

Mill Woods **Mosaic**

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The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast

Independent • Non-partisan • Interdenominational

This month:

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Artist-in-Residence



Métis artist Carmen Miller has been named Edmonton's next Indigenous Artist-in-Residence.

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Food, Food, Food

The Edmonton Heritage Festival was back to William Hawrelak Park on Aug. 1 - 3, but the weather did not cooperate. The park had to be evacuated on the first two days, due to heavy rainfalls and strong winds, but it was packed on the third day, and thousands of people enjoyed the diverse ethnic food and performances. Please read editorial on page 4 of this issue.

Photo:
Edmonton Heritage Festival

Canada expands online passport renewal to all eligible adults

The Government of Canada is committed to making life simpler and more convenient for Canadians. This includes a modern passport program that delivers secure, user-friendly digital services that save time, reduce in-person visits and make passport renewal easier.

On July 28, Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that online passport renewal is now available to all eligible adult Canadians in Canada. By removing the limit on how many people can renew their passports online, the government is providing more Canadians with a convenient and secure option.

Online passport renewal makes it easier for Canadians to access the services they need, when and where it's most convenient for them. Canadians can complete their passport renewal application online by submitting their application, photo and payment digitally – instead of mailing documents or visiting a Service Canada Centre. Online passport renewal also benefits those who face barriers to in-person service, including people living in rural or remote communities and those with mobility challenges. In-person and mail-in services will continue to be available for Canadians who choose or need them.

This change builds on recent improvements to passport services, including the online passport application status checker; expanded access to in-person 10-business-day passport service at select Service Canada Centres; and the government's passport service guarantee that applications will be processed within 30 business days or the passport is free.

Learn more about who can renew their passport online and how to get started: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/online-account.html#passport-renew>

"Canadians expect passport services that work for their lives," said Minister Diab. "Expanding online renewal gives eligible Canadians a simpler, more convenient way to renew their passports, without unnecessary barriers or delays. This is part of the Government of Canada's ongoing work to modernize passport services and deliver public services that are responsive to the needs of Canadians today."

"Accessible service means giving Canadians options, starting with more ways to renew a passport," said Patty Hajdu, Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario. "We are removing the barriers between Canadians and the services they rely on by modernizing how we deliver them and shaping them around how people live. When Canadians can access services without added stress or lost time, they can focus on what matters, their families, their jobs, and their futures."

"The Government of Canada is working to make services more efficient and better suited to the needs of Canadians," said Annie Koutrakis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families. "The online passport renewal service is a great example of modernizing our service delivery landscape and improving the passport program. In the long term, this online service will reduce wait times at

our points of service and benefit Canadians who can spend more time where it matters the most to them."

Quick facts

- All passport applications require commercially taken photos. Online renewal uses a digital photo file provided by a commercial photographer. Learn more about digital passport photo requirements.

- The requirements for the online passport renewal service are slightly different from the ones for renewal applications submitted in person or by mail. Canadians should check the requirements before starting the application process.

- Online renewals follow the same 20-business-day service standard as simplified adult renewals submitted in most Service Canada Centres and by mail. They include real-time status updates so applicants can track their application as it's being processed.

- Canadians who need a passport sooner must apply in person at a Service Canada Centre or a passport office that offers the 10-business-day, express or urgent service.

- Canadians applying for their passport outside Canada can do so by mail or by visiting a Government of Canada office abroad.

For more information, visit the website of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):

www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html

Rewarding academic excellence

Alberta's Minister of Children and Family Services Searle Turton issued the following statement as applications open for the Duke and Duchess Scholarship:

"The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge Scholarship recognizes the hard work, dedication and academic excellence of students transitioning out of government care as they pursue post-secondary education. I am pleased to announce that scholarship applications are now open and encourage all eligible students to apply by Aug. 31.

"Administered through the Advancing Futures Program, 25 students will each receive a \$2,000 scholarship in a wide range of degree, diploma and certificate programs. Through this scholarship, we are investing in the future of young Albertans transitioning into adulthood and empowering them to pursue their educational goals and

build brighter futures.

"Alberta's Advancing Futures Program reflects our government's commitment to supporting young adults transitioning to adulthood by providing financial, social and emotional support to help them succeed and contribute to their communities and Alberta's future."

Quick Facts

- Alberta's government established the scholarship to commemorate the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's royal visit to Alberta in July 2011.

- 350 scholarships have been awarded since 2011.

- Alberta's Advancing Futures Program, the first of its kind in Canada, invests \$14.2 million annually to support young adults transitioning from care to post-secondary education.

Celebrating everything Alberta

On Aug. 30, Albertans are invited to celebrate Alberta Day at free events in Edmonton and Calgary.

Alberta Day marks the anniversary of our province joining Confederation on Sept. 1, 1905. It's an opportunity to recognize the people and communities that make Alberta the best place to live, while taking pride in what our province contributes to Canada.

As part of Alberta Day, our government is supporting celebrations in communities across the province, including free festivities at the Alberta legislature grounds in Edmonton and Heritage Park Historical Village in Calgary. Together, these celebrations will give Albertans and visitors alike the opportunity to experience the history, culture and community spirit that define our province.

"Alberta Day is a chance to celebrate the incredible province we call home," said Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women. "I look

forward to joining my fellow Albertans as we honour our history, culture and the vital contributions our province makes to a united Canada."

The Alberta Day events in Edmonton and Calgary begin at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 30, and throughout the day, attendees can enjoy live music, local vendors and family-friendly activities that showcase Alberta's heritage, creativity and unique identity. Additionally, in Edmonton, a free barbecue at the legislature grounds will help make it a memorable day of food, entertainment and Albertan pride.

Throughout the day, several Alberta artists will also be taking the stage, with country artist Jake Mathews headlining in Edmonton. The event will then wrap up at 9 p.m. with a drone show that tells Alberta's story through music, light and technology.

"I'm so excited to headline the Edmonton Alberta Day concert at the Alberta legislature grounds," said

2026 Safe Routes to School

Edmonton City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright

While I know we still have a bit of summer left – hopefully with a little less rain than what we've experienced so far – I wanted to inform residents that traffic safety measures will be installed near a couple of our local schools. As part of the 2026 Safe Routes to School program, the two schools identified in Ward Sspomitapi are A. Blair McPherson in Tamarack and Svend Hansen in Laurel.

Over the years, I have heard from residents and the school community regarding pedestrian safety and parking violations during school pick-up and drop-off times. Based on reviewed technical data by our Safe Mobility team, these safety measures have been designed to improve the safety of students travelling to and from school.

Residents can expect to see curb extensions, no stopping zone enhancements and additional playground signage at each of the schools, to reduce speeds, improve pedestrian safety and address illegal parking and maneuvers during school pick up and drop off. Most of the no stopping zone enhancements will include painted (hatched) areas with safety posts, while some will only include hatched areas. The installations will

be completed by the end of August in advance of the start of the school year, weather and resource permitting.

Community members living adjacent to the measures will receive detailed information on the above installations through a hand delivered public notice and I will be sharing on my social media platforms. A digital version of the public notice and key messages will also be shared with school administration for their awareness and to share with the school community.

Following the installation of the measures, Safe Mobility will collaborate with School Administration and School Board Transportation Planners to ensure the measures are operating effectively. They will use feedback from the community via 311, as well as continuous technical data analysis to determine if any adjustments are needed.

Community members can continue to inform the City about any concerns or maintenance needs related to the installed measures through 311.

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

Quick facts

- Alberta's government is supporting Alberta Day celebrations in 69 municipalities from Friday, Aug. 28, to Tuesday, Sept. 1.
- The first official Alberta Day was celebrated on Sept. 1, 2022.
- A full list of participating municipalities can be found online at alberta.ca/AlbertaDay.

