

The Riverbend Ragg-Times

A PUBLICATION OF THE RIVERBEND COMMUNITY LEAGUE

NOVEMBER 2025 | VOL. 43, NO. 2

Friday Night Lights Shine Bright on Scona–Osborne Rivalry

Packed stands, school spirit and friendly rivalry lit up the Jasper Place Bowl as the Lords and Legends delivered an energetic showcase of high school football

By Terra Cook

On Friday, September 19, 2025 high school football was alive and electric as the Strathcona Lords and Lillian Osborne Legends faced off at the Jasper Place Bowl in front of a packed crowd of cheering students, parents and community members. The energy under the lights was unmistakable — a true celebration of school pride, sportsmanship and community spirit.

From the first whistle, both teams played with intensity and heart. The Lords and Legends traded strong defensive stands and hard-fought offensive drives, keeping fans cheering throughout the night. While the scoreboard ultimately favoured Strathcona, the story of the game was about much more than the numbers. It was about the passion of two programs that represent the very best of high school athletics — teamwork, dedication and mutual respect.

The stands were overflowing with supporters from across Edmonton's south side, with many from the Riverbend and Terwillegar areas turning out to cheer for friends and family. These neighborhoods feed into both Strathcona High School and Lillian Osborne, creating a unique and friendly rivalry that adds an extra spark to every matchup. Fans waved banners, music was pumping and the warm weather kept the energy high from kickoff to the final whistle.

As the teams shook hands at the end of the night, there was a sense that this game was about building something bigger than just a win or a loss. It was about strengthening connections between two schools and the communities they



Cheering students, families and community members packed the stands as the Lords and Legends clashed in a spirited Friday-night matchup. Photo by Graeme Kelly (graemek09.mypixieset.com)

serve.

Fans are already looking forward to seeing the Lords and Legends face off again in seasons to come. If this game was any indication, this growing rivalry will continue to bring out the best in both teams and in the community that proudly supports them.

Both teams compete in the Metro High School Athletics Miles Division (Div II), after Lillian Osborne moved up from the Gilfillan Di-

vision (Div III) this season. If you or someone you know is interested in playing high school football at either of these schools, spring training starts in April or May. Contact Strathcona Head Coach Jason Duxbury jdux.sconafootball@gmail.com or, Jon Waters jon.waters@epsb.ca at Lillian Osborne to get your name on the spring training camp roster now!

Final score: Strathcona Lords 36 - Lillian Osborne Legends 0

A Local Champion!

Local resident Chris Reckhard has spent two decades cultivating enormous pumpkins and having fun along the way at the Smoky Lake Pumpkin Fair

By Dave Rumbold

Have you ever wondered how big a pumpkin can grow? It turns out that pumpkin contests are a big thing and people around the world have been competing for years. Here in Alberta, the Smoky Lake Pumpkin Fair has been running every fall for 35 years and draws thousands of guests.

Local resident Chris Reckhard started out growing pumpkins 20 years ago, secretly aiming to grow the biggest Jack-O-Lantern in the neighbourhood. He quickly achieved that goal and then found that he wanted to keep going and set new personal records. Right from day one he has grown pumpkins that are 100 lbs or

larger and attending the Smoky Lake Pumpkin Fair led him to see and learn what could be achieved and increased his motivation to grow a bigger pumpkin every year! In order to be competitive at Smoky Lake, much larger pumpkins are needed and so Chris started using seeds from previous winners and refining his growing

continued on p.4...



After placing in the top ten with this 782-pound pumpkin, local grower Chris Reckhard is already aiming even bigger for next year.

Keep Edmonton's Record Flying High — Join the Christmas Bird Count!

Participate from home, help record local bird species and enter to win birding prizes on December 14

By Bob Bowhay

How many birds stay in Edmonton for the winter despite the long dark nights? Help us to find out! Join us on December 14, 2025 for our annual Edmonton Christmas Bird Count.

This is a free event held in Edmonton and over 2,000 locations across North America that encourages people to take part in this citizen science project. All ages and skill levels are welcome. You just need to watch for birds from the warmth of your home, identify, count and report them together with the amount of time that you were watching.

The Edmonton Christmas Bird Count was first held in 1905, and continuously since 1955. Remarkably, 121 species of birds have been recorded on these counts by people like you. 1,299 people participated in 1987, more than any other count in the world, ever! Most counters are people like you that watch for birds from

their home windows. Currently just over 500 people participate.

We hope to increase the number of backyard watchers participating this year, so that all birds get counted and to maintain our World Record.

To participate, your home must be within the count circle which, unfortunately, does not include all of our growing city but does include the entire distribution area of the Riverbend Ragg-Times. Check the count circle map, using the green QR code, to find your home.

We are excited to announce this year we have a free contest open to all registered participants, sponsored by the Wildbird General Store. Prizes include a grand prize of a pair of 8x42 Nikon Monarch M5 Binoculars and four runner-up prizes of a Backyard Birding Package which includes a bird feeder, feeding guidebook and 30 lbs of bird seed.

To register, scan the red



Boreal owl, a jewel in the Christmas Bird Count. There is typically only one found each year. Photo by Bob Bowhay

QR code or go to edmontonchristmasbirdcount.ca and sign up as a feeder, watcher or bush beater.



