

# The Riverbend Ragg-Times

A PUBLICATION OF THE RIVERBEND COMMUNITY LEAGUE

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## Remembering John Sexsmith (1961 – 2025)

Friends, colleagues and neighbours remember John Sexsmith for his lasting impact on local sports, community building and Edmonton media

By Dave Rumbold

Long time Riverbend-Terwillegar resident and community builder John Sexsmith passed away on October 17, 2025, at the age of 63. John is survived by his wife of 25 years, his son, mother, his large extended family and his two beloved St. Bernards.

John was a well-known figure in Edmonton media for 35 years. He worked as a Sports Reporter and Anchor at ITV/Global Edmonton for 26 years and at 630 CHED and K-97 before that. He also served as the PA announcer for the Edmonton Elks (then known as the Eskimos) for several years. A natural storyteller, he was known for his sense of humour and positive attitude, his enjoyment of wordplay and his love of sports of all kinds. He coached local hockey for years and greatly enjoyed seeing young people, including his son, enjoy the game and reach their potential. Until his last days, he was actively coaching local South Side Athletic Club (SSAC) hockey players, golfing, gardening and readying for a cruise while working full-time.

Locally, John was always quick to show up and help in the community in ways seen and unseen. I recall reaching out for his assistance with the TRAC 10K Community Run 20 years ago and he simply said “What can I do to help?”. Active with Brookview Community League for years, John was an integral part of the recent Brookview Rink Project team.

John valiantly fought different forms of cancer for the last 13 years with grace and good humour. While fighting this battle, he found time to actively



John Sexsmith smiles during the opening of the Brookview Community Rink, a project close to his heart and one that reflected his deep commitment to the Riverbend-Terwillegar community.

give back as a passionate advocate for the Alberta Cancer Exercise Program and as also as a Legacy Officer with the Alberta Cancer Society. His focus was on helping others, and he shared that he felt a deep calling in performing this service.

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## Minor Hockey Week Brings Community Together

Edmonton Minor Hockey Week returned, celebrating tradition, teamwork and community across the city

By Terra Cook

Edmonton’s 62nd Quikcard Edmonton Minor Hockey Week wrapped up earlier this month, once again showcasing one of the largest and longest-running minor hockey tournaments in the world. Held from January 9 to 18, 2026, the event brought together thousands of players and hundreds of teams from across the capital region.

Since its start in 1964, Minor Hockey Week has been a defining moment in the local hockey season. Players from U9 to U18 divisions competed throughout the city, continuing a tradition that even earned a Guinness World Record in 2003 for the largest ice hockey tournament ever held.

continued on p.4...



Young Edmonton players compete on the ice during Quikcard Edmonton Minor Hockey Week.

## Lithium-Ion Battery Fires Pose Risk for Edmontonians

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services warns that damaged or improperly charged batteries can ignite quickly, offering tips to prevent fires and safely recycle devices

Following recent dwelling fires, the City of Edmonton is sharing important information on behalf of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services (EFRS) to remind Edmontonians about the potential dangers of lithium-ion batteries. In 2025, EFRS responded to eight fires involving lithium-ion batteries.

From power tools and e-mobility devices to smartphones, laptops, vapes, smoke alarms and toys— if it makes noise, lights up or connects to the Internet, it likely contains an internal battery and needs to be dis-

posed of with caution. If these batteries are damaged, not used correctly or disposed of incorrectly, there is a risk they could catch fire or explode.

“Over the last few years, as lithium-ion batteries become more common, we have seen an increase in fires. This week alone, EFRS responded to two eBike battery fires,” said Assistant Deputy Chief, Justin Lallemand, Fire Prevention & Investigations. “Although less frequent than some of our other leading causes of fires, these lithium-ion fires are extremely dangerous to people and

property, and they can cause challenges for our crews who need to put them out.”

While we can’t avoid using lithium-ion batteries, there are ways to prevent these fires, including:

- Not charging devices overnight.
- Only using the correct battery and its specific battery charger and not modifying any equipment.
- Not charging electronic devices longer than necessary.
- Not charging electronic devices in entryways, or where a bat-

tery fire might block your exit.

- Not putting lithium-ion batteries or devices with internal batteries in the garbage. These items can cause fires when they go through collection and processing, putting staff and facilities at significant risk.
- Drop them off at an Eco Station or participating retailer for safe, easy recycling at no cost.

If a lithium-ion battery is on fire, it can burn at temperatures greater than 2000°C and can produce high volumes of toxic smoke that can fill a room quickly. They store a tremendous amount of energy.

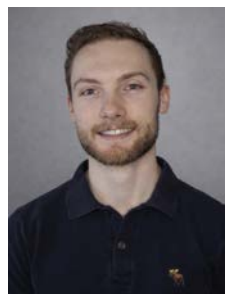
continued on p.4...