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Shared e-scooters and e-bikes roll into Mill Woods as part of parking and safety pilot

Since Aug. 5, Edmontonians are able to catch a ride on a shared e-scooter or e-bike in Mill Woods. Riders and residents will also experience new safety and parking features as part of a City of Edmonton pilot program designed to test new approaches and inform future improvements to the Shared Micromobility program.

"We're excited to bring shared e-scooters and e-bikes to Mill Woods, while also using the pilot to test new ways to improve safety and parking," said Jordana Kulchar, General Supervisor, Planning and Permitting. "The pilot will help us understand what works best so we can continue improving the Shared Micromobility program."

As part of the Mill Woods pilot program, the City has established specific operating and parking zones for shared e-scooters and e-bikes. Designated riding areas align with the Active Transportation Network, a series of bike lanes and shared pathways for walking, cycling and rolling. Riders can also use Mill Woods Road to connect to popular local destinations, including parks, pathways and recreation centres.

In addition to following riding zones, users must park e-scooters and e-bikes in designated parking spots conveniently located at major intersections, near transit stops and a short walk from nearby homes.

"Mill Woods was selected for the pilot because there was strong community interest and because it gives us a great opportunity to test new operating requirements," said Kulchar. "Its connection to the Active



The City of Edmonton is establishing designated parking areas, or corrals, in Mill Woods where shared e-scooters and e-bikes can be parked without obstructing pathways or infrastructure.

Photo: Courtesy of Lime

Transportation Network, along with features like narrower sidewalks and fewer boulevards, makes it an ideal area to try out new approaches that support safer riding and better parking before they could be tested elsewhere in Edmonton."

Designated riding areas

As part of the pilot, riding shared e-scooters and e-bikes in Mill Woods is permitted only on Mill Woods Road or within 50 metres of the City's Active

Transportation Network, which includes shared-use pathways and bike lanes. These designated riding areas encourage users to travel along Active Transportation corridors while discouraging illegal sidewalk riding and keeping riders a safe distance from motor vehicles.

Designated parking areas

The City is establishing designated parking areas, or corrals, in Mill Woods where shared e-scooters and e-bikes can be parked without obstructing pathways or infrastructure. A mix of physical and digital corrals can be found using the Bird and Lime apps, the City's two approved vendors. Most corrals will be within 200 metres of each other and approximately 500 metres from residential areas.

Device screens and mobile apps will notify riders if they attempt to end a

trip outside a designated parking area. Riders who abandon a device without ending their trip properly will continue to incur per-minute charges as a penalty fee.

Have fun and ride with care

When using shared e-scooters and e-bikes anywhere in Edmonton, riders are asked to share public spaces safely and respectfully. Travel in bike lanes, on shared pathways or on streets with a speed limit of 50 km/h or less. Practice proper parking habits by ensuring devices do not block pathways, accessibility ramps or building doorways. To report an improperly parked or abandoned device, contact the vendor directly using the information on the device or visit edmonton.ca/Scooters.

For more information: edmonton.ca/Scooters

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Mill Woods Mosaic

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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 Spirit of Canadians

After three years of rehabilitation, Edmonton's William Hawrelak Park was reopened to the public last May. The rehabilitation was identified as a priority to address aging park infrastructure and meet future demands.

The reopening meant that the Edmonton Heritage Festival was able to return to Hawrelak Park after being hosted at the Edmonton Exhibition Lands and Borden Park for three years. This year's festival, which was the 53rd, took place from Aug. 1 to 3 and featured over 65 countries with free admission to cultural displays, food, and performances.

Unfortunately, the festival was forced to close early and evacuate the park on the first two days, due to severe high-speed wind gusts reaching up to 90 km/h that blew away and damaged festival tents. This was not only disappointing for visitors but also devastating for the many volunteers and ethnic organizations for which the festival is a major fundraiser.

But, as so often, Canadians stepped up to the plate on the third day of the festival. The weather was better, and the park was packed with thousands of visitors who lined up to buy food. The volunteers were very busy preparing and selling the food and tired at the end of the day but happy that so many people showed up to support the festival.

That was another example of the spirit of Canadians.

Life can be like pulling teeth, but it doesn't have to be painful

On Aug. 7, I had to say good-bye to a good old friend. It was not easy to part with him, because he has been with me for most of my life, but it was time for him to go, because he had become a pain. He was not a pain in the ass but a pain in my mouth.

Yes, I am not talking about a human friend but one of my teeth which has caused me some trouble recently. It started a few months ago when I had a bad toothache, and my dentist said that this tooth may have to be pulled out sooner or later, because it was already loose, due to bone loss. So, when I had a bad toothache again in the first week of August and returned to the dentist, I agreed to have that back tooth extracted. It was not a big deal, because the tooth was already loose, the procedure went well, and I just had to take it easy for a couple of days, rest, eat only soft food and rinse my mouth frequently with salty warm water to prevent painful infections and speed up recovery.

Many people don't like to go to a dentist, because it can be painful and uncomfortable, but it is important to take care of our teeth because it prevents painful cavities, severe gum disease, and tooth loss. When I was young, I didn't care and took my healthy teeth for granted. I brushed my teeth regularly, but that was it, and when I was in my twenties, I ended up in a hospital in Hamburg, Germany,

because I had severe toothache. After that not so pleasant experience, I decided to go to a dentist regularly, and I was lucky to find a good one who helped me overcome my fear, because he explained to me what he was doing.

Arnim Joop

From the Desk of the Publisher



When I moved to Canada, I neglected my dental care again and started going back to the dentist only when I was diagnosed with severe gum disease (advanced periodontitis). Since then, my teeth are "scaled" (cleaned) every three months, and I have to do my part which is brushing, flossing and rinsing. If I do that religiously, I may never need dentures, because generally, I have healthy teeth which I owe to my parents, because it is hereditary.

What I also like about our dentist and his technicians and assistants is the fact that they are not only very professional but also cheerful and always

ready for an interesting conversation. Those conversations are sometimes a little one-sided, because they are working on my teeth, and I am not able to talk much, because I have to "open wide" and shut up, so they can do their job. The topics are politics, the latest developments in dentistry, some gossip and jokes which allow us to laugh together. And, as a journalist, I always like to ask people what their best or worst experience with customers, clients or patients was. Handymen, like electricians or plumbers, usually have some good stories, like vicious dogs attacking them or hoarders with too much stuff in their houses which makes it difficult for handymen to repair things.

One of my favourite stories was told by a young female plumber who shared her experience with male customers who have not yet arrived in the 21st century, because they believe that women are not capable of doing certain jobs. Really? And then there are "those people" who believe that members of certain ethnic groups have limited skills. One of these stereotypes are immigrants from the Philippines who work in Canada as temporary foreign workers, caregivers, etc. but are qualified to do more sophisticated jobs. Many of them have degrees which are not recognized in Canada and speak more than one language.

There is no shortage of dentists in Alberta, but the province faces distinct geographic and team-staffing challenges. Rural and remote communities often struggle to attract practitioners, while dental clinics broadly report high vacancy rates for registered dental hygienists and support staff. I know a dentist in a small town who wants to retire but can't find a younger dentist who would be interested in taking over the clinic, because many young dentists prefer to work in bigger cities. But my own experience in my profession is different. When I arrived in Canada, my first job as a newspaper reporter was in the small town of Cardston in southern Alberta. I was reluctant to move there, because until then I had lived most of my life in big cities in Germany, but it turned out to be a good move, because I had the opportunity to learn many new skills, like developing film and photos in a darkroom and using a computer. But that didn't mean that I wanted to spend the rest of my life in a small town. After living five years in rural Alberta we moved to Edmonton, because we missed the amenities of a bigger city.

Life is like going to the dentist: Sometimes it is like pulling teeth, but it doesn't have to be painful.

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.



