Mill Woods Mosaic

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The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast
Independent • Non-partisan • Interdenominational

This month:

Obnoxious Neighbor
Arnim Joop writes about our love-hate relationship with our neighbors south of the border.
Page 4

A Cherished Gift
Why should we recognize the efforts of our troops, asks Ron Kuban.
Page 5

Arrival City
Catherine Cole writes about the cultural diversity of Mill Woods.
Pages 7 & 8

No Stone Left Alone
Local groups in Mill Woods gathered to remember and honor the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for Canada.
Page 11

Tumultuous Year
Tom Monto predicts that the referendum in Alberta and midterm elections in the U.S. will set the stage for a tumultuous year.
Page 12

Dance in Spotlight



Contemporary dance artist Janita Frantsi has been named Alberta's seventh Artist in Residence and Arts Ambassador.
Page 9



Always Remember

On Nov. 10, students and staff at Baturyn School commemorated Remembrance Day and celebrated the 10th anniversary of the school's "Hallway of Heroes" exhibit, which has expanded to fill many hallways throughout the school. This year, many Remembrance Day ceremonies were deeply shaped by the tragic loss of four Canadian Armed Forces members who died in a wildfire and training accident at CFB Wainwright in Alberta on Oct. 17.

Photo: Edmonton Public Schools

How feds are working with provinces to support worker retention

Immigration that's well-managed, efficient and focused on our economic needs is key to building Canada strong. As announced in Budget 2026, Canada is introducing a time-limited measure that delivers stability and fairness to select groups of people who are already in Canada while helping provinces and territories address their labour market needs.

On Nov. 12, Lena Metlege Diab, Canadas's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, provided more details on the time-limited measure for workers, specifically on how the Government of Canada is offering the provinces and territories optional, additional space to transition up to a combined total of 100,000 workers and their families to permanent residence in 2027. These workers are already living in Canada and are contributing to key industries and supporting economic development in communities of all sizes.

As part of this time-limited measure, provinces and territories will be offered additional Provincial Nominee Program allocations and will be able to choose how much of this additional space they use to transition workers who are established in their communities and meeting their labour market needs. These allocations are intended to be used by March 31, 2027, to support the transition of workers and their families to permanent residence in 2027.

Provincial and territorial governments will also be able to identify workers in their jurisdictions who have already applied for permanent residence, including through several federal programs, and are awaiting a decision. This includes

- the Atlantic Immigration Program
- federal immigration programs and pilots that are closed to applications, including the Start-up Visa Program, Self-Employed Persons Program, Agri-Food Pilot and home care worker programs



Minister Lena Metlege Diab
Photo: House of Commons

By helping provinces and territories retain workers already established in their communities, the measure will help employers maintain access to skilled talent and support communities facing labour shortages without adding significant new pressures on housing and community infrastructure.

"Communities across the country benefit each and every day from the contributions of workers – both Canadians and those who have chosen Canada," said Minister Diab. "Our government understands that by retaining high-value, established workers, we can support economic growth and help our businesses thrive. With the new time-limited measure presented alongside our sustainable Immigration Levels Plan, we will work closely with provinces and territories to provide certainty and stability to even more employers, workers, and families right across Canada."

Quick facts

- Under the time-limited measure, IRCC will also help transition to permanent residence
  - up to 32,000 people who have applied under the Hong Kong permanent residence pathways, which closed to new applications in August 2026
  - up to 18,800 people who have applied under the Ukraine Family Reunification Pathway, which closed to new applications in October 2024
  - up to 12,600 people who have already been found eligible for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds
  - up to 45,000 spouses, common-law partners and dependent children of Canadian citizens or permanent residents living in Canada
- These measures do not create new programs or re-open closed pathways. Applicants do not need to do anything or contact IRCC for their applications to be processed under these additional spaces.

Alberta's best receive province's highest honour

Eight remarkable Albertans will become this year's newest inductees into the Alberta Order of Excellence during an investiture ceremony at Government House.

"It is an honour to invest these individuals as members of the Alberta Order of Excellence," said Salma Lakhani, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. "Each has shown leadership in their fields while dedicating themselves to their communities. These eight people join a small, but illustrious group of exceptional Albertans whose contributions have helped shape our province and inspire generations to come."

This year's inductees bring the total membership of the Alberta Order of Excellence to 237. Established in 1979, the Alberta Order of Excellence is the province's highest honour and is an official part of the Canadian Honours System.

The following individuals are this year's inductees into the Alberta Order of Excellence:

Jodi Abbott of Edmonton has shaped post-secondary education, health care and international figure skating. Her transformative leadership advances innovation, stronger institutions and better outcomes for Albertans.

Clive Beddoe of Calgary transformed air travel by co-founding WestJet. He built a new business model around affordable travel, employee ownership and shared success while creating jobs and opportunity across Canada.

Bruce Bentley of Edmonton is a respected business leader and community builder. His financial and real estate acumen, compassion and leadership have strengthened the arts, athletics, education and health care across Edmonton and Alberta.

Heather Culbert of Calgary is a visionary community leader who turns ambitious ideas into action. She spearheaded Calgary's cancer centre while advancing women into leadership roles across Alberta.

Ian Holloway of Calgary is a globally respected legal scholar whose decades in the Navy helped shape his career. He transformed legal education through the innovative Calgary Curriculum, influencing law schools around the world.

Kim McConnell of Okotoks has advanced Canada's agriculture and agri-food sectors through business, advocacy and industry leadership. He inspires the next generation to strengthen agriculture, rural Canada and community.

Ron Triffo of Edmonton helped build Stantec into a global engineering company. He has invested his time, leadership and resources in education, health care, the arts and initiatives that improve life across Alberta.

Paul Wynnyk of Sherwood Park rose to the highest levels of military service and led through crises in Canada and abroad. His leadership in the Canadian Armed Forces and Alberta Public Service reflects a lifetime of commitment to others.

2027 - 2030 City of Edmonton Budget

Edmonton City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright

On Nov. 2nd, City Administration released their proposed 2027 - 2030 Operating, Capital and Climate Budget documents. The Utility Budgets, which were released on Nov. 12th, will be presented at the Nov. 26th Utility Committee meeting. You can review all the budget documents at Edmonton.ca/budget



Coun. Jo-Anne Wright

Of the proposed $6.3 billion capital budget, $3 billion of it is carried over from previous projects, including the long-awaited 50 Street Grade Separation over the rail tracks, upgrades to Terwillegar Drive, the Yellowhead Trail freeway conversion, LRT extensions, and the new Community Recreation Centre in Lewis Farms. The $3.3 billion in new funding being recommended prioritizes maintaining the City's existing infrastructure and includes $2.3 billion in new renewal projects such as neighbourhood renewal, rehabilitating and repaving the bridges and major roads that need it most, and replacement of old City buses, vehicles and other equipment essential for effective service delivery.

As our City continues to grow towards a population of two million people, the $4 billion operating budget delivers on the services that Edmontonians expect such as fire rescue, police, parks, recreation, roads, transit and a few strategic increases to services like snow removal and turf maintenance. It's a sensible budget that barely keeps up with inflation and population growth while recognizing the affordability constraints that many Edmontonians are facing.

As a result of these increases, the median residential property owner, assessed at $492,500, can expect to pay $335.39 per month in 2027. This is an early estimate to give people a sense of what to ex-pect as changes may be made when budget deliberations begin on Nov. 23rd.

You can register to speak at the Non-Statutory Public Hearing beginning Nov. 23rd or watch the budget deliberations taking place until Dec. 18th. Find more info at: edmonton.ca/meetings

As part of the deliberations, I will be considering the feedback from the six budget workshops conducted in Ward Sspomitapi this spring. You can learn more about the results on my website at: jo-annewright.ca/budget

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



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



Sampling a subject you've never touched before is a great way to stretch your mind

Steve Chambers took a brave leap into Improv. Barb Maheu discovered chemistry isn't scary. Roger Bryan learned the Canadian Constitution can be riveting. These adventures were all offered by the Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA) which offers adults 50 and over a chance to step out of their comfort zone and into a new world of discovery with a broad range of online and in-person courses.