# Preventing Winter-Related Back Pain

Before you tackle the snowbanks, a few smart moves can help protect your back, muscles and joints

By Dr. Ethan Marler



The snow banks are piled high and we're all sick and tired of shoveling for hours out in the cold, so we rush to get it done. But every year around this time, the clinic fills up with people who push it too far and end up with back, joint, muscle or nerve aches and pains. So here are a few tips on how to avoid limping (or crawling) into a clinic.

Tip #1: Warm-up as if you're Exercising. Excessive snow is a part of our lives as Edmontonians, so we don't see shoveling as a workout, just a chore. But shoveling is very strenuous! It involves many major muscle groups in the body, all the way from your feet to your shoulders. And much like you, your muscles don't enjoy the cold weather. Try this quick routine before tackling the snow:

- 10 bodyweight squats
- 10 jumping jacks
- 10 arm circles or cross body reaches

These take less than 2 minutes but get your blood flowing, loosen your muscles and prime your body for the heavy lifting ahead.

Tip #2: Shovel Smart, Save Your Back. Many of us grew up shoveling, but with the hustle and bustle of our daily lives we may not always be giving it our A-game. Proper technique goes a long way to protect your back.

- Don't overload your shovel – bigger

scoops can easily weigh 25+ lbs

- Lift with your legs — they are a lot stronger than your back
- Turn, don't twist — take an extra second to turn to face where you're throwing snow to avoid straining your spine

These minor changes make major differences in how you use your muscles, which can save you a trip to a healthcare provider down the road.

Tip #3: Beware of Ice. We've all been there — you're tired, cold and just want to go inside for some hot cocoa. Be sure to take the extra time to use the scraper or ice melt on those pesky patches of ice, and wear quality winter boots/shoes with good traction — grip matters!

Slip and fall injuries are very prevalent this time of year, ranging from annoying bruises, to more serious fractures and head traumas. Ice doesn't discriminate and is out to get us all. A little extra attention might be the difference between a close call and a moment going viral on a ring camera recording.

Winter can be a lot of fun, but only if you are feeling your best. Following the tips above can help you stay happy, healthy and ward off the winter woes. But if pain does manage to creep in, remember that chiropractors, physiotherapists and massage therapists can help.

*Dr. Ethan Marler is a Chiropractor practicing in the Riverbend community.*

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President's Message



# Plenty of Options to Enjoy the Winter Months

There's something for everyone this winter at Riverbend Community League. Join friends and neighbours for bridge, skating, trivia and other activities that bring our community together

By Mike Lupien

We gather with family and friends for good times during the holiday season, but there's no reason why we can't keep that spirit going well into the new year. Watch for our emails, social media posts and messages on the RCL website for upcoming social events to get out and have some fun!

**Bridge anyone?** The Riverbend Bridge Club meets every Wednesday from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the social room at Riverbend Community Hall (258 Rhatigan Road East). All are welcome to play regardless of skill level. Our host, Allan Terplawy, is an accredited American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) director and teacher, who shares his knowledge and advice. Join us on your own or bring a friend.

No need to register, just have a valid community league membership and a \$5 drop-in fee. Visit us and check it out!

**Family Skate Fest:** Some of the best outdoor skating rinks in Edmonton are right here in Brookside. Thanks to our great volunteers we have two fully functional rinks for skating and playing shinny hockey.

Be sure to mark February 16 on your cal-

endar and join us from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for the Family Skate Fest at Brookside rinks. This very popular annual event features an afternoon of on-ice activities, music, snacks and refreshments.

**Trivia Night:** March 12 is Trivia Night at Riverbend Hall! Starting at 7 p.m. you can mix and mingle then get down to seeing who has the most brain power to answer the most obvious or obscure questions. Bring your friends and join in the fun. Sign up at riverbendonline.ca.

**Community Swim Program:** Riverbend Community League members can take advantage of free swim hours at the Booster Juice Recreation Centre on Sundays from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m., and the Confederation Leisure Centre from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

**Free hall rentals on Thursdays:** Did you know the Riverbend Community Centre is available on Thursday evenings for free rentals to community league members who want to provide community programming? Bring people together to share your skills, ideas or crafts. We are open to your ideas. Reach out to us for more details if you're interested in tak-



Brookside rinks come alive as families enjoy ringette and winter fun at the 2025 Family Skate Fest. Join RCL for Family Skate Fest and more this winter!

ing advantage of these free rental nights.  
**Give back to your community:** If you'd like to volunteer, we have a number of opportunities from leadership to programming or to just help out with an event. Anyone with an interest in giving back to the community is welcome to join us. We'd love your interest and expertise! Visit riverbendonline.ca and click on About Us/Board Executive to see the board positions available.

## JOIN OUR BOARD!

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need your help to make a difference at Riverbend Community League! Join our team of volunteers and contribute to something meaningful in your community.

OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

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- TRAC Reps
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For more information: Email [info@riverbendonline.ca](mailto:info@riverbendonline.ca)  
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...John Sexsmith, continued from p.1

Long-term friend and broadcasting icon Tim Spelliscy says “John loved all sports but especially the activities that weren’t well known or competitions that weren’t high profile. He also liked to get behind the scenes and tell stories about athletes and their families. He really knew how to connect with viewers, which is an incredible talent. He was a natural.”

Local sports and media leader Dave Jamieson shares “John had a profound effect on me personally but

also on the community at large. John was proud of living in Riverbend and wanted future generations to enjoy the Brookview Rink the way he and his family had enjoyed community amenities for so many years.”

The Brookview Community League Rink Committee recalls that “Everything is Beautiful” by Ray Stevens was a song that played in John’s mind every time he passed by the rink. It became his catch phrase. As a member of the Rink Committee, John reached out to his vast local net-

work and secured the scoreboard for the new rink through his persistence! Thank you for your contributions to our community John – you are missed!

In John’s memory, donations can be made to the Alberta Cancer Exercise (ACE) program, the Alberta Cancer Foundation or Second Chance Animal Rescue Society.

Thank you to Kyle Fodchuk, Dave Jamieson, Glenn Kubish and Tim Spelliscy for their assistance with this article.



John Sexsmith stands with the Brookview Community Rink scoreboard, which he helped secure through his extensive local connections and tireless advocacy for community amenities.

...minor hockey, continued from p.1

Among the participating associations was SWAT Hockey, representing southwest Edmonton neighbourhoods including Riverbend, Terwillegar, Windermere and Ambleside areas. For SWAT players and families, the tournament marked a season highlight as an opportunity to compete, connect and be part of a citywide celebration of minor hockey. “Quikcard Edmonton Minor Hockey Week is one of the most meaningful weeks of the season for our families,” said SWAT President Mark Buchynski. “It’s a powerful reminder of how deep hockey roots run in our community. Our athletes followed in the footsteps of parents, siblings and relatives who competed

years ago. SWAT was incredibly proud to contribute over 100 volunteers and field 35+ teams, representing more than 100 coaches and 500+ athletes.”

Booster Juice Recreation Centre in Terwillegar served as one of the tournament’s busiest venues, filled with the energy of young athletes, volunteers and cheering families throughout the week. If you noticed the parking lot was extra busy, it was also the site of the final games for all age groups and divisions.

Information about how teams fared and who won the tournament can be found online at [quikcardminorhockey.com](http://quikcardminorhockey.com).

...fire safety, continued from p.1

dous amount of energy, almost three times more than alkaline batteries, and can last for years longer. Even after a lithium-ion battery fire is put out, it may reignite hours or days later.

“Fire moves fast. From the first sign of a problem, you could have less than a minute to escape a battery fire. The best way to be safe is to prevent a fire from starting. Don’t wait, plan ahead. Create and practice a fire escape plan. You need an escape plan no matter what type of building you live in and know at least two ways out of your location,” said Assistant Deputy Chief Lallemand.

It may be a sign of danger if you notice any of the following with your batteries: Odour, change in colour, change in shape, too much heat, leaking, or odd noises.

If it is safe to do so, move small devices like cell phones away from anything that could catch fire, call 911 and go outside.

For larger batteries, such as those found in e-mobility devices like e-bikes and e-scooters, leave the building immediately if you hear an explosion or see signs of smoke. Activate the fire alarm and call 911.



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# A New Year at City Hall: Snow Clearing, Taxes and What’s Ahead

An update on winter maintenance concerns, property assessment deadlines and opportunities to stay connected in Ward pihêsiwin in 2026

By Mike Elliott, City Councillor, Ward pihêsiwin



**H**appy New Year from City Hall! Please see some important updates below.

**Snow & Ice Control:** Over the last several weeks, many residents have expressed frustration with the City’s approach to snow clearing this season. Safe and timely winter maintenance is essential, and I recognize that expectations have not been met, particularly in residential neighborhoods.

A discussion is currently scheduled for August, during which Council will review the previous winter season alongside the scheduled Snow and Ice Policy review. Please be assured that I intend to question Administration closely regarding the data presented and residential snow removal efforts. I will continue to monitor snow clearing closely, as I recognize how critical this service is.

**Property Tax Assessment Mailout & Deadline to Appeal:** In December 2025, Council approved a property tax increase of 6.9% for

2026. This covers the portion of taxes for City Operations. The amount of tax required for education taxes is set by the Province in its Spring budget. For 2026, final tax assessments are expected to be set in April.


Following extensive deliberation, I voted against the proposed budget and the associated tax increase of 6.9% as my ultimate goal was to reduce the proposed tax increase.

