

Mill Woods Mosaic

March 15, 2023

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The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast

Independent • Non-partisan • Interdenominational

This month:

Celebrating Diversity

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Aspiring Artist



Giselle General is an aspiring storyteller, artist, and community builder who immigrated from the Philippines at age 16.

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Welcome back, Snowbirds!

Soon they will arrive again and make a lot of noise. The Canada Geese, our "national birds", should be called "Southern Geese" or "Mexico Geese", because half of the year they are not here to avoid the cold weather in Canada.

This photo of a couple of Canada Geese was taken two years ago south of Mill Woods when they were approaching Edmonton.

Photo: Frank Curtis

Shaping the future of immigration in Canada

Immigration is critical to Canada's long-term success. To fully harness the potential of immigration and create the best experience for newcomers, Canada needs an immigration system that is strong, easy to navigate and adaptive to change.

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, on Feb. 23 announced the start of a broad-based engagement initiative – *An Immigration System for Canada's Future* – aimed at exploring how immigration policies and programs can support a shared vision for Canada's future. The engagement, which will continue throughout the spring, will include in-person dialogue sessions across the country, thematic workshops and a survey for the public and our clients. The input gathered will inform Canada's future immigration policies and programs, and will help shape a system that will benefit communities across the country for decades to come.

The next generation of Canada's immigration system will involve continued, whole-of-society collaboration. That is why this engagement initiative is intended to capture a diversity of perspectives from a broad range of partners and stakeholders, including all levels of government, businesses, academia, post-secondary institutions, settlement organizations, implicated sectors in Canada and our clients.

To kick off the engagement initiative, Minister Fraser chaired the first dialogue session in Halifax. The session provided an opportunity for the Minister and participants to exchange ideas and discuss how Canada's immigration policies and

programs can better support the needs of communities from coast to coast.

If you would like to contribute to the future of Canada's immigration system, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will also be launching a survey, which will be available to the public later in March in addition to the dialogue sessions and thematic workshops with stakeholders. We encourage you to visit our website to learn more about how to get involved.

"Immigration is critical to Canada's long-term success, and we need to ensure our policies and programs are aligned with the needs of our communities," said Minister Fraser. "That's why the Government of Canada is launching this large-scale engagement initiative, which will provide an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders and Canadians to share their ideas and perspectives on how we can build a stronger, more adaptive immigration system for Canada's future."

Quick facts

- In 2022, Canada welcomed approximately 437,000 new permanent residents, a new record.

- Immigration is the main driver of population growth in Canada. In 2021, more

than 8.3 million people, or almost one-quarter (23%) of the population were, or had ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident in Canada. This was the largest proportion since Confederation, and the highest among the G7.

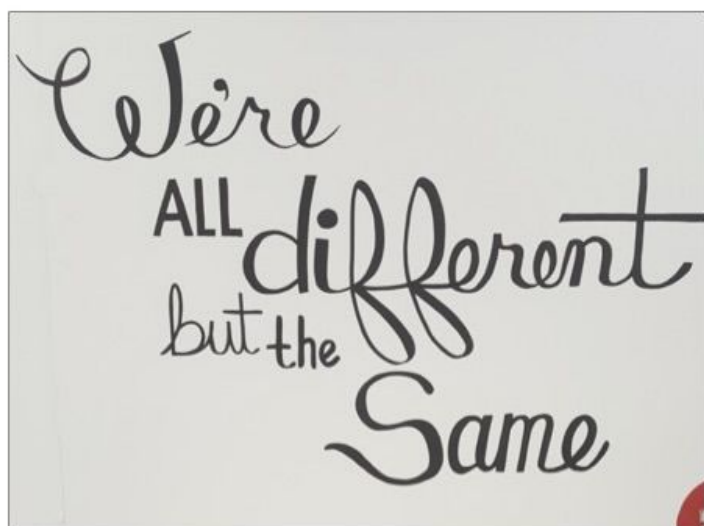
- The share of our population that is of working age is shrinking. Fifty years ago, there were about seven workers to each senior in Canada. Now, we are at approximately three workers to each senior, and projected to drop to close to only two workers to each senior in the foreseeable future.

- Close to two-thirds of recent immigrants are of core working age—between 25 and 54—helping rejuvenate Canada's population.

- As part of our ongoing work to improve client service, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has taken steady action to reduce application backlogs and build a stronger immigration system. This includes digitizing applications, hiring and training new staff, and harnessing automation technologies to help us increase processing capacity and efficiency, while protecting the safety and security of Canadians.

For more information, visit the website www.Canada.ca/immigration-future.

The next issue of the *Mill Woods Mosaic* will be published on April 15, 2023.
The deadline for advertising and editorial is Friday, April 7, 2023.



Writing on the wall

Kids are bullied in school (read Ron Kuban's column on page 5), and city employees are wearing "language identifier pins" (see article on page 3), but at the end of the day, "We're all different but the Same", as this writing on a wall at Mill Woods Town Centre says.

Photo: Arnim Joop/MILL WOODS MOSAIC

Letters to the editor welcome

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

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

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Reflections on Provincial Budget 2023

Edmonton City Councillor Jo-Anne Wright

In advance of the provincial budget, Mayor Sohi, on behalf of Edmonton City Council, provided a submission to the Government of Alberta outlining our community's needs and priorities. Our priorities were full funding of previously agreed upon transfer payment commitments and support for housing, community safety, economic recovery, and climate resiliency.

Municipalities have been funded by the province primarily through the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI). This program has seen a number of revisions and beginning in 2024 is renamed the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF). Under the MSI, Edmonton's transfer payments have been much less than anticipated. And while the province did announce changes to the LGFF in Budget 2023, the additions will only result in a \$20 million increase. Given provincial surpluses from resource revenues, making up the difference was a realistic ask to greatly improve affordability for all Edmontonians.

The City's submission included increased funding for the growing need for emergency shelter support. Along with the need for 1,250 emergency shelter beds, minimum shelter standards, significant funding for bridge and supportive housing, and subsidized units is required. Unfortunately, no new funding was specifically assigned towards Edmonton's housing projects from the

\$150 million allocated to the Affordable Housing Partnership Program.

To address Edmontonians' need for safety in our communities, I would expect the recommendations of the province's Public Safety and Community Response Task Force include measures that address the root causes of poverty, systemic discrimination, improved access to outreach and harm reduction resources, and community health rather than a solitary focus on enforcement.

The city's request also included funding related to climate resiliency, such as hydrogen energy programs and infrastructure planning for changing climate conditions. I am pleased to see that the province has funded \$5 million in grants for the Hydrogen Centre of Excellence to support expansion of this technology across Alberta. While Edmonton did not see direct investment into its planned hydrogen bus and garage infrastructure, we will benefit from development of the sector as a whole.

I was pleased to have recently had the opportunity to meet with regional UCP Caucus members and look forward to working with the provincial government in the future to collaboratively best address Edmonton's ongoing needs.

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



Coun. Jo-Anne Wright

Mill Woods Mosaic - mwmosaic@telus.net

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SCAN



Celebrating Diversity and Language in Our City

Proclaiming International Mother Language Day in Edmonton and launching an important City of Edmonton diversity and inclusion pilot project for ESL speakers.