The City of Edmonton has a new program to educate citizens how to get rid of their garbage. "Waste Educators" will be in our community, inspecting food scraps carts and talking about better waste sorting. In a letter to "Dear Residents", the City's Waste Services said: "When you sort your waste properly and reduce contamination in your carts, the City can divert more waste from landfill and keep your waste utility rate stable."

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

Let it flow

For over thirteen years, the topic of my monthly column was easily inspired and its narrative readily composed. Not so this month when my writing became an unexpected struggle. With the publication deadline rapidly approaching, I became progressively more frustrated realizing that nothing was making sense or advancing smoothly. My many ideas and their initial content quickly followed each other into an electronic trash bin. Totally irritated with the process, it dawned on me that I was trying too hard and my mind, like spinning wheels, made no progress. I decided to put aside my writing and allowed my thoughts to wander aimlessly for a few days. Suddenly, the universe performed its magic and this column simply materialized, also providing me with valuable lessons. But first, let me provide some context.

I firmly believe that modern life is continuing to take us along its many twists and turns at an escalating pace. We are now regularly propelled from one task to another through ever-pressing deadlines, along with an increasing number of demands on our time and effort. I am convinced that this places us under escalating pressure, which appears to be more demanding than that experienced by previous generations. While much more may be said about our current lifestyle, a key observation for me is that we are steadily deprived of the ability to become grounded and reflective. Instead, we rush through our days, often reacting to the events we confront instead of planning and execu-

ting an intended life plan or path.

In fact, we have much to reflect upon. Time and again, we are required to focus our attention on the past and its

**Ron
Kuban**

*Time
Passages*



many lessons, the present with its immediate demands and diverse options, as well as the future with its countless yet unpredictable outcomes. When we consciously think about these topics, singularly or collectively, we often gain valuable insights to assist us in better addressing our life's undertakings. Unfortunately, we are typically rushed by time and duties, and consequently ignore this necessary effort of reflection, for the sake of further action on other, seemingly more immediate, tasks and issues.

Understandably, we need to get through our days and complete what appears like an endless stream of chores. However, while necessary and demanding, these tasks need not and should not become so over-consuming as to deprive us of regular, even if brief, downtime. The many justifications for doing this are worthy of careful thought.

Clearly, the first and most obvious reason is the need for physical rest. All creatures alive need a pause in their daily activities to replenish their energy before resuming their life's labor. Obviously, sleep is a major component of this rest cycle, but so are the occasional brief periods of repose which we experience during our days.

That said, while physical rest is vital for the body to repair itself, such effort should be complemented by also taking mental-health breaks. Both are needed for a healthy lifestyle.

Considered in that context, our brain is truly an amazing organ. Think of it as our personal and unique hardware that operates an equally unique software known as the mind. Consciously, or not, our brain never stops working. It constantly races along to gather stimuli for our mind. The latter, then sorts and defines our experiences, makes sense of our present circumstances, and works through what we perceive as the future's many complications or opportunities. Collectively, these tasks typically demand much effort and occur even when we are not awake or conscious of them. Interestingly, when we are asleep, or when we suspend our fixation on an idea or a problem, our mind continues to labor through the quagmire of our thoughts. It then offers us potential solutions. Here I am reminded that, like nature, our mind abhors a vacuum and often strives to make sense of things, to give them meaning.

Back to the drafting of this column. After struggling through version after version of start-and-stop writing, I put

the task at bay and ceased considering it, at least at a conscious level. I allowed my mind the freedom to operate without pressuring it for ideas. I purposely stopped focusing on that task and took time off to relax, to simply enjoy the environment I was in. Sure enough, the idea for this column just appeared along with an easier composition of its content. Success, at last.

Sadly, I also recognized that we seem to be losing the art of rumination, "daydreaming", or the suspension of all other actions for the sake of doing nothing for a while. Modern life pressures us to constantly and forcefully churn our minds to address the immediate demands of daily life. In doing so, we have little time to get grounded or to be creative. Consequently, we risk exhausting our minds and potentially having them become less effective as our primary problem-solving tool.

Our minds can be extremely creative when generating insights, solutions or ideas, often when we least expect them. As I rediscovered recently, while struggling to draft this column, all I needed to do was to let my mind wander without my pressuring it. Left alone, it suddenly provided me with the necessary inspiration and a general framework of an idea. The lesson, for me, is that down time or brief disengagements from the daily grind are invaluable. May you too find them useful.

Feedback is welcome at
rkuban@shaw.ca

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

**The next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic
will be published on September 15, 2026.
The deadline is Friday, September 11, 2026.**

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Albertans Deserve a Say on AI Data Centres

The question I keep hearing from constituents across Edmonton-Meadows this summer is a simple one: Who asked for this? Families already stretched by grocery bills and rent are watching enormous AI data centre projects get fast-tracked across our province, and nobody thought of asking them what they thought about it. One constituent put it to me plainly last week. "I found out about this from the news," he said. "Not from my government."

Danielle Smith has made her position clear. AI data centres are coming to Alberta whether Albertans support them or not. Her government is exempting these projects from the environmental studies and reviews that exist for a reason, to tell us what a project will do to our land and our water before the concrete is poured. Experts are warning that the enormous power demands of these facilities could drive up electricity prices for everyone. Albertans are being asked to carry the risks of projects they were never consulted on.

Let me be clear about where Alberta's New Democrats stand. We support investment and we support good jobs. But major projects must be in public

Jasvir Deol

**MLA
for
Edmonton-
Meadows**



interest, they must be transparent, and they must be supported by the communities that host them. Those are not unreasonable conditions. They are the bare minimum of responsible government.

A Concierge Service for Billionaires

Instead, this government rolled out the red carpet for foreign investors while ordinary Albertans learned about

these projects after the fact. Now, having already made up its mind, the UCP is scrambling to hold last-minute town halls. Albertans won't be fooled. Consultation that happens after the decision is made is not consultation. It is damage control, and it is insulting taxpayers.

We're Doing the Listening

Because this government will not do the job, Alberta's NDP is doing it. This month my caucus colleagues and I launched a province-wide AI Data Centre Consultation Tour, and the response has been remarkable. Hundreds of residents packed the first session in St. Albert to tell us what worries them: land use, water, and what these facilities will do to household power bills. They asked what regulatory processes apply, and how many jobs will remain once the construction crews go home. Many said exactly what I hear at home in Edmonton-Meadows, that these decisions are being made over their heads. "While the government and its so-called 'concierge service' take marching orders from billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg, the Alberta NDP is focused on engaging directly with

Albertans and fighting for their priorities," said Official Opposition Leader Naheed Nenshi. "We want to hear directly from Albertans about where they stand on AI data centres and what safeguards they expect to see in place."

Have Your Say

If you have not been able to attend a session in person, our caucus is hosting an online event on Wednesday, August 19 at 6:00 p.m. Details are available on the Alberta NDP Caucus website. I hope you will join us. Everything we hear will shape the AI data centre plan our caucus is developing, a plan built on what Albertans told us rather than on what one premier decided on her own.

Albertans are not asking for much. They want to know what is being built in their communities, what it will cost them, and to be heard while it still matters. That is how democracy is supposed to work, and it is what Alberta's New Democrats will keep fighting for.

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

Telephone: (780)-466-3737, e-mail: edmonton.meadows@assembly.ab.ca



Opening of the Stelmach Community Health Centre in Mill Woods (from left to right): MLAs Gurtej Singh Brar, Jasvir Deol and Christina Gray present a plaque to former Premier Ed Stelmach and his wife Marie, Tim Spelliscy (Board Chair of Covenant Health) and Patrick Dumelle (President and CEO of Covenant Health).



MLA Jasvir Deol (right) with Yash Sharma at the launching of the Indian Seniors Association on Aug. 6. The ISA is under the umbrella of the Hindu Society of Beaumont to address seniors concerns.

