

# The Riverbend Ragg-Times

A PUBLICATION OF THE RIVERBEND COMMUNITY LEAGUE

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## The Bridge Over the Whitemud Creek

Project on time and on budget, but that doesn't mean there won't be pain



Stage 2 of the Terwillegar Drive Project is underway and that means rehabilitation and widening of the Rainbow Valley Bridge to four lanes in each direction. The two structures over Whitemud Creek that make up Rainbow Valley Bridge were built in 1979 and 1982.

Crews have been installing foundations and the next step is to get all the traffic onto the southern, eastbound bridge. Over the next

two years, crews will first rebuild the northern, westbound bridge, and then reverse the process, shutting down the eastbound bridge and diverting traffic to the new, westbound one.

City Councillor Tim Cartmell says the project is on time and on budget, but that it's going to come with pain. "It's going to be two years of congestion, no question about it," he says. "It's going to be trying at times but we just need

people to be patient and understand that sometimes it takes a bit of time to get the improvements that you really want."

Stage 2 also includes upgrades to the interchange of Whitemud Drive and Terwillegar drive, the widening of ramps, a bus-only lane from 53 Avenue to Terwillegar Drive and a new pedestrian/cyclist bridge beside the westbound lanes of the Rainbow Valley Bridge.

## Preparing for the Flood

The Government of Alberta is seeking feedback on draft flood maps

The provincial government is seeking feedback from Albertans on draft reports and flood maps from the North Saskatchewan River flood study. The draft flood maps are an update to existing flood mapping, which were done based on studies from 1994 and 1995.

This is the second phase of public engagement for the flood study, which is being done to help with long-term planning. It focuses on maps that define floodway and flood fringe areas. Engagement on draft flood inundation maps, which show areas at risk for different-sized floods to help with emergency response, was completed in January 2021.

Public engagement is part of the province's standard flood study finalization process, and occurs after local authorities, such as towns, cities, counties, municipal districts and Indigenous communities have had an opportunity to review the draft reports and flood maps.

The provincial survey closes February 12. To participate, visit [alberta.ca](http://alberta.ca) and search for "north saskatchewan flooding."

## Notley to Step Down

Edmonton-Whitemud MLA Rakhi Pancholi one possible successor

By Michael Ganley

In January, Alberta NDP Leader Rachel Notley announced that she will step down as soon as party membership has an opportunity to choose her successor, likely later this year.

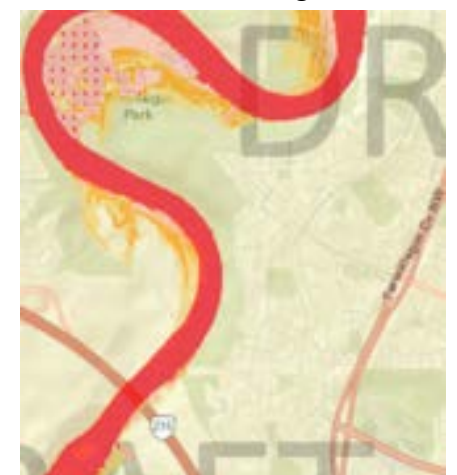
The former premier received kudos from Albertans of all stripes after the announcement. She led the Alberta NDP to a surprising electoral victory in 2015, ending 44 years of conservative rule in the province, and has set the Alberta NDP up as an effective opposition

and a legitimate threat in the next election.

The three names that come up most often in discussions of her replacement are former justice minister Kathleen Ganley, former health minister Sarah Hoffman and Edmonton-Whitemud's own MLA, Rakhi Pancholi. Ganley, who is a distant relative of the writer, has the advantage of being from Calgary. The Alberta NDP has a strong grip on ridings in Edmonton and will need to pick up seats in Calgary to

win the next election. But Hoffman was an effective minister and both she and Pancholi have been prominent in opposition.

When asked about her intention to run for the leadership, Pancholi provided a statement: "I am reflecting on how I am best able to support the building of that party, and best able to serve my province," she wrote. "I look forward to saying more soon."



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A screen capture of the draft flood map at [alberta.ca](http://alberta.ca), zoomed in on the Riverbend-Terwillegar neighbourhood.



# Pricing Pollution

## The carbon tax debate is heating up again

By Michael Ganley



The carbon tax is set to go from \$65 to \$80 per tonne on April 1. Expect verbal emissions from supporters and detractors alike to skyrocket between now and then. I'll add to my footprint now.

I first wrote about using a broadly-based carbon tax to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 10 years ago in a cover story I wrote for Alberta Venture, the monthly business magazine I used to edit. I wrote about how the insurance industry was on board since they were already seeing the impacts of megastorms. I quoted banks that were warning investors to take carbon pricing into account when making decisions. I interviewed Jack Mintz, the free market supporter at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, who supported a carbon tax because it provided cost certainty. Remarkably, all these years later and after reams of policy development and implementation, and near-constant debate, those points hold up.

The federal carbon tax began in 2019 at \$20 per tonne and is now at \$65, on its way to \$170 in 2030. It has been absorbed into the economy in a thousand ways, as people and businesses make small changes to their behaviours to account for it. Mostly, it passes through the system unnoticed.