Scan for maps



Scan to register

Riverbendonline.ca

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President’s Message



A Lot of Action Coming to our Community

With a full calendar of upcoming events, Riverbend Community League is seeking volunteers and offering new ways for residents to engage and share their skills

By Mike Lupien

It’s a busy time at Riverbend Community League with several special events and programs coming up to bring our residents together to learn and have some fun.

Annual General Meeting:
Residents of Brander Gardens, Brookside, Ramsay Heights and Rhatigan Ridge are invited to attend the community league’s annual general meeting on Monday, November 24. Following the AGM, join us for a community conversation. Do you love Riverbend as much as we do? Let’s grow our community together. It will be a social event with snacks and drinks. Meet with your friends and neighbours, members of the board and share your hopes for Riverbend. We’ll also have a draw to win a Zoominescence ticket prize package.

Volunteers Needed:
Speaking of the board, the

community league is a volunteer-driven organization, and we invite anyone with an interest in giving back to the community to join us. Do you love numbers and spreadsheets? We need a treasurer. How about organizing and planning? Program planning may interest you. Enjoy looking at the big picture and planning a way forward? Members at large can view the league as a whole and participate in planning for the future. Are you organized and detail oriented? Secretary may be the position for you.

We’d love your interest and expertise! Consider joining us. Check out riverbendonline.ca and click on About Us/Board Executive to see the positions available. Of course, if you want to volunteer generally for a program or event, we’re happy to have you.

Free Rentals on Thursdays:
We’ve opened the Riverbend

Community Centre on Thursday evenings for free rentals to community league members who want to provide community programming. Share your skills or knowledge with our residents. It could be an information night or a craft event — we are open to your ideas. As an example, look for sessions on creating healthy relationships for teens and adults in the new year. Reach out to us for more details if you’re interested in taking advantage of these free rental nights.

Bridge Club is Back!
Our popular bridge club program returns from a brief hiatus, stronger than ever thanks to volunteer Allan Terplawy who will host the club weekly in the social room at Riverbend Community Centre (258 Rhatigan Road East). Allan has played, taught and directed bridge for most of his life. He is an accredited American Contract

Bridge League (ACBL) director and a trained and experienced teacher who is passionate about the game. He currently serves on the board of directors for the Edmonton Bridge Centre.

Join the fun on Wednesdays from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Some knowledge of the game is useful. No need to register — just be sure to have your community league membership up to date and bring a \$5 drop-in fee. Allan could also provide lessons in the future for those interested in learning more about the game or who want a refresher. Visit us and check it out!

Social Nights:
Keep an eye on our emails, social media and the RCL website for upcoming social events like family movie night on December 12 and a trivia night coming in late January.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

All residents of Brander Gardens, Brookside, Ramsay Heights and Rhatigan Ridge are welcome. Enter to win a Zoominescence ticket prize package.

Meeting agenda to include:

- Election of Officers
- Audited Financial Statements
- 2025-2026 Budget
- Special Resolution to amend the Bylaws of RCL
- Presentation of Volunteer Awards

For complete details, please visit riverbendonline.ca

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...continued from p.1

methods.

Chris grows his monster pumpkins in his backyard garden, starting in early May after sprouting them indoors beforehand. The size of a garden can be a limiting factor and its exposure to extreme weather events can be problematic — Chris did lose a pumpkin to hail damage a few years ago. These days, many serious growers use greenhouses and larger areas than a typical garden has available, but Chris is happy to maximize the results from his own

backyard. The goal is to have fun!

This year Chris tied for ninth place at Smoky Lake with his 782 lb pumpkin — the first-place winner weighed in at 1,368 lbs. The largest winner in Smoky Lake history was 2,537 lbs back in 2022, and the current world record is 2,819 lbs! For some reason the world of pumpkin growing still seems to use Imperial measurements. Chris donated his pumpkin this year to the Alberta Children's Hospital Trust Fund who drop it and others on cars as a fundraiser

in their annual Pumpkin Fest.

A championship pumpkin will have a peak growing rate of more than 30 lbs per day and its main shoot will extend by 6 to 8 inches per day. Chris would like to grow a 1,000 lb pumpkin someday, but in the meantime is happy to let nature take its course with helping hands along the way. Good luck to Chris as he makes his plans for 2026. Fingers crossed for a personal record next year!



Local grower Chris Reckhard's 782-pound pumpkin tied for ninth place at this year's Smoky Lake Pumpkin Fair.

Ridge Men's Shed Launches to Support Local Connection

Edmonton's newest Men's Shed invites residents to meet weekly, build friendships and strengthen community ties

By Roy Kelly

Nine years ago, my partner and I moved to Edmonton from Abbotsford, BC to be closer to our grandchildren. For the most part, that was a good decision for both of us; however, I lost contact with most of my colleagues and friends. It's probably a "guy thing," but I was slow to recognize there was an empty place in my life. In recent years, researchers and community organizations have warned

of a growing "male loneliness epidemic," as men often struggle to maintain friendships after retirement or major life changes. I eventually realized I was experiencing some of those same challenges.

I became aware of Men's Sheds Canada about a year ago. I was drawn to their message and with time, decided I would like to join one in Edmonton. At that time, I found there were 13 Men's Sheds in the city. The

one closest to me was the Ritchie Men's Shed. After reviewing their website, and given my involvement with the Ridge Community League, I thought their shed would be a good model for our community. Ideally, a shed's members can meet locally, fostering easy friendships and support. With that in mind, I decided to try and establish one in our community this past July.

