally robbed blind by the government of that day.

In his 1979 MA thesis, *A Tax-Eating Proposition: The History of the Passpasschase Indian Reserve*, Kenneth James Tyler notes that the surrender of the Papaschase Reserve was the first surrender for sale following passage of the 1876 Indian Act.

The surrender remains controversial. Descendants argue that the government did not look hard enough for band members to sign the document, some of whom were out hunting, and that band members were not compensated adequately for the land. Since the 1990s, more than 1,000 descendants of original band members have demonstrated their link to the band. In 1995, the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations passed a resolution in support

of the descendants noting that there were irregularities in the surrender. The case went to the Supreme Court but was dismissed when the judge argued that the band had not existed since Papaschase took Métis scrip in 1886, since the remaining members joined other bands in 1887, or at the latest when the Enoch Band formally admitted former Papaschase

members in 1894. An appeal was thrown out because the Court ruled that too much time had passed.

Whether or not the descendants ever receive legal recognition, in the spirit of reconciliation and social justice we should acknowledge that Papaschase and his followers were morally and ethically mistreated during a particularly difficult time with the loss of their land, their freedom, and their main source of food. Their very existence clashed with the government's goal of settling the west, and they got caught up in rules that were changing and inconsistently applied, incompetent administration, and Liberals and Conservatives, Protestants and Catholics, all jockeying for influence.

Beginning March 11 and continuing the second Wednesday of each month to the end of June, I will be collaborating with the Edmonton Public Library on a Community History Project about Mill Woods. She invites residents to share memories, stories, and reflections about the people, places, and moments that have shaped the community. Through informal conversations, one-on-one appointments, and community discussions, they will create space for residents to connect with local history, explore heritage issues, and listen to the voices that make Mill Woods unique. The program will operate March 11, April 8, May 13, and June 10 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Next month, I will focus on the first homesteaders, Moravian farmers. If you have information or photographs to share, please feel free to contact me at catherine.cole@telus.net. I am very grateful to the Edmonton Heritage Council and the Canada Council for the Arts for supporting the research and writing of this manuscript.

Catherine C. Cole is a writer, curator, and consultant. Her last book, GWG: Piece by Piece, a history of Edmonton's Great Western Garment Company, was published by Goose Lane Editions in 2012.



An 1888 cartoon from the now-defunct *Grip* magazine showing Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney callously ignoring starving Cree. Credit: John Wilson Bengough, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Letters to the editor welcome

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Alberta Referendum on Secession - What Kind of Future Do You Want?

Possibly during this coming year Albertans will be voting in a critical referendum. The question of whether or not Alberta should stay in Canada may be put to the average voter. But there is great uncertainty about many things. Will a vote actually be held? Will the Alberta government abide by the vote result? What would happen if Alberta seceded from Canada?

This uncertainty should not be unexpected. Referendums have always been contentious and polarizing events. As well, economic problems and human costs are even greater when countries are broken up.

In various ways, the idea of Alberta separation is presented as a way to fight or avoid the moves by the Canadian government toward fulfilling Canada's international obligation to bring down the consumption of fossil fuels and thus do its bit towards staving off a looming environmental collapse, predicted to be caused by global warming and climate change which looks to worsen within the next several years. The recent above-zero weather in Edmonton can be seen as a harbinger of that, and perhaps even of a record-breaking drought and heatwave this coming summer.

As well, the Conservative/UCP's long-held dislike of public healthcare and progressive social policy on women's rights, gay rights, and transgender youths also are cause for a call for separation from a Canada committed to a social safety net and full human rights.

Under Alberta law, about 177,000 voters can sign a petition calling for a referendum. When it looked like a petition on Alberta leaving Canada was getting started, a group led by Alberta's former deputy premier Thomas Lukaszuk gathered up more than 450,000 signatures in support of a referendum on the question of staying in Canada. This phraseology was intended to nudge votes to vote in favour of staying.

Many right-wingers, the natural voter base for the UCP government, support Alberta leaving.

A massive majority of Albertans wants to stay in Canada

But the UCP government meanwhile has said it is in favour of staying in Canada and of the province of Alberta being sovereign within Canada. It would assert a legal right to push against federal laws and policies that it deems unconstitutional or harmful to provincial interests. We have seen this recently with the Danielle Smith government's invocation of the "notwithstanding clause" of our constitution last year. It thus disregarded what the national constitution said about its actions, and gave a slap down on transgender youth and also ordered striking teachers back to work.

