

Mill Woods Mosaic

May 15, 2026

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The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast

Independent • Non-partisan • Interdenominational

This month:

Canada in Mill Woods

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Camps for Youth



Gail Sidonie Šobat is a multi-award-winning teacher and author who organizes camps for kids who love to write.

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One Page, Many Worlds

On April 22, J. Percy Page High School in Mill Woods hosted the 18th annual "One Page, Many Worlds", a student-led cultural celebration. The event featured a vibrant showcase of the school's diverse community through traditional food and clothing, live performances, games and interactive booths. Photo: Students at J. Percy Page High School have many different ethnic backgrounds.

Photo: Edmonton Public Schools

Stronger regulation of immigration and citizenship consultants

The Government of Canada is strengthening protections for people seeking immigration and citizenship advice by improving access to trustworthy, quality representation. On May 6, Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced new regulations to enhance the oversight of immigration and citizenship consultants in Canada.

These measures will reinforce the role of the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants and help applicants obtain more reliable, transparent and accountable services throughout their immigration or citizenship process. The new regulations will take effect on July 15, 2026, and will

- allow the College to strengthen its complaints and discipline process, including through increased penalties, for consultants who break the rules
- require more information on the College's public register of licensed consultants beginning April 2027, to increase transparency and protect the public from unauthorized representatives
- improve transparency by adding new reporting requirements for the College
- improve the College's investigation process for misconduct by clarifying the rules
- give the minister the power to appoint someone to take over board duties if the board fails to meet its responsibilities
- establish guidelines for the College's compensation fund, created for victims of financial loss caused by dishonest acts from consultants

These regulations will strengthen the integrity of immigration and citizenship

consulting, and play an important role in protecting people from dishonest representatives.

"People looking to build their future in Canada deserve access to honest and reliable immigration and citizenship advice," said Minister Metlege Diab. "They need to have confidence that our government is taking effective steps to improve integrity. These changes reflect our commitment to protecting applicants from fraud and misconduct, and to supporting a system where consultants are held to high standards."

"The regulations strengthen the tools available to the College to help ensure that Canada's immigration and citizenship consultants continue to meet the highest professional standards for their clients," said Kate Lamb, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants. "We look forward to the regulations coming into force on July 15, and the future finalization of by-laws and other supporting legal frameworks. The College remains committed to regulating the profession in the public interest and welcomes continued collaboration with our government partners to ensure that the regulations and associated operational, governance and communications structures uphold a system that is transparent and accountable."

Quick facts

- The draft regulations were published in the Canada Gazette on December 21, 2024, and stakeholders had the opportunity to review the regulations and provide feedback before implementation.
- IRCC established the College in 2021 to regulate immigration and citizenship consultants, and the department maintains strong oversight to ensure the College fulfills its mandate to protect the public. The College doesn't receive funding from the government and is entirely funded through fees paid by its licensees.

More information about rules to improve the regulation of immigration and citizenship consultants:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/proposed-rules-improve-regulation-immigration-citizenship-consultants.html>

And here is the website of the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) which licenses and regulates Canadian immigration and citizenship consultants in the public interest: <https://college-ic.ca> The CICC does not provide immigration advice, process immigration applications, or influence any decision related to immigration.

The next issue of the *Mill Woods Mosaic* will be published on June 15, 2026. The deadline is Wednesday, June 10, 2026.

Alberta's community champions

Nominations are now open for the 2026 Stars of Alberta Volunteer Awards, shining a spotlight on community heroes across the province.

Through the Stars of Alberta Volunteer Awards, Alberta's government celebrates the extraordinary contributions of individuals whose time, energy and commitment to service is strengthening our communities and making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

"Volunteers are the foundation of strong and connected communities in Alberta," said Tanya Fir, Alberta's Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women. "The Stars of Alberta Volunteer Awards are an opportunity to recognize these everyday heroes who make our province a better place to live, work and raise a family."

This year's nomination period for the Stars of Alberta Volunteer Awards opened April 20, during National Volunteer Week, a nationwide celebration of the vital role volunteerism plays across Canada. Nominations are open until June 30, giving Albertans an opportunity to recognize an outstanding member of their community.

These prestigious awards honour the incredible impact of volunteers, with two awards presented to nominees from each of the following age categories:

- Youth (up to 24 years of age)
- Adult (25 to 64 years old)
- Senior (65 years and older)

The Breaking Barriers category honours volunteers who are working to build diverse and welcoming commu-

nities. Three awards are presented in this category to individuals who:

- fight racism
- advocate for LGBTQ+ communities
- challenge gender discrimination

"National Volunteer Week is a celebration of the people who bring life to our communities," said Gemma Dunn, executive director of the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. "This week, we celebrate volunteers and the difference they make every day. Programs like Stars of Alberta and the Northern Lights Volunteer Recognition Program are important ways to highlight the vital role volunteers play, recognizing, supporting and empowering those who give their time to make our communities stronger, more connected, and places of joy."

Across Alberta, volunteers support more than 28,000 non-profit organizations, many of which rely entirely on volunteer efforts. In 2023 alone, Albertans contributed more than 145 million volunteer hours, representing almost \$4 billion in value to the province's economy.

Alberta's government is proud to also recognize volunteers year-round through the Northern Lights Volunteer Recognition Program. This program shines a light on Albertans whose contributions are helping build strong, vibrant and more connected communities across the province.

Albertans are invited to celebrate the power of volunteerism and nominate an outstanding volunteer in their community today by submitting an online application.

Property Taxes – Now and in the Future

Edmonton City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright

Spring has *finally* sprung and I'm looking forward to warmer days, summer festivals and more time spent outdoors. And with spring came Council's confirmation of the annual property tax levy that funds over 70 lines of business to deliver the programs and services Edmontonians expect. For 2026 the increase of 6.9% equates to about \$27 per month for the typical homeowner. This is based on a market value assessment of \$492,500 for a typical single-detached property. You can learn more about how your property taxes are calculated by searching on YouTube for "How the City of Edmonton Calculates Your Property Taxes"



Coun. Jo-Anne Wright

Also included in your municipal property tax notice is the provincial government's education tax which they increased 10.2% for 2026. Although they refer to it as the provincial education taxes, it actually just goes into their general revenues and accounts for roughly 25% of the total bill you receive.

And as we look ahead to the upcoming four-year budget deliberations taking place in the fall, Administration has determined that in order to maintain the status quo on programs and services, a tax increase of 5.4% for 2027 is anticipated. This takes into account the inflationary pressures we

have all had to endure including rising fuel costs to maintain our fleet of buses and emergency vehicles.

Capital spending will focus on the renewal of existing city assets that we don't divest ourselves from. This includes office space, buses, recreation facilities like pools and skating rinks, and other aging infrastructure like bridges. While 80% of our capital spending will be renewal, the other 20% will be committed to growth. And that doesn't mean shiny new facilities or playground and park space, but much needed fire stations that hadn't been addressed over the years as our city grew.

If you want to provide your feedback on how the City's budget is planned, please check out the in-person engagement opportunities my team and I are conducting. The remaining sessions are on May 21st at the Mill Woods Seniors Association, May 24th at the Meadows Community Recreation Centre, and June 2nd at Southwood Community League. You can also access the link for an online survey at jo-annewright.ca.

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

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.

E-mail your letter to: The Editor of the *Mill Woods Mosaic*, mwmosaic@telus.net.

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Celebrate the Diversity of Our Community: Canada Day in Mill Woods

By Karen Liber
 Chair of the Mill Woods
 Canada Day 2026 Committee

The Mill Woods Presidents' Council is finalizing preparations for the community's premier summer event: the annual Canada Day celebration at Mill Woods Park. On July 1st, the park will transform into a vibrant hub of culture and music, though organizers say this year's festivities carry a deeper purpose than just celebration.