Barb Maheu



Steve Chambers



Roger Bryan

Photos: ELLA

Chambers' background is a long way from Improv theatre. He spent 10 years studying sciences then a 40-year career in medicine. "I've been going to ELLA and taking something completely out of my past experience, relying on the expertise of wonderful teachers to bring it to life," he says. The Improv class, which ended with a noon-hour performance for the other ELLA participants, showed Chambers the importance of teamwork and not being afraid to put yourself out there. "The whole concept of Improv is to work as a team. You watch your teammates … when one member gets stumped, another teammate jumps in to help."

In high school, Maheu was baffled by chemistry. "I never would have thought I would understand chemistry, let alone like it!" she says. With a background teaching social studies, Maheu wasn't looking forward to a lecture on nitrogen fertilizer by Leah Martin-Visscher from King's University.

But Martin-Visscher connected the development of fertilizer to wars over guano (seabird poop), the need to feed the world, sustainable development, the development of munitions, and even the Nazi regime in Germany. "The chemistry part was integrated so seamlessly and simply that it just blew my mind. Leah took all these relevant facts, drawing from art and history, and the whole thing now makes sense to me. Even the chemical notations at the end made sense." says Maheu.

Bryan remembers a copy of the Charter of Rights hanging on the school wall when he was a kid, but that was the limit of his contact with the Constitution until he took Richard Mailey's course on constitutional controversies. Bryan has a background in science and worked for the government and Ducks Unlimited.

Mailey brought elements of the current Alberta political climate and the Constitution's mindboggling history into the classroom and made it all relevant, says Bryan.

"He gave a very open presentation. He didn't give you all the answers. He wanted to challenge you to get a better understanding of how the Constitution was born; how over the years there have been many failed attempts to amend it. It was all very relevant to what's happening in Canada right now, like provincial secession and how difficult that would be."

The ELLA winter session runs online from January 11 to March 5, offering 16 courses in topics as diverse as Renaissance music, tai chi walking and climate change. Registration begins December 1.

A session of in-person ELLA classes runs in May at the University of Alberta. For more information go to my-ella.com.





Letters to the editor are welcome

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

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

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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

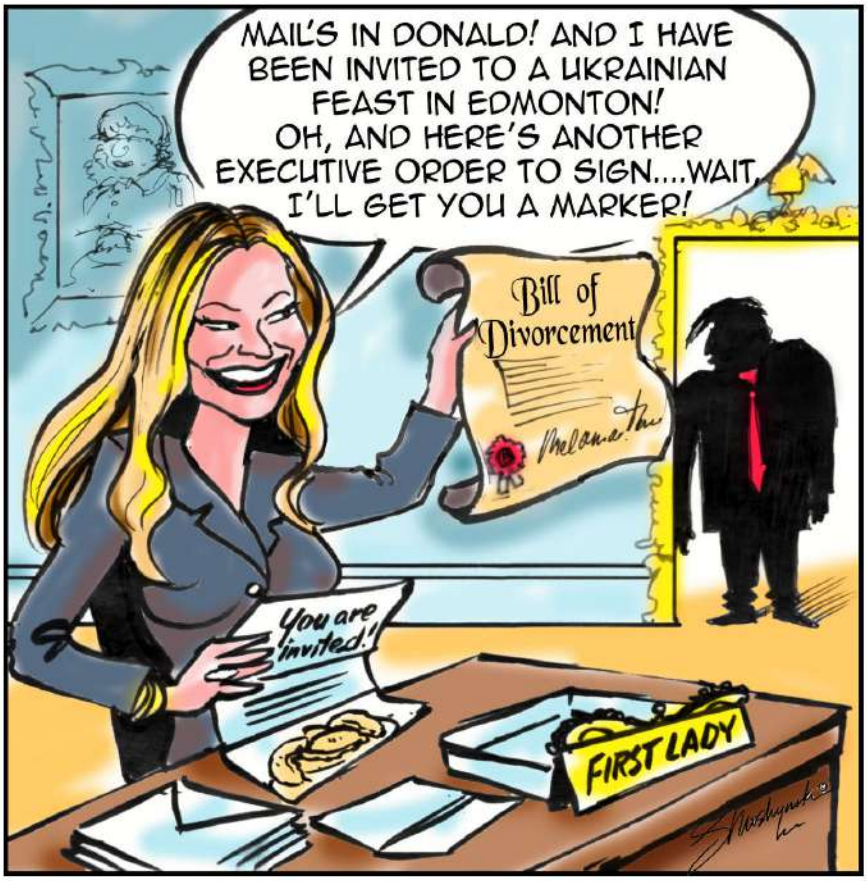
More reasons to remember

November 11 was Remembrance Day which is observed annually in Canada to honor the men and women who have served and sacrificed in times of war, military conflict, and peace. It is an important day, because as Canadians, we should NEVER forget those of us who have served and sacrificed. Without them, we would not be able to enjoy the privilege to live in one of the best countries in the world.

This year, we had more reasons to remember after that terrible incident at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright in Alberta on Oct. 17 during a live-fire training exercise. Five members of the army died and dozens were injured. And a day before Nov. 11, it was reported that members of a military reserve unit in southwestern Ontario had to pay for attending Remembrance Day services this year while the Liberal federal government has already sent more than $22 billion in total assistance to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion began in 2022. Maybe it's not fair to compare foreign aid with support of Canadian veterans, but it is legitimate to ask why we send billions of dollars abroad but don't have enough spare change for remembering the brave men and women who served and sacrificed for our country.

Sadly, it is also a fact that not many schools in Mill Woods and The Meadows had Remembrance Day events this year.

We should NEVER forget our own history.



The midterm elections in the United States were a disaster for President Donald Trump. Many candidates of the Democratic Party won seats in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the Republican Party lost majorities in both Houses of the Congress which will make it difficult for Trump to govern in the last two years of his four-year term. He is now a "Lame Donald Duck"!

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

From brave liberator to obnoxious neighbor

Arnim Joop

From the Desk of the Publisher



When I grew up in post-war West Germany, the Americans were not very popular although they liberated Germany from the cruel Nazi regime with the other Allied Powers, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France, and also Canada. My father was a German soldier during World War II and not a fan of the U.S., because he became a prisoner of war in an American PoW camp after the war.

Most Germans were thankful that the "Amis" helped rebuild the western part of their country with the Marshall Plan, but the people in East Germany were not so lucky, because they ended up with a socialist regime, and the division of Germany was cemented with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

The Berlin Airlift in 1948/49, when the Soviet Union cut off ground and water routes into West Berlin in an attempt to force Western powers to abandon the city, was another example of humanitarian aid from the U.S.

In 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy visited Germany and said in his famous speech in Berlin: "*All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words 'Ich bin ein Berliner!'*"

When I was a high school student, one of my dreams was to travel across the U.S. on a Greyhound bus, but then the "Amis" became very unpopular again, because they escalated the Vietnam War. And when I graduated from high school, I wrote an essay about JFK who was not really a peacemaker but a warmonger.

When I was a university student in Hamburg, I became a passionate peace activist, because I did not want my country to be involved in another war. It was the time when the nuclear arms race was in full swing and the U.S. wanted to deploy nuclear missiles in West Germany. On Oct. 22, 1983, I was one of more than 400,000 people who gathered in front of Hamburg's City Hall to protest against the nuclear armament. It was encouraging to see so many people taking to the streets, because they had enough of the Cold War, and then another U.S. President, Ronald Reagan, visited Berlin in 1987 and famously challenged Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in front of the Berlin Wall with the words: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" I was always skeptical, when politicians talked about the reunification of Germany, and I thought it would not happen in my lifetime, but the writing was literally on the wall.

In 1988/89, I immigrated to Canada and was surprised when I saw the news of the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989. I didn't see it coming, and my editor asked me to write an editorial about it, because I grew up with the Berlin Wall.