The sovereignty of Alberta may be said to exist, but as long as Alberta is in Canada, such sovereignty would necessarily be of limited nature. The Canadian government has jurisdiction on international trade, including export of oil, and is expected to work with other countries in pursuit of environmental goals.

As well, being in Canada must mean paying the national income tax. Canada has a standard progressive tax system imposed on all Canadians everywhere. Smith somehow claims that Albertans are over-taxed, but each of them pays the same income tax as

Canadian government, but actually last year Alberta produced more oil than ever before. It set a new record of more than 4 million barrels per day. Alberta exports 3 million barrels per day to the U.S., which consumes about 20 million barrels per day.

But Smith wants even more production. Uncertainty about secession is not good for investment in oil or any other section of the economy, except perhaps for psychiatrists.

Premier Smith is now saying that as her government is in support of staying in Canada, a petition in favour of a vote on staying in Canada should not necessarily force a referendum. Of course, a referendum on staying in Canada is also a referendum on leaving, and Thomas Lukaszuk and his stay-in-Canada activists never intended to give an opportunity for a leave-Canada vote.

The history of referendums

The whole referendum idea is intended to allow citizens to force a government to hold a vote on doing something a government does not want to do. Or sometimes a government uses a referendum to do a thorough polling of public sentiment.

The Alberta referendum, if it goes ahead, will not be the first to be held in Canada on a province voting to leave or stay. Quebec has held two referendums on that question. The question used in 1980 envisioned a later confirmatory referendum - "... any change in political status resulting from these negotiations will only be implemented with popular approval through another referendum; on these terms, do you give the Government of Quebec the mandate to negotiate [with] Canada?" A majority of Quebecois voted against even this tentative plan of action.

A second referendum in 1995 had this question "Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership..." Again a majority voted against.

The first known referendum in history was on redrawing a country's boundaries. That referendum was held in 1527 to test the opinion of people living in Burgundy on whether or not they would agree to being moved from France to Spain. They rejected the idea.

Another referendum was held in 1938, after Nazi Germany imposed its rule on little Austria. A vote was held to get Austrians to say they endorsed the grab. The vote was hopelessly unbalanced. Anti-Hitlerites were put into concentration camps. On the ballot, the circle to make the X to show support for Hitler was larger than the circle for the no vote. Many voters who marked their ballot with a yes showed their ballot to officials to show they did not vote against Hitler.

Such behaviour would not be accepted in Alberta if a referendum is held. But other rules are not clear - how much propaganda and campaign

advertising would be allowed? Would a simple majority be enough to force secession, or would it be 60 percent, or what?

If the leave-Canada forces also complete their petition calling for a referendum, will two questions be put to voters - one on whether or not to leave and one on whether or not to stay?

There was a case of a referendum held in Oregon in 1908 with two questions. One question was whether or not to ban fishing upriver (put forward by a petition signed by downriver fishermen). Another question was whether or not to ban downriver fishing (put forward by upriver fishermen). Voters saw each group acting selfishly and voted in favour of banning both types of fishing.

If Alberta's case, such could happen if two questions are put to voters. Albertans, like many Canadians from coast to coast to coast, are not happy about how things are. Food prices are high; wages are stuck in place (especially minimum wage); our public healthcare and education systems are teetering.

But it seems the same problems or worse would exist in an independent Alberta, and perhaps even more so if the U.S. grabs Alberta after secession.

Will Alberta be exposed to the risk of mass suffering?

We have seen independent movements fail in the past in the world. The Biafran humanitarian crisis of the 1960s arose from the move by an oil-rich part of Nigeria to split off on its own. And old newspapers carried blood-drenched photos of outrages that happened in Belgian Congo when the diamond-rich province of Katanga broke off. The bloody U.S. War of Independence when it broke from the British Empire, and the burned cities and body-filled battlefields of that country's civil war are two other examples of the human cost paid in the past for secession.

I would just as soon see Danielle Smith make a mock attempt to assert Alberta sovereignty within Canada, rather than see her lead a secession and expose Alberta to the risk of mass suffering like in those historical examples. At least until the next election when the will of the voters can be tested in a true test of their vision for Alberta, as personified by the NDP, the Conservatives, or another party.

Even within Canada, a range of possibilities exist. Let's explore them together.

Tom Monto is an Edmonton historian. His books When Canada had Effective Voting and Proportional Representation, and Protest and Progress (the lives of Harry Ainlay, Rice Sheppard and Margaret Crang) are available at Alhambra Books near Whyte Avenue. His blogsite Montopedia has hundreds of articles on contemporary events, history, politics and elections.

**Tom
Monto**

*A
Different
Perspective*



those of the same income tax bracket in other provinces.