The City of Edmonton mailed property assessment notices on January 12th. I encourage you to verify its accuracy by taking the following steps:

1. Review the details on your assessment notice.
2. Check what makes up your property’s assessment value and compare it with similar properties in your neighbourhood using the tools on [edmonton.ca/assessment](http://edmonton.ca/assessment).
3. Contact the City for one-on-one support by calling 311 (780-442-5311, if outside Edmonton). An assessor can answer most assessment-related questions with no formal complaint fees required.


If you disagree with your property’s assessment, you have until 4:30 pm on March 23, 2026, to file a formal complaint with the Assessment Review Board. You can file online at [arb.edmonton.ca](http://arb.edmonton.ca), in person or by mail to Clerk of the Assessment Review Board, Main Floor, Churchill Building, 10019 103 Avenue NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 0G9. Your actual tax notice will be mailed to you in May, but it will be too late to challenge your tax bill in May.

**Looking Ahead in 2026:** With my first 2 months of Council down, I’m very much looking forward to what 2026 will bring as I continue to represent Ward pihêsiwin. This year, I’m excited to continue doing regular community meetings in the Ward, which will be a great opportunity for you to share your questions and concerns with me. I would like to encourage you to keep an eye on my social media channels and also subscribe to my newsletter if you would like to keep updated on community events I am hosting in the Ward.



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# Parent volunteers are the heart of TRSA soccer programs

With the right support and a willingness to get involved, parents can make a lasting difference in youth soccer — on and off the field

By Mike Lupien

A popular sentiment in the sports world is that behind every player who believes in themselves is a coach who believed in them first. One could easily include parents in the conversation.

You might be thinking, “I’m not a professional coach, how much can I offer to teach my kids and their friends?” The truth is, there are many opportunities in your community to contribute to youth development in the sports they enjoy.

Take community soccer for example. The Terwillegar Riverbend Soccer Association (TRSA) has plenty of resources, tools and supports for team officials like coaches, assistants and team managers.

TRSA has one of the largest community soccer programs in the city, serving the communities of Riverbend, Terwillegar, Hodgson, Oak Hills, The Ridge, Brookview, Ogilvie Ridge and Greater Windermere. It has programs for U4 to U19 soccer players at all skill levels.

Last year, TRSA had more than 1,500 players on 111 teams during the outdoor season and currently has nearly 600 players on 38 teams playing in the 2025-26 indoor season.

The demand can outweigh the number of available coaches for certain age groups. Without coaches, players are moved to teams in other southwest communities, or in the worst case, there isn’t a team at all.

“Coaching and managing starts with parents taking a role on their child’s team,” says Carl Tan, TRSA president. “They get involved to enjoy the

sport with their kids and to see them succeed. Previous experience is useful, but many parents will learn along with their players as they progress through the development phase and into more competitive soccer.”

That was Eunice Wong’s experience. She volunteered as a team manager on her son’s team for several years and took on the coaching role for her younger son’s team last year.

“I volunteered because there was a risk we could lose the team, and I had the experience as a manager and the confidence to lead,” said Eunice. She is quick to point out her success comes from parents who take on roles like assistant coach, team manager or equipment manager.

“Knowing you’re not the only one coaching is important. I work with the parents to get help, and there are resources available from TRSA, other coaches and online.”

Joanna Manchur coaches to give back to the sport and for the joy she receives from seeing her players develop. She leads her daughter’s U11 team and is an assistant coach for her son’s U13 team.

She counts herself lucky, as a young player, to have had two female coaches who were attending the University of Alberta running her team. She was inspired to do the same during her university years initially as an assistant coach and then head coach. “I stayed with those girls as their coach until they aged out, and it was a thrill for me when two of my players decided to stay involved with TRSA coaching a younger girls team together.”



Joanna Manchur volunteers as a coach for daughter Emily’s soccer team, and an assistant on son Lucas’s team.

After learning about the high rate of children dropping out of sports in their teens, girls in particular, Joanna is focused on keeping players interested in soccer well past age 12, so they will stay active in the future.

“As a coach, it’s rewarding to see growth and development in players as they progress. They gain confidence, self-esteem and teamwork skills that they show on and off the field,” says Joanna.

Confident players give it their all when they know they are backed by a team of parent volunteers who believe in them.

Parents can indicate their volunteer interest during the player registration process. For more information about the TRSA soccer program, visit [TRSA.ca](https://trsa.ca).

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# Community Building Through Holiday Cheer

Riverbend ROCKS’ annual Holiday Gathering spreads cheer throughout the community and brings together neighbours for shared experiences

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 Cvida complex and surrounding areas to accessible opportunities that promote social inclusion, community connection and an enhanced quality of life.

On December 5, we had the pleasure of hosting our annual Holiday Gathering at Riverbend United Church. Open to all, attending the event has become a tradition for many of our community members. This event is a cornerstone of our ongoing community engagement.