The event, which runs from 2:00 p.m. until the final firework fades after 11:00 p.m., features a packed schedule of free family entertainment. However, the Mill Woods Presidents' Council is placing an emphasis on a "Special Call to Action" to support the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

A Growing Need in the Community

Operating out of St. Theresa Parish, the Society serves residents living south of the Whitemud Freeway to the southern city limits and east of 103rd Street to the eastern city limits. In 2025, the organization served over 1,600 neighbours, including 784 children. This support included toiletries, diapers, furniture, household items and food hampers.

We are asking all attendees to show the "Mill Woods Heart" by bringing a food donation. Volunteers will be on-site collecting non-perishable food such as cereal, peanut butter, jams, canned meat/fruit/vegetables, pasta and rice. To encourage participation, every person who donates will be entered into a draw for a \$100 gift card to Mill Woods Royal Pizza.



Volunteer Jemma Manthirikumar distributes Canadian flags.

Photos: Sangeetha Vasanthkumar / Mill Woods Presidents' Council

Entertainment for All Ages

The day kicks off at 2:00 p.m. with two distinct activity zones. The Main Stage, located by the pond, will host a diverse lineup of cultural dancers throughout the afternoon. Simultaneously, the Kids' Zone by the soccer fields will offer bouncy fun, mini-golf,

train rides, and carnival games hosted by Hope City Church until 6:00 p.m.

The opening ceremony starts at 6:00 p.m. featuring local dignitaries and the singing of "O Canada." The evening's soundtrack continues with a showcase of local musical talent, building momentum until headliner Martin Kerr takes the stage at 10:00 p.m. The night concludes at 11:00 p.m. with a massive fireworks display sponsored by Mill Woods Town Centre. Throughout the event, attendees can sample diverse flavors from local food trucks or browse unique treasures at the "Artisan Market."

Logistics and Site Access

Attendees are reminded that this is a "walk-on" event. To ensure public safety, several major road closures will be in effect, and organizers strongly advise against attempting to park near the site to avoid the frustration of being blocked in by slow moving traffic, after the fireworks.

- **66th Street** will be closed from 23rd Avenue to 28th Avenue starting at 7:30 p.m.
- **Additional closures** beginning at 10:45 p.m. include 28th Avenue and sections of Mill Woods Road, with restricted access points at 34th Avenue and 50th Street.

A full schedule of events can be found at www.seedmonton.ca/canada-day-2026.

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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 conclusion of anti-racism

On April 28, Edmonton City Council confirmed the "conclusion" of seven council committees, including the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and the Women's Advisory Voice of Edmonton Committee on April 30. The ending was very abrupt, and one committee member said that it came as an absolute shock, and she commented: "It honestly felt like a slap in the face." Mayor Andrew Knack said the decision was not about saving money and told reporters that the change isn't about hearing from less voices.

So, what was the reason for this hasty decision to shut down these seven committees? Were they inefficient or useless or a thorn in someone's flesh?

In the case of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, it was questionable if this committee was really necessary and accomplished anything. The purpose of the City's Anti-Racism Strategy was to bring our community together to improve equity, end poverty, eliminate racism and make clear progress toward Truth and Reconciliation. But did the committee help to reach that goal, and did City Council listen to the committee's recommendations?

Or was the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee just a useless appendix and its members some well-meaning people who were preaching to the choir?



Edmonton is navigating intense controversy over infill development, balancing housing density goals with neighborhood character concerns. Key issues include massive "boxy" buildings, reduced privacy/sunlight, and inadequate parking. In response, city council is restricting maximum heights from 10.5 to 9.5 meters and tightening design rules starting.

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

Destruction can not be undone with destruction

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 was a terrible day in the small community of Tumbler Ridge in northeastern British Columbia. An 18-year-old former student of the local school stormed into the building of Tumbler Ridge Secondary School and started shooting. She killed five students and one teacher and then herself. More than 20 students were injured, some of them severely.

This massacre, which was the first school shooting in Canada in many years, was a shocking and traumatic experience not only for the victims and their families but for the whole community of Tumbler Ridge with a population of only 2,400 people.

Three months after the shooting, on May 7, the Premier of British Columbia, David Eby, announced that Tumbler Ridge Secondary School will be demolished and rebuilt, because no student should be forced to return to the existing building after the horrible shooting. "We want to make sure we're doing things right by the survivors, by the families, by the people of Tumbler Ridge," said Eby.

Although I have never been in a terrible situation like the people of Tumbler Ridge, I think that demolishing the school and building a new one is a wrong decision and will not help the students to overcome their traumatic experience.

There is nothing wrong with the existing building. It was built in 1982

and may need some repairs, but there were no plans to replace it before the shooting happened. It was reported that the students returned to class in portables set up on the grounds of the local elementary school, and the

Arnim Joop

From the Desk of the Publisher



province says larger, more modular classrooms will be built in Tumbler Ridge in the coming weeks to use while plans for a permanent replacement are underway.

There was probably help available for traumatized students, like psychiatrists, grief counselors and trauma therapists, but did that really help them cope?

The American stand-up comedian George Carlin used dark, satirical humor to address school shootings, most notably in his 1999 special *You Are All Diseased*, where he joked that if kids were shot during math class, the

class should "go right on with our arithmetic: 35 minus four equals 31". This dark humor may be offensive for sensitive types, but Carlin used this to mock societal reactions to tragedy and the cold efficiency of institutions.

When the Nazi regime in Germany was defeated at the end of the Second World War, some of the notorious concentration camps, where millions of Jews and other people were murdered, were destroyed, but that was done by the Nazis to get rid of evidence or by the Allied liberators due to disease control or political decisions. Many other concentration camps (like Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau) were preserved as they were found or converted into memorials, and it is now mandatory for every high school student in Germany to visit a memorial and learn the history of the Holocaust.

When I visited the memorial in Auschwitz in 1975, I had the opportunity to stand in a gas chamber and see the big ovens where the bodies of the victims were burnt 24/7. That was a more powerful history lesson than any books I had read about the Holocaust, and I was thankful that the historic buildings were preserved for the next generations.

So, in the case of Tumbler Ridge, wouldn't it be better to turn the school into something positive and meaning-

ful, like a drop-in centre for youth or an interpretive centre instead of destroying the building?

I worked two years as a reporter in the small town of Taber in southern Alberta where a student was killed in a local high school by a 14-year-old shooter in 1999, and the school building was not demolished after that shooting. The community pulled together, supported the family of the victim, and the father of the murdered student, a local pastor, was an inspiration for all with his strong faith and forgiveness.

Destroying a building doesn't erase the memory of an act of violence. Destruction can not be undone with destruction, but should be healed with something constructive, but it doesn't have to be the construction of a new building.

Last but not least, the shooting in Tumbler Ridge, which was the deadliest attack connected to a Canadian school in nearly 40 years, was a good reminder of the value of School Resource Officers (SRO). There was no SRO in the Tumbler Ridge School when the shooting happened, but there was an SRO in the high school in Taber who disarmed the shooter and prevented more fatalities on that day.

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.

An Immigrant's Perspective

Exactly 60 years ago, almost to the day, my family and I first landed on Canadian soil at the famous Pier 21 in Halifax. Often called the "Gateway to Canada", it operated between 1928 and 1971 serving as Canada's primary Atlantic entry point. Nearly a million immigrants, including my family, came through Pier 21. Here then is an immigrant's perspective, which I hope is thought-provoking.

Let me start with four key observations. First, this column is about landed immigrants, not refugees or asylum seekers. Second, immigrants find immigration fundamentally demanding because it typically requires the abandonment of some family members and friends, culture, property, and traditional bonds to one's land of birth or heritage. Third, this difficult task is often undertaken in the hope of a better life. And lastly, Canada has a long history of absorbing immigrants.

As early as the 17th century, long before its foundation in 1867, our land experienced British and French colonists who were vying to attract more settlers and secure their colony's dominance. Waves of European immigrants were later augmented by newcomers from other parts of the world, notably Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Sixty years ago, we experienced our share of this privilege.