Having received a petition demanding a vote on staying in Canada, the Alberta government is seeking a way to avoid the expense of the vote. Although having done little to thwart the separationists' campaign, the Premier says she does not want to be the one to break up Canada.

A sampling of Albertans shows a massive majority in favour of staying in Canada, but if somehow the leave-Canada won the vote, the premier will have a choice of leading Alberta out of Canada or disregarding the vote result, neither of which are appealing outcomes.

What would be Alberta's relationship with Canada?

And if Alberta left, what would be the nature of its relationship with its former compatriots in Canada? Would Alberta face anger and economic blockades? Would Alberta have just one friendly neighbor, the land-hungry U.S.?

How long would such an aggressive "friend" withstand the temptation to engulf the mini-country of Alberta? Recent revelations that some of the leading separatists have met with high-ranking U.S. officials puts the project in a bad light and opens them to charges of treason. This shows that the U.S. might be hoping to cash in on Alberta secession. An independent Alberta could go the way of Texas and California, which broke from Spanish Mexico 200 years ago. Texas was an independent republic for only ten years; California was independent for just three weeks. Then the U.S. gobbled them up.

And once taken by the U.S., Alberta's key asset - its tar sands - would then become a national treasure for the U.S. Under U.S. law, the national government has jurisdiction over natural resources. So if Alberta was to become part of the U.S., Alberta would not have freed its oil from outside control but instead put itself even more under the control of a national government. Only now it would be located in Washington, D.C., not in Ontario.

Premier Danielle Smith cries that Alberta oil is under attack from the

Staying When It Would Be Easier to Rush Past

February is Random Acts of Kindness Month

Some things only show themselves when we slow down.

Like a bird settling on a branch, they disappear the moment we move too quickly. To notice them, we have to pause. We have to stay.

Most of our world is not built for staying. It rewards speed, efficiency, and quick reactions. We admire people who respond fast and decisively. Slowing down can feel like a waste of time, or even a weakness.

But care rarely shows up at full speed.

We often think of kindness as action – stepping in, speaking up, doing the right thing at the right moment. Those acts matter. They are visible and easy to recognize.

There is another kind of kindness, though, that is much quieter.

It looks like patience. Like holding back. Like choosing not to interrupt, not to correct, not to escalate. It shows up when someone is struggling to find the right words, when a story comes out tangled, when silence lasts longer than is comfortable.

Staying in those moments takes effort. And effort is something our culture doesn't practice very well.

What does come easily is cynicism. Cynicism asks very little of us. It lets us decide, quickly, who deserves care and who does not. It spreads easily –

Sharan Sandhu

Guest Column



especially on social media – carried by likes, comments, and shared outrage.

We see it when one person harms another and the harm is celebrated.

A bully humiliates another bully, and people feel satisfied.

Someone is publicly shamed, and the crowd feels proud.

The words sound reasonable:

“He stood up for himself.”

“He got what was coming.”

“He deserved it.”

But underneath it all, one person has hurt another – and we feel good about it.

That is what makes cynicism dangerous. Not because it looks cruel, but because it feels justified.

Over time, it does real harm. Trust weakens. People pull back. Loneliness grows. Depression and hopelessness settle in. Faith in leadership, in

institutions, and in one another begins to erode.

And the pattern feeds itself.

When people feel isolated, they grow more cynical.

When cynicism grows, connection becomes harder.

And when connection feels impossible, it becomes easier to applaud harm.

In groups and organizations, this can turn into a kind of performance.

People learn who it is acceptable to care about and who it is safe to dismiss. Applause signals belonging. Silence signals agreement.

Cruelty doesn't always arrive loudly. Often, it spreads socially.

Cynicism is easy. It protects us from disappointment. It keeps expectations low. It lets us feel strong without having to be vulnerable.

Hope is harder.

Hope asks something of us. It asks us to stay when it would be easier to walk away. It asks us to keep believing in people and in community, even when doing so feels lonely or unrewarded.

But hope matters.

Small acts – listening without fixing, choosing not to harm, making room for connection – push back against cynicism. They don't make headlines.

They often go unnoticed. But they hold something darker at bay.

They quietly say: people matter.

They say: this place matters. One example of this kind of hope exists close to home.

While many local newspapers have disappeared, the *Mill Woods Mosaic* has stayed. Its continued presence reflects a belief held by its publisher, Arnim Joop – that community still needs connection, still needs shared stories, still needs spaces where people can see themselves reflected with care.

It is not the easiest path. It doesn't promise quick rewards. But it says something important: that neighbours matter, that stories matter, and that staying connected is worth the effort.