It's true that the carbon tax increases costs for Canadians (at least before the rebates are factored in). But not by much. The Bank of Canada estimates that 0.15 per cent of recent inflation can be attributed to the carbon tax. When you add in knock-on effects (the so-called "tax on everything"), that number increases to around 0.2 per cent. The rebates

flip the effect for many Canadians. According to Statistics Canada, 94 per cent of households with incomes below \$50,000 receive rebates that exceed their carbon-tax.

The federal tax has not been in place long enough for there to be much data on its effect on the economy, but research has shown that BC's carbon tax, which has been in place since 2008, has reduced emissions in the province by between five and 15 per cent. The same research showed a negligible effect on the economy, although certain emissions-intensive sectors face challenges.

About 40 countries worldwide now have some form of carbon pricing. That number needs to increase, and the percentage of global emissions covered by carbon pricing needs to increase. There's no doubt about that. In the meantime, Canada should consider a carbon border tariff, such as that launched by the European Union in October, to protect industries from competitors in countries that do not have a price on carbon pollution. Regardless, Canada should lead the way on this crucial file.

The federal government has made missteps in the implementation of the tax, the most egregious being carve outs for home-heating oil in Atlantic Canada and poor communications around rebates. But those can be corrected.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has called for the elimination of the carbon tax and will look to make it an issue in the next federal election. But even with flaws, a broadly based carbon tax is still one of the most effective public policy tools we have to combat climate change. I welcome the increase on April 1, and hope Canada continues to lead the way in this crucial debate.

Riverbendonline.ca

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**President's Note**



# We've Hit the Ground Running in 2024!

Join us at the Brookside Rinks on Family Day (Feb. 19): Enjoy skating, outdoor activities, hot chocolate and cookies with neighbours and friends

By Miep Raedschelders, President, Riverbend Community League

What a difference from a year ago! Our restored Brookside Hall is bustling, once again able to house programs and community rentals. We have welcomed churches, karate programming, Peanut Butter & Jam Playgroup, Girl Guides, Sparks and Pathfinders, and the hall has hosted birthday parties, other celebrations and our very own Community League Day!

Please join us at the Brookside Rinks on Family Day for Family Skate Fest: skating, outdoor activities, hot chocolate and cookies with neighbours and friends! The event is weather-dependent, so check out [riverbendonline.ca](http://riverbendonline.ca) for updated details and follow us on Facebook for league updates!

The Riverbend Community Centre in Rhatigan Ridge is looking great with an updated kitchen and flooring in the main hall. Our rentals team has been busy with rental requests, and we welcome your inquiries.

We are looking for community-minded people who want to help out with social events and programs at the RCL. If you're a planner, have great ideas, or prefer boots-on-the-ground helping out, please reach out to us and offer to volunteer. If you're looking to meet people

in the neighbourhood, we have program opportunities available as well. Take a yoga class, join our group of gardeners in Brander Gardens or Brookside, try out Dungeons & Dragons (if you're 12-19 years old), or come out to one of our events and meet new friends and neighbours.

If you're seeking experience with a board and like to have an ear to the ground of what is happening in your community, volunteer as a neighbourhood ambassador from Brander Gardens, Brookside, Ramsay Heights or Rhatigan Ridge. These ambassadors represent the RCL at the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council and are voting members on the RCL Board.

RCL is always looking for volunteers to deliver the Riverbend Ragg-Times and to drop a few copies of our newspaper off at neighbourhood businesses. Such a minimal but much-appreciated time commitment is a great way to support the league and helps you get a few steps in as well! Please reach out to [info@riverbendonline.ca](mailto:info@riverbendonline.ca) if you can help in these or other roles.

Thank you to Nancy Wendt, Gina Thede and Deann Stein-Hasinoff, elected along



The renovated kitchen at Brookside Hall is ready to go, once again able to host your gathering. Find hall-rental options at [riverbendonline.ca](http://riverbendonline.ca).

with myself as officers of the RCL Board of Directors at November's AGM. Thank you to outgoing treasurer, Haley Sutherland, for all your contributions in 2023. We wish you the very best in your future endeavours.

*Please support your Community League by purchasing a membership, volunteering and participating in our programs! Advertise your business in the Riverbend Ragg-Times and check out our hall rental opportunities at [riverbendonline.ca](http://riverbendonline.ca)!*

**Riverbend Community League**

# Family Skate Fest

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**Riverbend Community League**

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANTED - WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Riverbend Community League is looking for dedicated individuals to join us in planning events to make a positive impact in our community.

Please email [president@riverbendonline.ca](mailto:president@riverbendonline.ca) to learn more about this exciting volunteer opportunity.

**JOIN NOW**

[www.riverbendonline.ca](http://www.riverbendonline.ca)



# New Year, New Taxes

Canadians to see higher carbon, fuel taxes in 2024

By Matt Jeneroux, MP, Edmonton Riverbend



**H**appy New Year. As we enter 2024, I want to provide you with some updates as well as information on what can be expected as Parliamentarians return to Ottawa.