I still remember seeing Canada for the first time. After a week's sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, seeing nothing but sky and wavy water, we sighted Nova Scotia's coastline as a green strip emerging on the western horizon. This was to be our new country, and it looked magical. We then flew to Vancouver, our future home. Back then, you had to walk across the tarmac to the airport terminal. We did so

through pouring rain, holding onto a few precious possessions, not knowing the local language or customs, and having no clue how we would survive

**Ron
Kuban**

**Time
Passages**



the months ahead. It was scary, overwhelming, and disheartening. I was a young boy then, and had I been offered the chance to "go back", I would have done so eagerly. Fortunately, my parents were resolute about making a new life in Canada. Through their commitment, we quickly carved out our respective paths and began our contribution to our new homeland.

We came for a better life. To achieve it, we recognized our need to adapt to the Canadian culture and way of life, fulfill our responsibilities as citizens, and give back to the country which welcomed us. My contributions include 56 years of continuous employment (involving military and public service), and nearly 35 years of volunteering at local, provincial and national levels. However, while I am proud of my effort, I also recognize that countless other immigrants have also contributed enormously to make Canada a better place. The problem is that we immigrants continue to be targeted for every political or social malaise. Such targeting is ill informed and misguided, yet it persists.

Some people are quick to put down the process of immigration and its product. They forget that except for First Nations people, all of us are either immigrants or their descendants. Through wave upon wave of newcomers, these Canadians have built our country to what it is today. Their success required time, collaboration, and a growing number of new Canadians to enhance the labor force and fill our spacious land. Their efforts helped Canada evolve and grow.

Admittedly, immigrants do not arrive as readymade Canadians. Nearly always, they come from another culture, and may potentially be limited by their resources, local contacts and support, or language proficiency. Therefore, they typically need a period of integration, and some degree of assistance to guide them towards becoming productive citizens. However, their admittance into Canada requires them to follow Canadian law and common norms, and to somehow contribute to our nation. Most achieve that requirement and more, while relatively few do not.

However, despite their many contributions, new immigrants are viewed as being "different" and are often treated with suspicion. Additionally, they are also accused of "taking our jobs away" or causing "increasing crime rates". In Canada, these perceptions are based on myth.

Arriving immigrants are encouraged to secure employment. Initially, many among them perform jobs that more-

established Canadians prefer not to do. It is a necessity of survival when settling in a strange land. However, many immigrants create jobs and wealth. As for those who secure high-end jobs, they are often encouraged to immigrate because their skills are in short supply.

In that regard, I challenge you to identify the shakers and movers in our community, from local to national level. Identify the creators, builders, contributors, or generous donors and you will be amazed to discover that a large proportion of them are first- or second-generation immigrants. They grew roots here and became committed to making Canada a better place for themselves and the rest of us.

Of course, there are those who run afoul of the law. They often make the headlines and are erroneously assumed to represent all immigrants. In fact, they are a small minority of the immigrant population. More significantly, the reporting in the media overlooks the large body of Canadian-born individuals who are convicted and incarcerated for their crimes.

In short, immigrants are not perfect, nor are they demons. Like previous, now well-established Canadians, they too strive to set roots, establish homes, and ameliorate their new country. Canada continues to need them and they obviously need Canada.

Feedback is welcome at
rkuban@shaw.ca

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

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Protecting Albertans From a Crisis the UCP Created

Over the past few weeks, I've heard from constituents across Edmonton-Meadows who are anxious, frustrated, and looking for answers. One woman told me she now checks her bank account every morning before her first coffee. A senior on a fixed income asked me how he's supposed to protect himself when he doesn't even know what was taken. A young family wrote in to ask the question on so many minds: "If the government couldn't keep my information safe, who will?"

These are the human consequences of one of the largest data breaches in Canadian history. Nearly three million Albertans had their personal information exposed. More than 550 people had unauthorized access to that data. The Privacy Commissioner has launched an investigation. And weeks later, Premier Danielle Smith has yet to speak directly to Albertans about what happened, what they can do to protect themselves, or what consequences her staff will face.

Instead of leadership, we've seen the UCP do what they always do: deflect, insult, and try to change the channel. Albertans deserve better than silence.

Jasvir Deol
MLA for Edmonton-Meadows



A Common-Sense Bill to Protect Albertans

That's why, on May 7, I introduced Bill 210, the Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act. This legislation would give Albertans two practical tools to defend themselves against credit fraud and identity theft.

The first is a credit freeze. Albertans would be able to lock down their cred-

it file so that no new loans or accounts can be opened in their name without their permission. The second is a security alert, which would require lenders to take extra steps to verify a person's identity before approving credit. These are simple, proven measures already in place in Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. There is no reason Albertans should have fewer protections than their neighbours in other provinces, especially now.

The UCP Said No

On May 11, the UCP government had a chance to do the easiest, most straightforward thing for Albertans whose personal information was exposed through no fault of their own. They had a chance to give families peace of mind during an affordability crisis when the last thing anyone can afford is to be drained by a fraudster. They had a chance to vote yes.

They voted no. Nearly three million Albertans had their data exposed by this government, and when given the opportunity to provide basic, common-sense tools to protect them, the UCP couldn't even do the bare minimum. As Official Opposition Leader Naheed Nenshi said, this should have been an easy yes for every MLA in the Legislature.

What You Can Do Right Now

While the UCP refuses to act, Alberta's NDP has published a tip sheet to help Albertans protect themselves. I encourage every reader to take a few minutes to review their bank and credit card statements, place a fraud alert with Equifax and TransUnion, change passwords on important accounts, and stay alert to suspicious calls, texts, and emails. If something feels off, trust your instincts.

If you have concerns or need help, my office is here for you. That's our job. And as your MLA, I will keep pushing this government to take the safety of your personal information as seriously as you do.

Albertans didn't ask for their data to be exposed. They didn't ask for silence from the Premier. They asked their government to do one simple thing: protect them. The UCP refused. Alberta's NDP will not. We will keep fighting for the basic protections every Albertan deserves.

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

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From left to right: A member of the Francophonie community with MLAs Lizette Tejada (Calgary-Klein), Janis Irvin (Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood) and Jasvir Deol (Edmonton-Meadows) at the Legislature Rotunda on March 24, the Day of La Francophonie.



MLA Jasvir Deol and Sandra Azocar, President of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) at the nomination meeting for Edmonton-Mill Woods on April 8.

Photos: Office of MLA Jasvir Deol



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"I am YEG Arts" Series: Gail Sidonie Šobat

**Interview by Jamie Chapelsky
Edmonton Arts Council**

Gail Sidonie Šobat is a writer, educator, arts administrator and singer, passionate about sharing her love of words and inspiring the next generation of wordsmiths. Most notably, she is the creative force and coordinator behind YouthWrite®, camps for kids who love to write, just about anything!©, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

In this month's I Am YEG Arts feature, we chat with Gail about her multidisciplinary arts practice and the narrative threads she explores, the origins of YouthWrite and what we can expect during this year of celebration.

As someone who has had the opportunity to live in several different places – in the province and beyond – tell us about your connection to Edmonton and why you've made it your home and creative base.

I've left Edmonton a few times, but I do find my feet coming back here, and I think it's because Edmonton is such a cultural hub. It's really an artsy city. And despite all the adversity in terms of funding and COVID and all the things that derail the arts, Edmonton perseveres. And maybe it comes up as something new; a theatre company rises like the phoenix, or artists find a new way to make a living. It is exciting to be in this city and to see all the things that are going on. And I rely on, for example, the Edmonton Arts Council to keep me apprised of what is happening in my own city because I feel like everywhere I turn something new is popping up.

I have a lot of friends in the arts, and that makes for a vibrant community and an informed and progressive community. I also think that we're a university town, certainly U of A, but also the other universities, including MacEwan, which have really added to the artistic life of this city. Those are the up-and-coming baby performers and arts admin people.

I think we have a different sensibility than elsewhere in the province, and I guess I call it progressive, humane, and compassionate. And I think it's also an affordable city. This city has given me and my partner a wonderful livelihood and an affordable life that I couldn't have had elsewhere.

You work across so many creative forms – writing, poetry, acting, singing, and teaching. How do these different artistic pursuits intersect for you? Do they influence or shape one another in ways that surprise you?