On October 9, the 14th shed in

Edmonton, the Ridge Men's Shed was launched by four founding members. Subsequent weekly meetings, on Mondays at 8:30 p.m., will focus on growing its membership.

You can learn more about Men's Sheds at mensshedsCanada.ca and you can read more about joining us at the Ridge Community League at theridgeonline.ca.

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Upcoming events & services:

- Children's Christmas Program - Sunday, **December 14th** - 10:30 a.m.
- Community Christmas Carol Sing - Sunday, **December 14th** - 4:00 p.m.
- Christmas Eve services - Wednesday, **December 24th** at 5:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

We wish you a blessed Christmas season.



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A Stronger Community Starts With “Hello”

Studies show that knowing the people next door reduces loneliness and improves physical and mental health

By Kathy Trepanier

In this day and age, our world has become so dynamic and unpredictable. You might wonder what you can do to make the world a safer, happier and healthier place.

We can all start in our community — by getting to know our neighbours.

Clinical studies have shown that knowing even a few neighbours reduces loneliness and improves feelings of wellbeing and safety. Social connectedness has been linked to better public health outcomes and frequent contact and trust among neighbours is associated with higher levels of happiness and wellbeing.










Your actions, to get to know neighbours, can have a ripple effect in your community. As more neighbours get to know each other, it builds trust that they will look out for each other. When parents have this trust, their children are twice as likely to play outdoors. More outdoor play is linked to feelings of safety and self esteem in youth.

The more that children are playing outside and neighbours are talking, the more chances there are to connect and to lend a hand.

Try the Know Your Neighbour Challenge. Let’s make southwest Edmonton the friendliest and safest community it can be.

Know Your Neighbour Challenge*

Check each statement that applies to your nearest neighbour and tally your points at the end.

| | POINTS |
|---|--------|
|  I know their first name | 1 |
|  I know their last name | 1 |
|  I recognize them by sight in another setting (e.g shopping) | 1 |
|  I know whether they have pets | 1 |
|  I have one of their contact details (e.g. phone, email, social media) | 2 |
|  I have had at least one conversation, more than just hello | 2 |
|  I would feel comfortable asking them for a small favour (e.g. collect a parcel) | 5 |
|  I have helped them with something or they have helped me | 10 |
|  I have noticed something unusual at their house and let them know (e.g. bins not out, garage door open) | 20 |

TOTAL points ____/43

How did you score?

0-9, You’re neighbours in name only. Start small, maybe a wave or smile when you put bins out or see each other.

10-19, You know each other a little. Next time you see each other, walk over to them and start with a simple comment about the weather, their pet or garden.

20-34, There is comfort and trust there. Look for an opportunity to offer help or ask for help, even for something small.

35-43, You are the kind of person everyone wants living next door. Look for opportunities to help other neighbours make connections.

*Adapted from Psychology Today May 13, 2025 - The Power of Knowing your Neighbour by Kelly-Ann Allen, Ph.D., FAPS.

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Charitable Giving is a Final Act That Has Lasting Benefits

You don't have to have vast wealth in order to leave a legacy

By James Frey

When people think about charitable giving, they first think of wealthy philanthropists who donate millions to hospitals or universities as part of their estates.

That is not always the case; many Canadians consistently give small amounts to charity — \$30 to \$40 monthly. Of course, over time, that adds up.

According to Statistic Canada, summary of charitable donors:

- Charitable organizations received \$12.8 billion in donations in 2023.
- About 5 million individual Canadians (17 per cent of tax filers) donated, about \$2500 each.
- As people age, the average donation increases — \$1,000 for people ages 25 to 34 to almost \$4,000 for people over 65 years of age.
- In 2023, about 200,000 Edmontonians donated almost \$550 million.

You don't need to be wealthy to make a charitable gift as part of your estate. According to Will Power and

the Canadian Association of Gift Planners, the average Canadian's net worth is valued at \$970,000 (includes your house, retirement savings, insurance, etc.); and the average philanthropic gift from an estate is about \$30,000 or about three per cent.

In 2020, five per cent of Canadians left a donation to charity in their Will, rising to eight per cent in 2022. In just three years, 1.2 million more Canadians decided to leave a legacy donation. As we observe the trends, we know that an extra 22 per cent of Canadians are now planning to add a charitable donation in their Will. That could mean billions of dollars in donations in the coming years.

Why should you make a charitable gift as part of your Will?

To continue to support the charities you love. You likely already give to charities, churches, and others because of what they do. It makes sense to continue that generosity beyond your lifetime and in turn, you might motivate others to continue giving.

To leave a legacy. Imagine the pride your children or grandchildren

will have in knowing that you have left something for an organization that continues to support people in the community.

For tax breaks. The Canadian government offers some generous charitable tax credits. We don't have space to examine all the detailed tax implications, but under current Canadian income tax rules, a donation tax credit may be claimed for qualifying donations from an estate through a Will or direct designation under certain conditions. The tax credit can be applied against taxes payable from the estate or by the deceased in the most beneficial manner. If you are in that situation, contact an accountant or financial advisor to help set this up. Consult the Canada Revenue Agency for the latest information.