By Amarjeet Sohi

On Tuesday, February 21st, my Council colleagues and I joined the Bangladesh Canada Association of Edmonton to recognize International Mother Language Day in City Hall. This event also served as an opportunity for Council and I to pay tribute to the Bangladeshi language martyrs who fought valiantly to have their mother languages acknowledged, and to learn more about the immense barriers that Bangladeshi people overcame to have the right to speak in their own languages freely and without discrimination.

Edmonton is a welcoming city of many cultures and a home to people who speak more than 100 different languages, all of which are vital to preserving culture and identity. In tandem with International Mother Language Day, the City of Edmonton launched a very exciting pilot project that champions diversity, equity and inclusion for staff and all Edmontonians. Effective immediately, all multilingual City of Edmonton employees can wear a language identifier pin (provided and customized by the City) that will help newcomers and ESL Edmontonians receive the support and services they need from CoE staff who speak their mother languages.

I received my very own language identifier pin that indicates that I speak Punjabi and Hindi, and will wear this with pride as I endeavor to support all diverse Edmontonians in tangible ways. I have my own special connection to the languages I speak, and this connection keeps me rooted to principles of family, heritage and community. I know this feeling is shared by many fellow ESL speakers, and I want



Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, City Council and Members of the Bangladesh Canada Association at City Hall

Photos: Office of the Mayor

them to feel welcomed, included and supported here in Edmonton. I was pleased to see these pins all around City Hall during the International Mother Language Day event, and know that this small step towards inclusion will help foster a sense of belonging and comfort for many newcomers and multilingual community members who call Edmonton home.

The City of Edmonton continues to prioritize anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion, and Council and I are deeply committed to leveraging the Anti-Racism Strategy and our continued efforts to make our city a safer and more welcoming place.

Together, we can build a more diverse Edmonton for all of us.

Amajeet Sohi, who immigrated to Canada from India in 1981 and worked as a taxi driver and bus driver before entering politics, is the Mayor of Edmonton since 2021. Before that, he was a City Councillor, Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Mill Woods, and a federal cabinet minister in the Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.



Multilingual City of Edmonton staff wearing their new language identifier pins

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

What a waste of money!

On Feb. 27, the Government of Alberta announced that it will invest \$125 million in capital funding over four years in MacEwan University to support the development of the university's new School of Business. With the new building, MacEwan will be able to accommodate an additional 7,500 students in business and STEM fields across its campus. The School of Business is a proposed seven-storey tower in the heart of MacEwan's campus in downtown Edmonton. The building would give the post-secondary institution 35,000 square metres of additional space, including 30 classrooms, 20 collaboration spaces and 15 study spaces.

This project was announced after the recent demolition of MacEwan's South Campus building in Mill Woods which was done to make room for a new community wellness centre which will be built by Covenant Health.

What a waste of money and existing infrastructure which could have been renovated and reused. Instead of spending \$125 million of taxpayers' money for a new building in downtown Edmonton, the South Campus building in Mill Woods, which was only 45 years old, could have been saved and refurbished with less money and be used for the new School of Business.



There will be a provincial election in Alberta on May 29, 2023, the people of Alberta have to decide who is the lesser evil, Conservative Premier Danielle Smith or former Premier Rachel Notley's New Democrats.

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

Are you sick and tired of waiting? Do not take no for an answer!

When I grew up in Germany, I was a sickly child, and every time I saw the pediatrician, I was intimidated by the white man in a white coat, suffered from anxiety, and once even fainted in his clinic. But it was nothing serious, and I was pretty healthy most of my life.

But as we get older, we have to expect to deal with some health issues, and we are lucky to live in a country which has one of the best healthcare systems in the world. It is not a perfect system, of course, and there is always room for improvement, but one of the ongoing problems of Canada's healthcare system are the long wait times for medical tests and procedures.

I was diagnosed with hernia last June and had to wait more than nine months to see a specialist (surgeon) for a consultation, and now I have to wait three or four more months for the surgery. And when I had chest pain, I had to wait more than eight months for a CT scan to find out if I had a heart problem. That was eight long months of waiting and worrying about my health.

The Government of Alberta has a website for wait times (<http://wait-times.alberta.ca>), but that website is pretty useless, because it shows only "Wait Time Trends" and average wait times but doesn't tell individual patients how long they have to wait. Patients are left in the dark, have to

stand by, and if they ask their family doctor for an update, they are told to continue to be patient.

That is totally unacceptable. When I order a product online, for example a scratching post for my cat, the compa-

ny will give me a tracking number, so I can find out what the status of the delivery is and don't have to sit beside my telephone and wait for a call.

Arnim Joop

From the Desk of the Publisher



ny will give me a tracking number, so I can find out what the status of the delivery is and don't have to sit beside my telephone and wait for a call.

Why is Alberta Health Services not able to do that? When vaccinations for COVID-19 started two years ago, there was an overwhelming demand in the beginning, but when people booked an appointment online, they were told exactly how long they had to wait for their first shot. So, why can't that be done also with other medical tests and procedures?

As Canadians, we like to complain although we have better healthcare ser-

VICES than many other countries, but in some areas our complaints are valid, because the system is inefficient, not flexible enough, and too bureaucratic.

After waiting many months without any update, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I asked our family doctor to give me the name and contact information of the specialist who will do my hernia surgery, so I can ask him for an update. And sure enough, when I phoned the surgeon's office, I was able to make an appointment with him for the consultation, saw him soon after that in person, and after the consultation I was given the date and location of the surgery, so I don't have to stand by anymore and can make plans for the summer.

When I was waiting for my medical procedure, our Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Alberta, Jasvir Deol, offered to help me and contacted Alberta Health, and two days later, I received a call from the health department, but it was just the usual excuses for the long wait times, blah blah blah, and so on and so forth.

I also wrote a letter to Alberta's health minister Jason Copping and followed up twice but never received a reply which gave me the impression that he just doesn't care. Of course, I understand that a Minister of the Crown is a busy man who has more

important things to do than answering letters from individual patients, and there are many cases which are more urgent than mine, but some kind of acknowledgment would be nice.

I could have used private healthcare to have my CT scan and hernia repair done sooner, but that would have cost an arm and a leg, probably \$850 for the CT scan and thousands of dollars for the hernia repair, and not everybody can afford that.

If you are waiting for a medical test or procedure in Alberta, and you are sick and tired of waiting, phone the office of Health Minister Jason Copping at 780-427-3665 or e-mail to health.minister@gov.ab.ca. The minister will not reply, because he doesn't care, but contact him anyway. He needs to hear from THE PEOPLE, the more the better. And send a copy of your request to your MLA.

And remember, there will be a provincial election in Alberta on May 29 of this year. Both parties, the governing United Conservative Party (UCP) and the opposing New Democratic Party (NDP), are promising to improve our healthcare system, but whom can we trust to keep their promises?

We are THE PEOPLE, so do not take no for an answer.

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 Western Canada.

Bullying Be Gone

I recently learned that my eleven-year-old grandson was bullied and punched in the head at school by his Grade 5 classmate. His attacker has been terrorizing his classmates and abusing his teachers for the last few years! In fact, the situation has become progressively more disruptive and seemingly more unmanageable by his teachers. On occasion, their response was to evacuate the whole class, leaving the disrupting student in the classroom to cool down.

Let that bit of information sink in for a moment as you recall your own school experiences. I suspect a great majority of us today can still recall the abuse inflicted upon us by fellow students. For me, even six decades later, the memories and related emotions are easily recalled. My grandson's recent experiences got me angry about the continued presence of bullying in our lives.