Photos: Office of MLA Jasvir Deol



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**STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY**

More Choice for Students: Locally Developed Courses at Edmonton Public Schools

One of the great strengths of public education is our ability to respond to the interests, needs and aspirations of the students and communities we serve. Locally Developed Courses are one way Edmonton Public Schools is able to do exactly that.

So, what is a Locally Developed Course?

While Alberta Education establishes provincial programs of study, school authorities can also develop or acquire courses that complement and expand those programs. These courses can respond to student interests and community priorities, encourage innovative approaches to teaching and learning, help engage students who may be at risk of leaving school early, and help prepare students for further education.

Despite the name, Edmonton Public Schools does not necessarily develop every "locally developed" course itself. We develop some courses and acquire others from school authorities elsewhere in Alberta. Courses authorized by Alberta Education and Childcare can be acquired by school divisions at no cost. Before they can be offered in Edmonton Public Schools, however, they must be formally approved by the Board of Trustees.

What does that look like for students?

The range is quite remarkable. Courses recently brought to the Board

**Jan
Sawyer**

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



for approval include American Sign Language and Deaf Culture, Astronomy, Guitar, Musical Theatre Performance, Speech and Debate, Technical Theatre, Indigenous Studies, Exploration of Film, Learning to Lead and a number of specialized Art and Design courses.

There are also courses designed to support particular student needs and pathways. Learning Strategies 15-25-35, for example, helps students develop strategies to learn more effectively and confidently and is currently offered in 26 Division schools. Introduction to Educational Assistant 35 allows students to explore the role of educational assistants while making connections to possible careers.

Another example is **Competencies in Math 15**, which helps students strengthen their understanding of mathematical concepts and build a stronger foundation for success in high school mathematics. In 2025-26, 1,098 students were enrolled in the course.

Some of these courses have become very popular. **Learning to Lead 7-8-9** had 5,795 students enrolled across 54 Division schools as of March 2026. The course gives students opportunities to develop leadership skills through service initiatives which is a wonderful example of learning extending beyond traditional academic subjects.

I am also pleased to see opportunities that reflect the cultures and experiences of the students and families we serve. Recent approvals include Arabic and Punjabi Language and Culture courses, as well as Indigenous Studies, Métis History and Stories, Indigenous Art and Ceremony, and Pathways to Reconciliation. The latter courses provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, contemporary issues and reconciliation.

Why does this matter?

Students don't all learn in the same way, nor do they all have the same interests or plans for their futures. A strong public education system should provide rigorous foundational learning while also creating opportunities for students to discover what engages them, build on their strengths and explore where their learning might take them.

That is what I like most about Locally Developed Courses. They allow schools and school divisions to respond to students rather than assuming that one set of courses will meet every learner's needs.

Whether a student discovers a passion for astronomy, develops confidence through debate, explores their culture and language, strengthens their mathematics skills, learns leadership through service, or begins imagining a future career, these courses can create another pathway for that student to find success at school.

And sometimes, **the course that makes a student excited to come to school can be just as important as the course they are required to take.**

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

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“I am YEG Arts” Series: Jamie McRae

**Interview by Jessica Telford
Edmonton Arts Council**

Our city’s media arts scene is robust and so uniquely Edmonton. Multimedia artist Jamie McRae is part of that fascinating landscape as an actively practicing artist, the Executive Director of FAVA (the Film and Video Arts Society of Alberta) and President of the Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society. In this month’s I Am YEG Arts story, Jamie tells us how he works to balance his independent practice with everything else, about the organization’s deep community ties and member-driven focus, and much more.

Tell us about yourself and what you do. How do you manage to maintain your own artistic practice in addition to everything else?

I am a multimedia artist, primarily working in analog and digital experimental video art. I also do analog collage, using various scraps of magazines, books, and photographic elements.

I am the Executive Director of FAVA. I’ve been working here for 12 years, and I’m also currently serving as the president of the Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society.

Luckily, with the amount of flexibility that I have here working at FAVA, there are days when I’m able to break away and focus on my art practice. And as the ED, I didn’t want to work a whole five days a week; I wanted to work four. The last day that I spend during the week, I have another office here with two other individuals, Milan Kalra and Tony Kinash, who are recent additions to our board. We’ve formed a little collective called the Midnight Society Media Arts Collective, where we’re experimenting, working with video, doing installation-based types of arts activities, which we’ve been slowly starting up this year.

How did you get involved with FAVA?

I graduated from NAIT’s Digital Cinema program in 2014, and FAVA was the first job that I applied to. I worked as a summer intern through the Canada Summer Job (CSJ) program for the summer and just ended up doing grip, lighting, one-camera stuff here and there and got my hands into building sandbag parts and fixing stuff. They kept me on for one day a week, and that slowly grew over time, and now I’m still here 12 years later.

We’re always really impressed with how well we do with our CSJ participants over the summer. Our Programming Manager, Dana, also came from the CSJ program as well as our President, Ryan, and two additional board members.

Tell us more about FAVA and some of the main services that FAVA offers to its members and community.

FAVA is a not-for-profit charitable arts organization that exists to facilitate affordable access to the professional development, education, production, post-production, distribu-



Jamie McRae is a Métis, Neurodivergent, independent film and video artist residing in Amiskwaciwāskahikan (known as Edmonton).

Photos provided by the artist

tion, and exhibition of independent film in Edmonton and northern Alberta. We are a screen-based media arts organization that exists to reduce barriers and bring affordable resources to artists who need it most – whether that is cameras, studios, or education. We are a great alternative to learn the processes of filmmaking from point A to point Z. Through our programs, you can learn screenwriting, how to direct or produce, how to use specific cameras and audio equipment, and how to light. We also have a great rental equipment inventory that we’ve been building up for many years. That includes current state-of-the-art cameras like Sony and ARRI cameras, both in digital 35mm and 16mm.

We also manage studio spaces for the City of Edmonton as part of a management agreement that we have here in the Orange Hub. We currently manage four studio spaces, a darkroom, and two post-production facilities. For me personally, I probably wouldn’t be making films without FAVA, the only media arts support organization in Edmonton. And while there are organizations like us all across the country, we’re considered one of the largest media arts support organizations in Canada.

Tell us about your work as a film and video artist, and your work in tech and analog realms.

Coming into FAVA, a big part of my role was handling rentals. So, dealing with all the cameras, audio equipment, post-production equipment, and having to learn both analog and digital as part of my job to make sure everything is properly working and up to date. And with that, also working on sets. I’ve done camera assisting, I’ve been a digital intermediate technician and editor, and a director of photography. I was always drawn towards the technical aspects of it. Many FAVA members emphasized the importance of analog and film, like Lindsay McIntyre and Aaron Munson, and I grew to love shooting on 16mm. I absolutely love it as a format, and FAVA makes it affordable. (We get a discount through Kodak and have very affordable equipment rentals here.)

My current practice explores experimental analog glitch art, which I’m currently focusing on thanks to an EAC grant. Collage was something I wanted to pick up part-time because it’s easier to do from home than hauling around a bunch of video equipment. This way, even though I have loads of bookshelves with equipment, magazines, and old books and things that take up a lot of physical space, I don’t really need that much space to work.

I was the Director of Photography on Kyle Ball’s film *Skinamarink*. That’s currently my biggest claim to fame these days. Whenever people ask me about it and the look, I always refer to the texture of it, how it’s dark, and there’s a lot of grain and noise. I take quite a bit of that quality into my experimental stuff as well. Kyle really knew what he was doing with that film and his audience.

Continued on page 8



March 2026 FAVAFEST Installation “From Edmonton to Milan”

"Edmonton is a great city to do meaningful films and art"

Continued from page 7

His upcoming release with A24, *Land of Nod*, was shot locally here last year; Kyle really pushed for that. He brought me in to do some behind-the-scenes stuff for when they do their Blu-ray.

Tell us about the community FAVA has built and the benefits of having an artist-run membership-based structure. What sets it apart from other models?