Adding a charitable donation to your will can be easy:

1. Choose a charity. It could be one you already support or something new. Connect with that charity to find out if there is a particular project or program you'd like to include. This is not a commitment; the

organization can't contest anything if you change your mind.

2. Ensure you have the organization's legal name and charitable number, which is essential for the tax credit. Only Canadian registered charities can issue official donation receipts that qualify for charitable tax credits. You may donate to foreign charities but won't receive the tax benefit.
3. Talk to your family, executor and financial advisor so they understand your wishes and why you want to include charitable giving in your estate planning.
4. Prepare your Will and include your charitable wishes.

Giving to charity as part of your estate can be a tremendous win for all involved. Charitable organizations greatly appreciate these legacy gifts and you will be happy knowing that your gift can have a lasting impact on the people served.

James Frey is the director of fund development for The Good Samaritan Society, a charitable organization based in Edmonton.

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Treats for Your Eyes as well as Your Tastebuds

A Riverbend chocolatier shares the secrets behind shiny artisanal chocolates and an upcoming chance to shop local

By Melissa Simon

Have you ever walked by chocolates in a market that are so shiny and so pretty that you had to ask if they were marbles? Many are in disbelief when they learn they are artisanal handmade chocolates. Here we will demystify the process and let you in on the secrets of an artisan chocolatier.

Step 1: Start With The Best

The first and most important step in making high quality handmade artisanal chocolates is to start with the highest quality ingredients. It must begin with couverture chocolate. Couverture chocolate is made without added oils and artificial ingredients often used to make chocolate more inexpensive. It simply consists of cacao beans, sugar, cocoa butter, an emulsifier and sometimes vanilla. The most crucial ingredient here is the cocoa butter, because it is the cocoa butter that can be ‘tempered.’ When chocolate is tempered, the end product is smooth and shiny and has a snap when you take a bite. Much like the crystals found in a sheet of ice line up to make a shiny, smooth and stable creation, the beta 5 crystals in tempered couverture chocolate are lined up in a specific way to achieve a similar result. Create the wrong crystals and you are left with a brittle and

crumbly end product that does not melt so nicely in your mouth.

Step 2: Polishing The Mould

The cavity of each polycarbonate mould is hand-polished with a soft cotton pad. When tempered cocoa butter sets against the shiny mould, a super shiny chocolate results.

Step 3: Decoration

Each cavity in the mould is painted with coloured cocoa butter using various different techniques, from swirling a finger or using a brush, to using a spray gun. These artisan chocolates are a piece of art in every sense of the word.

Step 4: Creating Shells

To create a hollow, thin shell, tempered chocolate of the perfect consistency is poured into the mould to coat each cavity and then poured out. When the chocolate cools, or crystallizes, it pulls itself and the coloured cocoa butter away from the mould, enabling the chocolates to be released.

Step 5: Fillings

There are many different fillings that chocolatiers will choose from when filling their chocolate shells. Some examples include: fruit gels, caramels, marshmallow, ganache and gianduja. The very best chocolatiers will make their own from

scratch. Each filling is hand-piped into each cavity and many chocolates will even contain multiple layers of fillings to achieve a specific flavour profile.

Step 6: Seal in the goodness


Once the fillings have set, a tempered chocolate cap is applied to the to seal in the fillings.

Step 7: Tap out the joy

The most exciting part of the whole process, is when the results of several days of work are finally revealed. When the chocolate caps have crystallized, the chocolates can be tapped out of the mould. The chocolates are now finished and ready to enjoy.

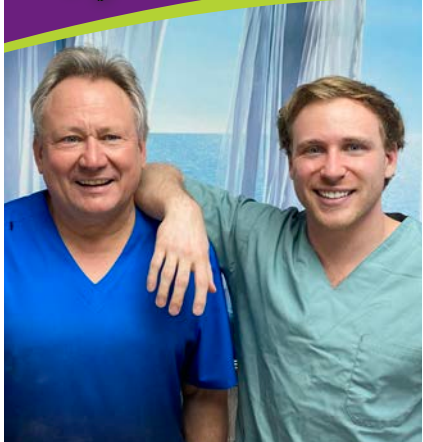
If you loved hearing about this process and want to see artisanal chocolates and other locally made goods in person, be sure to check out the Hand2Hand market in the Terwillegar Community Church on November 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This market features over 60 local artisans and is a wonderful place to find unique holiday gifts.

Melissa Simon is a professional chocolatier who lives and works in the Riverbend area.



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Community Support Through Tutoring

Riverbend ROCKS' expanding tutoring program is empowering young learners and transforming education, confidence and community connection for future leaders

By Fisher Smith, Coordinator – Child and Youth Programming, Riverbend ROCKS

Riverbend Reaching Out to Community and Kids Society (ROCKS) is a local non-profit organization that connects families living in the Brander Gardens Civida complex and surrounding areas to accessible opportunities that promote social inclusion, community connection and an enhanced quality of life.

One of our primary focuses is the support of our children and youth's education through our tutoring program. As we moved into Fall 2025, we prioritized bolstering this program, delivered daily in our Community Hub. With this new focus, we have brought on five new part-time tutors who, alongside our volunteers and staff, have helped us accommodate nearly 40 students, free of charge. For the first time, we have the incredible luxury of having a waiting list of parents and students from outside of our community who have requested our tutoring services.