First, with the new year comes new taxes. Beginning on April 1, the carbon tax will increase from \$65 to \$80 per tonne in provinces where the federal backstop applies. As well, provinces and territories using the federal backstop will see gas charges rise to 17 cents a litre from the 2023 rate of 14 cents a litre, while the propane fuel charge will increase to 12 cents a litre from 10 cents. At a time when many Canadians continue to suffer from enormous cost-of-living challenges, these

measures will only increase the burden.

As Parliament returns, and especially as we debate the upcoming Budget 2024, my colleagues and I will continue to raise these concerns and put pressure on the government to reduce their burdensome taxes on Canadians. You can read more about these changes, and others, on my website at [mattjeneroux.ca](http://mattjeneroux.ca).

Over the coming months, I expect there will be ample debate as the government puts Budget 2024 consultations into effect with legislation. Certain issues such as housing, cost of living, and rampant government spending will likely continue to receive most of the focus. Canadians can formally submit their thoughts to the government for pre-consultation until February 9. However, as we look to the coming months, please continue to reach out to our office with

your thoughts on what issues matter most to you and on where you would like the budget to focus.

Finally, regarding some other legislative agendas for the upcoming session: We will likely continue to see further debate on the government's response to Canada's housing crisis as well as other affordability measures. Whether it is addressing the practicality of the government's new housing plans or continuing to investigate the fallout from deals such as the HSBC-RBC merger this December or the earlier Rogers-Shaw merger, my colleagues and I continue to raise concerns regarding the ability of Canadians to make ends meet and afford a good quality of life.

As we continue to put pressure on the government, please continue to reach out to our office with your cost-of-living concerns.

## For Girls By Girls

City program designed to build self-confidence

**T**he City of Edmonton runs a free drop-in program designed to encourage girls between the ages of eight and 17 to build self-confidence and encourage their pursuit of sports and physical recreation.

Each session of For Girls By Girls is facilitated by student athletes from the University of Alberta or Concordia University. Programs are regularly held at the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre. For more information, visit [movelearnplay.edmonton.ca](http://movelearnplay.edmonton.ca).

## Health Care Crises Go Unchecked

We need to invest in health care, not starve it; build it up, not tear it down

By Rakhi Pancholi, MLA, Edmonton-Whitemud



**I**f there is one issue that continues to be top of mind for many Albertans right now, it's health care. I continue to hear from constituents about long wait times for critical diagnostic and surgical procedures, as

well as long waits in emergency rooms. Many of you would prefer to avoid emergency rooms altogether if you can, but the wait time to see your regular physician has grown too long or you don't have a family doctor at all.

And recent healthcare data shows that wait times in Alberta are worse than they were a year ago.

This is not acceptable. Those who work in health care and understand the systemic challenges we are facing have been clear about the solutions and immediate actions required.

Incentives to retain and attract doctors, nurses, and all healthcare workers are key to rebuilding a weakened, burnt out and demoralized workforce. We must value the hardworking Albertans who

care for us every day.

Moving to an integrated, team-based approach in primary care would mean that you and your family would have easy access to a number of healthcare providers – a nurse, pharmacist, mental health support worker or physician – who can quickly provide the care you need in your community. This is the Family Health Teams approach that the Alberta NDP proposed in the recent election.

As our healthcare system and providers are once again pushed to the brink by the predictable surge in respiratory illnesses, public health must be a priority. It is deeply disappointing to see that public health measures and campaigns around influenza immunizations that have historically been uncontroversial and effective are now politicized by the current provincial government. Public health measures keep Albertans healthy and out of emergency rooms.

Lastly, we continue to be short of more than 500 hospital beds in Edmonton based on our growing population. For almost five years, there has been no progress on the promised South Edmonton hospital. We cannot afford this

inaction any longer.

The people of South Edmonton deserve emergency care services closer to home. We need to get on with the job of building a hospital in the area.

For those of you without a family doctor, or who are waiting for a much-needed surgery, or have spent hours in an emergency room, I don't believe firing people, making more cuts to health care, or making organizational changes are the answers. But those are the only answers the current government is offering.

We need to invest in health care, not starve it; build it up, not tear it down; strengthen it, not weaken it. I will continue to advocate for these kinds of solutions.

Lastly, I hope you will join me and my colleagues for a Lunar New Year's celebration on February 15, 2024 at Esther Starkman School. I will also be co-hosting a townhall on pensions and the Canada Pension Plan on February 6, 2024 with MLAs Rhiannon Hoyle and Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse at Blue Quill Community League. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

# No Home Left Alone

A vacant home can present a crime of opportunity, but there are things you can do to ensure your property will be OK while you're out of town

By Michael Elliott, EPS Officer and Haddow resident

As the winter is upon us, many people like to head to a warm climate to relax in the sun and enjoy life. While planning a vacation is exciting, we also need to be cognizant of the safety and security of our homes. A vacant home can be a crime of opportunity, but there are several things you can do to ensure your property will be OK while you are out of town. The following are recommendations, but they can be of assistance.