Recently I said to Stephen Heatley, who's the former director of Theatre Network and also at the Citadel, "you know, isn't it amazing that I became a teacher and then I forged a life where I got to be a singer and an actor and a writer and an arts administrator?" That Education degree opened all the doors for me. I know I wouldn't be the director of YouthWrite had I not had an education background. And yet I get to sing, to improvise, and sometimes I get



The YouthWrite staff at the YouthWrite River Valley Experience

Photo: Noel Taylor

to act, and I get to run YouthWrite and the spoken word youth choir and all of that stuff. And people say, what do you do with a BA in English or in Education? Well, here's what you can do. It is so much more than just a narrow degree.

I think what I mentioned is the real surprise: who knew that being a teacher could mean that I travel and present internationally, and I get to be a writer. I have a very rich, artistic, creative life, and I think that would surprise my younger self. When I was in the Education faculty, I did not see this on the horizon.

How do they inform each other? Well, I think the humanities are the place where we learn to be human. As an advocate for reading and writing, I see that as the way to a more compassionate, critical thinking, and creative thinking world. I've certainly seen evidence of that. I think that the arts are not divorced from one another. The music feeds into writing, feeds into dance, feeds into storytelling, feeds into filmmaking. I know we compete for different pockets of money here and there, but I think we are more connected than we are separate. Maybe that's the way to go forward in this chaotic and disparate world.

As a storyteller, what narrative threads or inspiration do you find yourself drawn to?

Fairy tales have always been my go-to. I love grown-up fairy tales that don't always have to end happily ever after. I love the darkness and the hope. I'm drawn to those kinds of writers as well.

And the other thing is music. Music has been integral to who I am. Singing and a musical life have given me ways into friendships, networks, and communities in ways I never anticipated. And I guess I'd be remiss if I didn't say theatre. The theatre community in this town has been a friend to me. And although I'm not in professional theatre anymore, those people remain dear friends, and I continue to meet new ones. If you think of it as a DNA

key, because I think the body and mind are connected. That led to courses like improvisation and writing, drumming and words, dance and words, and yoga and words. There are kids who can't sit still, so this was an opportunity to show them that you can be a storyteller in so many ways.

We started in Edmonton at the Bennett Centre, but now we're at the Highlands United Church, and they've been very gracious hosts. We are secular and non-denominational, but the church happens to be a nice site near McLuhan House, which is where our office is. For those who don't know about McLuhan House, it's a beautiful museum of the short childhood years that McLuhan spent in Edmonton in that very house. Marshall McLuhan, as we know, is so important to communication and writing. And then across the street is one of our venues for our summer and spring camps. We also have camps elsewhere in the province because we are a province-wide organization, but our Edmonton camps are our home and where we began—the genesis of the



Gail Sidonie Šobat is a multi-award-winning teacher and author, with thirteen books for children, teens and adults, and a number of educational and academic articles.

Photo: Geoff McMaster

molecule, those three things are woven together in my life.

Congratulations on 30 years of YouthWrite! Tell us a little about your role with YouthWrite and what makes it special to you and the city.

Years ago, I was asked to begin a camp for kids who love to write. I left [teaching] to do that because I felt like high school was doing kids a disservice. After grade nine, there's so little creative writing in high school. Writing instruction is focused on the five-paragraph essay, which I find is akin to a horrible death for writing. I thought, there are better ways to thrill kids about wordplay. That's how YouthWrite was born.

There is a multidisciplinary focus because I believe that all the arts are conjoined and that we can't sit and write all day. I don't even think professional authors can do it. Using other art forms as a springboard into creative writing was really important to me. Getting the body involved is

whole shebang. Additionally, MacEwan University has very graciously granted us rehearsal and performance space for the Spoken Word Youth Choir and the Spoken Word Adult Choir, and they prepare and print our beautiful YouthWrite the Magazine, which is a professionally produced magazine.

YouthWrite is a supporter of the artist. We are known as one of the highest paying arts instruction organizations, and we continue to try to find ways to improve that so that we're on par with the Writers' Union of Canada. Over the years we've paid so many artists, and I think they come back to us because they feel well treated. And then we have these great kids who graduate and go on to do amazing things.

What have been some of the major highlights for you over the last 30 years of inspiring young writers?

Continued on page 8

Camps for kids who love to write, just about anything!

Continued from page 7

Having the benefit of 30 years of watching people grow – whether that's the youth writers themselves, or our supervisors who are young, emerging professional artists, or our instructors. And of course, seeing our organization grow. We're now year-round, and we offer so many programs – I think it's nine different programs over the year – and we continue to seek ways to grow and flourish. Of the youth writers themselves, I've seen people grow into filmmakers, poets, published authors, and arts administrators. And as the arts inform all the professions, I've also seen youth writers become doctors, lawyers, activists, paleontologists, teachers, professors, animators and people who write for games. It's so rewarding to see all these people blossom into these incredible human beings. We knew they were great at YouthWrite and they've gone on to prove us right.

Many of our supervisors are former youth writers, while others started as emerging playwrights or emerging screenwriters, and they've come into their own. We have supervisors who are drag queens, television writers, showrunners, filmmakers, dancers, improvisers – they've all gone on to these amazing creative lives.

And then finally, the instructors. All of our instructors are certainly professionals in their fields, but they have also, over 30 years, become award-winning, or they were already award-winning, and now they're recognized on the national or international stage. That is inspirational to see how these great mentors took their art even further over 30 years, and that they have continued to make a living in the arts.

There is nothing like YouthWrite in other provinces with this scope. For all



The YouthWrite camps are popular events for kids who love to write.

Photo: Geoff McMaster

the things that are said about Alberta, Alberta has maintained this funding. To allow this camp and others like it to continue and to blossom is fantastic at a time when, arguably, the arts are in peril everywhere. Without the Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Community Foundation, the City of Edmonton, I know we would not have grown.

Tell us a little about what you're currently working on or hoping to explore next.

Personally, I've launched *Songs from This and That Country*, which received funding from the Edmonton Arts Council. I'm hopeful that it has wings and carries on in wonderful ways. I've also been asked to write a musical based on *The Book of Mary*, which is

in the works. The script is finished and I'm working with local composer Michael Clark of the Edmonton Pops. He's composing the music, and we're having a grand time. Thirdly, I'm working on a book about the Edmonton Grads.

In terms of YouthWrite it's our 30th anniversary, so we've got a whole year planned of wonderful activities celebrating our camps and our additional programming. The Spoken Word Youth Choirs are going to be performing at the Edmonton Poetry Festival. We've got an alumni weekend planned for this summer in between our camps. We're offering not only the Highlands United Camp, but also the camps in Calgary and Write2Film in Rockyview, AB. And in the fall there will be a huge block party anniversary celebration in Highlands.

So many exciting things for our anniversary celebration year!

About Gail Sidonie Šobat

Gail Sidonie Šobat is a multi-award-winning teacher and author, with thirteen books for children, teens and adults, and a number of educational and academic articles. She is the creator/coordinator of YouthWrite®, camps for kids who love to write, just about anything!®, its adult version, JustWrite, and the Spoken Word Choirs. Gail is also an instructor in the Communications and Arts and Cultural Management programs at MacEwan. From 2016–2020, she was the regional representative for The Writers' Union of Canada.

Registration is open for YouthWrite's 30th Anniversary season!

Celebrating 30 years, registration is open for YouthWrite® Summer Camp in Edmonton. YouthWrite is a unique opportunity for kids expand to their writing horizons. Campers will receive instruction from published authors and learn techniques in many forms of communication and storytelling.

This year's Highlands Experience, June 28 - July 3 for ages 8 - 12, provides 8 hours of daily instruction and activities including visual art, yoga, dance, and music. Camps are led by high-calibre professionals from a variety of backgrounds. Register here: www.youthwrite.com/youthwrite-highlands-experience-2026

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

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



Remembering and honouring the victims of violence

On May 5, the City of Edmonton observed Red Dress Day to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) and recognize the ongoing impacts on families, loved ones and communities. There were several events, including this march from Beaver Hills House Park to the Legislature. The red dresses symbolize the lost lives, acting as a visual reminder of the disproportionately high rates of violence faced by

Indigenous people. Red Dress Day in Canada was initiated by Métis artist Jaime Black in 2010 through her REDress Project. The initiative uses hanging empty red dresses to visually represent the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S+), calling attention to high rates of violence.