We provide two main avenues for accessing our tutoring services: one-on-one and group tutoring. Our one-on-one tutoring provides students with targeted assistance based on their individual needs. These one-hour, personalized sessions can cover any subject and grade level to ensure our students are given every possible opportunity to succeed in school. Our group tutoring sessions

provide academic support and an environment to develop our children and youth's intersocial skills. These sessions are grouped by age, with three groups: Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7+. The sessions are tailored to the age group with focuses on English Language Arts, Science and Mathematics. Seven group tutoring sessions are delivered every week.

Our tutoring program has become a staple of our child and youth engagement and we are extremely proud of the strides we have made in providing educational assistance to our community. We have seen a steady increase in students' knowledge-base and understanding of core concepts along with incredible strides in their interpersonal skills. We are extremely appreciative of the funding provided by Humanserve International and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), which have made this incredible tutoring program possible.

As we move forward, we are excited to continue providing exceptional tutoring services to families in need, both inside and outside of our community. We hope to have the opportunity to further grow the program, adding additional resources and additional hours to support our growing future leaders.



Regular tutoring sessions are strengthening core concepts, boosting social development and empowering future leaders — right here in the community.



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Learning Never Gets Old: ELLA's Winter Session Brings Engaging Courses Online

Registration opens December 2 for classes exploring storytelling, civic politics and the power of AI

By Kathy Kerr

Learners on both ends of the age spectrum have a lot in common, including enthusiastic curiosity, says writer and instructor Marty Chan. The award-winning children's book author will repeat his course on writing for children for Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association's (ELLA) online winter session starting in January.

He says students at ELLA, which offers classes for those over 50, are ready with as many questions as the elementary school kids he usually teaches.

Seniors are as engaged as the kids, "but with more self-control," Chan says. "They're more willing to participate. ...It gives me a chance to interact with the audience as opposed to just being a one-way broadcast."

ELLA is offering 17 thought-provoking online courses this winter. In spring, the organization conducts in person classes on the University of Alberta campus.

Chan's class for this session will

cover basics, such as character and plot development and topics such as crafting a voice which will grab the younger reader. "You have to sort of blow up your expectations of how somebody takes in the story and figure out exactly how to appeal to that younger audience."

Chan says the motivation to take the course varies from wanting to tell stories to grandkids to wanting to publish a book.

Edmonton Journal municipal affairs columnist Keith Gerein is returning to teach his Civic Politics in the Age of Incoherence course.

Coming off the recent elections, the course will have plenty of relevance even for students who have taken it before, says Gerein. Last year the class raised questions about where the city was heading, with factors such as party politics and whether change was in the air. "We'll delve into that and we'll try to look at what happened and why."

Gerein says it's great to get the feedback ELLA students provide.

"They probably have a little more time to think about these issues. They've seen the city go through its ups and downs."

Veteran technology instructor Shawn Gramiak is teaching two ELLA classes - Getting More out of Google and AI for Everyone.

Gramiak says he wants students to come away with something that will make their lives simpler. But there will be fun and challenges along the way. The Google course will cover Google mail, docs, sheets, maps and YouTube. "I show people how to use the tools and I leave it up to them to figure out where they want to go with it," says Gramiak, a longtime instructor at MacEwan University.

The AI course will focus on practical uses of AI, but Gramiak adds that he appreciates senior audiences dive a bit deeper into subject matter. "In a class of seniors, you'll have very frank discussions about the ethics and morality of it all. And sometimes I don't think that neces-



Award-winning author Marty Chan returns to teach writing for children as ELLA launches its winter online courses starting January

sarily takes place, especially with the people who are big fans of artificial intelligence."

Registration for ELLA's Online Winter Session begins December 2, with classes starting January 12. For course information and more details, visit my-ella.com.

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When Rights Are Ignored, We All Lose

The government’s decision to invoke the notwithstanding clause during the teachers’ strike has prompted questions about learning conditions, collective bargaining and future use of this legislative tool

By Rakhi Pancholi, MLA, Edmonton-Whitemud



Watching Albertans from across the province rally behind teachers and students in the last months has deepened my belief that there are strong, common values we share as a province. And public education is one of them.

It’s clear Albertans want students in school learning and teachers in school teaching. But we also agree that students should have the supports and learning conditions they need to be successful in school and in life.

Unfortunately, that’s not what students have been getting in Alberta for the past few years. In our own community, we have seen the impacts of large class sizes, lack of EA support for students and lotteries for local schools. These classroom conditions and the failure of the UCP government to put forward measures to address them during collective bargaining is what led to the teachers’ strike. Albertans overwhelmingly supported teachers in their efforts to improve classroom

conditions for our kids — my inbox was proof of that!

However, instead of listening to teachers, parents and students — by bringing forward a proposal during bargaining to address classroom conditions — the government used the most heavy-handed measures this province has ever seen to force teachers back to work under terms that 90 per cent of teachers rejected twice.

The UCP government rammed through Bill 2, the Back to School Act, in one extraordinarily undemocratic evening which forced teachers back into the same underfunded and overcrowded classrooms they were fighting to address. Not only that, they also used the notwithstanding clause against teachers.