Ask a family member or friend if they can house sit. If they cannot, ensure you inform a family member, friend or trusted neighbour of your scheduled time away so they are aware of your departure and return. Ask them if they can physically check on your residence on a regular basis (I recommend every 48 hours). The purpose is twofold. One, to ensure all is safe and secure and, two, the regular checks may be a requirement for your insurance or condo board if anything were to occur such as a water leakage, furnace issue, etc. (Consult your insurance provider on this matter.)

Having people check your home will create an impression your house is not vacant, which is a deterrent to anyone contemplating a crime.

Install outdoor lights with motion sensors. They will illuminate if anyone approaches your property and have the potential to deter people.

If you can, install timers on various lights inside your home. Program your lights to turn on and off at random times throughout the evening and night. This will also create the impression there is a person residing inside.

Refrain from publishing plans of an upcoming vacation on social media. People monitor open social media platforms and may take note of your vacation to determine if they can take advantage of your property.

Please do not have mail packages delivered. Having boxes sit on your doorstep is an invitation for someone to take your items. Only order items when you are home and not while you plan to depart or while you are away.

Speaking of doorsteps, ensure you have a friend or company available to clear your drive when it snows. This is also important to ensure you are compliant with city bylaws and your



Do not have packages delivered while you are away. Boxes sitting on your doorstep are a sign that the home may be empty.

neighbours can walk freely.

If you can afford it, install a doorbell camera on the front and back door and/or subscribe to a security service. You can monitor your home via an app on your cellphone.

I hope these recommendations help you plan your time away, so you can relax and truly enjoy your well-deserved vacation!

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# From the Tiniest Sprout

Children's nutrition program returns to farmers' market this summer

The Southwest Edmonton Farmers' Market is pleased to announce that the much-loved Sprouts Program is continuing for the 2024 season, beginning in May!

Sprouts is a free nutrition program for children ages 4-12 that gives them the opportunity to purchase fruits and vegetables with a token worth \$2.

The purpose of the Sprouts program is to introduce kids to nutritional food choices,

empower children to make their own healthy eating choices, educate them about where their food comes from, and encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle.

We hope to see you at our market this season, and we look forward to meeting our community members and their families! Visit [swefm.ca](http://swefm.ca) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for more information.

This program is only possible with the help of



our generous sponsors. You can find them listed on our website. To help sponsor the program, please contact the Sprouts Coordinator at [swefm.sprouts@gmail.com](mailto:swefm.sprouts@gmail.com).

## Brookview Community League Update

This is a New Year, a new beginning



**Happy New Year to Brookview with Chinese New Year approaching!** Happy new year to all our community members and wishing you a safe and successful year ahead. The year of the dragon is upon us!

**Winter Festival Appreciation** Thank you to all community members who came out to support this event.

**Volunteers Needed for Brookview Community Casino, Feb. 14-15, day and night shifts** The Brookview Community League is looking for volunteers for the upcoming casino to help fund our operations and programming. Please volunteer to help us maximize the amount we receive in return for our efforts. Email [president@brookviewcommunityleague.ca](mailto:president@brookviewcommunityleague.ca)

**Brookview Community League Board members needed** The BCL board is short-handed with willing, community minded volunteers and is immediately seeking volunteers who can contribute to the roles of communications and secretary. Please contact us through the website.

**Brookview Community Gardens – All are welcome!** Brookview Community is starting a community garden. All ages and all abilities are welcome. Come build something beautiful! Please contact Jacquelyn at [rrreduce@gmail.com](mailto:rrreduce@gmail.com)

**BCL Website** For more Brookview news check out [brookviewcommunityleague.ca](http://brookviewcommunityleague.ca).



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# The University of Alberta Senate – What Does It Do?

Each senator brings a unique perspective to the table,  
but all are strong advocates for the university and post-secondary education

By Dave Rumbold

The University of Alberta Senate has been a part of the university since its founding in 1908. Its initial role as the governing body for the university has changed over the years to become one of inquiring, promoting and connecting on behalf of the university. Senators are tasked with advocating for the university and higher education, serving as bridge builders to their personal networks and to the community groups they belong to. (Full disclosure: I am currently serving as a senator).

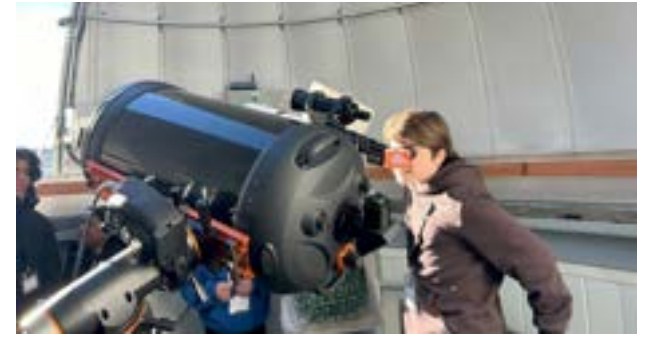
The Senate consists of 60 volunteer members who are selected to represent a broad spectrum of Alberta society. Thirty Senators are appointed by university affiliated groups such as the Alberta Minister of Advanced Education, the University Board of Governors, the General Faculties Council, the Graduate Students Association and the university's Alumni Association. The other 30 members are publicly elected and represent all geographical regions of Alberta as well as groups and organizations with an interest in the well-being of the university. Members of the publicly-elected group go through an application and interview process and then serve for three years, with an option to apply for a second three-year term.