Photo: City of Edmonton

Southeast Edmonton Remains a Major Focus in New Three-Year Capital Plan

At the April 20 Board meeting, the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees approved the Division's new Three-Year Capital Plan for 2027–2030. The plan outlines the school construction, modernization and expansion projects the Division will ask the provincial government to fund over the next three years.

Not surprisingly, Southeast Edmonton continues to be one of the fastest-growing areas of the city and many of the Division's top priorities are located in Ward I and surrounding southeast communities.

Across Edmonton Public Schools, enrolment has now reached a record 122,014 students, with another 2,500 students expected next year alone. Overall school utilization has climbed to 90 per cent, and the Division expects enrolment to grow by more than 25,000 students over the next decade.

The Capital Plan reflects both the need for new schools in rapidly growing neighbourhoods and the need to modernize aging schools in established communities.

Southeast Edmonton features prominently throughout the plan. The Division

Jan Sawyer
Edmonton Public Schools Trustee (Ward I)



sion notes that communities such as Alces, Mattson, Meltwater and The Orchards continue to experience significant growth pressures.

The Division's top overall capital priority is now the Ellerslie Campus K–9 Solution project. This proposed project would replace aging school buildings on the Ellerslie Campus with a modernized K–9 facility serving up to 1,200 students. The project is intended to help address growth in areas such as Charlesworth, Walker and Summer-side, while also relieving pressure on nearby schools including Jan Reimer

and Shauna May Seneca. Alces K–9 has also risen dramatically in priority and is now ranked second overall in the Division's entire Capital Plan. The report notes that development in Decoteau, particularly in Alces, is accelerating quickly and that over 90 per cent of lots in the area remain undeveloped, meaning student growth will continue for many years.

Other southeast priorities include:

- The Orchards South K–9
- Mattson K–9
- Meltwater K–9
- Greenview K–6

Addition/Modernization

The report also highlights the importance of Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack School, which opened in fall 2024 and has already provided much-needed relief to rapidly growing southeast communities.

One of the most striking realities in the report is how many schools across the city are already under enrolment

pressure. Edmonton Public Schools currently has:

- 139 schools operating above 80 per cent utilization
- 56 schools with closed boundaries
- 11 schools operating under Level 3 growth controls and lottery processes

As many families in Southeast Edmonton know firsthand, this can mean students are required to attend overflow schools outside their communities when local schools reach capacity.

While this Capital Plan is only a request to the provincial government, it represents the Division's clearest picture of where student growth is occurring and where investment is most urgently needed. As Southeast Edmonton continues to grow rapidly, securing timely provincial funding for both new schools and modernizations will remain essential to ensuring students can attend high-quality schools close to home.

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



Celebrating Neurodivergent Strengths

The staff of the ABC Head Start Society gathered for this group photo to celebrate neurodivergent strengths. Neurodivergent describes people whose brains function, learn, and process information differently from what is considered typical (neurotypical). It is a non-medical umbrella term for natural variations in human neurology, often including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or other developmental differences.

"At ABC Head Start Society, we believe every child deserves to be celebrated for exactly who they are," said Megan Pedersen, Partnerships & Engagement Manager of ABC Head Start. "Our team proudly stands alongside the incredible children and families we serve, recognizing that neurodiversity brings unique strengths, perspectives, creativity, and potential to our communities. Because differences don't divide us, they make us exceptional."

ABC Head Start Society is a registered children's charity which provides free, inclusive early learning programs for children ages 3–5 who may have speech and language delays, developmental needs, behavioural challenges, or require additional support in their early learning journey, combining high-quality classroom learning with meaningful family support and access to specialized services such as speech and behavioural supports. ABC Head Start Society has seven locations in Edmonton, including at Mill Woods Town Centre and Millbourne Market Mall.

For more information, visit the website www.abcheadstart.org.

Photo: ABC Head Start Society

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

The Mill Woods Development Concept – A City within a City

This is the fifth in a series of articles about the history of Mill Woods that will continue throughout 2026 as I write a book about the community. The fourth chapter will focus on the Mill Woods Development Concept. (https://webdocs.edmonton.ca/infraplan/plans_in_effect/Mill_Woods_Development_Concept_Consolidation.pdf) Of the 6,000-acre site bounded by 91st and 34th Streets and 51st and 15th Avenues, 4,425 acres, 68% of the site, was publicly owned thanks to the land assembly. Mill Woods was to be developed over 20 years and ultimately provide housing for 120,000 people.

Rather than hire consultants to create the development concept, the city chose to second a group of young planners from within the Planning Department, the advantages being that they knew and liked one another, and they understood the planning context in Edmonton. The project was overseen by Superintendent Clive Rodgers and Assistant Superintendent Phil Ellwood, whose idea the development was. The team was led by Senior Planner David A. McCullagh with planners Frank Greif and urban designer Jaap Schouten, Alex Kachmar, and technicians Lyle Neyrinck and Ed Nozack. They had nine months to complete the project. The timeline was tight because there was pressure to put the first lots up for sale and build the first homes. The development concept is a relatively short document that does not adequately represent the amount of work and ingenuity required to develop it, as described in the oral history interviews.

In a May 2013 interview, Greif paints a picture of the working environment as a very creative process. "We spent probably the first six months, lots and lots of tracing paper, lots and lots of ideas ... Looked at all different kinds of alternatives of where to put schools, where to put commercial, where to put open space, and again, working within the constraints that there were within Mill Woods for some of the environmental and some of the existing infrastructure that was in there. Things like the oil and gas pipelines certainly provide some constraints."

In a March 2017 interview, McCullagh remembers that beyond the team, they worked closely with other departments related to roads, utilities, engineering, education "... any agency that had a direct input and concern about how their needs would be accommodated in the future ... We were operating in those days without the benefit of computers so a lot of work was done by just direct applica-

**Catherine
C. Cole**

History of Mill Woods



tion of people's skills and talents and ability to communicate in order to get what we needed and assimilate everything together and try and make trade-off decisions in terms of where there might've been potential conflicts, in terms of who needed what and when."

Greif summarises the influences on the Mill Woods project, saying that there were, "A lot of interesting things going on in terms of the type of urban planning that was being done, the architecture that was being done, moving out of the old sort of gridiron pattern into more curvilinear design, more open space. The idea of integration of multiple family into single family, but in a much more sensitive way. The whole use of walkways – that was something totally new. Trying to link the green spaces together so that there was a continuous movement that allowed people to wander through schoolyards, parks, walkways, public areas. It had I think quite a substantial influence on how we approached looking at the concept for Mill Woods ... It was to try to create a human urban environment."

The planners were influenced by the work of planner Nathaniel Lichfield (England) and landscape architect Ian McHarg (Scotland), and several postwar planned communities in the United Kingdom, United States and elsewhere in Canada, particularly Erin Mills in Mississauga. The Erin Mills development concept was published shortly before that of Mill Woods, in 1969. Some were examples of municipal planning, while others were planned by developers.

The Development Concept had physical, social and economic objectives, the social objectives of which were to "Encourage a composite and compatible population of a wide range of racial origins, income characteristics and personal backgrounds; stress social values and concerns and encourage citizen participation in evaluation and modification; improve the quality of life through environment; foster social

interaction;" and meet needs of minority groups.

The May 1, 1971 *Edmonton Journal* was full of superlatives when the concept went to City Council. They hailed it as "One of the most comprehensive town planning designs in modern history," and "one of the most beautiful on the continent." Mayor Dent said the city had the opportunity to

set "the pace on the continent for building from scratch, as it were, a city within a city." The plan appealed to the city's boosterism as it was expected to draw "a continuous stream of groups from other cities and countries examining how a city faces the need to provide land – and living conditions for expansion." Planners argued that it moved "away from the American 'satellite' town, or the British 'New Town' and instead directs planned growth within an integral part of the city."