This year, we brought out a wonderful array of activities and goodies for attendees, some of which were generously donated. We prepared crafts for the children, including felt ornament making and paper gingerbread house construction, along with board/card games for the youth and adults. An impressive food display was prepared by the ladies of our community through our Women

ROCKS program and its partnership with Amity House. Lastly, we had our very own Santa Claus, who, of course, brought with him gift bags for all of the children and youth in attendance.

Community building is a central part of our mission, and we believe that large events in which community members come together to share meals and experiences are foundational to this goal. We host numerous events and gatherings throughout the year, including Summer Gatherings, Back-to-School, Give-or-Take Bazaars and Holiday Gatherings. These activities also serve as an outreach opportunity for our other programs, such as our Tutoring Program, Youth and After-School Programs and Women ROCKS.

We want to thank all of the community members who came out on such a cold day for our event, our volunteers from the University of Alberta Medical School Program, Norquest Settlement Studies Program, and our board members who helped ensure the program ran



Community members enjoyed all sorts of crafts and activities at the Riverbend ROCKS annual Holiday Gathering on December 5, 2025.

smoothly. Thank you also to Chase the Chill for providing beautiful, hand-knit scarves and toques which were distributed to our attendees. Special thanks to Riverbend United Church for providing such a won-

derful site for the event.

As we wrap up the holiday season and enter the new year, we are very excited for all that will come in 2026!



# MARCH BREAK COOKING CAMP 2026

AGES 8-12

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# The Ridge Community League

**Call for Volunteers:**

Our rinks are open, and being enjoyed by many Edmontonians. It takes a lot of people and a lot of time to create quality ice surfaces such as ours, and we can always use more volunteers. We're also hoping for adults willing to supervise the warmup room at the Centre so that skaters have a nice place to put on their skates or warm up for a bit. If you could spare some time for ice maintenance or the warmup room, please send us a message at [volunteers@theridgeonline.ca](mailto:volunteers@theridgeonline.ca).

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**Ladies Creative Collective** — Thursday, January 29, 6:00 – 8:00pm  
Bring your own craft and join us at the Ridge Community League Centre for an evening of crafting, community, and conversation!

**Family Day Fun** — Monday, February 16  
The Ridge Centre and Rinks will be open from 1:00 – 4:00pm for family skating, indoor crafts, and hot chocolate. We hope to see you there!

**Gardening Workshop:**  
**How to Start Your Own Seedlings!** — Thursday, March 12, 7:00 – 9:00pm

- Join us to learn how to start your own vegetables and flowers from seeds
- Learn how to apply for a community garden plot at Haddow or Henderson

**Community Garden Applications** open on the website — March 13 - April 12

**St. Patrick's Day Pub Night!** — Saturday, March 14, 7:00 – 10:00pm

**3-Park Spring Cleanup** — Saturday, May 9, 10:30am - 12 noon

**Community Garden Kickoff** — Saturday, May 9, 2:30 - 4:30pm

**Our Neighbourhood in Bloom:** Congratulations to all involved in the successful pilot project of "Our Neighbourhood in Bloom" this past summer! Info about 2026 dates and volunteer opportunities coming soon.

For more details and updates, visit our website:  
[www.theridgeonline.ca](http://www.theridgeonline.ca)

To know what's happening in The Ridge Community, be sure you're signed up to receive our eNewsletter, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram!  
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INFORMATION**

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5:30-7:30**

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INFO @  
lohs.ca**



# Growing Together: SWEFM Looks Ahead to the 2026 Market Season

As planning begins for another summer of Wednesday markets, SWEFM invites vendors, volunteers, young entrepreneurs and sponsors to be part of the 2026 season

By Lisa Jodoin - Market Manager

The Southwest Edmonton Farmers' Market (SWEFM) has been part of the community landscape since 2011 and runs 22 Wednesdays from May through to early October. We are excited to get the 2026 market season started. While the snow and cold are still with us, behind the scenes our intrepid vendors are starting to get into the full swing of things to start the 2026 market season. Produce vendors have started sprouting those little seedlings in their greenhouses so when our market opens up in May, our customers will have the start of a bountiful summer! Our bakers have spent the winter perfecting their recipes to provide our customers with fresh baked products. Other vendors have preserved last year's fruit crop into yummy jams and jellies, while some have pickled last year's vegetables into delicious side dishes for your table. We can't wait to see what our amazing vendors have to offer us this season!

Our vendor applications for 2026 are open now. Make your way over to [swefm.ca](http://swefm.ca) and take a look at what you can expect from being a vendor at SWEFM. We are proud to be a member of the Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA)

which is an Alberta wide organization supporting markets and vendors. Pop by [albertafarmersmarket.com](http://albertafarmersmarket.com) to see how AFMA supports all aspects of Farmers' Markets across our Province.

Our Sprouts Program is a staple of our market and will continue into 2026. If you or your company would like to be part of this amazing program, please contact Karin at the TRAC Community Office at [yegtrac@gmail.com](mailto:yegtrac@gmail.com) for information about how to become a sponsor.