During Random Acts of Kindness Month, we often think about gestures that are quick and visible. Those have their place. But there is also a deeper kindness that unfolds slowly – through patience, presence, and the choice to stay when leaving would be easier.

These acts may never be celebrated. But they shape how a community feels.

And over time, practiced quietly and without applause, hope does something lasting.

It makes staying possible.

Sharan Sandhu is a resident of Mill Woods who works as Secretary Treasurer at the Boyle Street Education Centre.

Did you review your assessment notice?

Help make sure you pay only your fair share of property taxes

Edmonton

Property assessment notices were mailed to all Edmonton property owners in January. The assessed value of your property represents its market value as of **July 1, 2025** and is used to determine your share of provincial education and municipal property taxes. Provincial education taxes are collected by the City of Edmonton on behalf of the Government of Alberta to fund public education, while municipal taxes are used to fund City programs and services such as transit, road maintenance, fire rescue services, recreation centres, libraries and more.

When you receive your property assessment notice:

- Review** the details on your assessment notice. Accurate information ensures you only pay your fair share of property taxes – no more, no less.
- Check** what makes up your property's assessment value and **compare** it with similar properties in your neighbourhood using the tools on edmonton.ca/assessment.
- Contact 311** for one-on-one support. Most assessment-related questions can be answered with no formal complaint fees required.

More online tools are available at myproperty.edmonton.ca. Create your MyProperty profile and use the access code on your paper notice to add your property. On MyProperty, you can download an application for the property tax Monthly Payment Plan, sign up for electronic notifications, view your assessment and tax history and more.

For more information, call 311 or visit edmonton.ca/assessment.

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 nonprofit, 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.mehb.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.iafcanaada.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

9-1-1

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 March 15, 2026. The deadline for advertising and editorial is Wednesday, March 11, 2026.



Heritage Festival will return to Hawrelak Park

The City of Edmonton announced on Feb. 5 that William Hawrelak Park will reopen on March 13, following the completion of a major rehabilitation project at one of the city's most cherished green spaces. Festivals, events and picnic bookings will return to the park beginning June 1. That means that the Edmonton Heritage Festival, which is the world's largest three-day celebration of multiculturalism, will return to Hawrelak Park Aug. 1 - 3 after three years "in exile" at the Edmonton Exhibition Lands and Borden Parks.

Construction of the three-year rehabilitation project at Hawrelak Park began in 2023 and is now in its final stages. The project addressed utility, transportation and facility infrastructure, while enhancing the park's open spaces. The City says that the modernized park amenities, improved accessibility and enhanced connections to the River Valley will ensure the park continues to serve as a vibrant gathering place for generations to come. Beginning March 13, visitors can access most of the park and enjoy various amenities and activities, such as walking, biking, snowshoeing and hosting winter picnics, as well as a new playground, a new lakefront promenade, a modernized pavilion and updated washroom facilities. The new perimeter path and multi-use trails are fully paved, supporting safe, inclusive and accessible use for people of all ages and abilities

Photo: Uwe Welz

What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

Feb. 16 - Family FUN Day Extravaganza

Celebrate Family Day at a family-friendly event with outdoor activities, and tasty treats! Millhurst Community League 5811 - 19a Avenue NW, Mill Woods 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Feb. 19 - Open House

Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School 2410 - 17 Street NW, The Meadows 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Advanced Placement Info session @ 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 19 - Covenant Community Health Centre

Public Engagement Session Help shape the future name of the Covenant Community Health Centre 7319 - 29 Avenue NW, Mill Woods (Lakewood) 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. RSVP to attend: <https://tinyurl.com/mtzct4z>

Feb. 24 - Open House

École kisewatisiwin School 1434 - 80 Street NW, Mill Woods 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

March 11 - Social Innovation - Problems and Solutions

Fair at the University of Alberta University Commons Atrium 11308 - 89 Avenue NW, Edmonton 7:30 p.m.

March 20 - Celebration of 50th Anniversary

St. Hilda Catholic Junior High School 7630 - 38 Avenue NW, Mill Woods 12:30 p.m.

April 11-12 - 6th Annual Baisakh Mela 2026

Mrs Punjab Alberta, Fashion Show, Shopping, Gidha/Bhangra, Door Prizes, Kids Activities & Food Mill Woods Town Centre 2331 - 66 Street NW, Mill Woods 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Contact: Monika Nijhawan, Tel. 780-906-2941

Do you have a community event in Mill Woods

or The Meadows 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 Wednesday, March 11, 2026.

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**