When I grew up in Germany, we learnt a lot about the U.S., and one history teacher even made us memorize a phrase from the U.S. Declaration of Independence ("All men are created equal ..."), but Canada was not on my radar screen. My Filipino wife has many relatives and former classmates who immigrated to the U.S., and she is the only one of her batch who chose Canada, and it turned out to be a blessing for our family, because Canada is the better part of North America in so many ways. We knew that already when we arrived in this "Promised Land", but since that MAGA maniac became President of the U.S. and "punished" Canada with numerous tariffs and threatened to make our country the "51st State", we appreciate even more to have found a new home in one of the best countries in the world. Canada is not perfect, it's a work in progress, and many immigrants from around the world have contributed to making it a great country. Therefore, I found it disgusting and despicable that Alberta's Premier Danielle Smith and her UCP government tried to blame immigrants for the problems in our province in the Oct. 19 referendum. But fortunately, the majority of Albertans has voted that Alberta should remain a province of Canada and rejected separation.

The U.S. used to be the dream destination for many people from other countries, but that is no longer the case. In the latest Economist Democracy Index, the U.S. is ranked 28th and classified as a "flawed democracy." But the results of the midterm elections in the U.S. on Nov. 3 showed that not all Americans are morons. With the Democrats winning a majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, there is new hope that things will improve in the U.S., but I think that it will take years to repair the damage that has been done by the current tenant in the White House and his gang, and in the meantime Canada has to continue to become less dependent on the U.S.

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

A Cherished Gift

Ron Kuban

Time Passages



Tightly wedged between Thanks-giving and the Holiday Season, Remembrance Day seems like an odd blimp on our calendar, added to an already busy schedule. It doesn't help that the day's events are far from glitzy. They attract no vast commercial hype, and are not accompanied by catchy jingles, tasty culinary offerings, dining opportunities, or fancy costumes. I mean, the day's events cannot even be described as a celebration! Predictably, therefore, many people overlook the day's meaning, and relatively few tolerate its associated inconveniences such as attending an outdoor ceremony at a cenotaph. However, those who do take the time to consider the day's significance often gain much from their effort. Let me explain this by first providing context to the day.

The first Remembrance Day was established by King George V, who proclaimed that a two-minute silence was to be observed across the British Empire starting on November 11, 1919. It was intended to remember those who died during the First World War (WWI) which resulted in unprecedented slaughter. Nearly five million combatants were killed and 13 million were wounded. Additionally, the war's unparalleled destruction had a global impact which included the collapse of four imperial dynasties. Its level of violence and devastation was so horrific that many hoped it would become "the war to end all wars".

Clearly, we have learned little from that catastrophic event. Wars continued to proliferate with escalating toll of fatalities, injuries, and destruction. Over time, therefore, Canada's Remembrance Day commemorations were expanded to include the sacrifices made during other wars, including the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Eventually, the day was transformed to also pay tribute to the many who came home injured or maimed following their service to our nation.

Think what you may about war, the reality is that our troops were ordered into hostile and violent environments not of their own choosing. They enlisted in Canada's Armed Forces to defend our country, as needed. While aware of the risks, they nevertheless stepped up voluntarily to shoulder demanding and potentially hazardous roles. Frankly, they expected to survive and return home to their loved ones and the life they temporarily set aside. They wanted to serve and serve they did!

On November 24, 1956, the Canadian Armed Forces acquired new taskings and participated in their first peacekeeping mission. The many missions that followed became progressively more complex and violent as they transitioned from peacekeeping to peace making. Although not declared as war, these missions also resulted in fatalities and injuries.

Statistics Canada's figures from November 6, 2025, provide an interesting perspective. Since Confederation, 158 years ago, over 2.3 million Canadians have served in Canada's Armed Forces. A total of over 118,000 perished in that service and countless more returned with life-altering injuries.

Regardless of their diverse assignments, our armed forces personnel must remain combat ready. To achieve an optimum capacity, these men and women often undergo simulations that are both realistic and dangerous. Occasionally, these military exercises lead to accidents, injuries, and sadly, even deaths as the devastating recent accident at CFB Wainwright illustrated.

Aside from the inherent dangers, during peace and war times alike, military life bears many challenges that are uncommon, and likely unacceptable, to non-military personnel. Key among them is the disciplined and demanding lifestyle expected of all service members. While they must abide by the laws that govern other Canadians, they are also bound by a set of rules and regulations specific to the military. Nevertheless, our troops have always been a part of "us", living as our neighbors and being an integral part of our community.

Remembrance Day reminds us of the incredible sacrifices made by these men and women. Clearly, those who had lost their lives are at the forefront of our thoughts on Remembrance Day. However, let's also remember those who returned home injured, disabled, and forever scarred by their experiences. Recall too that their loss affects a large community of people, from their family and friends to colleagues and associates.

For me, the more significant point is not whether we should recognize the efforts of our troops, but rather why. While both are worthy considerations, the latter is particularly illuminating.

Even a brief review of history reveals two lessons which are consistent regardless of the chosen historical era, geography, culture, or the local governance structure. The first is that freedom is never freely granted. Human beings secured their liberty, rights, and privileges through determined struggles. The second lesson is that once secured, freedom and civil rights had to be defended from those who aimed to deny them. The retention of these rights required persistent vigilance and determined defense.

In that context, our military is the last line of defense which allows us to maintain our lifestyle within a peaceful Canada. The benefits we gain are profound and persist day after day. They give us the opportunity to be who we are, travel and associate freely, consume, and much more. Therefore, let's remember to thank our troops for their protection and sacrifices, not only on Remembrance Day, but throughout the year. Their gift to us is truly a cherished one.

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 December 15, 2026. The deadline is Friday, December 11, 2026.

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Democracy Is Not a Game

Jasvir Deol

MLA for Edmonton-Meadows



Over the past several months, I have heard a consistent message from residents across Edmonton-Meadows. Families are struggling with rising grocery prices, soaring utility bills, overcrowded classrooms, and growing barriers to healthcare. Parents are concerned about their children's future, seniors are worried about accessing essential services, and working Albertans are wondering whether the opportunities they once counted on will remain within reach.

What I have not heard is a demand for the government to redraw Alberta's electoral boundaries for political advantage.

Yet, while Albertans are looking for leadership on the issues that matter most, Premier Danielle Smith and the UCP appear increasingly preoccupied with political calculations rather than public priorities.

Many constituents have already expressed frustration over the government's decision to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on a referendum that did little to address their everyday challenges. At a time when Albertans needed meaningful action on affordability, healthcare, education, and economic stability, their government chose to pursue a divisive political agenda.

Now, rather than reflecting on the message voters have delivered, the UCP appears more interested in changing the political landscape than responding to public dissatisfaction.

The recent by-election defeat in Calgary-Shaw, traditionally considered a conservative stronghold, should have prompted serious reflection. When voters turn away from a governing party in one of its historically safest ridings, the appropriate response is to examine its policies, priorities, and performance – not the electoral map.

This should concern every Albertan, regardless of political affiliation.

Independent electoral boundary commissions are fundamental to a healthy democracy. Their purpose is to ensure fair representation through an impartial process that respects population changes, community interests, and the principle of electoral fairness.

Electoral boundaries must serve the people, not the political ambitions of those in power.

Any attempt to undermine that independence or manipulate electoral boundaries for partisan benefit risks eroding public confidence in our democratic institutions.

And once that confidence is lost, rebuilding it is no simple task.

In Edmonton-Meadows, the priorities are clear. Parents want properly funded schools and manageable class sizes. Seniors want timely, accessible healthcare. Workers need relief from escalating living costs. Small businesses need economic stability, while families want a government committed to building a more affordable and prosperous Alberta.

These are not partisan demands. They are the fundamental expectations of people who work hard, contribute to their communities, and deserve responsible government.

Albertans expect their elected representatives to confront these challenges, not become consumed by political maneuvering.

When governments lose touch with the people they serve, voters notice. When political survival takes precedence over public service, voters notice. And when those in power appear more interested in changing electoral rules than earning public trust, voters notice.

The answer to declining public confidence is not gerrymandering. It is better governance, greater accountability, and leadership that puts Albertans first.

Every Albertan deserves fair electoral boundaries, meaningful public consultation, and confidence that their vote carries equal weight. These principles must remain above partisan interests.

Democracy does not belong to a premier, a political party, or any government. It belongs to the people.

As the MLA for Edmonton-Meadows, I will continue advocating for fair representation, transparent decision-making, and democratic institutions that remain accountable to the Albertans they serve.

Because in a democracy, voters must choose their politicians – not politicians choosing their voters.