Prior to the last two or three decades, bullying in schools or playgrounds was seen as normal, simply a way for kids to sort themselves out and become tougher in preparation for the real world. The often-proffered remedy by adults was to fight back. "Stand your ground", we were told, with the belief that we had, at that very moment, the capacity to defend against the ogres harassing and terrorizing us. That was a thoroughly misguided notion.

However reasonable or practical the "fight back" proposition was for some, the great majority of bullied children did not have the courage, insight, or wisdom to protect themselves from abuse. Being children, they were naturally vulnerable, early in their formative journey into adulthood, and fearful of being seen as weak or incompetent. Therefore, many among us may still recall the emotional devastation, physical pain, shame, self-doubt, fear, and powerlessness of being bullied.

According to many sociological studies, bullies prey on those they believe are weak physically, fragile emotionally, less capable than themselves, or disadvantaged in some way. They then strive to socially isolate those whom they target to bully, demeaning them by words or actions, and degrading their ability to retaliate by building support for themselves and promoting hostility towards their victims. While bullying is explained in many ways, study upon study point to a single pervasive reason for such behaviour: the attainment of personal power over others.

Dr. Dan Olweus, from the University of Bergen in Norway, is world renowned for his research on bullying and peer harassment. He developed

Ron Kuban Time Passages



"The Bullying Circle" as a model to explain the many roles that often support the bully. The circle begins with the "Bully", who plans and instigates the bullying activities, which are then actively supported by "Henchmen". Their actions are often cheered on by "Active Supporters", who seek social or material gains, and by "Passive Supporters", who enjoy the bullying without showing open support. Then, there are the "Disengaged Onlookers" who claim, "it is none of my business" and turn away. "Potential Witnesses" may oppose the bullying and know they ought to help, but nevertheless take no action. The only ones who can break the circle of bullying are the "Resisters, Defenders, and Witnesses", who stand up to the bully and speak up against the bullying. They and they alone can put an end to the harassment and prevent it from being repeated or even escalating in either intensity or consequences.

Barbara Coloroso is a retired nun, who became an internationally acclaimed speaker and author on parenting, teaching, school discipline, non-violent conflict resolution, and restorative justice. She has authored many thought-provoking books, including "The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander". In her more recent book, "Extraordinary Evil", she explains how the Bullying Circle, when neglected in its schoolyard dimension, continues to escalate into other social environments, including the workplace, diverse organizations, and social groups. She clearly illustrates how, at its worst, the "Bullying Circle" model may explain how we get to genocide.

During the last decades, we saw growing awareness of the damage, both visible and hidden, of bullying at

school and at work. Slowly but surely, we also saw increasing public awareness, and the development of government policies or programs to prevent, respond to, and mitigate the impact of bullying. Robust programs do exist in our school system which specifically address this issue and strive to prevent bullying among our youth.

However, when a class full of students is evacuated to accommodate a known and long-established bully, we have clearly missed the point. In doing so, we only further penalize the victims of bullying, without addressing the behaviour of the bully. This is wrong!

I am obviously concerned about my grandson. However, this column is much more than about him and his classmates; it is about us as a society. My point is this: we cannot hope to stop bullying by being disengaged onlookers or potential witnesses who do not act. We need to recognize the act for what it is, defend the bullied person or persons, and bear witness to the bullying as an act which causes long-term damage to individuals, communities, organizations, and society as a whole. Our youth deserve a better environment in which to grow, learn, develop, and perform.

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

How will provincial budget impact schools?

Edmonton Public Schools Trustee Saadiq Sumar (Ward G)

A quick aside: a happy early spring to everyone. In my faith, March 21st also marks the Navroz or Nawruz, the Persian New Year. Shortly thereafter will be the start of the holy month of Ramadan, so Ramadan Mubarak or Ramadan Kareem to those that are observing this month.

The provincial budget was released by the Government of Alberta a couple of weeks ago. While a high-level budget for education has been announced, school authorities, including Edmonton Public, are waiting for detailed funding envelopes that will allow us to understand how the provincial budget will impact our own.

A few highlights of the provincial budget include:

1. Funding for school buildings: For the first time in three years EPSB received funding for the full construction of a new K-9 school in Edgemont. This facility will provide an additional 950 seats for students. The budget also includes design, planning or pre-planning funding for three more schools we identified as priorities in our Three-Year Capital Plan. While we are pleased to see funding for the construction of one new school, the division grew by nearly 4,500 students this year and we are projected to grow by another 4,200 students in the 2023-24 school year.

2. Funding for students: The budget includes funding for students with complex needs and those who need additional learning supports as well as funding to address students' nutritional needs.

3. Transportation funding: While public schools across the province will see an increase in funding for transportation, so will charter schools. This is the first provincial budget where Albertans will see public funds allocated to transportation for private schools. To learn more about the provincial budget, please review the Government of Alberta website (<https://www.alberta.ca/budget.aspx>).

Parents and the community have the power to impact budget decisions through their advocacy efforts at a provincial level, the division level, and at the school level through their school council. The provincial budget is only

one of the many points during which parents and the community can advocate for students and ask for dollars to be directed towards areas of concern. Provincial funding comes in the form of several grants, including those for students with complex needs, newcomers and English language learners, and First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students, and is based on **projected** student enrolment.

For parents of EPSB students, the second lever is to advocate to the Board. Once the province provides details on the funding envelopes and grants, the Board will approve a high-level budget allocation through a report called the "Distribution of Funds".

Once this is approved, individual schools are informed of their allocations based on the enrolment that has been **projected** for the upcoming school year. Edmonton Public School Division believes that school administrators, in collaboration with their school communities are in the best position to make decisions to address the needs of their individual schools (i.e. on staffing). This site-based, collaborative decision-making model means that families have the opportunity to advocate for, and participate in, budget decisions at their own school.

Once all of those school budgets are compiled, the final budget is provided to the Board for approval. This is the fourth and final level available to parents. To provide an idea of the timelines, the first lever generally occurs in late-February or early-March. The final lever is close to the end of May. It's also important to remember that much of this is based on **projected** enrolment rather than **actual** enrolment.

The budget process can be challenging to follow. Hopefully, this helps to clarify the process once the information comes from the province and where school communities can better influence the funding decisions being made.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out via email at trustee.saadiq.sumar@epsb.ca or by phone at 780-429-8086.



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Albertans deserve a government that prioritizes their needs

Hello, Edmonton-Meadows, Mill Woods, and Ellerslie! I hope your 2023 has been going well so far. I have had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with many of you across school functions, community events, door knocking, and calling. While it has been a chilly winter these past few months, I have received nothing short of warmth from the community.

I have also been listening to folks' concerns throughout the constituency, particularly with our healthcare system, education, and affordability. With the government's budget release a few weeks ago, the NDP Caucus and I were hoping to see some improvements in these areas, but the budget leaves funding for many critical services below where they should be when we adjust for population growth and inflation. These services include our healthcare system and education sector. These are priorities for Albertans, and my team and I have been advocating for these services in the legislature and have firmly stood beside healthcare and education workers. However, the current government does not share the same priorities. Luckily, you do not have to accept these terms. In just a short few months,

Jasvir Deol

**MLA
for
Edmonton-Meadows**



an election is scheduled, and Albertans can choose better.

Under the UCP, Alberta's healthcare system has suffered greatly, and continues to be in a crisis due to a shortage of healthcare workers that are needed to provide care. The budget proposal was an opportunity for the government to remedy its errors, but it has left the healthcare system \$1.4 billion short of where it should be.