A typical publicly elected Senate member brings a history of involvement and leadership in local community, cultural and civic organizations. Senators are all strong advocates for the university and post-secondary education and bring their unique perspectives to the table. It's important to note that the membership of the Senate really reflects the diversity of Alberta, and all members actively contribute to the work of its seven committees. There are currently at least half a dozen members of the Senate from the Riverbend-Terwillegar neighborhoods.

Peggy Garrity is the current Chancellor of the University of Alberta. She is an illustrious Edmontonian who has a long history of local community leadership. Peggy is just one of



Some members of the University of Alberta Senate on a visit to the university's Augustana Campus in Camrose in 2023. Among other things, the Senate administers the U-School program, which brings young students from socially vulnerable areas of Edmonton and northern Alberta to spend a week at the university in the hopes they will see post-secondary education as a viable option.



the many great role models at the Senate! Well known local resident Ralph Young is a past Chancellor.

The Senate meets at two-day plenary sessions four times a year. The university leadership, administration and various faculties provide detailed updates, and Senate committees bring their reports and recommendations forward for discussion. Senators are expected to participate fully and bring informed input. An example of a Senate committee is the Honorary Degree Selection Committee, which researches and brings forward candidate names for presentation of honorary doctorates at convocations.

The Senate also administers the unique U-School program. This outstanding initiative

brings students in Grades 3 to 9 from socially vulnerable areas of Edmonton and northern Alberta in to spend a week at the university. While on campus, they learn about different faculties, attend classes put on by different professors and meet university students with backgrounds like theirs. They come away with an understanding that post-secondary education and the University of Alberta is a realistic option for them. There are many current University of Alberta students who first came to campus to attend U-School.

To find out more about the University of Alberta Senate and current senators, visit [ualberta.ca/chancellor-and-senate](http://ualberta.ca/chancellor-and-senate).

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# Thanks to Our Community

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes parents, staff, students and community members who shone in 2023

By Julie Kusiek, Board Chair, EPSB

Each year, the Edmonton Public School Division honours the outstanding leadership, accomplishments, contributions and achievements of parents, staff, students and community members. We recognize people for professional and volunteer services, outstanding achievement or exemplary performance. We also honour teams for achieving significant goals through collaboration.

On January 11, the Division held its Recognition Awards event. What a celebration! We proudly honoured 36 people and 166 team members who bring out the very best in their peers, students and colleagues. Many people volunteer time, talent and energy that not only exceeds expectations, but also sets an example for others to follow. Many of the honourees were connected with schools in Ward F (take a peak at the program at [epsb.ca/ourdistrict/recognition](https://epsb.ca/ourdistrict/recognition) to see them all).

Edmonton Public Schools is able to provide the high-quality public education it does because of our community. It's a community that includes outstanding staff and volunteers. It's a community that is dedicated to the true spirit of public education. The passion, talents and unwavering commitment of these individuals and groups has a profound and lasting impact on students, families and colleagues.

I invite you to read more about this year's recipients. These stories – both those in the spotlight and the quiet, behind-the-scenes narratives – showcase the incredible collective strength of Edmonton Public Schools. May these stories continue to motivate, inspire and energize others in their everyday work, their volunteer activities and in their lives.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who works and volunteers to support the promise of public education — an education that inspires



Julie Kusiek, chair of the Edmonton Public Schools Board, at the Recognition Awards event. "Many people volunteer time, talent and energy that not only exceeds expectations, but also sets an example for others to follow," she says.

each and every student to believe in themselves and to live a life of dignity, fulfillment, empathy and possibility.

# Skis, Skates, Runners and Cleats

No matter your preference, you can play in your neighbourhood

By Karin Shott



**Community Ski Night**  
TRAC is pleased to report that we have booked Snow Valley Ski Club for our annual community ski night on Saturday, February 10 from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. Participants will be able to enjoy the evening at a great price, which includes a lift ticket, equipment rental, and an introductory lesson if needed. Tickets will be available until February 2. For more information, please contact the TRAC office at [yegtrac@gmail.com](mailto:yegtrac@gmail.com).

**Save the \$5 EFCL Administration fee** Purchase your community league membership from the TRAC Community Office, which is located in the Terwillegar Recreation Centre. If you wish to purchase or renew your membership in person, the office is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Thursdays from 4 – 8 p.m., and the first and third Saturdays of the month from 12 – 4 p.m. Payment options include by cheque, cash, e-transfer and debit.

Memberships are also available by mail or by sending an e-transfer with a follow-up email. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the office at [yegtrac@gmail.com](mailto:yegtrac@gmail.com) or by phone 780-439-9394.