Alberta deserves a government focused on earning the people's trust, not rewriting the rules to retain power.

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

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MLA Jasvir Deol along with his colleagues, MLA Sarah Hoffman and MLA Gurtej Singh Brar at a press conference on Emergency Room Crisis in Edmonton at Legislative Grounds on Sept. 9.



MLA Jasvir Deol discussing issues with local community stakeholders at the Edmonton-Ellerslie nomination meeting on Sept. 11.

Photos: Office of MLA Jasvir Deol

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Mill Woods as an Arrival City

Catherine C. Cole

History of Mill Woods



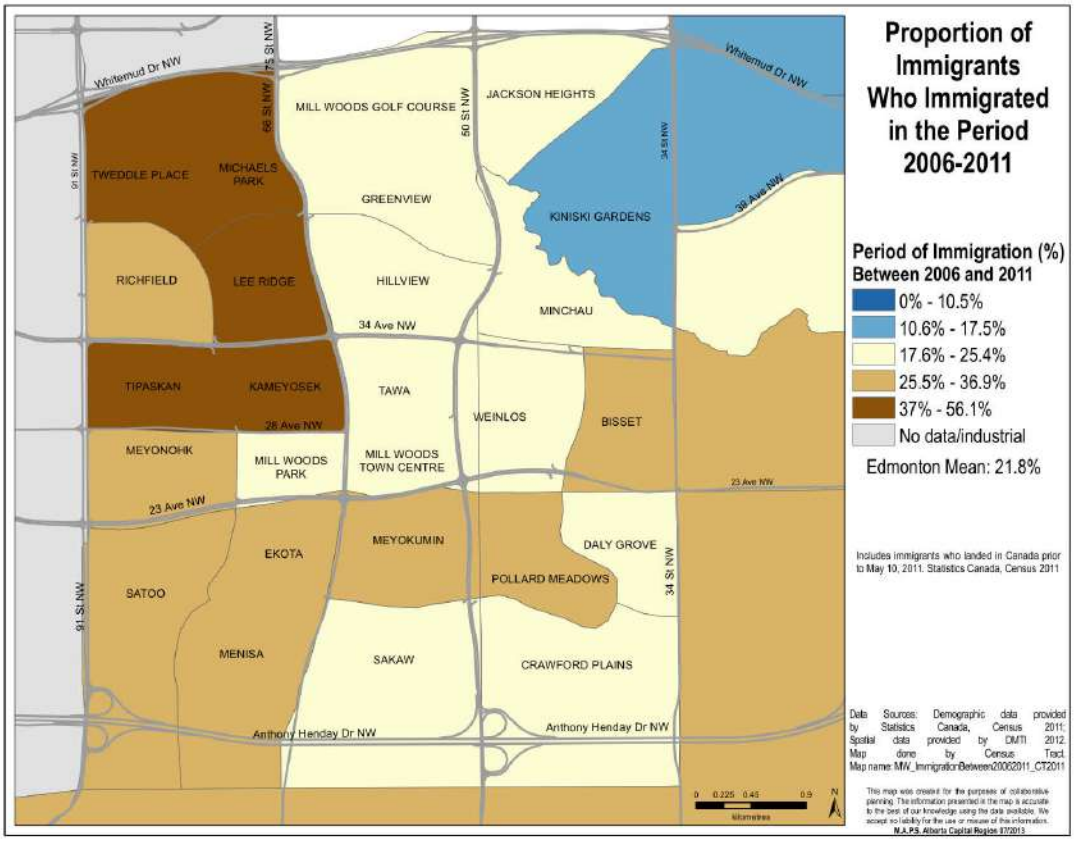
The final chapter of the book I'm writing about Mill Woods will be about cultural diversity in the area, taking as its point of departure the concept of an arrival city, outlined in Doug Saunders' book *Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World*. The book chapter is, of course, much longer than this article, and will discuss the various immigrant groups that have settled in Mill Woods and how the community has changed over the years.

Saunders writes about arrival cities as the areas on the edge of a city that rural people migrate to, as they did in the inner city and North Edmonton in the early to mid-20th century, and where immigrants settle when they arrive in a new country. He notes that, "transitional places – arrival cities – are the places where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born" if we allow ourselves to engage. (p. 3) He describes them as being peripheral urban neighbourhoods, with people who are themselves in transition, much as the area is itself in transition. Mill Woods is not as pronounced as the arrival cities he describes but it is comparable in the sense of being a transitional place.

The first residents of Mill Woods in the early 1970s were primarily young Edmontonians and migrants from Eastern Canada, people of European ancestry. Edmonton began to receive culturally diverse immigrants in the mid-1970s, coinciding with the early development of Mill Woods. Canadian immigration laws changed in 1967, allowing large numbers of immigrants from non-European countries for the first time. Immigrants were accepted based on points in nine categories related to education, skills, job prospects, character, age, proficiency in English and French, and family in Canada. There were three categories of immigrants: independent, nominated and sponsored. Canada's multiculturalism policy was introduced under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1971. As was the case for earlier immigrants, people came primarily for political, religious or economic reasons.

The largest numbers of immigrants in Mill Woods are South Asian, Filipino, Latin American, Chinese and Caribbean. Global unrest in the 1970s led to people coming to Canada and arriving, coincidentally, in Mill Woods. For example, in 1972, South Asians of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi descent were expelled from Uganda. Latin Americans from Chile came in 1973 following the coup, from Argentina and Uruguay in the years leading up to military dictatorship in 1976, from El Salvador in the early 1980s because of civil war. Vietnamese "boat people" came beginning in 1979 following the reunification of North and South Vietnam. Others, including large numbers of people from the Caribbean, came in the 1970s, often for education and economic opportunities. Once settled, they invited friends and family to join them. The first Filipinos were professionals who were recruited in the 1960s to fill labour gaps. Later waves

Continued on page 8



This map was produced by M.A.P.S. (Mapping and Planning Support) Alberta Capital Region (mapsab.ca) and is used with permission. They have produced many maps of Mill Woods (and other communities) that use census data to look at the area in different ways.



Changes Around the Board Table, Continued Commitment to Our Schools

Jan Sawyer

Edmonton Public Schools Trustee (Ward I)



There have been some significant changes around the Edmonton Public Schools Board table in recent weeks, and I wanted to share what those changes mean for our school communities, particularly those in Mill Woods.

On November 10, Trustee Saadiq Sumar announced that he would be stepping down as Board Chair and taking a temporary leave of absence as Trustee for Ward G. I want to acknowledge Saadiq's leadership over the past year and thank him for his dedication to our students, families and staff. I wish him all the very best during his leave. Following his announcement, the Board elected Trustee Holly Nichol as Board Chair and Trustee Nickela Anderson as Vice Chair. I look forward to working alongside them in their new roles.

The Board has also established new arrangements for trustee representation following the vacancy in Ward F and temporary leaves in Wards G and H. For Mill Woods families, this means that I will now represent the Ward G schools south of Whitemud Drive, while Trustee Anderson will provide coverage for schools north of Whitemud. These arrangements will remain in place during Trustee Sumar's leave. I'm particularly excited about this opportunity because many of these schools are already connected to the communities I represent in Ward I. Students who begin their educational journeys in Ward I often continue into high schools in Ward G. With the addition of schools such as J. Percy Page and Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack, I now have the opportunity to represent students across more of their educational journey.

Having spent more than three decades as an educator and school administrator with Edmonton Public Schools, including six years as principal of Satoo School and my time as the founding principal of Jan Reimer School, I have deep connections to southeast Edmonton. I know these communities, appreciate their diversity and understand the importance of strong relationships between schools and families. I'm looking forward to reconnecting with familiar school communities, building relationships with new ones, attending school council meetings and celebrating the wonderful things happening in our schools.

Although trustees are elected to represent particular wards, our responsibility around the Board table extends to every student and every school across Edmonton Public Schools. We share a commitment to making thoughtful decisions that support student success and the long-term well-being of our Division.

Changes in leadership and representation are a natural part of governance. What matters most is that our schools and families continue to feel heard, supported and connected. As I take on these additional responsibilities, I remain committed to being accessible, listening carefully and bringing the perspectives of our school communities to the Board table. I look forward to the opportunities ahead and to continuing our work together in support of public education.