Meanwhile, the Alberta NDP has proposed our Family Health team model. This model allows doctors and other primary care providers, such as nurse practitioners, pharmacists, mental health therapists, and others to work together to deliver healthcare to

patients in one place. Within 10 years, a Family Health clinic could mean one million more Albertans getting access to a doctor within a day or two.

This budget has also not allocated enough money for the construction of the South Edmonton Hospital, a hospital necessary in our community as South Edmonton's population growth is one of the fastest in Canada. Construction of the hospital was to start in 2020, but the UCP has delayed it indefinitely, while this hospital would add 491 beds to the Edmonton region. This means families will continue to travel further and wait longer to receive hospital care.

Albertans deserve to have a timeline for this project. Therefore, my team, and I are committing to accelerating the construction of the Edmonton-South hospital if we are to form a government in the coming months. You can count on it.

The proposed budget has also shown that Alberta schools will continue to be underfunded. Alberta currently has the lowest funding per student. Public education has struggled these past few years in Alberta under the UCP government.

In this budget, Alberta maintains the lowest funding per student in Canada. Our province is short 3,600 teachers, and our children who need help in the classroom still will not receive it. Our

students deserve better and I, Rachel Notley, and the rest of the NDP Caucus are committed to fighting for our kids. An NDP government will ensure that students and school staff are supported every year.

Affordability and the cost of living have also weighed heavily on Albertans these past months. The Affordability Action Plan released by the government earlier this year has left out two million Albertans, who are also struggling with affordability. Moreover, the Affordability Action Plan, along with the electricity rebates and fuel tax reliefs, will end shortly after the May election, meaning that these programs have been designed to buy votes and lead Alberta families to witness the "Most Expensive Summer Ever." On the other hand, Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP will support families every year, not just in the weeks leading up to an election.

A better Alberta is possible, and I am here to listen to your insights and advocate on your behalf in the legislature. Please feel free to call or email my office. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting more folks in the coming months.

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

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



MLA Jasvir Deol speaking to students at an Anti-Racism and Reconciliation Summit put on by a few EPSB schools on Feb. 15.

Photos: Office of MLA Jasvir Deol



MLA Jasvir Deol, Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, City Councillor Keren Tang, MLA Rod Loyola, and MLA Christina Gray (from left to right) attending the "Greater Mill Wood's Dining Week" launch on March 2.

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

"I am YEG Arts" Series: Giselle General

By Jessica Telford

As a community advocate, Giselle General knows very well the good we can achieve in the world when we come together. When you pair Giselle's compassion and drive with her creativity, you get an emerging artist with a lot to contribute. Her community service includes sitting on five volunteer boards. Online she is dedicated to helping others as a connector and activist. She recently left her steady gig in the non-profit sector to focus on writing creative non-fiction and visual art. Not one to be idle, she's making the most of this time to write her memoir, a coming-of-age story of a Filipina girl up until her arrival in Canada as a teenager.

Tell us about your connection to Edmonton and why you've made it your home.

I identify as a Filipino-Canadian and I have been here for half my life. I had a similar experience of a lot of immigrant teenagers. We don't really choose where in Canada we're going to land. I came to Edmonton in 2008 but I first lived in St. Catharines, Ontario for a year. Where you are planted you try your best to build roots, right? I did all the young adult stuff, so to speak. I went to university, I had jobs, internships, and made friends. I met and fell in love with a born-and-raised Edmontonian. That is a significant factor in making Edmonton my permanent home base. A few years after I immigrated, my teenage brother also came. That entire process of helping a fellow teenager settle in helped me experience Edmonton more deeply. That impacts you profoundly. It's those different experiences that made Edmonton my true home.

What drew you to writing and making art? Were they a natural fit for you or something that you grew into over time?

You cannot be a top student in school in the Philippines if you don't have good grades in writing, both in English and the Filipino language classes. It's a necessary skill, but for me, it was also an interest. I got into student journalism, and it was a great part of my childhood and teenage years. Eventually I discovered that there's an ethnic newspaper [*Alberta Filipino Journal*] here in Edmonton, where I volunteered despite not having a degree in journalism. Writing as a personal expression — that became more of a thing during my university years and afterwards.

For visual art, I never imagined doing that at all because it was my parents that had the beautiful handwriting. My mother was creative, and I thought I inherited none of that. I was quite young when they died, so it's not like I had the chance to learn from them either. Here in Edmonton, it started more as a hobby. I made our home decor, and my husband really encouraged and nurtured my visual expression. In all my artistic endeavours I like to call him "the wind beneath my wings."



Community advocate Giselle General with some of her recent artworks

Photo provided by the artist

As a storyteller what narrative or inspiration do you find yourself returning to?

I admit I find these questions awkward; they tap into the knowledge of what I would describe as literary arts experts and I'm not one of those. I have a Bachelor of Commerce degree and I managed to squeeze in a few literature electives. What resonates with me is far as a narrative — and even the content — is just the simple, sincere and compelling way that real people share their stories, knowledge and experiences. It's probably why primarily my work is non-fictional. I don't need to make stuff up because people's real lives have more than enough material to make something creative and inspirational. That's how I think of my storytelling, writing style and what resonates with me.

Tell us about what you're currently working on or hope to create next.

I am immensely privileged that my husband and I managed to modify our financial circumstances so that I am not as pressured to find employment for the past seven months. I had unprecedented time and capacity, which is overwhelming. My current project is the memoir that I'm writing — my first literary project of this scale. It's a coming-of-age memoir from the day my parents and sister died to the day when I landed in Canada in August 2007. My plan is to have an artistically compelling work that will take readers on an adventure of a Filipina girl's story growing up. And thanks to different resources that I managed to access in the past few months, the manuscript is developing well. I hope that people get to read it in the near future. The road to publication and promotion is exciting and I hope we get there soon! It will be a new experience to work with editors while finding a way to make a living — since my savings account is not unlimited.

Tell us about someone who has mentored you or helped set you on your path.

My husband is the first person who showed appreciation for a visual piece

of art I made. That helped me integrate creative expression regularly into my life. Aside from that, I'm grateful for the different mentors and organizations I've encountered. I try reminding myself that I am worth it and that I can apply for these kinds of things. The Writers' Guild of Alberta has a group called the Horizon Writers Circle for underrepresented writers like me. I was paired with a mentor, an author named Wendy McGrath. Her support and constructive feedback have been incredible during the six-month mentorship program.

I've been tapping into the Edmonton Arts Council. From the newsletters and being inspired by other people's stories to the recent, tangible piece of support: I received an Individuals & Collectives grant. The staff from the different arts funding organizations have been incredible in giving tangible knowledge to help me access more funding to help my artistic work become a reality.

Also, in Edmonton there's the Philippine Arts Council, they're all volunteers. They've worked hard over the past few years to find ways to showcase the work of Filipino artists from online galleries, documentary programs, and building a community.

What does community mean to you? And where do you find it?

For me, community means that one-of-a-kind, remarkable ability to do good in the world that you can only do with the power of multiple people. Because they bring different perspectives, passions, and skills together. And if you find your group of people with whom you have something in common, the positive impact in the world that you can make is quite profound.

Where do I find it? Being an introvert (many don't believe that about me) I'm selective about the networks I build. I've found community many times online and with social media circles. I know it's kind of a minefield, but Twitter can still be a treasure trove of people and wonderful opportunities to learn. Maybe it's the immigrant in me, but I like to build community in places with a bit of formality. If there is a program or a workshop that I attend on a regular basis or when I'm

assigned a role if I'm on a volunteer board, I'm happy and I find it rewarding to fulfill that task. As an extension of that, I build community with the people that I worked alongside.