Once again, we are happy to have our Young Vendors Program return for another season. This program encourages young entrepreneurs between the ages of 10 and 17 to experience the market from a vendor's point of view. Each young vendor is given a space at no charge to sell their handmade product during our market. By investing in the future of local youth, we can all play a vital role in shaping a brighter, more entrepreneurial community. Young vendors can apply at [swefm.ca](http://swefm.ca).

Our Community Tent will once again play host to local non-profit organizations wanting to touch base with the community. Visit our website and click on the Community Tent link to apply.



As a non-profit organization, we are always happy to welcome volunteers to help us during the summer. If you have some time to spare this summer, please see our volunteer information at [swefm.ca](http://swefm.ca).

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram to continue to get updates as we get closer to opening day.

We would like to send out a sincere thank you to our entire community for your continued support of SWEFM and our vendors.



## Bridge Club


Drop-in for a game of bridge every Wednesday.  
Some knowledge of how to play is useful.

**No registration needed. Valid Community League Membership and \$5 drop-in fee is required (cash only).**

Wednesdays from 12.30-2.30 pm  
at Riverbend Community Centre  
258 Rhatigan Road East

For more information:  
Email [info@riverbendonline.ca](mailto:info@riverbendonline.ca)  
Visit [www.riverbendonline.ca](http://www.riverbendonline.ca)





## TRIVIA NIGHT

Tease Your Brain

Thursday  
**March 12**

Riverbend Community Centre  
258 Rhatigan Rd E

Doors open at: 7:00pm  
Game starts at: 7:30pm

For registration & further information  
[riverbendonline.ca](http://riverbendonline.ca)



# Renewed Resolve for the Year Ahead

Following a year of intense political debate and strong community engagement, there is renewed determination to advocate for Albertans amid uncertainty in 2026

By Rakhi Pancholi, MLA, Edmonton-Whitemud



**H**appy New Year! I hope you enjoyed a joyous holiday season with friends and family. For me, it was a time to recharge, to spread some holiday cheer in our city and to welcome a second rescue dog into our family.

Never a dull moment!

2025 was a busy year and I am proud of the work we did in the constituency office and as your Official Opposition. In the community, I knocked on doors all summer and fall, attended community league events, met you at the Farmers' Market and kicked off our monthly coffee chats, which have seen wonderful engagement.

I proudly stood with teachers, students and parents during one of the most challenging times our province has seen in decades — the teachers' strike and then the unprecedented decision of the government to override Albertans' fundamental rights and freedoms four times in one legislative sitting. This has mobilized Albertans in remarkable ways and started a movement.

In the Legislature, I continued to serve as your voice and as the Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition. The bills and motions the Official

Opposition put forward focused on the issues that matter to Albertans:

- Bill 201 proposed gradually increasing the minimum wage and then indexing it to inflation and protecting workers' tips.
- Bill 202 proposed limits to the gifts MLAs can receive and expanded the definition of "conflict of interest" to address recent government corruption allegations.
- Bill 203 proposed strengthening Alberta's electricity grid reliability by integrating energy storage and smarter use of existing resources.
- Bill 204 proposed whistleblower protection for healthcare workers who report wrongdoing or misuse of public funds.
- Motion 501 (which I introduced) called on MLAs to denounce Alberta separatism and express support for national unity.
- Motion 504 called on MLAs to support a cap on auto insurance rate increases, indexing increases to inflation.
- Motion 505 called on MLAs to support an inquiry into the practice of "shrinkflation," where manufacturers reduce the size, quality or quantity of a product without reducing the price.

All of these were voted down by the Government or delayed, but we will not stop putting for-

ward thoughtful proposals to improve life for all Albertans.

2026 looks like it will be a challenging year for our province. The Government has set the stage for referenda on unpopular issues like separation from Canada and leaving the Canada Pension Plan. The volatility of the global oil and gas market, ongoing trade challenges with the US and the strong likelihood of a large deficit budget means more impact on the lives of Albertans.

Like you, I remain deeply concerned about the ongoing worsening of Alberta's healthcare system — an issue highlighted by the death of Edmonton father, Prashant Sreekumar, in the emergency department while waiting for care.

This only strengthens my resolve to represent our community with diligence, integrity and optimism.

Finally, I want to offer my congratulations to our new City Councillor for Ward pihësiwin, Mike Elliot, and my deepest thanks to our outgoing city councillor, Tim Cartmell, for his years of service to our community. I also offer my sincere appreciation to our MP for Edmonton-Riverbend, Matt Jeneroux, on his years of public service.

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# It's Open House Season at Edmonton Public Schools!