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

trustee.jan.sawyer@epsb.ca.

Mill Woods as an Arrival City

Continued from page 7

came through family reunification and because of instability in the Philippines. As those communities grew, people displaced from other countries joined them and, because Mill Woods was the fastest growing part of the city in the 1970s, it became increasingly culturally diverse.

At a City Council meeting on June 10, 1975, following receipt of a Green Paper on Immigration, Councillors passed a motion that the City,

"*...believes firmly that in the selection of immigrants to Canada there should be no discrimination on the basis of race, creed, sex or country of origin and further,*

That we believe that where racial or other serious forms of prejudice in Canada arise that the Government should take positive and firm action to oppose such trends and give assistance and protection to those hurt by them."

This motion expressed the City's commitment to being inclusive and welcoming. However, the situation was more complex.

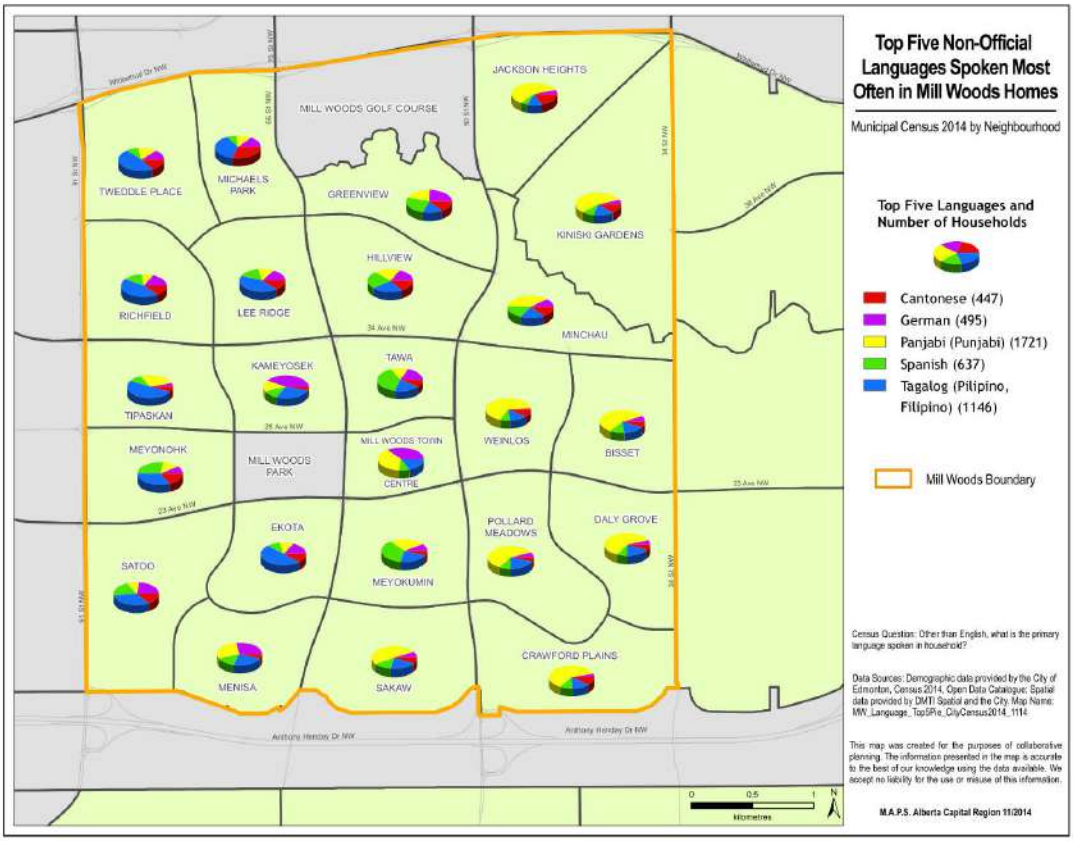
For some Mill Woods is a transitional community. New immigrants living in Mill Woods enjoy living among people of their own cultural community; people from older immigrant communities appreciate the cultural diversity. Second generation immigrants who grew up and went to school there reflect on it as a very positive experience and an advantage in today's increasingly global society, growing up not necessarily without prejudice but better equipped than those who grew up in white enclaves. Many cultural and religious organizations have been established to support individual communities and settlement organizations and resources like the *Mill Woods Mosaic* help people to integrate into their new home. Mill Woods is not a transient community as people choose to stay, or move into new developments in Southeast Edmonton, because of the diversity and energy. The community has become increasingly South Asian, rather than diverse, since the turn of the century.

Saunders suggests that Toronto "may be the world's most complete collection of these old-style arrival cities," with one of the highest immigrant intakes in the Western world (p. 317) and Thorncliffe Park as the arrival city in Toronto. While Edmonton's population is smaller, the diversity in Mill Woods is comparable, and Mill Woods is a successful arrival city.

Join us at the Edmonton Public Library, Dec. 10, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

If you have information about the history of Mill Woods or photographs to share, please join us on Dec. 10 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. or contact me at catherinec.cole@telus.net. Next month, my final article in this series will discuss why Mill Woods? Why is it important to understand the history of Mill Woods and what can we learn from the Mill Woods Project? 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.*



This map was produced by M.A.P.S. (Mapping and Planning Support) Alberta Capital Region (mapsab.ca) and is used with permission. They have produced many maps of Mill Woods (and other communities) that use census data to look at the area in different ways.

Artist in Residence puts dance in the spotlight

Contemporary dance artist Janita Frantsi has been named Alberta's seventh Artist in Residence and Arts Ambassador.

Frantsi is the first dance artist ever selected for the role, marking an exciting milestone for the Artist in Residence program. Her appointment recognizes the important place dance holds in Alberta's cultural landscape and reinforces the government's commitment to supporting artists and connecting Albertans with the arts.

As Alberta's Arts Ambassador, Frantsi will receive a $50,000 grant for a one-year residency, sharing her creative process with communities across the province and creating her project, *Art Around Us*. Combining live and pre-recorded dance, the project will explore new ways for Albertans to experience the arts while showcasing the province's landscapes, communities and natural spaces.

"Artists shape how we see the world and bring our communities together," said Tanya Fir, Alberta's Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women. "The Artist in Residence program celebrates that contribution and connects Albertans with their work. As the first dance artist selected, Janita Frantsi is breaking new ground for the program. I'm proud to welcome her to the role."

Frantsi is a contemporary dance artist originally from Finland and has been creating, teaching and performing in Edmonton for more than a decade. She has built an impressive body of work as a performer, creator and educator. She has collaborated with organizations including Mile Zero Dance, KO Dance Projects and Edmonton Opera, while teaching dance and movement at the University of Alberta. Her work pushes the boundaries of dance, exploring new forms of expression through performance, film and digital media.

"It is an absolute honour to promote and celebrate the arts as Alberta's Artist in Residence and Arts Ambassador," said Frantsi. "I am excited to take dance beyond the stage and into communities across Alberta, exploring how it can transform how we experience a place and connect with one another."



Janita Frantsi is a contemporary dance artist originally from Finland.

Photo: Tyler Baker Photography

"This past year as Alberta's Artist in Residence has shown me that every Albertan has a story worth telling," said John Wort Hannam, Artist in Residence and Artist Ambassador 2025-26. "Sometimes, all we need is an invitation to begin. Through the arts, we can find our voice, listen to one another and build understanding, belonging, connection and empathy."

"We are thrilled to see a member of our province's dance community selected as the next Alberta Artist in Residence," said Cynthia P. Moore, chair, Alberta Foundation for the Arts. "At the AFA, we strive to ensure arts of all disciplines are supported, celebrated and showcased. We are excited to work with the minister to elevate Janita's work over the next year."

Frantsi was selected from a shortlist of seven artists. The six other shortlisted artists will receive a $1,000 grant to begin developing their proposed project or further their artistic practice, recognizing the strength of their submissions and supporting their continued creative work. The shortlisted artists are Marnie Blair (Red Deer), Tiff Hall (Edmonton), Kelsey Merkeley (Calgary), Diana Ohiozebau (Edmonton), Eunju Park (St. Albert) and Jason Valleau (Calgary).