What are some important lessons you've learned as a community advocate and an artist?

There are endless ways to make positive change happen. Being okay with trying new things and changing direction is very important. Also, having an open mind to incorporate other people's experiences that you haven't gone through. I try to have a good sense of my privileges and my points of marginalization. I'm a woman, I'm Asian, I'm an immigrant, I can't drive — that counts. Those are notable points of marginalization. At the same time, white people compliment me for my so-called perfect English. My verbal communication is mostly white-passing and my last and first name are white-passing, those are privileges too. I am straight and cisgender, able-bodied, and I'm not Indigenous, so I'm very conscientious of all of that. Being open-minded because there are points of hardship that I could never comprehend is important. And, at least for me, also being okay with not completely fitting in. Looking at all the things I'm involved in, I stand out even within ethnocultural organizations due to other criteria — whether it's based on age, gender, country of origin, or my family circumstances.

I dislike labels and titles like VP Internal and Subcommittee Chair, writer, or artist. I think it's because I'm an action-oriented person. I prefer describing myself based on the tasks I do; I write columns for the ethnic paper; I write creative nonfiction; I salvage waste by upcycled materials for visual art. But I know that titles have a functional reason, so I put up with it!

Tell us about an opportunity that you think more creatives should know about.

I wish more people were aware of funding opportunities. There's the Edmonton Arts Council, there's also funding available through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council for the Arts. I think it's really important that people understand that even if they have a job unrelated to the arts, but they have a creative idea that they want to make into a reality, there is funding for different purposes. They can apply for professional help, there's a category for education, even for buying or renting equipment and supplies.

In my case, I applied for subsistence. People can apply for a few months of living expenses while they do their work. I needed reassurance that I could cover my bills while I go through the ordeal of writing emotionally heavy content. It's been an adventure writing my memoir. It's important for the public to realize that you don't need to be a full-time artist or a born-and-raised Canadian or sophisticated, popular or whatever. Everyone is worth it. Their creative work is worth it. So please, apply for arts funding!

Continued on page 8

Storyteller and community builder

Continued from page 7

Yes, that is important to share since there are others who also might not necessarily see themselves as an artist, in that capacity at least. It can take a while to build yourself up to that.

Indeed! As someone considered the A student growing up, the people around me had lofty ambitions. But a lot of the time it had nothing to do with the arts, which is in many ways, unfortunate. In my case, ambitions are made more complicated with the immigrant dream. I have been here for almost half my life. I have a lot of complicated questions and emotions as far as "how do I demonstrate that my being brought over here is not a waste of anyone's time." Frankly, it's confusing. There's a bit of survivor's guilt too.

There's also the issue of visible representation. So, for my memoir or any other literary work, being a bestselling author is a minor objective. Access is more important. In addition to mainstream and indie bookstores, I want my book to be in the bookstores at airports so that when Filipinos are traveling all over the world, they can buy it. I want it to be available to borrow from every public library both in the Philippines and countries where there's a lot of the Filipino diaspora. Then as a spillover effect, people from other communities can access it, enjoy it, and understand someone with my story.

About Giselle General

Giselle General has worked in the non-profit sector for over a decade, most recently as the Volunteer and Events Coordinator for the Edmonton Community Legal Centre. She serves as the Chair of the Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board, Program Director with the West Meadowlark Community League, Board Secretary of the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition, and a District Representative with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. Giselle is a columnist for the *Alberta Filipino Journal*, a local ethnic paper in Edmonton. In the 2021 Edmonton Municipal Election, she placed second in the City Councillor race for Ward sipiyiniwak. Giselle has been featured by CBC, CTV, and Global Edmonton, as well as various local podcasts such as "What's the Tsismis" and "The Broadcast."

Giselle General immigrated to Canada at 16 years old. She and her younger brother were sponsored by relatives after

they became orphans due to a vehicular accident killing their parents and sister. She completed a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from the University of Alberta School of Business. She enjoys volunteering, writing, sewing, and creating mixed-media artwork using recycled materials. She has self-published a book of

poems, *The Humanity in Me* and writes for her blog, FilipinaYEG. Giselle lives with her husband Corey in Edmonton.

This interview was first published on the blog of the Edmonton Arts Council: <https://yegarts.tumblr.com/>

A stack of primary source materials for Giselle's memoir.

Photo provided by the artist



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City highlights Anti-racism Community Safety Funding Program recipients

The City of Edmonton recognized the recipients of the Anti-racism Community Safety Funding (ARCSF) Program at an event hosted at the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council office.

The ARCSF Program was launched in the fall of 2022 with one-time funding of \$1.174 million. It was designed to support local initiatives and activities that promote anti-racism approaches to community safety within four areas: community justice, mental health, employment, and social participation.

Requests for funding were considered for projects and initiatives ranging in scope from \$150,000 to \$250,000 (to differentiate from the City's existing \$300,000 per year Anti-Racism Grant Program, which awards grants in the range of \$5,000 to

\$25,000). There were 55 applications received for the Anti-Racism Community Safety Fund, totalling \$10.6 million in requested funding.

"The Anti-racism Community Safety Funding Program shows us what is possible when we think about safety as an ecosystem," said Amarjeet Sohi, Mayor of Edmonton. "Safety can look like empowering communities to address hate, racism, and gender-based violence, and to create their own solutions. These five recipient organizations have imagined what a more welcoming, healthy, and inclusive Edmonton can look like and I am proud that the City of Edmonton can support them in working towards that goal."

The following five organizations were selected to receive funding:

- **African Canadian Civic Engagement Council** will provide support and co-ordination of legal and protective services for Black women from different intersectionalities experiencing gender-based violence. (\$250,000)
 - **Alberta Workers Association for Research and Education** will raise awareness on the realities faced by undocumented families, and address mental health and social participation gaps within the undocumented community to fight negative stereotypes that contribute to their fear and anxiety. (\$246,000)
 - **Canadian Mental Health Association** will empower Edmonton Distress Line crisis responders and leaders in ethnocultural communities to provide mental health support to racialized Edmontonians who are victims of race-based hate. (\$250,000)
 - **Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues** will collaborate with grassroots BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) organizations on innovative and transformative anti-racism and intercultural learning for community leagues throughout the city. (\$178,000)
 - **Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers** will work to create safe spaces, a sense of belonging, and foster an anti-racist environment for LGBTQ+ newcomers in Edmonton. (\$250,000)
- For more information: edmonton.ca/arcsfgrant

Council declares National Day for Truth and Reconciliation a civic holiday in Edmonton

The City of Edmonton took another step in its journey of reconciliation by officially declaring September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a civic holiday.

This declaration is part of the City's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Municipal Response Plan, which outlines actions that City Administration will take to remove barriers and enhance inclusion and access to City programs and services. It also supports the TRC Calls to Action. To date, the City has made progress on addressing 21 of the 94 Calls to Action, and this declaration specifically supports Call to Action #80.

"I'm proud to formally recognize National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I encourage Edmontonians to reflect on the collective traditions and cultures of the diverse First Peoples whose footsteps have

marked this territory," said Amarjeet Sohi, Mayor of Edmonton. "In order to truly honour those contributions, we also have to acknowledge the trauma of residential schools and the ongoing effects of colonization – not just on September 30 but throughout the year."