We're here for artists. FAVA is run by artists for artists. Over the years, FAVA has been really good at identifying how we can support community through a wide variety of needs. We do that through a lot of local partnerships. We've partnered with Creatives Empowered on their current anti-racism campaign. We're providing them with some free equipment. We also put out a grant for members for Pride Month to provide resources for free equipment.

We've had a lot of members build their careers here and move away. The industry in general is very focused on Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary. But I do think for individuals looking to make meaningful and experimental films and art, Edmonton is still a great city to do it in. Which is why I've stayed here. It's a very tight-knit community with a lot of great resources and capabilities, which FAVA is happy to support.

The EAC is asking Edmontonians about why the arts matter now. Why do you think the arts matter now, more than ever?

Historically speaking, artists are some of the lowest-paid individuals while providing the most cultural benefit to our communities. With stagnation of arts funding from all three levels of government since about 2019, and the pandemic and everything around that, we're playing catch-up. And artists are falling behind—they're taking on more jobs; they're moving away from Edmonton to sectors with more opportunities for artists.

Over the past few years, the film industry here has taken a few big hits with major filmmakers moving away to Toronto, Vancouver and elsewhere for opportunities. With that, we lose culture and valuable art being created here. And it also creates institutional knowledge gaps, whether it revolves around training and education, or particular skills in terms of celluloid and analog filmmaking.

Even though FAVA survived the pandemic and some rough years around 2023, we've downscaled quite



Behind-the-Scenes photo from Kaunsel - Grain Hopper (Music Video)

Photos provided by the artist

a bit. Our staff put in so much extra time and effort, and they deserve to be paid accordingly. For every dollar invested in the arts sees a return of about \$1.45 [according to the EAC's 2025 *Economic Impact Study*] in the economy, which is an absolute no-brainer. Employee retention, to my knowledge, used to be better. We're now seeing turnover about every year and a half to two years for positions, which is creating issues for arts organizations.

What's next for you and at FAVA? Tell us about what's coming up that you're excited about.

I have an AFA grant for a film called *Industrial Effigy*, which is an atmospheric experimental film that surveys the lands around Edmonton in relation to our industrial society and the land we live on—with farmland, the river and four petroleum refineries within a stone's throw of natural water

resources. It's essentially an eco-defence film of the prairies.

For FAVA, we've been working on an animation community development project, which was funded by the EAC last year with an Invent & Adapt grant. We've had so much engagement from local animators. We've been working very closely with the local group YEG Animation, which we're bringing fully into our organization. We'll be applying for grants to give them more resources for equipment and spaces for them to work in.

Our programmer Dana is great at coming up with new classes and is bringing back our Super 8 and 16 mm challenges. We put a lot into our educational programming and events, and we've gotten a very good response from the community.

We're trying to continue that momentum and develop some more art projects to expand out into the community and work with other organizations. For a while we've been

wanting to develop Indigenous-focused training programs. We're trying to make FAVA a more inclusive and welcoming environment. Media art and especially film and video are such expensive formats; we want to give individuals opportunities who otherwise feel that they're not able to access them.

About Jamie McRae

Jamie McRae is an independent film and video artist, residing in Edmonton, Alberta. His work primarily consists of shooting on celluloid 16mm film, in addition to experiments with digital video, and analog glitch art and analog collage art. His work can be described as punk rock on sedatives, the decay of the human soul. Jamie's work attempts to explore the fallacy of the human condition, the underlying societal depression of post-capitalism economics and industrialization in the prairies.

He has worked at the Film and Video Arts Society of Alberta since 2014, first starting as the Summer Rentals Assistant, then staying on as the Production Manager, working in the equipment depot as a technical minded inquisitive. Since then, he has moved into a greater Arts Administrator role as the Executive Director of the organization in 2022.



Jamie McRae

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

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

Letters to the editor are welcome

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Please e-mail your letter to: mwmosaic@telus.net

Changing the Story of Spinal Muscular Atrophy

By Ramneek Pandher

Most people have likely never heard of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), yet it is one of the leading genetic causes of infant mortality worldwide. Though it is considered a relatively rare disease, it has a profound impact on individuals and families. With August marking SMA awareness month, this is an important opportunity to learn more about this neurological disorder and the remarkable advances in treatment that are changing lives.

SMA is a genetic neurological disorder caused by changes in the SMN1 gene, which results in a shortage of a protein that motor neurons need to survive. Motor neurons are nerve cells that carry signals from the brain and spinal cord to the muscles. Over time, these nerve cells shrink and die, causing muscles to become weaker because they no longer receive the signals needed for movement. SMA can make it difficult to move, swallow, or breathe, but it does not affect a person's intelligence or ability to think. A child develops SMA only if they inherit a changed copy of the gene from both parents, who are often healthy carriers without knowing it.

Beyond its physical symptoms, SMA



can also affect an individual's sense of independence in everyday life. Activities that many people take for granted can become more challenging, and places like schools and workplaces may present barriers if they are not fully accessible. One of the biggest misconceptions about SMA is that a physical disability also means a cognitive disability, but this is simply

not true. People living with SMA attend school, build successful careers, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. Accessibility, adaptive technology, and supportive environments can make a tremendous difference in their quality of life.

Until recently, treatment focused primarily on managing symptoms through supportive care. Today, how-

ever, new therapies, including gene therapy and medications that increase levels of the survival motor neuron (SMN) protein, have dramatically improved outcomes, especially when treatment begins early. These advances highlight the importance of early diagnosis and newborn screening, giving many children opportunities that were not possible just a few years ago.

As August marks *Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month*, taking a few minutes to learn about SMA can help dispel misconceptions and foster greater understanding. Increased awareness not only supports individuals and families living with SMA but also highlights the importance of early diagnosis, continued research, and accessible communities. Small acts of understanding can help create a more inclusive future for everyone.

For more information:
<https://www.curesma.org>

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



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CPP Grab to be Basis of Alberta Prosperity under Independence

According to separatists, life will be rosy in an independent Alberta. But it looks to me that the positive economic forecasts are based on getting a large share of the federal CPP assets and then using them as a cash cow, on keeping Alberta united by suppressing the rights of loyalists within Alberta, and on the economy staying strong despite the uncertainty that the separation issue is creating. None of these assumptions seem warranted.

The financial rationale for independence is that Alberta will keep about \$45B per year that currently leaves Alberta and does not come back. The amounts we are talking about here – numbers in the tens of billions – are mushy, but evidence seems to show that the federal government receives about \$56B from Alberta taxpayers and spends about \$50B in Alberta. Some estimates put Alberta's loss at about \$18B per year. But still nothing like the \$45B that some separatists say.

Despite the rhetoric about the amount that Alberta pays to the rest of Canada, there is no big cheque that the Alberta government currently pays to the federal government. If there was, then stopping that annual payment would save Alberta money. Instead the federal government takes taxes from Albertans at the same rate as anyone across the country, and then pays it out in a variety of ways. Poorer provinces get equalization payments, which Alberta does not get, but Alberta does get other monies from the federal government, and the federal government does perform services – customs, military defence, national parks, etc. – across Canada including inside Alberta.

Meanwhile some separatists seem to say that the Alberta government can take on these federal government responsibilities, and also lower income taxes, and also raise pension plan payouts in a new Alberta Pension Plan. Due to low income tax rates and royalty rates charged to oil and gas companies, the Alberta government is currently spending \$10B a year more than it gets in revenue. With the upset to our economy that separation would cause, it is not likely that the Alberta government will be able to drop income taxes further or raise pension payout amounts, despite the promises.

Such promises seem based on Alberta being given \$167B of the CPP fund's assets, as Alberta's due share. This amount is said to be enough to earn \$18B annually in interest, which would buttress the Alberta government budget. But such skimming off of the fund's proceeds would leave the fund stripped, and the value of the fund would drop by about \$3B each year due to inflation.