The Artist in Residence program supports an Alberta artist in developing a project that celebrates the value of the arts and connects with communities across the province. Alberta is the only province in Canada with an Artist in Residence program open to artists working in all disciplines.

Quick facts

- Janita Frantsi will serve as Alberta's seventh Artist in Residence and Arts Ambassador through Sept. 30, 2027.
- She is the first dance artist selected for the role.
- Seven artists were shortlisted for the 2026-27 residency.
- The selected artist receives a grant of up to $50,000 and serves a one-year term as Artist in Residence and Arts Ambassador.
- Alberta allocates $56,000 annually to the program, including grants for shortlisted applicants.
- Previous Artists in Residence have represented music, visual arts and Indigenous arts.
- Alberta funding for the arts is at historic levels with more than $40 million allocated each year, including more than $38 million for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

More information about the Alberta Artist in Residence Program:
https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-artist-residence



The Body's Electrical Wiring: Understanding Peripheral Neuropathy

By Ramneek Pandher

Most of us have experienced the familiar "pins and needles" feeling, temporary numbness in our feet, or a slight burning sensation in our hands. These sensations are usually temporary, but what happens when they become persistent? Peripheral neuropathy is a condition that can cause these symptoms, and with November 7 marking Neuropathy Awareness Day in Alberta this year, it is a great opportunity to learn more about it.

The peripheral nervous system includes all the nerves outside the brain and spinal cord. These nerves carry messages between the brain, spinal cord, and the rest of the body. They help us feel touch, temperature, and pain, move our muscles, and regulate certain automatic body functions. Peripheral neuropathy occurs when these nerves become damaged or stop working properly. This disrupts the signals travelling between the brain and the rest of the body, leading to different symptoms depending on which nerves are affected.

When sensory nerves are damaged, people may experience tingling, numbness, burning sensations, or difficulty feeling temperature and pain. Damage to motor nerves can cause muscle weakness, cramps, or difficulties with coordination. Meanwhile, damage to nerves responsible for automatic body functions can lead to problems with digestion, sweating, or blood pressure.



Diabetes is the most common cause of peripheral neuropathy, but other causes include vitamin deficiencies, certain medications, infections, and inherited conditions. Sometimes, the underlying cause cannot be identified. Finding the cause is important because some forms of nerve damage can be prevented or managed. Healthcare professionals may assess symptoms, perform physical examinations, and use blood tests or nerve conduction studies to help identify the problem. Treatment depends on the cause and may involve managing diabetes, correcting nutritional deficiencies, or using medications to help relieve nerve pain. Early assessment can also help prevent further nerve damage where possible.

The effects of peripheral neuropathy can extend well beyond physical discomfort. Numbness may make it harder to recognize injuries or changes in temperature, while pain and muscle weakness can interfere with walking, sleeping, working, and other everyday activities. Some people may also experience difficulties with balance and coordination. Because these symptoms are not always visible, someone may appear completely healthy while experiencing significant discomfort.

Our nervous system plays an essential role in nearly everything we do, yet we rarely think about it until something goes wrong. This Neuropathy Awareness Day, learning about peripheral neuropathy is an opportunity to recognize the importance of our nerves, understand the experiences of those affected, and encourage people not to dismiss persistent symptoms. Greater awareness and early assessment can make a meaningful difference in helping people manage the condition and maintain their quality of life.

For more information:
Calgary Neuropathy Association
https://calgaryneuropathy.com/

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.

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

Festival of Lights at the Legislature

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Ric McIver, hosted a celebration of Diwali on Nov. 2. "Diwali celebrates the enduring values of light, hope and community," said McIver. "Through its rich. traditions and the message of triumph over darkness, Diwali highlights the importance of kindness, inclusion and the shared bonds that bring people together." Other speakers were Alberta's Lieutenant Governor Salma Lakhani, Indigenous Relations Minister Rajan Sawhney and Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi. Diwali is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and some other religions.
Photo: Dancers of the Indian Society of Calgary who performed at the Alberta Legislature on Nov. 2.
Photo: Indian Society of Calgary



Reunited in service: Annual No Stone Left Alone initiative brings friends together

Submitted by Tammy Farkes and Penny Christoffersen-Clark

On the afternoon of Saturday November 7th, several local groups gathered to honour veterans buried in the Our Lady Peace Cemetery at the annual *No Stone Left Alone* (NSLA) ceremony. It included Sgt. Glenda Gauthier and Piper Alastair Briggs. They had a reunion, several decades in the making, as they had initially met each other as fellow members of their local cadet programs in the mid-1990's. Their involvement in the NSLA service as Master of Ceremonies and Piper has brought this friendship full circle. Now an annual service project of the 201st Endeavour Scouts, the Sunshine District Girl Guides, along with various cadet groups since 2021, their mutual participation in this event adds to the history and impact of this initiative, created for local youth and members of various communities.

Both community and school groups are leading the NSLA movement which began right here in Edmonton back in 2011. Local Mill Woods and Meadows area Scouts and Guides were inspired in 2021 to help at this outdoor event when Covid-19 limited participation at indoor recognition events. The opportunity to join the existing leadership team of volunteers at this site began, and has continued ever since, to honor the veterans buried there.

Preparation is required each year to review the existing inventory of veteran graves and to add any additional service people to the roll call. And a smaller team of volunteers, using small Canadian flags, pre-marks each gravesite and corresponding row, making it easier for the youth to find and acknowledge those on the date of the event. At the ceremony, alongside local dignitaries including City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright, Chief Warrant Officer Chad Santo of the 41 Combat Engineer Regiment, and Reservist Corporal Eaton, gathered with everyone attending to share remembrance.

The annual ceremony starts with a colour guard parade of flags representing the country of Canada, the province of Alberta, the Metis and Treaty 6 heritage, and each level of the Scouting and Guiding movements. Everyone files in behind Piper Briggs, whose playing unites the focus for the event and aids the overall mood. As the cool wind blows, each participant listens as Master of Ceremonies Sgt. Glenda Gauthier leads the ceremonial proceedings, which includes a reading of the NSLA mission statement. A youth reads the poem "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae, and a pledge of remembrance is completed by everyone present. Bugler Colin Bonneau plays the last rites, followed by two minutes of silence.

The biography of local Afghanistan War veteran Sgt George Rudolf Miok is shared by fellow soldier Santo at the gathering, emphasizing his heroism and sacrifice. The young people are called upon to lay wreaths, many of which they have made, at the flagpole honouring veterans. A vocal soloist, Tammy Farkes, sings "Let there be Peace on Earth", then the entire group is dismissed, and the young people disperse to place poppies on each of the 100 pre-marked veteran graves found at the Our Lady Peace Catholic and the nearby Municipal South Haven cemeteries.

An event of this significance cannot be completed alone. To the team members who have come together to support this annual initiative, I offer my heartiest thanks. Several local vendors, Long & McQuade Edmonton South Music, PCann Services Ltd., and the Alberta Flag Shop have loaned key equipment for this event. And I am blessed to have friends in my life who support the obligation I have assumed, which began with the desire to honour members of my own family, and has compelled me, as well, to also recognize all others who have sacrificed their individual comfort and safety to protect my - and our - personal rights and freedoms.

As I head out the door this morning, Thursday November 12th, to retrieve the wreaths and gather the poppies from the gravesites, I am reflective and mindful of those at CFB Wainwright and other military stations: they regularly put others before self, not only in theatres of war, but also in their various and chosen military communities.

May we all be aids in the remembering: "Lest we forget".



Sgt. Glenda Gauthier and Piper Alastair Briggs had a reunion at the memorial ceremony on Nov. 7.

Photo: Tammy Farkes

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



AB Referendum, U.S. Midterms Set Stage for Tumultuous Year Ahead

Tom Monto

A Different Perspective



It has been a tumultuous month since the last issue of the *Mill Woods Mosaic*. On Oct. 19 Alberta held a referendum on separation and other questions, then the U.S. midterm happened on Nov. 3, which saw Democrats move up to take majorities of seats in both chambers. Both of these events may affect the lives of residents of Mill Woods and other Canadians.