"Officially acknowledging September 30 as a civic holiday is a small but significant step in our commitment to supporting and building strong, respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton," said Andre Corbould, City Manager. "Administration will continue listening, connecting, advocating, and partnering with Indigenous communities to ensure they see themselves included and reflected in the City's spaces, places, and services. We still have a lot of work to do, and we're dedicated to continually moving forward on our journey of re-

conciliation."

Declaring a civic holiday is not equivalent to a provincial declaration of a statutory holiday and does not create any legal obligations for employers or businesses to close their offices or provide stat pay to their employees.

Also known as Orange Shirt Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation honours the survivors of residential schools, their families, and communities, as well as the children who never returned home. It is also a day to reflect and engage in dialogue and learning on the lasting impacts of colonization, anti-Indigenous systemic racism, and on the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

www.edmonton.ca



Good Friday & Easter Gatherings
Good Friday Gathering, April 7, 10:30 a.m.
Easter Sunday Gathering, April 9, 9:45 a.m.



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& EASTER MASSES**
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• **April 6** (NO WEEKDAY MASS)
Holy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper:
* 7:00 pm

• **April 7** (NO WEEKDAY MASS)
Good Friday - Celebration of the Lord's Passion:
* 11:00 am
* 3:00 pm

• **April 8** (NO WEEKDAY MASS)
Holy Saturday - Blessing of Easter food (church sanctuary):
12:00 noon
Easter Vigil - Resurrection of the Lord:
* 8:21 pm Twilight
N.B.: No 5:30 pm Mass



• **April 9**
Easter Sunday - Resurrection of the Lord:
* 8:30 am, 10:30 am, 12:30 pm & 6:00 pm

Surgery offers hope for young patients with knee injuries

By Katrina Lingrell

Kaytlyn Marshall was just 16 when she had her first knee surgery. Two more followed over the next few years, but her knee was never the same, even after she gave up high-impact sports.

"I was having a lot of pain years later doing simple things, even going for walks," Kaytlyn recalls. "My surgeon referred me to Dr. Sommerfeldt, and he told me about a surgery that could be a good fit for me."

Dr. Mark Sommerfeldt, an orthopedic surgeon at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital, recommended a fresh osteochondral allograft (OCA) transplant for Kaytlyn. He is one of only a few surgeons in Alberta with the training to perform the surgery, which uses living donor tissue to restore the joint surface and redistribute weight throughout the knee.

Surgeons need special instruments to sculpt the donor cartilage and bone so it matches the patient's injury. They press this cartilage into the patient's knee to create a seamless surface — almost like a greenskeeper filling a hole on a golf course.

The instruments have not been available in Canada though, so Canadian hospitals have had to borrow from American hospitals.

The Grey Nuns is now Edmonton's first hospital to have its own surgical set for performing fresh OCAs, allowing patients to have their surgeries sooner and saving the hospital the costs of borrowing the set.

The surgery has tremendous benefits for patients under 35, who are too young for a knee replacement and want to return to their active lifestyles post-surgery.

"Our joints are lined by tissue called articular cartilage, which cushions the ends of bones and allows for easy glid-



Since her surgery, Kaytlyn has been able to enjoy her favourite activities, such as hiking, again.

Photos: Covenant Health

ing during movement," says Mark. "But injuries and wear and tear can make the surface rough and even expose bone, causing painful rubbing of the joint and bones."

"We use a piece of tissue from a deceased donor and replace the damaged cartilage that lines the ends of bones in the patient's joint."

Since the surgical tools allow surgeons to precisely shape donor tissue to match the patient's injury, the joint function improves immediately.

"It's so satisfying fitting that transplant into place and having a smooth joint surface," says Mark. "It's great when we see patients six months after and their knee works better than it did before the surgery."

While Kaytlyn says recovery hasn't been easy, she's grateful to be able to get back to doing what she loves now.

"I'm someone who likes to get outside," she says. "Walks at the dog park, going for bike rides, playing with my niece and nephew — all of those were pretty limited before the surgery, but I've started doing them more. My niece and nephew definitely notice that I'm able to spend more time with them."

Charlene Moore, program manager for operative services at the Grey Nuns, says she's excited to make the fresh OCA procedure accessible to more patients like Kaytlyn.

"I love that there's an option for patients to improve their quality of life that they didn't have access to before," she says.

Katrina Lingrell works as a senior advisor for digital communications at Covenant Health.

This article was first published in *The Vital Beat*, a weekly newsletter published by Covenant Health.



Kaytlyn is enjoying walks with her dog, Rocky.



Kaytlyn's niece and nephew have noticed she's able to spend more time with them since her knee has healed.

Inherited heart disease: understanding your personal risk factors

Read about Susan Joop's experience heart failure - and the medical emergency that forced her to discover heart disease was in her genes.

In Canada, heart disease is one of the leading causes of death across the country, killing almost 100,000 people per year, and impacting over 20% of the population, particularly women. For Heart Month, which takes place annually every February, the Royal Alexandra Foundation chatted with Susan Joop, a former CK Hui patient, about her experience with heart failure, and about the care she received at the Royal Alex.

Prior to her heart attack, Susan, a retired nurse, lived a fulfilling, relatively stress-free life. She's happily married and has always made a point to stay active and eat well. "Prior to COVID-19, I was at the rec center almost every day," said Susan. "I maintain a healthy BMI, don't eat much red meat and go for an hour-long walk every day with my husband."

So, as you can imagine, it was quite a shock to Susan and her physicians when she suffered a flash heart attack on April 6th, 2022.

"My husband and I were out on our daily walk. About two-thirds of the way through the walk, I had overwhelming chest pain and I had to sit down. I felt dizzy, and like there was immense pressure on my chest. My husband knows I am not one to complain, so when I said he needed to call 911, he knew the problem was serious."

Within a few minutes, the paramedics arrived, gave Susan some aspirin, and advised that she be transferred to the CK Hui Heart Centre at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

As it turned out, Susan suffered from a myocardial infarction, the formal term for a heart attack. A heart attack occurs when the flow of blood to the heart is severely reduced or blocked. The blockage is usually due to a buildup of fat, cholesterol, and other substances in the coronary arteries, commonly known as plaques. Sometimes, a plaque can rupture, forming a clot that blocks blood flow. A lack of blood flow can damage or destroy part of the heart muscle. The affected part of the heart can experience permanent damage if not treated quickly.



Back to the fitness centre: Susan Joop two months after her heart attack.

Photo: Arnim Joop/MILL WOODS MOSAIC

When Susan arrived at the CK Hui Heart Centre, the cardiology team took her to a private room, and immediately began running tests to determine the source of her chest pain. Susan received an electrocardiogram, which shows the heart's electrical activity and reveals any abnormal rhythm or areas of possible damage in the heart or arteries; an echocardiogram which checks the structure and function of your heart; a nuclear scan, an imaging test that shows how blood moves to the heart; and finally, an angiogram, which shows blockages in the coronary arteries.

Based on her results, the medical team concluded she had indeed suffered from a heart attack.

Susan met with Dr. Bader and Dr. Tyrrell to work out a plan for treatment, who suggested she undergo angioplasty and stent placement, an hour-long non-invasive procedure in which a catheter is inserted into the wrist and travels up the artery. At the tip of a catheter is a tiny balloon that, when inflated, flattens the plaque against the artery wall, widening the artery channel, and helping improve blood flow. The stents, which look like

a tiny coil of wire mesh, support the artery's walls, help prevent the artery from re-narrowing after receiving an angioplasty and help keep blood flow open.