Alberta workers currently pay more into the CPP fund than it pays out to Alberta workers, but that extra money and the money raised by the fund's investments are needed to cover pension payouts when the workers eventually retire.

The CPP now operates separately from the federal government finances, and proper analysis of Alberta's future finances should use the same method. We should assume that the Alberta Pension Plan would cover its own costs and would save what money it

raises for future payouts. And we should not picture its proceeds as part of general government revenue.

As well, Alberta's hopes of getting that huge CPP amount seem to be based on a constitutional requirement that separation of a part of Canada can-

something of an historical accident.

Canada retaining north-central Alberta would solve many problems for ease of transportation between BC and the rest of the remaining provinces, if Alberta should vote to secede.

Of course Calgary would fight tooth and nail to keep control of the oil resources of northern Alberta within an independent Alberta.

As well, once coal mining activity on the Eastern slopes pollutes the water in southern Alberta, Calgarians will be looking at the lakes and rivers in the boreal forests of northern Alberta. This is likely to be even more pressing for them as parts of the world heat up and

dry up, as is trending at this point in time. Meanwhile, any hope of having these rivers and lakes clear of pollution depends on them remaining in Canada, judging by the expectations of expansion of oil and gas production after Alberta independence.

Questions of boundaries came up concerning Quebec's separation, and the security of that province's boundaries were never completely firmed up. A 1980's book *Partition*, the Price of Quebec's Independence, by Lionel Albert and William Shaw, and a 1992 book *Canada Remapped: How the Partition of Quebec Will Reshape the Nation*, by Scott Reid, say that Quebec may not be able to take all its land if it goes. The same surely applies to Alberta.

If Alberta is split in half, perhaps a new border would be drawn through the province

We have seen this before. Ireland was divided upon getting its independence in 1920, and to this day it still is divided into the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.

If Alberta itself is split in half, perhaps a new border – an international border – would be drawn through central Alberta.

The choices for "natural" borders on the flat prairie landscape include extremely winding rivers or some such arbitrary line as the 11th Baseline of the Dominion Lands Survey, a straight east-west line lying just north of Lacombe and Rocky Mountain House. Obviously neither the rivers nor the 11th Baseline are as good as Switzerland's mountains, the deserts of outer Mongolia that form China's western boundaries, or the Great Wall of China.

Alberta's porous borders would create feelings of paranoia and insecurity. Security forces would assert their authority in arbitrary ways. Alberta's future borders would have to be made difficult to cross, otherwise criminals fleeing pursuit would use the border as an easy "get out of jail free" card. But meanwhile farmers living along the Alberta-Saskatchewan border (or along a border at the 11th Baseline if it happens) and everyday travellers would be delayed by customs officials and checkpoints, just as happened in

Berlin with its infamous wall.

And the customs control and other new national functions of a new independent Alberta will have to be paid out of taxes. Either that, or debt, or perhaps a bailout from a covetous U.S. of A.

Alberta could become a leader in Canada for quality of life

Separatists say an independent Alberta will be able to take on the work that the federal government now does, such as control of the 340-km-long Canada-U.S. border in southern Alberta, but do they calculate the cost of border control on an international border that stretches an additional 3000 kilometres along the edges of Saskatchewan, BC and the NWT?

Better in my view for Alberta to remain in Canada and rewire its government policies so it becomes a leader in labour conditions and quality of life for all. Now Albertans suffer under the lowest minimum wage in the country, crowded emergency rooms, and long waiting lists for medical operations.

But with different policies, we could become a leader in Canada for quality of life. More jobs produced by encouraging the renewable energy sector, dispersed energy generation, higher minimum wage, quicker service in hospitals would raise the quality of life for Albertans. Alberta could aid in a surge ahead for people services across Canada, instead of acting as a retrogressive political brake as it does now.

But any hope for this rests on a firm vote in October to "remain in Canada."

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



not be blocked but must be negotiated between the federal government and the province. But that does not mean that the federal government just gives in to Alberta demands.

Secession from Canada could mean disruption to many families. It could mean an international boundary right down 50th Avenue in downtown Lloydminster and customs' checkpoints when entering BC or Saskatchewan.

Alberta may claim the right of self-determination, recognized in international law

Likely a contentious issue will be whether Alberta could take all its territory if it left. Alberta may claim the right of self-determination, recognized in international law, but that law is based on secession being a reaction to colonization or imperialism. Albertans have the vote, same as any people across Canada. If Conservatives are not in power now, it is because they did not get as many votes as the Liberals. Only 11 years ago an Albertan was prime minister. Albertans are not a politically-oppressed group within Canada.

First Nations reserve land, about one percent of Alberta, is actually under the trusteeship of the Crown (the federal government). And pockets of pro-Canada voters will assert their rights in case of separation. If a majority of voters in Edmonton vote against secession from Canada, shouldn't that city have the right to stay in Canada? It would be a hard day when Canada stands by idly as Alberta bully boys push and prod loyal Canadians into obedience to a new national Alberta government.

Alberta historically has not had a common heritage north and south. Historically the two regions have had two separate cultures. In successive periods of time, the area south of Red Deer was dominated by Blackfoot peoples, buffalo hunting, cattle ranches, the Canadian Pacific Railway and Conservative Party politics.

The area north of Wetaskiwin was dominated by Cree, the fur trade, small mixed farms (raising crops and livestock), the Canadian National Railway and Liberal Party politics. The two areas being within one province is

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Keeping Hope Alive

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Moments in our Community



Canada Day celebrations are behind us. Families are enjoying summer holidays. Children are attending camps, visiting grandparents, and making the most of a short Canadian summer. Schools are quiet. For a few weeks, the constant noise of schedules, meetings, deadlines, and political debates has softened. Yet beneath that calm, there is a growing uneasiness that many people can feel but struggle to describe.

In his June editorial, Arnim Joop reminded readers not to lose sight of what is good about Canada. That perspective matters. At a time when much of our attention is drawn to what is broken, it is important to remember that this remains a country where people continue to build communities, help neighbours, and work toward something better.

At the same time, many people are wrestling with a different question: how do we hold on to hope when division, bullying, and hostility seem to keep finding new ways to surface?

We live in a society that talks constantly about inclusion, belonging, psychological safety, reconciliation, respect, diversity, and equity. Organizations have policies. Schools have procedures. Governments introduce legislation. Human resource departments offer training. Community groups host conversations. The language of inclusion has become part of our everyday vocabulary.

Yet harmful behaviour has a remarkable ability to adapt.

Bullying adapts. Mobbing adapts. Hate adapts. The silencing of whistleblowers adapts. The exclusion of people from opportunities, conversations, and communities adapts.

Anyone who has experienced a house fire knows that smoke has a remarkable ability to find its way through the smallest openings. Seal one crack and it appears somewhere else. Close one door and it slips beneath another. You may no longer see the fire, but the smell tells you something is still burning.

Harmful behaviour often works the same way. When one form becomes unacceptable, another emerges. When one tactic is exposed, another takes its place. The language changes. The tactics change. The justifications change.

What was once spoken openly is now often communicated through implication. What was once direct has become subtle. What was once easy to identify now hides behind process, policy, procedure, and plausible deniability.

The most troubling part is that harmful behaviour rarely announces itself. The people causing harm are not always angry, aggressive, or easy to identify. They may be educated, respected, and admired. They may use all the right words. They may publicly champion kindness and inclusion. Yet behind closed doors, they can still undermine colleagues, spread rumours, exclude others from opportunities, or quietly damage someone's credibility.

The tactics evolve. The damage remains.

There are many dedicated people working every day to confront hate and strengthen communities. Their work matters. It makes a difference. Yet hate has an extraordinary ability to reinvent itself. One slur disappears and another emerges. One stereotype fades and a new one takes its place. The prejudice remains while the language changes.