In Alberta's vote on Oct. 19, a majority voted in favour of remaining in Canada and not for a negotiated departure from the country that Alberta has been in since 1870. Premier Danielle Smith applauded the result although previously she had smoothed the path for a citizen initiative to force a referendum on separation. Despite a court vetoing a straight vote on separation, she held a very similar question anyway. Now with public opinion clearly against proceeding toward separation, she is having a fight on her hands as she attempts to force separatists within her party to give up separation or leave the party.

On the other hand, many in her party mourn the referendum loss and blame Smith. The UCP is having a convention Nov. 27 and 28 in Calgary. Party members or officials may force a leadership review there, but news reports say that is not likely. As opinion polls report the UCP is currently roughly tied with the NDP and with a provincial election coming within a year, UCP loyalists may think it is not time to change leaders. However many in the public say the referendum was a waste of more than $80M and blame Smith for pushing it forward seemingly just to placate the hard right within her party. A new leader may help the UCP's chances.

Many Albertans criticize the UCP government's lack of action

In the referendum, most votes cast were against abolition of the Senate, pulling out of federal healthcare programs, and asserting provincial laws over federal laws. Thus most Albertans showed themselves not in line with Danielle Smith's policies, or perhaps not trusting her to have their best interests at heart in a confrontation against the federal government. Canada has seen a rise of nationalism, perhaps not as strongly felt since Canada's opposition to the U.S.-Vietnam war. Meanwhile Smith has pushed for more sales of our oil and gas to the U.S., to a degree undercutting the pro-independence stance taken by Prime Minister Mark Carney, who enjoys massive popularity across the country.

Since the Oct. 19 vote that went mostly against her agenda, Smith has brought in additional socially-restrictive legislation such as laws against free reading and displays of flags, apparently to placate the hard right in her party now that separation has fizzled. As well, her government has voted to press forward with new electoral districts in Calgary and Lethbridge. These changes seem intended to give the UCP more seats. The NDP is promising to fight the new map in court. Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan even threatens a general strike in protest against what he says is an attack on basic democracy.

The government's new map and the uproar it has caused is postponing action on the real issues facing the province and the country. Many criticize the UCP government's lack of action on the affordability crisis, homelessness and other social problems around us, so it is possible that not even tampering with districts will save the UCP government anyway.

But it should be pointed out that the old map and the old electoral system were not especially fair either. In the last provincial election Conservatives were due seven seats in Edmonton and got none; the NDP was due 13 seats outside Edmonton and Calgary and got four. A shift of just 20,000 votes in the last election could have meant a NDP majority government. Or an NDP victory could have resulted from perhaps just 40,000 UCP voters not feeling inspired enough to get out and vote.

With our chance-driven election system, even with new districts meant to benefit the UCP, a small shift in voters – or the activation of just some of the 1 million Alberta voters who did not vote in the last election – could see the UCP get just 30 seats and the NDP romp to victory. Or the other way around – it just depends.

In recent midterm elections in the U.S., the Democrats won more seats, enough to take majority control in both the House of Representatives and the Senate but the shift was far more than any shift in votes. It was due to millions of Republicans not voting for their normal party, mostly not voting at all. We see that when we look at the seven Senate seats the Democrats wrestled from Republican grip. Voter turnout was low and many Republicans stayed home, allowing a only-slightly-larger Democrat vote to reign supreme. In the seven states where Senate seats flipped to Democrats, the Democrat vote went up by about 2M and the Republican vote dropped by about 3M, compared to the last election.

The new Democrat Senators likely realize their grip on the seat is easily broken if just some of those stay-at-homes get out and vote next time. So likely they will not be pushing for radical change, despite most voters wanting change from Trump's policies of the last two years. As well, President Trump still holds some power. His presidential veto can stop any law that does not have support from two-thirds of the members in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. In neither the House of Representatives nor the Senate do the Democrats hold two-thirds of the seats.

Will the trade war between our two countries cease, lowering prices on many things we import from the U.S. and employing more workers? Will the U.S.'s war with Iran cease, opening the Strait of Hormus and lowering gas prices? We can hope, but the president armed with his veto may prolong these fights even against the will of the Democrats.

Meanwhile the high world price for oil caused by the strait's closure actually helps Alberta's economy, and the provincial government may be enjoying a $2B surplus by the end of this year.

We can hope that the UCP government will build new hospitals – there has been no new hospital built in Edmonton since the 1980s, despite Alberta's population having grown by more than 600,000. And the government otherwise has not put sufficiently more money into healthcare and education. Frequently, wait times at the emergency room at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in Mill Woods are as much as seven hours or more. Rather than redrawing electoral districts or holding referendums, the UCP may have a better chance of re-election if it addressed that situation.

It's easier to lay off workers than to leave buildings unused

The recent announcement of $40M for urgent care seems too little compared to Alberta's ability to pay – that large sum is only 1% of Alberta's $2B surplus. And even with this promise, no shovels will be in the ground for perhaps three years.

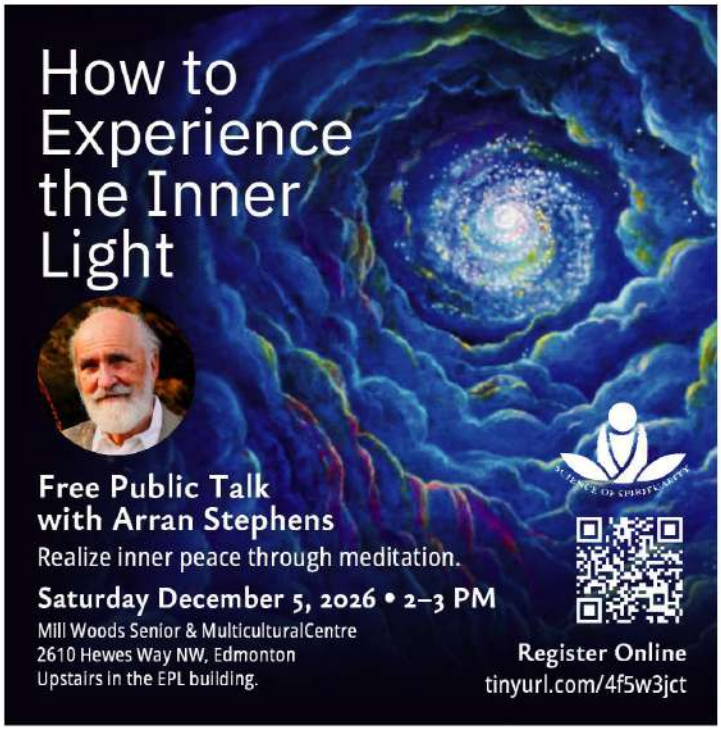
In basic terms, the government's preference to build new hospitals and treatment buildings instead of hiring nurses and doctors was seen back in the 1980s. In those years, the government stated boldly that it would rather build a new hospital building than hire staff, because it said hired staff imposed a long-standing burden on the government while a building could be easily mothballed. When actually the opposite holds true – it is easier to lay off workers (or not replace retiring workers) than to leave buildings unused.

Perhaps a different reasoning sets the government's preference. Construction companies donate to Conservative party election funds in quantities that nurses do not match.

We seem to all agree that the growing crisis in Alberta's healthcare is a combination of how much money is given and how it is spent. But it is unclear if the $33M is new money or merely an attempt to change how the money is spent, with the government possibly not investing more money than before.

Despite the referendum result, it seems the government is still emphasizing resource extraction and export, instead of social services and an open society. The Albertans who voted in favour of remaining in Canada - which is most of us – likely see an improvement in the healthcare and education portfolios as more important than prejudice against immigrants who have chosen to come here and make Edmonton, Alberta and Canada their new home.

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.*



The Empty Branch: When the display grows, what happens to the meaning?

Sharan Sandhu

Moments in our Community



A tree that has survived dozens of prairie winters does not stand because someone has painted its bark or decorated its branches. It stands because its roots run deep. Even when its limbs are bare and the yard is covered in snow, life continues quietly underneath.

Neighbourhoods are much the same. They are held together by the small things people do for one another: shovelling a neighbour's walk, sharing a story over the fence, or checking in when the furnace stops working on a cold night.