**Using the Rinks** A reminder that a community league membership is required for access to any outdoor community skating rink. Each community skating rink is maintained by that particular community league, so please help support your community! Skate tags are available for pick-up during office hours.

**Outdoor Soccer** If you have someone interested in playing outdoor soccer, please check the Terwillegar Riverbend Soccer Association's website, [trsa.ca](https://trsa.ca), for information. A current community league membership is required to play soccer with the TRSA. Check your membership card to see if it is still valid. All community league



Join your neighbours at the Snow Valley Ski Club on February 10.

memberships expire August 31.

**Save the Date** The 18th annual TRAC Community Run/Walk is planned for Sunday, May 26. Stay tuned for more information.

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# What Minus-30?

A little cold wasn't about to stop people getting some outdoor time with the fresh snow. Riverbend-Terwillegar has a wealth of winter opportunities for those that want them.



1 A couple rescues get to know each other in Terwillegar Dog Park. 2 The top of the lift at Snow Valley Ski Club. 3 Sunrise over the playground in Ramsay Park. 4 Hockey at the Brookside rinks. 5 The magic carpet at Snow Valley Ski Club. 6 X-country skiers on the University of Alberta Farm. 7 Sledding down the hill in Ramsay Park. 8 Heading for the river valley.





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# Our Journey to Plant-based Eating

Avoiding a black-and-white approach has made going plant-based a joy

By April Fair, Sustainability Director, Riverbend Community League



This January marks four years since my family switched to eating fully plant-based foods. With more evidence coming to light about the positive impacts of plant-based eating on the environment, human health and animal welfare, it seems we are part of a growing community.

While systemic changes are needed to fight climate change, many people are looking to be part of the solution in their personal lives. The raising of livestock produces significant greenhouse gas emissions. Eliminating animal products from our diets, or even just reducing our consumption of them, is one way to reduce emissions. So for those in our community who are interested, I'd like to share some insights my family has gained that I hope will be helpful.

Firstly, it's all in how you frame it: If you view cutting out meat as a joyless sacrifice for an abstract cause, your motivation will dwindle. Reinforce your intentions by learning about all the positive aspects of plant-based eating. My family initially made the switch for the environment, but experiencing first hand the health and financial benefits, as well as coming to prioritize the well-being of animals (not to mention seeing how delicious plant-based eating can be!), has only reinforced our decision.

That said, building new habits is more critical to success than maintaining motivation. I still don't love meal planning, but it has been the single most powerful habit in staying on track. As you find new foods and recipes you enjoy, eating plant-based will become second nature and you won't need to be feeling particularly charitable towards animals or the planet to choose the veggie burger. Eating plant-based gets easier the

longer you stick with it.

Start slowly and have patience with yourself. It takes time to change a habit, especially one as fundamental and long-standing as how we eat. Going plant based overnight is probably not feasible for most families; it may help to have a timeline planned out for the transition. We started by phasing out red meat first, then all meat, then dairy. You could also start by replacing a portion of meat in dishes with alternatives, or progressively reducing the number of meat-based meals. Before my family stopped eating meat completely, we would eat it only in settings where our food choices were difficult to control, such as family Thanksgiving dinner. Eventually, we developed a distaste for eating animals and started bringing our own alternatives to events when necessary.

On that note, expect some initial awkwardness with family and friends. Even when you don't say anything, others who make different choices may feel defensive, and view your new way of eating as a judgment on them. If you're asked about your food choices, try to make it clear that eating plant based is something you feel personally compelled to do, and that you understand everyone is trying to make a difference in their own way. Arguing won't convince others to come around to your point of view (in fact, it will likely do the opposite).



Offering to share your favourite dish is your best bet to inspire change and maintain relationships.

Lastly, strive for practicality over perfection. We don't purchase animal products anymore, but at the same time we don't pick the non-vegan candies out of our daughter's Halloween stash, and we wouldn't throw out a cow's-milk latte purchased for us by a well-meaning friend. Our goal is to reduce the demand for animal products as much as possible. Avoiding a black-and-white approach has made going plant-based a joy.

If you'd be interested in joining a community plant-based potluck, please reach out to [info@riverbendonline.ca](mailto:info@riverbendonline.ca).

# Attention Property Owners!

The new year brings property assessments, mill rates and tax bills

By Tim Cartmell, Councillor, Ward pihêsiwin



Happy 2024! I hope you all had a pleasant and restful holiday season.

As we head into 2024, I would like to provide some important updates regarding property assessments and the City of Edmonton's budget.

On November 28, Edmonton City Council agreed on a property tax levy increase of 6.6 per cent in 2024. How this tax levy increase affects individual property owners will depend on their property's assessed value.

On January 15, the City of Edmonton sent property value assessment notices to property owners. If your property maintained its value or increased in value, your property taxes will increase from last year. I strongly encourage you to review your assessment notices, as well as check and compare at [edmonton.ca/assessment](http://edmonton.ca/assessment) or contact 311 to connect with an assessor.