Social media has amplified this reality. Something happens thousands

of kilometres away and within minutes it appears on our phones. An incident in another city, another province, or another country suddenly feels as though it happened down the street. We carry the anger, fear, and anxiety of events that are far beyond our ability to influence. We consume a steady stream of conflict and outrage until it begins to shape how we see the world.

Part of the challenge is that we are constantly exposed to what is broken. Every headline, every controversy, and every online argument competes for our attention. We see the failures of institutions, the divisions within communities, and the worst moments in people's lives. What we rarely see are the thousands of ordinary acts of kindness, generosity, and courage taking place every day. They do not generate clicks. They do not go viral. Yet they are no less real.

Not long ago, our understanding of the world was shaped largely by what we experienced in our neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, and communities. Today, our understanding is increasingly shaped by algorithms designed to keep us engaged. The result is that many of us spend more time-consuming conflict than witnessing cooperation.

Perhaps that is part of our responsibility. Not to ignore what is wrong, but to resist allowing what is wrong to become our entire understanding of the world.

Over time, fear starts to feel normal. Suspicion starts to feel reasonable. Cynicism starts to feel wise.

We begin losing faith in one another. We assume bad intentions before good intentions. We prepare our arguments before we listen. We divide the world into people who agree with us and people who do not. Before long, disagreement becomes a threat rather

than an opportunity to learn.

This is why I keep returning to the words of the late Senator Murray Sinclair. On the final day of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he said: "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it."

He passed away last November, but his words continue moving forward without him.

This year, students in British Columbia became the first graduating class required to complete Indigenous-focused coursework as a condition of earning their diploma. Every student crossing that stage was asked to engage with truths that previous generations were never required to confront.

That does not solve everything. It does not eliminate racism, prejudice, or discrimination. It does not heal every wound created by generations of injustice.

What it does is something equally important.

It demonstrates that societies can learn. It demonstrates that people can change. It demonstrates that education can do more than prepare people for employment. It can prepare people to live together.

Real change rarely arrives with fanfare. More often it arrives quietly. A teacher introduces a new idea. A student asks a difficult question. A parent challenges an assumption. A community chooses conversation over condemnation. Years later we look back and realize something shifted beneath our feet.

Perhaps that is what hope really is.

Not the belief that everything will work out.

Not the denial of hate, bullying, or injustice.

But the refusal to surrender to them.

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

Métis artist Carmen Miller named Edmonton's next Indigenous Artist-in-Residence

On July 30, the City of Edmonton announced Métis artist Carmen Miller as the next Indigenous Artist-in-Residence. Her appointment begins the fifth cycle of the year-long program.

An Alberta-based artist, Carmen specializes in Métis floral design, beadwork and the intricate art of moose and caribou hair tufting. During her residency, Carmen will be working out of Ferrier Garage, an Edmonton Transit Service facility in southeast Edmonton. The space will provide her with dedicated time and support to advance her practice, share her work with Edmontonians and connect with communities.

"I'm looking forward to spending my year exploring and bringing alive the traditional clothing of the Métis people," said Carmen. "Through research and careful craftsmanship I will also use different methods of adornment on these pieces showcasing the beautiful culture of the Métis Nation. I'm excited!"



Carmen Miller

Photo: City of Edmonton

Carmen taught herself to bead at age eight, beginning with rings, necklaces and bracelets. She has since taught across Alberta and in northern and eastern Canada. She has received a Traditional Arts Award at the Great Northern Arts Festival and an Artist's Choice Award at the Adäka Cultural Festival.

"Artists benefit greatly from dedicated time and space to focus on creating new work," said Renée Williams, CEO, Edmonton Arts Council. "Carmen is an exceptional Métis artisan, and with her intricate designs it will be fascinating to see how her artform develops throughout the residency. We are proud to partner with the City to provide Carmen with this time to explore and grow her practice and share her knowledge with the community."

Throughout the year, Edmontonians can look forward to opportunities shaped by Carmen's practice and interests. These may include workshops, open studio sessions, presen-

tations or exhibitions. Details will be shared at edmonton.ca/IAiR.

"This residency creates more than a workspace. It creates room for Indigenous artists to shape how art, culture and community are experienced in Edmonton," said Krystin Flierl, Director, Indigenous Relations Office. "By supporting Carmen's work and making City space available for Indigenous artistic practice, the residency puts the City's commitments to truth, reconciliation and healing into action."

Developed in relationship with Indigenous artists, Elders, Knowledge Holders and community partners, the Indigenous Artist-in-Residence program strengthens Indigenous presence, visibility and cultural expression across Edmonton. The program is delivered by the City's Indigenous Relations Office, with support from City Operations, in partnership with the Edmonton Arts Council.

For more information:
edmonton.ca/IAiR

Infrastructure Challenges in the 1970s and 1980s

This is the eighth in a series of articles about the history of Mill Woods that I am writing throughout 2026 as I write a book about the community. The seventh chapter will focus on infrastructure: utilities, public institutions, and commercial development. I cannot address all types of infrastructure in the space allowed here so will focus on two of the early challenges in Mill Woods – drainage and schools. Drainage needs to be in place in order to build a new suburb and schools follow construction. Both require provincial approval. These challenges were not unique to Mill Woods – they appear in other communities – but the scale of the Mill Woods project made them more pronounced.

Drainage

The first drainage system used in Edmonton was combined lateral and collector sewers that transport both wastewater (sewage) and stormwater in a single, shared pipe. This system was typical in Europe and is still in use in older neighbourhoods in Edmonton. The city started building separate sewage and stormwater systems in the 1950s. In the 1970s, the city built a 'spider mole' to tunnel through the clay soil. The concept was not unique to Edmonton, but the city was unusual in building its own mole. They put in steel and concrete as they tunnelled to create a 'double-barreled sewer'.

There are two sanitary drainage systems and two stormwater systems in Mill Woods. The use of two systems caused flooding of wastewater into basements and stormwater overflow. They developed a pipe with a dividing wall, sanitary drainage on one side and stormwater on the other, with the sanitary side smaller diameter, but this didn't solve the problems. The sanitary system drains from the trunk sewer at 99th St./Parsons Road to the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant and the stormwater is transported to a storm outfall in Terwillegar Park.

The *Edmonton Journal* predicted on March 21, 1973, that the development of Mill Woods would be delayed at least 36 months if the city was not allowed to construct a temporary drainage outfall into Whitemud Creek. The province had said the city could drain the water into Whitemud Creek but rescinded their permission arguing that it would have destroyed the creek, so the city had to re-route the tunnels from the creek towards the river. The pipes increase in size from 3.5m diameter in Mill Woods to 5m at the river. Engineers had to figure out how to cross the creek and manage a slope that dropped from 11' in Mill Woods to 17'. Stanley Associates Engineering recommended tunneling under ravines. The pipe's capacity under the creek was less than that on the other side.

While longtime Mill Woods residents all remember the tornado (which was more wind than rain), there were other big storm events in the area, in 1937, 1953, 1978, 2004, and 2012. In 1978, there were flooded streets and homes in Mill Woods. A child was swept way down a manhole. The 2004 storm saw 6" of rain in Mill Woods in an hour; the 2012 storm flooded basements in 500 homes in Mill Woods.

The city upgraded the drainage sys-

**Catherine
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History of Mill Woods



tem and introduced stormwater ponds. Drainage remained a problem through the mid-1980s in some neighbourhoods, particularly Meyokumin, Meyonohk, Tipaskan and Kamayosek. Residents were encouraged to install back-up valves with a \$250 tax rebate. In 1986, the city allocated \$796,000 for more sewer inlets and underground pipes, and just two years later, announced an \$11 million, 3-year program to solve the drainage problems. In 2018, EPCOR built dry ponds in the Tawa neighbourhood, to address problems in Tawa, Hillview and Weinlos. As retired EPCOR Divisional Vice President, Drainage, Construction & Operations, Chris Ward said in an unrecorded interview this spring, "There's always a bigger storm than you design the drains for."