Yet every year, the displays seem to grow. Before the leaves have fallen, stores are filled with decorations. October brings inflatable figures and plastic spiderwebs. Soon they are replaced by coloured lights, illuminated deer and seasonal displays. One occasion has barely passed before the next is waiting at the door.

Customs change, and there is nothing wrong with that. Decorating can be fun, especially during a long Alberta winter. Children look forward to it, and a little colour on a dark evening can lift the spirits. The concern is not the lights themselves. It is how easily the meaning of a celebration can become buried under what we are expected to buy, display and replace.

The amount of waste left behind is one reminder. In Edmonton, residential waste collection in the week after Christmas has been reported at more than 2,800 tonnes, over twice the amount collected in a usual week. Zero Waste Canada has estimated that about 540,000 tonnes of wrapping paper end up in Canadian landfills each year. The unwrapping can leave a great deal behind.

Just a short distance from the brightly decorated streets, another part of the city is facing a very different winter. Edmonton's Food Bank, Hope Mission, Bissell Centre, The Mustard Seed and Boyle Street Community Services work to help people find food, warm clothing and shelter. A hot meal, a winter coat or dry socks may not look impressive, but in freezing weather these things matter.

Buying a decoration takes a few minutes. Building a sense of safety and belonging for someone who is struggling can take years of patient work. It may mean listening, making room at the table, or showing up on an ordinary day when there is no celebration.

This is not to suggest that people who decorate their homes or exchange gifts do not care about others. Many do both. The number of lights on a house tells us very little about the people living inside. Still, a street can shine brightly while an older neighbour nearby worries about the cost of groceries or spends the evening alone. Both realities can exist on the same block.

Schools, daycares and community halls put time into seasonal crafts and decorations. The excitement is real, but sometimes the preparation takes over, and attention quickly turns to the next event.

What often stays with children is simpler: a grandparent telling a story, an uncle showing them how to make something, or the feeling of walking into a home where they are welcome. A child may forget a toy, but is less likely to forget who made time for them. Those are keepsakes that do not need wrapping paper.

Traditions mean different things to different families: faith, a quiet meal, time with family, or simply having company through the darker months. The important thing is not to let the busy calendar crowd out the moments that give these occasions meaning.

Most of life happens on plain days: making soup, clearing snow from the alley, carrying groceries for someone, or sitting down for a cup of tea. These moments rarely make a photograph, but they help make a neighbourhood feel like home.

No one needs to take down the lights or give up the joy of gathering. There is room for laughter, good food, gifts and bright windows. There is also room to remember the neighbour who cannot afford a gift exchange, the person whose family lives far away, the volunteer still washing pots after everyone has gone home, or someone who has not heard a friendly voice all week.

When the decorations come down and the snow settles again, much of what remains will not be visible from the street. It will be a meal shared, an invitation offered, a child made to feel included, or a neighbour who took the time to ask how someone was doing.

A bare branch in winter is not a sign that a tree has lost its purpose. Its roots are still holding, even when there is little to see above the ground. Communities are much the same. The lights may brighten a street, but it is the care shared between people that keeps it alive.

Sharan Sandhu is a resident of Mill Woods and volunteers with BNT Foundation and StopHateAB.









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780-414-1000
@ChristinaNDP

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 nonprofit, charitable organization operated by immigrant women for immigrant women. Its mission is to help Edmonton and area immigrant women and their families overcome personal and systemic barriers that keep them from participating fully in Canadian Society.

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

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

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

The Family Futures Resource Network (FFRN) is a non-profit organization providing support to families and parents in the areas of early childhood education, child and youth, family and adult support and parent education. The FFRN has three separate locations in Mill Woods: Millhurst Site (5704 - 19 A Avenue), Knottwood Site (1733 Mill Woods Road) and Millbourne Community Site (3756 - 78 Street).

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

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

Indo-Canadian Women's Association
9324 - 34 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 5X8
Tel. (780) 490-0477

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alberta Employment Standards is a provincial agency responsible for the administration and enforcement of employment standards in Alberta. AES has publications available for temporary foreign workers and their employers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under Alberta's employment standards and workplace health and safety legislation. These publications are available in Chinese, English, French, German and Spanish.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other important phone numbers:

Edmonton Police Service

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

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

Poison Centre 1-800-332-1414

Hazardous Material Spills 9-1-1

Utility Trouble Calls Only:

Power Emergency 780-412-4500
Within Edmonton

Gas Emergency 780-420-5585
Edmonton & Area

Drainage Trouble 780-496-1717

Sewer Trouble 780-496-1717

Wastewater (odour hotline) 780-469-8176

Water Emergency Service 780-412-6800

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What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

Nov. 16 - Annual General Meeting 2026
of Knottwood Community League
with election of new Board of Directors
Knottwood Community Centre
449 Knottwood Road West NW, Mill Woods
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
More information: knottwoodcommunity.ca

Nov. 21 - Christmas Craft Fair & Bake Sale
First Mennonite Church
3650 - 91 Street NW, Edmonton
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m
More information: edmontonfirst.mcab.ca

Nov. 21 - Mochi Market - Free comunity event, featuring 75+ vendors, K-Pop random dance, a maid cafe, and photo card deco stations
Mill Woods Town Centre
2331 - 66 Street NW, Mill Woods
12:00 - 5:00 p.m.
More info: millwoodstowncentre.com/events/

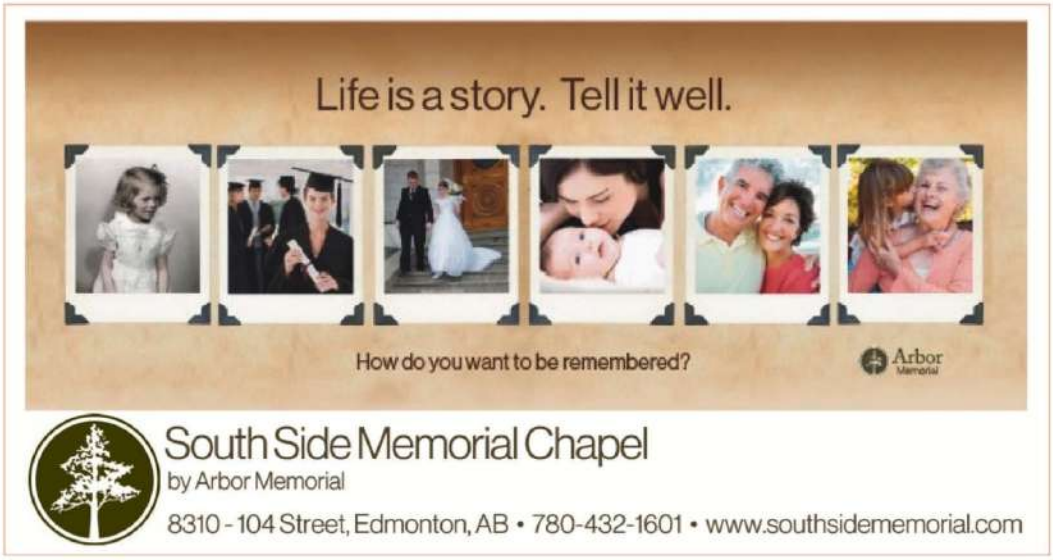
Nov. 28 - Christmas Craft Fair
Leefield Community League
7910 - 36 Avenue NW, Mill Woods
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Nov. 28 - Children's Christmas Party
German-Canadian Cultural Centre
8310 Roper Road NW, Edmonton
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
More info: gcca.ca or phone 780-466-4000

Nov. 29 - *Keys to the Heart*, featuring Remi Do, piano
Edmonton Metropolitan Chorus
First Presbyterian Church
10025 - 105 Street NW, Edmonton
3:00 p.m.
Tickets: Eventbrite.ca or at the door
More information: www.EdMetroChorus.ca

Dec. 5 - Christmas Market
German-Canadian Cultural Centre
8310 Roper Road NW, Edmonton
Noon - 4:30 p.m.
More info: gcca.ca or phone 780-466-4000

Dec. 6 - Advent Concert with the German Male Choir Liederkranz
German-Canadian Cultural Centre
8310 Roper Road NW, Edmonton
2:30 p.m.
More info: gcca.ca or phone 780-466-4000



Mill Woods Mosaic
"The best of both worlds"
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