The notwithstanding clause is a rarely-used section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that a government uses when they are choosing to intentionally and unreasonably violate their citizens’ Charter rights. In this case, Bill 2 explicitly violates teachers’ rights to collective bargaining under section 2(d) of the Charter. The government knows that and did it anyway.

And let’s be clear — they did not need to use the notwithstanding clause to end the strike. Its use, and forcing through the legislation in one evening, was one of the most profoundly undemocratic actions this province has seen. I was lucky that I had a chance to speak in debate, but only a handful of Opposition MLAs got the chance. And Premier Smith did not even have the decency to be in the Legislature to defend her egregious Bill. She left for an overseas trip that same day.

Albertans need to know that if this government has no problem violating the rights of teachers today, they will have no problem using it to violate your rights tomorrow. In fact, I suspect this won’t even be the last time they use the notwithstanding clause this year.

And so my friends, now is the time to use your voices to get involved and get loud. Fight for an Alberta that stands up for all of us.

And thank you to the teachers. Thank you for standing up for our kids. I know it’s been hard, but your community stands with you.



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Have a municipal question or concern?


Email me at mike.elliott@edmonton.ca or call my office at 780.496.8130 and let’s connect!



Grateful for Your Support, Ready for the Work Ahead

Following re-election, Trustee Julie Kusiek asks residents how they prefer to receive updates, share ideas and stay engaged in Ward F

By Julie Kusiek, Ward F Trustee, Edmonton Public School Board



I has been an incredible experience to serve as Ward F Trustee since 2021. THANK YOU for your resounding support this October in re-electing me to serve for a second term. It is truly an honour and I love serving public education as your Trustee. I received approximately 65 per cent of the Ward F vote and according to Taproot Edmonton this represents the fifth most votes across all mayoral, council and trustee races in the city and the highest number of votes for any ward-specific race.

As we get ready to embark on the next four years together, I'd like to check in with you around the best ways to connect. As you will likely already know, connecting with all constituents, not just those with kids in school right now, is important to me. Do you think I have the right mix of in person events, newsletter and social media communication? Please keep in mind that the Trustee role is set out to be 10-20 hours

per week and we receive limited administrative support for ward activities. Please send me an email at trustee.julie.kusiek@epsb.ca with your feedback!

Newsletter:

You can read the Ward F Newsletter, sent after each regular board meeting. I also post these to SchoolZone to ensure families with children enrolled in Ward F Schools receive these updates. Do you find these of value? Do they hit the right balance of quick, useful information that fits into your own busy schedules and inboxes? The sign-up link is at linktr.ee/JulieKusiek, or in my email signature.

Ward F Coffee Chats:

Every couple of months, I host a casual drop in coffee conversation in the Ward. Attendance can vary and these are currently advertised through School Zone, my newsletter and social media accounts.

Attending community events, school visits:

To avoid me missing a public event notice, if you have an event you'd like me to attend,

please send a direct invite. I'd be happy to attend if I'm able. For school visits or events, I do like to get out to each of the 35 schools in the Ward at least once per academic year so please work with your principal to extend an invitation if there is a school event or school council meeting you'd like me to attend.

Hosting Ward F School Council Network Meetings:

Last term I organized about 3-4 networking sessions per year for Ward F school council executives to get together, share ideas and support one another in the work of school councils.

Social Media:

I use Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. Do you use these platforms? If so, what content is most helpful to you?

Thanks for taking the time to read this and for emailing me some feedback if you can. I look forward to our continued work together, in support of student success at Edmonton Public Schools. Keep in touch!

Halloween Puppy Pawty Brings Brookside Dog Park Season to a Close

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Your Voice Matters in Upcoming City Budget

Residents are encouraged to attend an in-person or virtual town hall on November 26 to share priorities before four-year funding decisions are made

By Mike Elliott, City Councillor, Ward pihêsiwin



Ward pihêsiwin Residents, I would like to say from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Thank you for opening your doors to me and for sharing all of your questions, concerns and municipal issues. Over the past few months, I have enjoyed meeting thousands of residents and hearing each of your different perspectives. Your input will be invaluable in shaping my decisions at the Council table and I sincerely appreciate your time, support and input.

Now, we have work to do! Budget deliberations are just around the corner, starting at the beginning of December. These deliberations will set the budget for the next four years, allocating funding to our city's programmes and services. Please note that this budget is fluid, with adjustments occurring each fall and spring.

This four-year budget is incredibly important and your feedback and comments are crucial ahead of these Council deliberations. I invite you to attend my in-person or virtual budget townhall on Wednesday, November 26th from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Booster Juice Recreation Centre in Terwillegar in Multi-Purpose Room B (located on the 2nd floor on the arena side of the building). If you would like to attend virtually, please contact my office for the Zoom Link. There will be an opportunity to ask questions during this meeting. I strongly encourage you and your neighbours to participate in the conversation.

I look forward to representing Ward pihêsiwin over the next four years. I encourage you to reach out to my office at mike.elliott@edmonton.ca or by calling 780-496-8130 with any questions or concerns. The amazing team that supported Councillor Cartmell will be working with me to ensure your inquiries are answered in a timely manner. I look forward to building strong relationships with all of you and supporting you to the best of my ability. Thank you again for your trust!