"I knew I was in good hands with those doctors. I told them to bring it on! I wanted to get back to the things I love as soon as possible" Susan said, enthusiastically.

Susan spent three days in the hospital, where she received excellent patient care across the board.

"All the staff were amazing, so attentive," she said "The nurses were so nice and patient. I always knew what was happening next. The nurses said I've been caring for people all my life, now it's time for us to care for you. That was really touching. I felt very taken care of."

At the end of her stay, Susan's team of physicians concluded that genetics and age were the most likely causes of her heart attack. This news came as a surprise for Susan, her family, and her doctors considering Susan's overall excellent health and no known risk pre-existing risk factors, such as high blood pressure, stress, poor diet, smoking, obesity, and leading a sedentary lifestyle.

Through her own inquiry, Susan learned she likely inherited a predisposition for heart attack from her father. Through sharing her story with us, Susan's goal is to raise awareness about how heart attacks can happen to otherwise healthy people due to genetics, and so people feel compelled to understand their bodies and their personal risk factors.

Susan is especially thankful for the care she received from the staff at the CK Hui Heart Centre, for the ability to access world-class public healthcare in Canada, and for the love of her family, including her husband, Arnim, and her two children who all provided her invaluable support during her stay in hospital and through her recovery.

Thank you for sharing your important story with us, Susan, and being an advocate for heart health and understanding one's personal risk factors.

This article was first published on the website of the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation. For more stories, visit www.royalalex.org/our-stories.

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Elections in Bugaboo City suffer same problems that we face

Newspapers and TV news today are full of talk of how perhaps the Chinese government sought benefit from a recent election in Canada. But it has long been known that the election system that we use today provides opportunity to get unfair advantage.

Votes are ignored; some parties get far more seats than they are due according to votes cast; and some votes are seen to be more important than other votes. And it is possible for a group to take an easy route to representation.

Through time, there have been many instances where a small group has used the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system to get unfair advantage. This goes against the goal of a democracy and is something that should be abolished. A fair election system would do that as well as provide other benefits.

We don't have fairness under our present system. I am speaking of single-winner FPTP, where the winner in each district is decided by just having more votes than any of the other candidates. This is the system used today in Edmonton city elections and in provincial and federal elections.

There is no denying the present system produces competition, kind of. Parties can run candidates; voters can vote secretly; the most-popular candidate in each district does get the seat in each district. But the system has serious flaws.

Let's look at the pretend city of Bugaboo. It elects three members to the "Great Hall" using the same system that we use today in Edmonton.

Let's say that, barring some very unusual thing happening, Party A will win the seat in Bugaboo North.

In such a situation, how could a group use FPTP system to get an unfair advantage? Quite simply.

Say a group of voters, say the Association of Amalgamated Bakers, wants to elect someone to speak for it in the Great Hall.

If the Bakers can get their man (or woman) nominated to be the candidate

for Party A in Bugaboo North, then the election of that person is pretty much a certainty. Under our single-winner system, voters have narrow selection offered to them. In Bugaboo North a voter might like Party A but not Bakers, for some reason. But there is

Politics in Bugaboo city would be improved if all three districts were made into one district, with each voter casting just one vote. Party A and Party B would each put forward candidates, and each party would be sure of seeing one or two of their candidates elected.

Neither party would take all the seats. One of the parties would elect only one member, but supporters of that party would at least have that representation. The voter would be represented by someone he agrees with, no matter which part of Bugaboo he or she lives. Each vote would be important.

Under this system, each voter would have choice among the candidates of the party of their choice.

And the most-popular candidates of each party would be most likely to get the seats.

The most-popular party in Bugaboo would elect more members than the less-popular party.

Fairness could be ensured by use of transferable votes. The election system used in Ireland and Malta uses Single Transferable Votes and multi-member districts. It has produced fair results in those places for the last hundred years.

Under such a system if a voter liked Party A but not Bakers, he could vote for a Party A candidate who was not a Baker. And a voter who likes Bakers and Party A could vote for a Baker running under the Party A label.

In a three-seat district, voters could organize themselves locally or along wider social lines.

Perhaps Bakers make up a quarter of the Bugaboo voters, I mean across the whole Bugaboo City, which would no longer be divided into three separate districts. If so, Bakers could run their own candidate with certainty that he or she would be elected.

Perhaps the residents of Bugaboo South feel they are neglected, that hos-

pitals and schools are being built just in Bugaboo North or Centre. Voters of Bugaboo South could collect their votes behind the best spokesperson for Bugaboo South. And if the voters in Bugaboo South who vote this way make up more than a quarter of the votes counted across the city, Bugaboo South would elect its spokesperson. And there is nothing the voters elsewhere could do about it.

Using a three-seat district with Irish-style transferable votes, 75 percent or so of votes cast across the city would be used to actually elect someone. Under our present FPTP system a candidate with just 35 percent of the vote – or less – can be elected in a district. This means that the majority of voters in many districts are unhappy with the result.

A basic rule of democracy is that a group should get representation in line with its voting support. The party with a majority of members in the Great Hall will pass the laws they want to, but each group in society should have its due share of members there as well. That fairness allows each substantial group in society to have a voice to speak for itself in the Hall. It also ensures that the majority of elected members – the group that holds power in the Great Hall – reflects the views of most of the voters in society.

Majority rule is a basic goal of good government. But FPTP does not give us that. It often does not give us that in the district. And it usually does not give us that in the "Great Hall" in whatever level of government we are talking about – city, province or national.

Tom Monto is an Edmonton historian and author of Old Strathcona – Edmonton's Southside Roots and Protest and Progress – Three Labour Radicals in Early Edmonton. He is also author of the blog site <https://montopedia.wixsite.com/montopedia>

**Tom
Monto**

**A
Different
Perspective**



only one Party A candidate, so the choice is "lump it or leave it."

That kind of thing happens all the time in single-winner elections. The voter does not have any choice if he stays true to his party. And Bakers or some other group could get unfair leverage through that lack of choice.

FPTP has other problems as well.

In our pretend case, Party A is pretty much assured of winning in Bugaboo North.

And say a different party, Party B, is pretty certain to win the seat in another part of the city, Bugaboo South.

But we can say that a third district, Bugaboo Centre, is not locked in for either party. Party A will rest content in Bugaboo North and Party B will mostly give up on Bugaboo North; Party B will rest content in Bugaboo South and Party A will give up on Bugaboo South. And both parties will devote their attention in trying to ensure that it, and not the other party, wins Bugaboo Centre. They will give their attention to just the voters in Bugaboo Centre, pretty much ignoring the voters in the other two districts.

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Canada opens operations centre in the Philippines to boost global immigration

Given the importance of the Indo-Pacific region and its impact on Canadians, a comprehensive and inclusive strategy is crucial to guide Canada's actions. To this end, Canada is investing in fostering ties between Canadians and the region as part of its Indo-Pacific Strategy.

On March 3, Rechie Valdez, Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville, announced on behalf of Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, the opening of a new application processing centre in Manila, Philippines. This initiative supports Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy and helps boost immigration application processing within Canada's centralized network, as well as abroad.

The new centre is located within Canada's Embassy in Manila and will be supported by 37 new employees. The added capacity is part of Canada's ongoing efforts to accommodate the high volume of visa applications from around the world, and will support ongoing efforts to also improve client service and help achieve Canada's planned increases to immigration levels in the years to come.