If you disagree with your 2024 property value assessment, now is the time to file a formal complaint with the Assessment Review Board. You

have until March 25 2024 at 11:59 p.m. to file this complaint. Please visit [edmontontribunals.ca/assessment-review-board](http://edmontontribunals.ca/assessment-review-board) for more information. Note that there is a fee to file a complaint.

The mill rate will be finalized in April, and your actual tax bill will be mailed at the end of May. However, it will be too late to challenge your tax bill in May or June. If you want to challenge your tax bill, you need to do that by March 25.

At the end of January, City Council will receive an update on the operating and capital budgets. We will also receive an update on the Operating Budget Adjustment 12, which directs City Administration to identify another \$240 million in savings. Later in the spring, the City will receive its education tax requisition from the Province of Alberta, which will determine how much of that portion of property tax bills will increase.

These conversations are important pieces of information that will inform the final tax increase in April.

As always, if you have any municipal questions or concerns to share with me, please feel free to contact my office at [tim.cartmell@edmonton.ca](mailto:tim.cartmell@edmonton.ca) or by calling 780-496-8130.



# “A Change Is As Good As a Rest” and Other Myths

Also, SWESA is on the move!

By Colleen Crozier

**Myth #1: A change is as good as a rest** When was the last time we heard that expression? Ages ago, probably. It used to be a common one. When we were dismayed with an upcoming change, we needed words of commiseration or comfort. We knew that the change would bring challenges, but we wanted to make the best of it, didn't we? Like when banks stopped mailing us our cancelled cheques, or when businesses and government replaced telephone receptionists with automated "menus," or when abbreviations and acronyms took over our language. JK? Not.

**Myth #2: You're only as old as you feel** Not

true. You are as old as you are.

**Myth #3: You can't teach an old dog new tricks** Let's hear it for the seniors who are embracing change and learning new skills. We're learning to use computers, smartphones and other electronics. We've learned to laugh with younger people when we say "dial a number." We try our best to set aside our fears as we surrender to the reality of computerized everything. Sometimes, though, we old dogs just want to bark — or bite somebody.

All of this is to say that the South West Edmonton Seniors Association is in the middle of a big change. We've outgrown our Blue Quill

space, which is now closed, and there is no rest as we pack up, move and get settled in our new location. Our new home is in the William Lutzky YMCA, on 111 St. just south of 23 Ave. That building is senior friendly, has ample parking, and is on a bus route. We will open there February 1, 2024.

We welcome all seniors aged 55 and over to join SWESA. Check out the winter/spring program guide on our website, or contact the office for a paper copy. Getting involved with SWESA is a change that just *might* be better than a rest!



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# Kudos to the Council

Lillian Osborne School Council and Fundraising Association recognized for important contributions

The Lillian Osborne School Council and Fundraising Association was recently recognized for outstanding achievements and important contributions through Edmonton Public Schools' annual Division Recognition Program.

"They consistently go above and beyond in their efforts to enhance the educational experience for students and the overall environment of the school," says Will Robertson, assistant principal at Lillian Osborne High School, of the volunteers on the school council and fundraising association. "They have spent many hours fundraising for everything from resources and community-building activities to the MacLab Theatre and LOHS TV studio." Members have helped organize activities, events and initiatives that have directly benefited students and staff. They have also helped enrich student learning through events like LOHS Live (similar to a TEDx) and a grand staircase student performance area.

Members of the association have also been strong advocates for the needs and concerns of the school community, ensuring the voices of parents and students are heard and addressed.

One of their many contributions has been to facilitate communication and collaboration between parents, teachers and school administrators. "They not only come to meetings to listen to the principal reports and what is happening in the school, they also actively ask



The Lillian Osborne School Council and Fundraising Association is a group of dedicated, supportive, professional and collaborative leaders. It includes (front, left to right) Lynn Yang, Vivian Shih, Kathy House, Anathan Mahalingam; (back, left to right) Principal Mike Morison, Assistant Principal Darlene Scammell, Houda Trabelsi, Kristi Slavens, Karey Heard, Susan Burke, Priya Nelson, Rita Huang, Ruby Kullar, Christina Breault; (missing) Monica Lane, Fred Kong.

how they can help make Lillian Osborne a better place," says Assistant Principal Danny Jeffrey.

"This group goes out of their way to let staff know that they support and appreciate them," says Assistant Principal Darlene Scammell. She says the team spent many hours shopping and coming up with creative ideas to make staff feel

valued.

Every month, staff would receive a small token of appreciation, like a highlighter, stress ball or treat, with a note, thanking them for the work they were doing. "Knowing that parents are there to support you, and that they value the work that you do, is huge," says Scammell.



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# Think Twice About the Ice!

Recent tragedies have reminded us of the need for safety around frozen lakes and ponds

By Eilish Lemieux, Edmonton Riverbend-Neighbourhood Watch Representative

Happy New Year! I hope you had a fun and safe holiday season. Since we are now in the season of resolutions, and many of you will be partaking in winter activities, I thought I would take this opportunity to talk about ice safety. And I don't mean sidewalk and road ice (though I do recommend ice cleats and winter tires). I'm talking about open-water ice safety.