Shaping Priorities at Home and in Ottawa

From federal budget priorities to trade committee work and Remembrance Day observances, November brings important conversations to Parliament

By Matt Jeneroux, MP, Edmonton Riverbend



November is always a busy and meaningful month — both here at home and in Ottawa. With important debates underway in Parliament, a new City Council beginning its work in Edmonton and Remembrance Day approaching, there's much happening in our community.

Parliament has heard the government's proposed budget — it was a chance to take stock of Canada's finances and hear this government's priorities for the months ahead. Many families and small businesses in Edmonton Riverbend continue to share concerns about affordability, spending, and long-term fiscal health. I'll be reviewing the plan closely to ensure it reflects the realities Canadians are facing.

Our relationship with the United States also continues to be front and centre as I continue to see firsthand, as a member of our International Trade Committee. As our largest trading partner and closest neighbour, cooperation between our two countries remains vital to Alberta's economy and Canada's broader prosperity. As this relationship continues to evolve, and as new opportunities open up, I will be paying close attention to see how these concerns continue to affect us.

At the local level, I want to congratulate our newly elected members of Edmonton City Council. Their leadership will be essential as our city continues to grow and evolve, and I look forward to working together on the issues that matter most to residents of our community.

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Gratitude and Kindness — The Heart of Our Community

Following the return to regular classes, school leaders are emphasizing academic recovery, student support and renewed community engagement

By Lisa Turchansky, Vice Chair, Edmonton Catholic Schools Board of Trustees



As we begin a new chapter in our school year and community life, I am filled with gratitude. Having been re-elected to my third term as trustee and entering my sixth year as Vice Chair of the Board, I am deeply humbled by the trust and confidence that our families, staff and community members continue to place in me.

Elections are moments that remind us of the strength of democracy. To everyone who stepped forward — whether you won or lost — thank you. You contributed to a process that enriches our communities and strengthens our shared commitment to publicly funded education.

These past few weeks have brought both challenge and renewal. With the recent teachers' strike behind us, our focus now returns wholeheartedly to students, staff and families. Across our Division, teachers and staff are working tirelessly to ensure that learning momentum is regained, relationships are rebuilt and classrooms

are once again filled with the buzz of students. The decision to cancel departmental and provincial achievement tests this semester gives our educators the space to focus where it matters most — on supporting students' learning and well-being.

We owe special gratitude to our incredible support staff, who stood as the steady heart of our schools during the strike. They showed up every single day, ensuring that our buildings remained cared for and our communities connected. Many used the time to update learning spaces, complete long-awaited projects, and prepare classrooms for a joyful return. When our teachers and students walked back through the doors, they were welcomed not just with gratitude, but with visible signs of dedication and love.

Kindness, too, has been a defining theme in recent weeks. Across Edmonton, our teachers were met with compassion — discounts from local businesses, kind words on sidewalks and social media and countless prayers offered at St. Thomas More Parish and beyond. This spirit of solidarity and empathy spoke volumes about

who we are as a community. When challenges arise, we stand together.

But kindness is also a call to action. One unexpected impact of the strike has been a decline in food bank donations. Many of our schools traditionally begin the year with food drives to support families in need across our neighbourhood's. With classes paused, those shelves are emptier than usual. It's a reminder of how deeply interconnected our schools are with the health and heart of our communities.

As students settle back into their routines, I encourage all of us to rekindle that spirit of giving — whether through food donations, volunteer time, or simple acts of kindness. Our schools are more than places of learning; they are hubs of compassion, generosity, and joy in action.

To our teachers, staff, families, and community partners — thank you. Your kindness sustains us, your spirit inspires us and your gratitude reminds us of what truly matters. Together, we continue to build not only strong schools but strong hearts.



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Sprouts Program Flourishes as SWEFM Celebrates a Strong Season

Vendors, volunteers and loyal shoppers (including Sprouts) helped make SWEFM’s 14th season a success, with planning underway for 2026

By Lisa Jodoin, market manager and Karin Shott, Sprouts coordinator

Southwest Edmonton Farmers’ Market (SWEFM) would like to send out a huge thank you for all the community support we have received throughout our 14th Farmers Market Season. Our season saw new faces discovering everything our market has to offer and many familiar faces joining us every week.

One of the highlights of this fall was our amazing Thanksgiving Dinner Basket. Each item was donated by our incredible vendors. We want to acknowledge and thank the following vendors for their generous donations:

El Mero Mero Taqueria, The Lemon Grass Grill, Canadian Kettle Corn Inc, Sunworks Farm, Lily N Kae Natural Designs, Good Morning Honey, Sherwood Park Soups, Hand Pressed Canada, Bliss Small Batch Vegan Dressing, Kona Ice of Edmonton, JillsDills, Sea Change Brewing, Grey Owl Meadery, The Davinci Cone, KokoCup, Lori’s Eats and Treats, Urban Fresh, Theo’s Greek Kouzina, S4 Greenhouse, Riverbend Greenhouse and Steve and Dan’s Fresh BC Fruit.

We would also like to send out a huge thank you to all our volunteers who join us each week and help make the market possible.

Our 2026 market season vendor applications will open up in January. Please stay tuned to our

social media and website for updates on our 2026 calendar.

SWEFM was pleased to host the Sprouts Program again this year! Despite the unpredictable weather, our dedicated “Sprouts” and their families showed up rain or shine. Over 960 children (ages 4-12) took part in our program and enjoyed the local market experience.