By expanding its presence overseas, Canada is making strategic investments, with the goal of bringing more

people to Canada—whether to visit, study, work or immigrate permanently.

"Canada is set to welcome a record number of newcomers in the years ahead to fuel our economic growth," said Minister Fraser. "This will give us an advantage in the global race for talent, and support key sectors and industries. Today's announcement to open a new centre supported by 37 new employees in the Philippines is another example of Canada's work to boost immigration processing, as we continue to promote greater diversity among those looking to visit, study, work and live in Canada."

"Canada and the Indo-Pacific share deep people-to-people ties, which are not only vast but expanding rapidly," said Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs. "This operations centre will help facilitate travel, attract highly skilled workers to Canada, and meet the needs of our economy today and in the future."

"Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy is crucial in addressing the impact of the region on Canadians, including the Filipino community," said Valdez. "The opening of the new application processing centre in Manila is a strategic investment that will benefit Filipinos by providing more efficient

processing of visas and supporting Canada's planned increases to immigration levels. By expanding our presence overseas, we are committed to facilitating the immigration process for those who want to visit, study, work, or immigrate permanently to Canada."

Quick facts

- Canada's Immigration Levels Plan has set targets of 465,000 permanent residents in 2023, 485,000 in 2024 and 500,000 in 2025.

- IRCC has visa offices in more than 50 locations in Canadian embassies, high commissions, and consulates around the world. The new application processing centre is located in the Embassy of Canada in Manila.

- As part of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, the Government of Canada is investing \$74.6 million over 5 years, and \$15.7 million ongoing, to boost the department's application processing capacity both domestically and in the Indo-Pacific region.

- Ever-increasing people-to-people ties between Canada and the Philippines contribute to the growth of both societies. According to the 2021 census, 960,000 people of Philippine origin live in Canada, while a growing number of Filipino citizens visit family and friends in Canada, study at Canadian colleges and universities or immigrate to Canada.

- With diplomatic relations beginning in 1949, Canada and the Philippines will mark their 75th year of strong and friendly bilateral relations in 2024.

Chief Superintendent announces retirement Edmonton Catholic Schools Trustee Laura Thibert

Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) is wholly united in the spirit of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent. We are guided by Pope Francis' message for Lent 2023. In it he states, "May the Holy Spirit inspire and sustain us this Lent in our ascent with Jesus, so that we may experience his divine splendour and thus, confirmed in faith, persevere in our journey together with him, glory of his people and light of the nations." This is a beautiful reminder that Lent is about commitment to follow Jesus.

Following a 37-year career serving Catholic education, Chief Superintendent Robert Martin will be retiring from Edmonton Catholic Schools. During his tenure, Martin has restructured the organization of the Division, resulting in greater efficiencies. He has

Heritage Valley, and pre-planning funding for a new Catholic K-9 School in Crystallina Nera East. This announcement is a positive step in helping us serve the growing number of families who are choosing Edmonton Catholic Schools, and we look forward to receiving full funding for all three projects as soon as possible.

Edmonton Catholic Schools is pleased and honoured that our families are seeking an excellent, faith-based Catholic education for their children! Our Division is experiencing unprecedented growth and tremendous pressures in Edmonton's new neighbourhoods including Ward 77. Growing enrolments mean that our Division needs more schools to address our needs. The Board of Trustees will continue to advocate for the building of new schools to



Trustee Laura Thibert

address that growth in the most expedient manner possible.

We are excited to announce the names of our two new schools! On February 22, the Board of Trustees voted to name the new Catholic High School in Dunluce/ Castle Downs Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic High School. The new Catholic K-9 school in Lewis Farms/Secord will be called St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic Elementary/Junior High School. These two extraordinary namesakes will provide exemplary models of faith in action for the families and staff who join those communities.

Spring break provides a wonderful opportunity for families and our staff to rejuvenate and spend time with loved ones. Students will be dismissed for Spring Break on Friday, March 24. Classes will resume on Tuesday, April 3.

I want to close by saying that I am committed to making decisions that are in the best interests of our students and I am very interested in engaging with members of our school communities. I welcome any questions or comments you have regarding educational matters and look forward to chatting with you. I can be reached at 780-231-6312, or by e-mail at Laura.Thibert@ccsd.net.

Mill Woods Mosaic - mwmosaic@telus.net



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Important addresses for immigrants and other newcomers

If you are new to Edmonton and don't know anybody, it can be tough to find a place to stay, a job, the right school for your children or good health care services, but there is plenty of help available. Here are some of the main agencies specializing in helping immigrants and other newcomers in the Edmonton area:

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

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

Welcome Centre for Immigrants in Mill Woods
Suite 200, Tower II, Millbourne Mall
7609 - 38 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6K 3L6
Tel. (780) 462-6924
Website: www.mwci-edmonton.net

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.org

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

Other important phone numbers:

- Edmonton Police Service
- Emergency calls only **9-1-1**
Police - Fire - Ambulance
Life & death, injury accident, crime in progress
- Non-emergency calls
(Dispatch) **780-423-4567**
Report of suspicious activity, calls for assistance, advice, etc.
- Poison Centre **1-800-332-1414**
- Hazardous Material Spills **9-1-1**
- Utility Trouble Calls Only:
- Power Emergency **780-412-4500**
Within Edmonton
- Gas Emergency **780-420-5585**
Edmonton & Area
- Drainage Trouble **780-496-1717**
- Sewer Trouble **780-496-1717**
- Wastewater (odour hotline) **780-469-8176**
- Water Emergency Service **780-412-6800**

The next issue of the *Mill Woods Mosaic* will be published on April 15, 2023. The deadline for advertising and editorial is Friday, April 7, 2023.

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Letters to the editor welcome

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

What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

March 18 - Movie Matinee, *Minions: The Rise of Gru*
Ridgewood Community League
3705 Mill Woods Road East, Mill Woods
Doors open at 12:30 p.m., movie starts 1 p.m.
www.ridgewoodcl.org

March 18 - Party Gras and Season Finale
Mardi Gras Costume Party
presented by Edmonton's Blauen Funken
German-Canadian Cultural Centre
8310 Roper Road NW, Edmonton
8:11 p.m.
For tickets, phone 780-466-4000.

March 21 - Annual commemoration of the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, hosted by the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action
Edmonton City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
12:00 p.m. (noon)

March 24 - International Women's Day and 39th Anniversary of the Indo-Canadian Women's Association
Woodvale Community Facility
at Mill Woods Golf Course
4540 - 50 Street NW, Mill Woods
5:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Phone 780-490-0477 • www.icwaedmonton.org

April 15 - Spring Market & Craft Sale
German-Canadian Cultural Centre
8310 Roper Road NW, Edmonton
12:00 p.m. (noon) - 5:00 p.m.
www.gcca.ca • Phone 780-466-4000

April 22 - Spring Gift & Craft Sale
Leefield Community Hall
7910 - 36 Avenue NW, Mill Woods
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
www.leelefield.ca • Phone 780-463-2456

Do you have a community event in Mill Woods to announce? Please send us the information, and we will include it in this community calendar in the next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic.

Tel. (780) 465-7526 or e-mail to:
mwmosaic@telus.net

The next deadline is Friday, April 7, 2023.

Life is a story. Tell it well.



How do you want to be remembered?



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by Arbor Memorial

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

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