Schools

The first homeowners in Mill Woods had seen the development concept and were aware of plans for schools, parks, shops, and other infrastructure, but they took longer to be established than expected. A marketing brochure stated that, "In the fall of 1972 the first of 27 public elementary schools will be opened ... work will already have commenced on the first high school and district park complex in the Mill Woods development ..." Many residents were young families who needed access to schools. Parents estimated an increase in elementary students of 1,591 by September 1974 and 805 residents signed a petition demanding more schools. When Grace Martin Elementary School opened in December 1972, it was immediately over capacity requiring portables to be added. The city and the school boards blamed the province, which had put a freeze on new school construction, for delays in approving new schools. Edith Rogers Junior High School was approved in the fall of 1974.

In September 1975, parents protested the overcrowding at Grace Martin where there were two principals, 13 portable classrooms, four classes of students in the gymnasium – there were close to 1,000 students in a school designed for half that number. Children carried signs reading: "They call it Mill Woods: I call it backwoods" and "Pack sardines, not children". Lee Ridge Elementary School was not due to open until at least November 30. By 1977, parents organized as the Mill Woods Concerned Parents Group which was focused on fighting for a second junior high school in the area. All public schools in Mill Woods were operating above capacity, but the province argued that students should

be bussed to below capacity schools like Ritchie, Hazeldean, Bonnie Doon and McNally. Parents were concerned about the number of children being packed onto a bus. The lack of schools remained a significant issue throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

As schools were built, they also became places for other community use – youth clubs, community league meetings, town halls, even a fun fest – particularly before community halls were built. For example, in 1975, 250 area residents met with MLA Horst Schmid and Aldermen Ed Leger, Terry Cavanagh and Bettie Hewes at Grace Martin to discuss compensation from the Alberta Housing Corporations land dealings in Mill Woods.

Interestingly, in the late 1970s, the only French immersion program in Mill Woods was at Grace Martin, where they also offered programs for gifted students and special needs students. But as the demographics of the community changed, so did schools. Enrollment at Grace Martin was drop-

ping 15 years ago when the Muslim community approached the school about introducing a Sakinah Circle as an alternative program. Today, the school is defined as an inner-city school, not by geographic boundaries, but by socio-economic factors facing the student population, such as intergenerational trauma, poverty, homelessness, and English language barriers.

I will be continuing the Listening Sessions at the library in the fall. Please join us on Sept. 10 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Next month, I will shift from focusing on the city's role in development to the growing community – community leagues, MCARFA, etc. If you have information about the history of Mill Woods or photographs to share, please 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.



Student holding a sign reading "They call it Mill Woods: I call it backwoods," September 1975.

Photo: Provincial Archives of Alberta, *Edmonton Journal* J2029.2



Modern tunnel boring machine, 2018. I'm looking for a photo of the original spider mole that was built locally.

Photo: Courtesy of EPCOR

Police warn public about rise in scams targeting seniors

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) is warning the public about an increase in grandparent scams targeting seniors and their savings. In many cases, the suspects are impersonating police officers and exploiting victims' concerns for their loved ones.

In the past two months, police have received 21 reports of seniors being targeted by scammers in a similar fashion.

The common tactic involves the suspects posing as police officers claiming that a child or grandchild has been arrested and requires immediate bail money to be released from custody.

The scammers often create a sense of urgency, insisting that payment be made immediately in the form of cash, credit cards, gift cards, cryptocurrency, gold or jewellery. In some cases, a courier is sent directly to the victim's home to collect payment or the "police officer" will meet the senior in person.

Once a victim provides payment, the fraudsters often continue to contact the victim and demand additional funds for purported legal fees, court costs, and other charges. Some victims have been targeted repeatedly, resulting in substantial financial losses.

"These criminals are manipulative, convincing, and highly skilled at creating panic. They deliberately prey on seniors by exploiting the fear and concern they have for their loved ones," says Staff Sgt. Mike Zaparyniuk of the EPS Financial Crimes Section. "We want people to understand that the police will never call and demand money, gold, gift cards, cryptocurrency, credit cards, or any other form of payment to secure someone's release from custody. If you receive a call like this, stop, hang up, and verify the information independently."

Spot the scam. Police will never:

- Request cash, gift cards, cryptocurrency, gold, jewellery, or credit cards to secure someone's release.
- Send a courier to collect money, valuables or financial information.
- Demand immediate payment over the phone.
- Instruct individuals to keep a police matter secret from family and friends.

If you receive a call claiming that a loved one has been arrested and needs money:

- Hang up immediately. Do not provide any personal or financial information.
- Contact your family member directly using a phone number you know is legitimate or reach out to another family member or trusted person.
- Never provide cash, valuables, banking information, or credit cards to someone you do not know.
- Contact the EPS non-emergency line 780-423-4567 if you believe you are being targeted.

Investigators are also asking Edmontonians to talk openly with seniors they know about these scams.

"We want seniors to know that it's okay to be skeptical, even if someone claims to be a police officer. We won't be offended if you question the call or hang up to verify who you're speaking with," says Staff Sgt. Zaparyniuk. "If someone is demanding money, creating urgency, or telling you to keep a secret, those are major red flags. We also encourage family members to have conversations with their parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbours about these scams. A simple conversation can prevent someone from becoming a victim and losing their hard-earned savings."

Families are also encouraged to establish trusted methods of verification and discuss what to do if they receive an emergency call requesting money. Taking a moment to pause, verify, and speak with a trusted family member can help prevent fraud and protect vulnerable loved ones.

Anyone who believes they or someone they know has been targeted by a grandparent scam is asked to contact the EPS at 780-423-4567 or by dialing #377 from a mobile phone.

Anonymous information can also be submitted to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or online at www.p3tips.com/250.

www.edmontonpolice.ca

What do you think of the *Mill Woods Mosaic*?

What do you like? What do you not like?

Please tell us your opinion.

Send us an e-mail: mwmosaic@telus.net

What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

Aug. 13 - 23 - Edmonton International Fringe Festival around Whyte Avenue and Old Strathcona
More information: www.fringetheatre.ca

Aug. 15 - Muslim Heritage Festival
Family-friendly celebration of Islamic culture, food, and community
Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton
1:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Aug. 15 - Family & Friends Picnic
Free community picnic sponsored by the Philippine Bayanihan Association of Alberta
Coronation Park
11425 - 142 Street NW, Edmonton
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Aug. 22 - Second Annual Share Fair
Free clothing, school supplies, coffee, snacks and fun for the whole family
Sunrise Community Church
3303 - 37 Street NW, Mill Woods
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Aug. 22 & 23 - YEGO 2026
Edmonton's #1 LEGO Festival
Mill Woods Town Centre
2331 - 66 Street NW, Mill Woods
Saturday, Aug. 22: 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, Aug. 23: 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
More info: millwoodstowncentre.com

Sept. 5 & 6 - Afro & Indigenous Cultural Festival
Music, Food, Arts, Poetry & Culture
Borden Park
7507 Borden Park Road NW, Edmonton
1:00 - 7:00 p.m. (long weekend)
Contact: africanheritagemusic@gmail.com

Sept. 12 - "Where care meets community"
Free BBQ lunch, ice-cream and snacks to celebrate the opening of the new Stelmach Community Health Centre in Mill Woods
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
7319 - 29 Avenue NW, Edmonton
To learn more about this event, visit CovenantWellnessCommunity.ca/bbq

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 Friday, September 11, 2026.

Life is a story. Tell it well.



How do you want to be remembered?



South Side Memorial Chapel
by Arbor Memorial

8310 - 104 Street, Edmonton, AB • 780-432-1601 • www.southsidememorial.com

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Woods
Mosaic**

**"The best of
both worlds"**

mwmosaic.ca

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-

eign 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.ca

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 September 15, 2026. The deadline for advertising and editorial is Friday, September 11, 2026.