Many of our favourite cold-weather pursuits, like shinny hockey, hiking, snowmobiling, skating and ice-fishing, take place on lakes and other open-water ice surfaces. Mostly, they're done safely, but as we've seen in several recent tragedies across the country, there are cases of people and animals falling through thin ice.

There are many tips, rules, and common-sense ideas around ice safety, but I'll highlight just two:

1. If you see a person or a pet fall through the ice, call 911 immediately and stay near the area where they went in until help arrives. Edmonton's Rescue Services says we should

not attempt to rescue them ourselves.

2. When in doubt about the thickness of ice, don't go on it.

We are lucky to live in a city that is surrounded by lakes. When doing on-ice activities such as ice-fishing or skating, think about bringing self-rescue equipment including PFDs, waterproof matches, rope and ice picks. It's also important to watch for signs on lakes undergoing aeration projects to minimize fish kills.

No matter how good you think you are at gauging the thickness of ice, you need to be aware that there can always be weaker areas that can crack at any time. Ice thickness can change daily and vary greatly on the same body of frozen water. Don't base your decision on the previous year's open-water ice conditions as these can fluctuate from year to year. As well, it can be difficult to see what ice conditions are like from the surface – especially when it's covered with snow.

There are many factors that can affect ice thickness, including the weather and air temperature, the



The City of Edmonton advises that people never walk on the frozen North Saskatchewan River because the water moving underneath makes the ice unstable.

size of the water body, chemicals, debris, and shock waves from vehicles moving on the ice.

The City of Edmonton advises that we should never walk on the ice on the North Saskatchewan River as it is unstable due to the moving water underneath. Similarly, EPCOR (responsible for stormwater ponds) states these ponds are working facilities and not suitable for any type of recreational activity, even walking. Stormwater ponds have

working pipes that keep water flowing below the frozen top layer, reducing the integrity of the ice and making the ice thickness unpredictable.

So, whether you are a resolution-maker or not, I hope you resolve to make safety a priority in your life – including open-water ice safety!

For more information about open-water ice safety, please visit the websites of Epcor, the City of Edmonton or My Wild Alberta.

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## Brookside

|                        | <u>Single Family</u>             | <u>Condo</u> |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Active                 | 3 listings<br>AV LP<br>\$734,666 | N/A          |
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# Living Fully in 2024

## I'm finding ways to live with hope and joy on a suffering planet

By Melanie Hoffman

I'm curious: How have you been feeling throughout this year of weird weather? If there's even a little something nagging at you, I'm writing for you. There's a community of practice starting in Brookside, and I'd love to see you there. Wholehearted joy lies along the path of feeling it all – let's be with all of it, in the support of our community!

So, what has felt difficult (limiting myself to climate change, not including war and conflict)? Close to my home in Germany, massive floods destroyed lives. In Alberta, we cancelled our family's summer camping trip because the road to Jasper was in flames, part of Canada's record-breaking fire season. We had to take our daughter out of summer bike camp when our usually-fresh air was unsafe to breathe owing to smoke. I was gutted. Then we had zero precipitation in October, a brown Christmas, and a sudden cold snap. Seeing people around me behave as if everything is fine feels like gaslighting. We are not powerless over what we build together. We needn't be alone.

My family is fortunate to have an airtight, highly-insulated home, providing us with the ability to filter out smoke and keep our winter energy bills low. We have kid-sized N95 masks. They help with COVID-19 protection, but really we want to be ready for outdoor activities when the air quality is poor, as sad as that feels.

I hate that this is what I need to do. I'd rather



be out dancing or riding a horse. I suspect that new Edmontonians, recent migrants displaced by the threat multiplier that is climate change, are reading my words and thinking, "Must be nice." And while, no, it hasn't been, I'm grateful to be more aware now. Awakening to the ecological realities of our planet has awakened me to the privilege of not being directly threatened by the massive changes human activity has caused to air, water and soil. Many newcomers have lived experience of instability and have had their lives destroyed by human-caused changes to the climate. There is a lot to grieve. All this was entirely preventable.

But what's done is done. The question worth asking is, what do we do now? How do we live

fully and well?

A transformation is underway, and it's happening with or without us. If you'd enjoy being welcomed into a community that is participating in the present to build the future the planet deserves, you can join a province-wide team online at [albertatalks.ca](http://albertatalks.ca).

Or join your neighbours, in person, in Brookside on Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. – noon, to read, share and practice, guided by the 10-step program described in *How To Live In A Chaotic Climate*, by LaUra Schmidt.

All you need is you. Find out more by getting in touch via a short Google Form at [tinyurl.com/2s4ejfzt](https://tinyurl.com/2s4ejfzt).

### Want to Write for the Ragg-Times?



Are you interested in telling a story about the people, places or things of Riverbend? The Ragg-Times is always seeking volunteer writers with great ideas. Email [raggtimes@riverbendonline](mailto:raggtimes@riverbendonline) with your idea.



### Riverbend Dental Clinic Comprehensive General Dentistry



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| Wednesday          | 1:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.  |
| Thursday           | 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  |
| Every 2nd Saturday | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |

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