Of course, there were concerns about the concept, which will be discussed in the book – questions about urban sprawl, the proportion of single-family

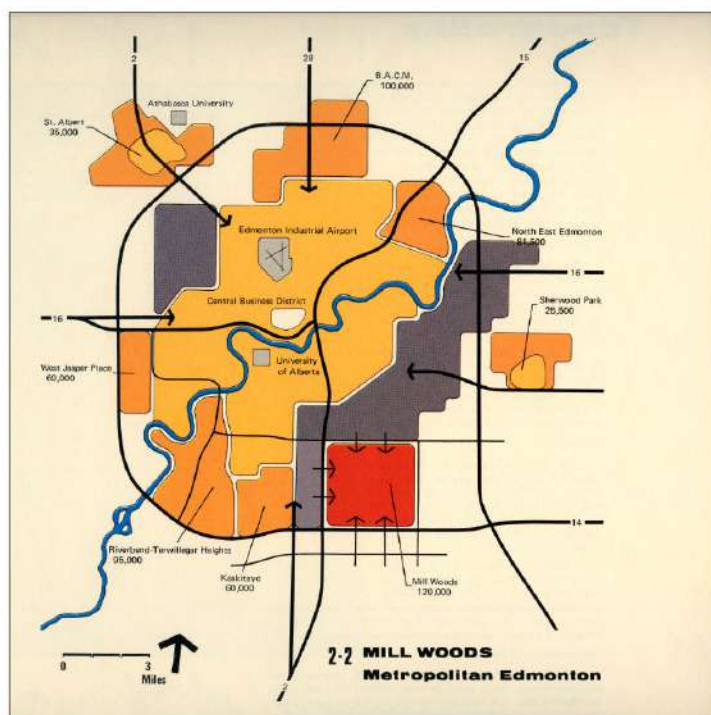
to multiple-family housing, and the lack of public transportation, for example.

Next month, the column will focus on the development of Mill Woods. If you have information about the history of Mill Woods or photographs to share, please contact me at catherinec.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.

Upcoming Events

Since January, I have been collaborating with the EPL on a Community History Project about Mill Woods through which residents have shared memories, stories, and reflections about the people, places, and moments that have shaped the community. The final session will be June 10, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Mill Woods Library. We will determine whether to revive the program in the fall.

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.



Credit: Mill Woods Development Concept, City of Edmonton Archives

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

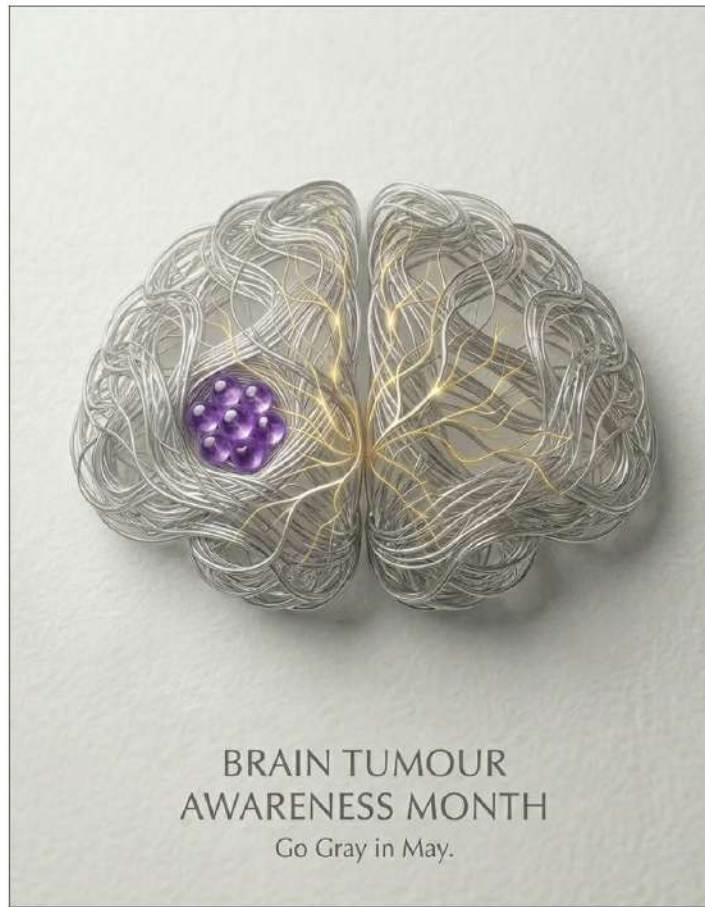
What You Don't See: Understanding the Hidden Impact of Brain Tumours

By: **Ramneek Pandher**

Every day, about 27 Canadians are diagnosed with a brain tumour. When people think of brain tumours, they often imagine something visible or dramatic. However, for many individuals, the most challenging effects are the ones you can't see. A brain tumour is an abnormal growth of cells within the brain or skull. They can be non-cancerous (benign) or cancerous (malignant), and may originate in the brain itself (primary tumours) or spread from other parts of the body (secondary or metastatic tumours). As tumours grow, they can increase pressure inside the skull, leading to symptoms like headaches, seizures, and neurological changes.

However, not all of these effects are obvious. The brain plays a role in nearly every aspect of how we think, feel, and function. As a result, even small changes caused by a tumour can have widespread effects that go beyond what is immediately visible. Memory problems, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, and changes in personality or mood are some of the "hidden" impacts of brain tumours. For many individuals, these invisible challenges can affect everyday life in ways others may not fully understand. Tasks that once felt routine, such as focusing at work, remembering conversations, or managing emotions, can become significantly more difficult. This can lead to feelings of isolation, especially when others may not recognize the extent of these struggles.

Because these symptoms can be subtle, they are sometimes overlooked or misunderstood. This can lead to delays in recognition, diagnosis, and support. People may find themselves



navigating multiple appointments without clear answers, which can be both frustrating and overwhelming. The emotional impact extends beyond

the individual, affecting families and caregivers who must cope with uncertainty and change.

With May being *Brain Tumour*

Awareness Month, it is important to recognize the full scope of what individuals and families experience. Listening to patients, acknowledging their concerns, and understanding that not all symptoms are visible are essential steps toward better care and support.

Initiatives like #TurnMayGrey from the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada help bring attention to these often overlooked experiences. By looking beyond what is visible, we can foster greater understanding and support within our communities.

For more information:
<https://www.braintumour.ca/>



Ramneek Pandher is a BSc (Honours) Neuroscience student at the University of Alberta and a 2024 recipient of the Gene Zwofdesky Scholarship. She is passionate about neuroscience research and raising community awareness about neurological conditions.

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Boundary Changes Will Deepen Our Problems – Fair Elections Would Heal Us

The Alberta government recently announced that its MLAs will have direct influence in drawing the electoral districts that elects them. Such “gerrymandering”, as it is called, is possible due to the weaknesses of our election system. Instead of moving to fair election systems such as are used in Norway, Denmark and many other places, which would lighten the tone of our politics, the government is engaging in self-serving actions that will undoubtedly deepen our party-based polarization.

In our first-past-the-post election system, sometimes only a handful of votes separates the winner from the second-place candidate. This slight difference, which makes all the difference between being elected to the Legislature and not, could be cancelled by new district boundaries.

Due to several candidates running in a district, under FPTP it is common for a winner to be elected with less than half the votes in the district. If this happens in enough districts, a party with just a quarter of votes overall could take more than half the seats and grab power. Premiers Ralph Klein (in 2004) and Rachel Notley (in 2015) took a majority of seats in their respective Legislatures at a time when their parties received less than 47 percent of the vote. Those accidental results happened even without a government consciously drawing district boundaries to get advantage.