Special thanks to volunteer Martina Kunkel, from The Ridge Community League, for her help at the registration table — her time and effort were truly appreciated!

A big thank-you to everyone who made this year’s program possible: the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council (TRAC), our community leagues, local businesses, and the participating food vendors (who provided fresh fruits and veggies for the sprouts children). We couldn’t have made the program such as a success without your continued support!

We are also very grateful to all of our sponsors whose financial contributions helped keep the program running throughout the 2025 market season — Cultivator Level (\$2500): Omnia Dental Clinic, Terwillegar Community League and South West Area Council (\$2000). Gardener Level (\$1000): Riverbend Community League,



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Royal Bank (RBC) Magrath, The Ridge Community League and The Medicine Shoppe, Haddow (\$750). Seeds Sower Level (\$500): Greater Windermere Community League, Innovation Physical Therapy, Riverbend, Terwillegar Community Church, and Terwillegar Towne Home Owners Association. Sprouts Supporter (\$250): Brookview Community League

Thanks also to the Lupien, Pfeffer and Statton families who sponsored the Young Vendor Program this past year, allowing us to continue to have an extra tent for budding entrepreneurs.

Wishing everyone a wonderful winter season, and we look forward to welcoming our “Sprouts” back for another fun-filled SWEFM season in mid-May 2026!

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Bridging Generations - Opportunities for Boomers

Connecting with people of all ages gives us all a chance to learn and grow; while sharing the knowledge we've acquired through experience

By Sue Paulson

A recent post on Facebook had me thinking about what the Boomers have experienced since the 1940s and how each generation can bridge gaps to other generations. Because we're the eldest, we can be a vital bridge.

As a youngster, I spent nine years on a family farm that Dad bought just 10 miles south of Edmonton. My grandparents lived there too, and ran our mixed farming operation. From them, I learned how to milk a cow, pluck chickens and plant a garden. Weeding was not my favourite, but I sure enjoyed the fresh peas, corn and raspberries!

It was a simple life filled with aunts, uncles and cousins who visited on the weekends. We learned how to get along and how to look out for each other.

Back in the big city, and a mere 30 years after my farm adventure, technology started unfolding in a bigger and more personal way. Now, with technology rolling out faster than homemade cinnamon buns, maybe you, like me, have pleaded with kids and/or grandkids to show us — yet again — how to sort out our cellphones, emails and Smart TVs. (Do I really want a TV that's smarter than I am?)

So, what does each generation contribute as we go and grow? I'm so encouraged when I meet new young people. They're bright, en-

ergetic, and filled with great ideas. Most of all, they care about others, and they care about our planet. I learn from them all the time.

My granddaughters, age 7, remind me to be delighted with the present moment. I confess I tap into that well of energy whenever I'm around them.

Those of us in our 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s also contribute to each other and to younger generations in many important ways. Honed life skills and our experiences of what life has taught us have produced valuable perspectives.

Growing up in the 50s and 60s, we had opportunities to be rebels, protestors, loyal workers and fearless pioneers and entrepreneurs. We cherished our opportunities to learn and have become endlessly curious. We value what matters to us — kindness, a reverence for life and community at its best.

So, my Boomer Buddies, how can we participate more fully with every generation?

We can share stories with our young people whenever the opportunity arises. We can listen as they share. For example, Norquest College brings a group of students to SWESA for coffee and conversation on a regular basis. Why not join us?

A number of seniors I know work one-on-one with immigrant families to help them adapt to Canadian life (and the winter). Others



Norquest College regularly brings a group of students to SWESA for coffee, conversation and connection between generations.

volunteer at food banks, shelters and community kitchens.

Together, regardless of age, we can make a difference by communicating and connecting.

One of my ways of connecting is as a member of the Southwest Edmonton Seniors Association (SWESA). Our annual Open House, held in October, brought us a number of new members. Welcome to all.

Whether you decide to volunteer with us, participate in games, events or sign up for the latest workshop offerings, you're sure to be richly rewarded for being part of a vibrant community. A huge thanks to SWESA staff and their eager band of volunteers for their outstanding efforts in running SWESA.



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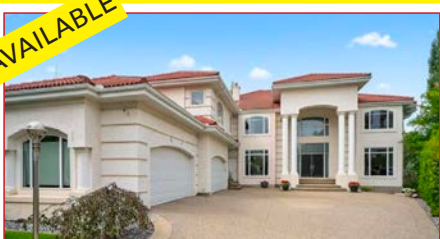
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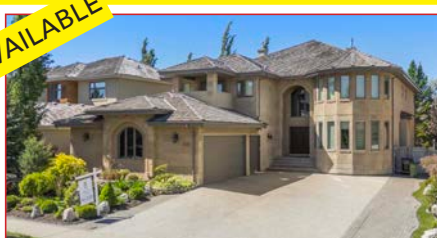
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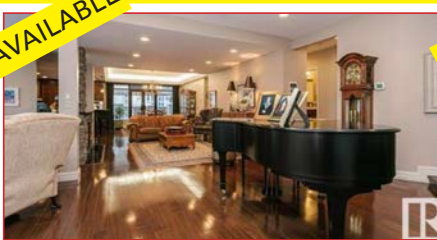
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