As registration season approaches, families can take advantage of online tools, open houses and important deadlines to find the right Edmonton Public Schools program for their child

By Julie Kusiek, Trustee, Edmonton Public School Board



With over 30 different alternative and regular programs, there's a great fit for each and every student at Edmonton Public Schools. It would be a joy to have your student learn with us! Here are a few tips to ensure you are able to support your child's best fit in their K-12 journey:

**Learn more about programming opportunities:** Each school offers a different combination of regular and alternative program offerings. This includes programs focused on specific arts, athletics, languages, faith, teaching philosophy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit education. More info on programming can be found at <https://epsb.ca/programs/curriculum/>.

**Use the "Find A School" Tool:** The "Find a School" Tool at <https://epsb.ca/schools/findaschool/fast/> is really great. Type in your

address and it will show your designated school. Type in the specific program and it will show you all schools with that offering. You can even check off the box at the bottom "schools with upcoming open houses" and it will list the school, open house information, grades and programs offered.

**Attend an Open House:** Schools will be hosting open houses beginning in late January. Head to <https://epsb.ca/schools/openhouse/> to learn more. You'll find information on preparing for an open house, programming options and important details and deadlines for new student registration and pre-enrolment for current students.

Have a child entering Kindergarten? Schools start accepting new student registration for the next school year on February 2. Learn more Kindergarten at Edmonton Public Schools at <https://www.epsb.ca/schools/register/kindergartenregistration/>.

**Wondering about bussing?** Of course, transportation is an important consideration for

families when making a choice for school registration. Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) is the preferred means of student transportation. Edmonton Public Schools provides yellow bus service to a student's designated school if they are in Kindergarten to Grade 6 and live at least one kilometre away, or in Grades 7 to 12 and live at least two kilometres away and ETS is not available. Learn more at <https://www.epsb.ca/schools/gettoschool/transportation/>.

**A few other dates to note:** Entrance criteria school applications open January 9 and close January 30 at 4 p.m. Enrolment for new students and pre-enrolment for current students opens February 2 and closes March 25. After March 25, your options may be limited to schools with available space.

If you have questions or need further guidance, please don't hesitate to reach out by emailing me at [trustee.julie.kusiek@epsb.ca](mailto:trustee.julie.kusiek@epsb.ca).

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# More Than a Long Weekend: Why Family Day Matters as We Age

Family Day is a chance to celebrate connection — and to remember loved ones of all ages

By James Frey

Family Day is only celebrated in half of the Canadian provinces. Alberta was the first province to recognize Family Day as a statutory holiday on the third Monday of February. At the time, then-Premier Don Getty (in 1990) wanted a day for Albertans to spend with family.

Of course, as Family Day always falls on a Monday, it gives families a long weekend in the middle of winter. It also marks the start of “Reading Week” for post-secondary students and often coincides with some “professional development” days for K-12 students.

Being a winter holiday, families often spend Family Day outdoors, at ski hills, ice rinks or other winter activities. Malls, recreation centres, and theatres tend to be busy as well.

But Family Day is not just about kids.

Each year, the National Institute on Ageing conducts an Ageing in Canada Survey to explore “the perspectives and experiences of Canadians aged 50 and older.” In 2024, 6,000 Canadians were surveyed. Results for 2025 will come out

later this year.

The survey found that over the last three years, social isolation and loneliness levels of Canadians aged 50+ have remained unchanged: 43 per cent are at risk of social isolation, and 59 per cent experience some degree of loneliness. Even people with children are not immune; about a third reported having weak social networks.

It is well known that isolation and loneliness can negatively impact physical and mental health. According to the World Health Organization, these impacts could lead to serious health issues (including stroke, heart disease and diabetes) and even premature death. People with dementia can decline more rapidly when they don’t have the stimulation that comes from social interactions.

It’s important to remember that just because mom or grandpa is living in a senior’s care home with 50 other people their age, it doesn’t mean they aren’t lonely.

Involvement with family is key for seniors to maintain social connections. Family can not

only help with some of the care needs and get them participating in recreation (which can help with physical health), but also help them remember stories from the past, which is key to slowing cognitive decline.

Family can also encourage their ageing family members to make social connections through volunteering or recreational activities. That can have a huge impact. My own mother passed away last year. She was 96. For the last 20 years of her life, she lived in a senior care facility with 150 other residents, and the entire time she volunteered as the tuck shop manager, postmaster, and was even the official “Welcome Wagon” for new residents. Though she outlived her siblings and all her friends, it was those social connections she made that kept her engaged and enabled her to maintain an excellent quality of life. I believe it gave her a reason to live and dignity.

So, remember to include your ageing family members when you recognize Family Day this year.



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**Julie  
Kusiek**

**PHONE**  
780-429-8087

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# What's Happening This Spring in Southwest Edmonton

Important dates and reminders for outdoor soccer registration, community league memberships, the farmers' market and the TRAC Community Run

By Karin Shott

**TRSA Outdoor Soccer:** If you have someone interested in playing outdoor soccer, please check trsa.ca for more information. Registration is from February 1 to 28. A current community league membership is required to play community soccer. Not sure if your membership is current? Email the TRAC Office at yegtrac@gmail.com to check if it's still valid. All community league memberships expire August 31.