If we had fair voting in each district, the boundaries would have little effect

The UCP government’s gerrymandering might draw boundaries so as to “crack” NDP voters into small shards that are too small to win a seat. This would cause the NDP to lose seats it holds in Calgary and outside the major cities. Or where NDP vote is strong, such as Edmonton, new boundaries may concentrate Conservative voters into a few districts and thus eke out a few Conservative seats in Edmonton. Even if votes stay the same, a gerrymandered election might see the balance in the Legislature change from today’s UCP 49/NDP 38 ratio, to an unfair 59 UCP MLAs to 30 NDP MLAs. This prediction comes from Kyle Hutton, author of the online article “The Would-Be Alberta Gerrymander.”

Some other countries prevent gerrymandering by using existing jurisdictions, such as cities and counties, as districts and set the number of members in the district to ensure the appropriate ratio of voters to elected members.

It is possible even in Canada to use multi-member districts and fairly set the number of seats in each district. But despite this opportunity, Alberta elections use arbitrary districts, where cities and counties are broken up and voters are sliced and diced in arbitrary groupings.

Our use of winner-take-all FPTP means there are great gains to be won by creative districting. If we had fair voting in each district – multiple members and each voter having one vote – the boundaries would have little effect.

Each party would get its due share of seats in each district, no matter how boundaries are drawn.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, the Edmonton city corporate limits were used to form a district that elected 6 or so MLAs. There was no possibility

not get quite as many district seats as they deserved, and in those cases, Denmark’s national-level top-up was used to give them a few more seats to bring their representation up to their share of the votes cast.

The Danish system and other such systems evolved over time due to recognition that no one party holds all the answers; that wise decisions are produced when all sides are considered; that no substantial chunk of the population should be completely ignored.

We see different values when we look at Alberta’s political culture. Due to the present two-party dogfight in the Legislature, we seem to be on the road to more polarization and anger.

According to the book *The Power of Collective Wisdom and the Trap of Collective Folly*, by Alan Briskin and several others, there is wisdom when many put their heads together. But that collective wisdom can only come out when minds are open and ears are unstopped. Today in the Legislature, the polarization of the two-party fight means minds are closed. To some degree each party demonizes the other party, sees them as the other.

Without change of the election system, the polarization deepens

Each party – the UCP and the NDP – has substantial supporters and thus in the minds of many voters, each has some wisdom. But with the polarized politics, only one has power and the other is not listened to. The collective wisdom that Alberta as a whole has in reserve cannot come out when one party thinks it has all the answers.

Briskin’s book says that without change, polarization deepens. The two main parties are drawn apart into mutually-hostile camps. And each party strives to appear to have internal unity. The parties stifle their supporters’ natural desire to hold independent sentiment and vary from the party line based on their personal experiences. Alberta newspapers almost daily give us clear examples of how the UCP and the NDP are each attempting to form their Legislative caucuses and party members into unified fighting machines. The name of the United Conservative Party itself demonstrates this drive for unity.

The government is also moving to impose other restrictions

While under Proportional Representation, each voter has the liberty to vote as they truly believe and new parties emerge where the numbers allow. Multi-party coalitions generally rule in PR countries, and there is natural fragmentation of the two-party polarization. Such an election system would soften Alberta’s party-based polarization and also the artificial regionalism that it suffers from.

And more than just closing its ears to wisdom held by NDP MLAs, the UCP

government says it will disregard the stated opinion of great masses of voters. It recently disregarded the result of the 2023 referendum on daylight savings time, where a majority voted against permanent daylight savings. The collective wisdom of a referendum is more than the wisdom of 30 cabinet ministers, and more even than the wisdom of 49 elected UCP MLAs.

The government is also moving to restrict what teachers can teach and what lending libraries can lend and saying it may disregard the outcome of the referendums to be held in October.

Majority rule and stable governments are the minimum goals of democracy

While Denmark has its problems, at least its election system carefully and prudently converts votes cast into seats, and then afterwards some of the various parties form up into a governing coalition that reflects the aspirations of a majority of the voters.

While in Alberta (and other parts of Canada), a party representing just a minority of voters might grab most of the seats and wield power, pushing society in a direction that a majority of Albertans disagrees with. Majority rule and stable governments are the minimum goals of democracy, and in recent elections our FPTP system has not given us those things. Boundary changes could be positive things if they created multi-member districts, but changes that merely redraw single-seat districts in new ways can never produce democratic results.

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



for gerrymandering. In 1959, the Edmonton district was broken up into separate single-member districts.

But even so, there has been the custom that city residents vote in different districts than their rural neighbours. Otherwise, city voters might drown out the less-numerous rural voters. But now the UCP government is saying adjoining rural voters can be lumped in with city voters. So that opens the door to even freer drawing of districts.

A political party may enjoy a short period of power from such schemes, but most voters are not pleased to be under a government they did not vote for. The ignored majority will work to ensure that they are not tricked again.

According to one view, the Labour party currently in power in the United Kingdom is facing a collapse of its support even though it benefited massively from the winner-take-all election system in the last couple elections.

Democracy is not about winning elections, or not only about that. It is about converting votes to seats in the legislature.

Denmark’s election system gives smaller parties a better chance to win seats

Say we look at Denmark, which uses a form of Proportional Representation. The whole country is divided into just ten districts. Most of the districts have between 11 and 20 members each. Each party gets its due share of seats in the district based on the votes it receives in the district.

Another 40 seats are given to parties that came up short in district elections.

However, the ten multi-member districts are so effective at producing fair representation that we have to go back to 2019 to find parties that were completely shut out in the district elections and had to be given several top-up seats. This was the Liberal party and the conservative Nye Borgerlige party.

But in every election since, every party that received at least 1/175th of the votes cast (the Danish “House of Commons” has 175 seats) got at least one seat in a district. The smaller parties did not suffer the total shut-out that thinly-spread parties in Canada suffer. The smaller Danish parties did

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

Bare Feet, Busy Minds, and a Bear Called The Boss

6:12 a.m. I step outside barefoot, convinced spring has finally arrived in Alberta. Three seconds later, I am standing there, feet in wet grass. A bit cold now. A quick gust of wind cuts through. It hits in a way thinking never does.

That was the end of my mindful moment. Everything after that became practical. Cold feet, quick thinking, mild regret, and complete presence. My mind is not thinking about emails or meetings. Just one thought. Grass, feet, a bit of cold.

Funny how that works. We spend time trying to be present, and then something simple does it for us. No app, no workshop. Just real.

I stand there a bit longer. Snow has almost disappeared. No big exit, no announcement. Just gone when it was time. Grass is still there, a little crushed but holding on. Not rushing back. Winter did not argue. Spring did not push. Things just moved.

I am still there, feet damp, listening to the birds. They have already started. No hesitation, no rehearsal. Just sound. One bird on the fence, fully into it, like it has somewhere to be and this matters. I find myself wondering if they do what we do. Do they replay yesterday. Do they go over what came out wrong. Do they plan what they will say later. It does not look like it. That bird is just doing its thing. No comparison. No second guessing.

Meanwhile, my mind is already gone. Jumping from one thing to another like it does not want to stay anywhere too long. One part planning the day, one part replaying yesterday, one part

Sharan Sandhu

Moments in our Community



reacting to something that has not even happened yet. Sitting still is hard. Staying with one thought is hard.

And then something else shows up. If it takes this much effort to sit in peace, how does the mind stay so steady on something else. Anger. Resentment. Hatred. The idea that someone does not belong. That takes focus too. Which means it is being carried. Not just out there, but everywhere. Into homes, into conversations, into work, even into quiet moments.

Not everything that hurts makes a sound. Some things are quiet. But they stay. Someone being followed in a store. No one says anything. Still, the message is there. Someone at checkout, tapping their card. It does not go through right away. The person behind them shifts. A look. A small eye roll. Nothing said. But something lands. And then there are the stares. The kind that lingers a bit too long. Enough to make you feel watched. Measured. You tell yourself it is

nothing. Maybe I am overthinking. But it does not really pass. It settles somewhere.

There is a lot of talk right now about racism and hate. Numbers going up. Stories in the news. Organizations stepping in. Sifarish. BNT Foundation. Stop Hate AB. Important work is happening there. I have been in some of those spaces. Sitting. Listening. People are sharing what they carry. Some for the

first time. Some still trying to find the words. Because this does not just pass. It stays in the body.

I remember a story about a man who had a tree in his front yard. Every day after work, before going inside, he would stop there. Just stand for a moment and whisper to it. Whatever he was carrying from the day. Stress from work, the frustration of commuting, things he did not say out loud. He left it there. Not perfectly. But enough. Then he would walk into his home lighter.

I think about that sometimes. Not the tree, but the act of not bringing everything inside.

There is another story. A monk was once told to hold a piece of burning coal and throw it into a fire when the time came. He picked it up. It burned his hand right away. But he held on to it anyway. By the time he threw it, his hand was already burned. The fire did not feel anything. It was already fire.

Fire burns. Ice chills. That is their nature. And it makes me wonder what ours is.

Because we can hold both. Kindness and anger. Care and indifference. We can build something, and we can break something. Sometimes in the same day. We know what it feels like to be treated with respect. We know what it feels like when it is missing.

And still, we carry what hurts us longer than we need to.

Everything seems to know where it belongs. We make it complicated. We carry things longer than we need to.

In Banff, there is a grizzly they call The Boss. Big, scarred, survived being hit by a train and kept going. Still moves through the valley like he belongs there, because he does. No comparison. No overthinking. Just moving, eating, resting. Nothing trying to prove anything.

Standing there, feet in wet grass, that moment stays. Later, something happens that might have pulled me in on another day. I feel it start, and then I do not follow it. Not because I worked it all out, but because, for a moment, I saw it.

Maybe that is the point. We cannot fix everything. We cannot drop everything at once. But we can notice what we are carrying, pause, and decide, even for a moment, what we want to do with it.

And that is enough.

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

New recreation centre named mistahaya wîkîhk Community Recreation Centre

The Lewis Farms Community Recreation Centre has been gifted the Cree name *mistahaya wîkîhk* (pronounced mist-ah-hi-ya wee-gik) *Community Recreation Centre* by Elder Bob Cardinal of Enoch Cree Nation. The name translates to 'The Big One's at his home/Grizzly Bear's Home' and is a reminder to all Edmontonians that this land once belonged to our neighbour, Enoch Cree Nation.

The name, spelled in lowercase, was approved by the City's Naming Committee in late April 2026.

The amenities included at the recreation centre will include:

- Aquatic facility with a 50-metre pool
- Twin arena
- Multi-purpose and studio spaces
- Fitness centre
- Double gymnasium and a separate ½ gymnasium
- Running/walking track
- Indoor Playground
- Medium-sized Edmonton Public Library branch

The *mistahaya wîkîhk Community Recreation Centre* will be a west-end

community hub that serves the recreational, sport, leisure and outdoor park space needs of 75,000 area residents.

The Lewis Farms Facility and Park Project includes this community recreation centre, public library and district park. This facility and park are anticipated to open to the public in fall 2028 in west Edmonton at 22103 Ave NW.

The City of Edmonton is guided by the Indigenous Framework, which was created to forge stronger relationships with the descendants of the original inhabitants of this land and to recognize we all have roles to play in our journey towards reconciliation.

Since 2016, Edmonton's Mayor and City Council, and the Enoch Cree Nation Chief and Council have actively pursued a collaborative partnership founded on mutual respect and a shared commitment to regional prosperity. The City works in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and organizations to support a growing, vibrant and welcoming city for all.

For more information: edmonton.ca/LewisFarmsFacilityandPark



You have news for the Mill Woods Mosaic?
Please give us a call: 780-465-7526

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

Mill Woods Town Centre Professional Building
Suite 304, 6203 - 28 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T6L 6K3
Tel. (587) 401-1129
Website: <https://newcomercentre.com>

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 for-

ign 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.iafcana.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 June 15, 2026. The deadline for advertising and editorial is Wednesday, June 10, 2026.



The first of the first responders

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) proudly welcomed 103 graduates to its Emergency Communications and Operations Management Branch (ECOMB) during a formal graduation ceremony held on April 22 at City Hall. The graduating class included 35 new civilian Emergency Communications Officers (ECOs) along with 68 additional graduates from Evaluation, Dispatch, and other operational support roles.

ECOs perform critical functions: 911 operator, police evaluator, and dispatcher. All candidates begin as 911 operators which includes four days of classroom training and four days of on the floor training with an experienced coach.

ECOs then progress to the police evaluator role, which includes five weeks of classroom instruction and approximately seven weeks of supervised, on-the-job training while working on regular shift rotations. After one to two years as an evaluator, members may advance to dispatcher training. This final stage includes 10 weeks of course material completed during regular shifts, followed by a 16 week program that combines classroom learning with hands-on operational training.

Photo (from left to right): Acting Chief Nicole Chapdelaine, Emergency Communications Operator (ECO) and graduate Kaitlan Posa, and training instructor Cst. Richard Begin.

Photo: Edmonton Police Service

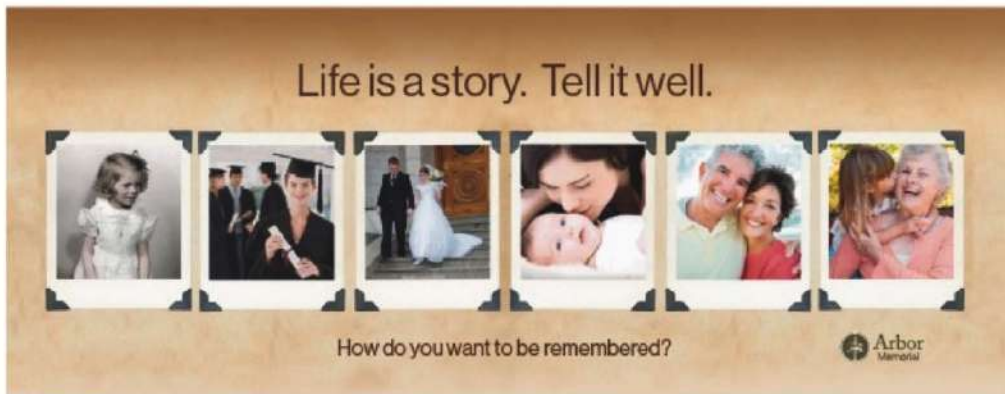
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What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

- May 15-18** - MayDaze Carnival
Mill Woods Town Centre
2331 - 66 Street NW, Mill Woods
Friday, May 15: 3 - 11 p.m.
Saturday, May 16: 12 noon - 11 p.m.
Sunday, May 17: 12 noon - 10 p.m.
Monday, May 18: 12 noon - 5 p.m.
- May 16-17** - Multiculture Bazaar 2026
A Celebration of Community and Culture
Mill Woods Town Centre
2331 - 66 Street NW, Mill Woods
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
More information: www.unitycelebrations.com
- May 17** - Nagar Kirtan Sikh Parade in Mill Woods
The parade will begin at noon at Gurdwara Millwoods (2606 Mill Woods Road East) and end at Gurdwara Siri Guru Singh Sabha (4504 Mill Woods Road South).
- May 26** - Annual General Meeting with election of new board, snacks and beverages will be served
The Meadows Community League
Meadows Community Recreation Centre
2nd Floor Community League Room
2704 - 17 Street NW, The Meadows
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Website: <https://themeadowscommunity.ca>
- May 30-31** - Big Bin Event in Ellerslie
Big Bin Events accept waste that cannot be set out for regular collection.
2415 - 101 Street SW, Edmonton-Ellerslie
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
More information: www.edmonton.ca
- July 1** - CANADA DAY Celebration in Mill Woods
Mill Woods Park
2730 - 66 Street NW, Mill Woods
2:00 p.m. - midnight
If you want to volunteer for this annual community event, be a sponsor, or contribute in any other way, contact the organizers: www.seedmonton.ca

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, June 10, 2026.



South Side Memorial Chapel
by Arbor Memorial
8310 - 104 Street, Edmonton, AB • 780-432-1601 • www.southsidememorial.com

Mill Woods Mosaic
"The best of both worlds"
mwmosaic.ca