**Save the \$5 Admin.Fee:** Purchase your community league membership via the TRAC Com-

munity Office which is located in the Booster Juice Recreation Centre in Terwillegar (Terwillegar Rec Centre). If you wish to purchase or renew your membership in person, the office is open Mondays & Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursdays from 4 to 8 p.m. and the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month from 12 to 4 p.m. Payment options include cheque, cash, e-transfer or debit. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the office at yegtrac@gmail.com or by phone at 780-439-9394.

**Southwest Edmonton Farmers' Market:**



This year's market will run from Wednesday, May 13 to Wednesday, October 7 in Lot E at the Booster Juice Recreation Centre, from 3:30 – 7:30 p.m. For more information, please check swefm.ca.

**Save the Date:** The 21st annual TRAC Community Run/Walk is planned for Sunday, May 31, 2026. Stay tuned for more information!

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## A Call for Conservative Candidates!

Are you passionate about Alberta politics? Do you possess a strong track-record of leadership and a savvy worldview? Would you like to make a direct impact by representing your fellow constituents as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Edmonton-Whitemud? If so, we want to hear from you.

The United Conservative Party (Edmonton-Whitemud Constituency Association) is actively seeking expressions of interest from potential candidates to run in the next provincial election (scheduled for the fall of 2027). While an official Nomination Contest has yet to be announced, we welcome the opportunity to meet with those who are interested in running as part of a preliminary process leading up to the nomination contest.

If you would like to learn more, please email Sheila Phimester, President of the Edmonton-Whitemud Constituency Association, at [edmonton-whitemud@unitedconservative.ca](mailto:edmonton-whitemud@unitedconservative.ca).



# What Will You Intend for 2026?

Why setting intentions — not resolutions — can open the door to curiosity, friendship and fulfillment in our golden years

By Sue Paulson

If you've ever played with numerology, you know that adding up the digits of the year 2026 turns into a number one. A number one in numerology relates to new beginnings. So not only are we starting a new year, but we're starting a whole nine-year cycle of newness.

For some, 2025 was a roller coaster where the highs were not high enough and the lows were below rock bottom. Financial challenges, health issues and shifting family dynamics were all too common, especially in the seniors' community. Phew! Glad that's over!

Personally, even though it was a pretty good year for me, I'm sure I spent far too much time on mind-

less tv and things that didn't really matter. I hope that 2026 will be better — for all of us.

If you, too, would like more of what you want this next year, then how can we make this happen? Forget those new year's resolutions that rarely work. Focus instead on setting intentions. An intention is a mindset that charts a course that will flex as situations change. (A resolution, in contrast is a rigidly fixed focus on some goal or result i.e. — lose 10 lbs, run 3 miles a day.)

I intend for 2026 to be a year filled with curiosity, learning, and joy. Anything that's fun and/or enriching is what I want. At 75, I've had my share of doing what I "should" do. Now it's time to shift

more into what I really want.

So, on January 5, I sprang into action online to inspect SWESA's 1st quarter program line-up. The seats go fast, so I didn't waste any time choosing my favourites.

Floor curling on Thursdays in January morphs into watercolor classes on Tuesday in February and a Spanish & Salsa class once floor curling is over. What a great start to my year! Of course, it's not just the learning that comes from each, but also the people I'll meet in class and the fun we'll have learning together.

Maybe in the second quarter of the year, I'll give the Bridge club or the Book club a whirl. Moving from adult to elder in our "golden" years provides so many wonderful



Seniors gather to celebrate the season at SWESA's 2025 Holiday Lunch, enjoying food, friendship, and festive cheer as they close out the year together.

choices. I, for one, am not going to miss out. Care to join me? (SWESA welcomes new members at a very affordable \$40/year.)



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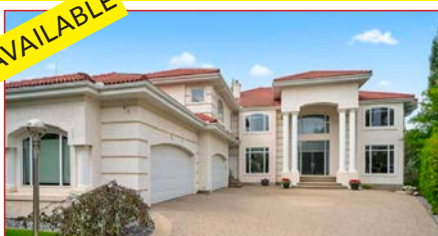
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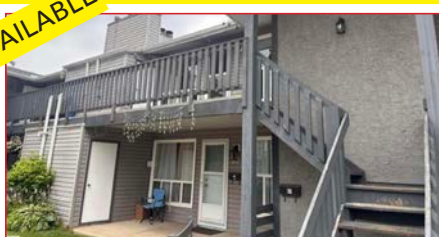
**Garneau Condo \$245,000**  
Walking distance to Whyte Ave, U of A. Bright corner unit 2 bed, 2 bath.  
ML# E4465533

AVAILABLE



**Rural Parkland Lot \$250,000**  
3 Acre lot in prestigious West Point Estates. Lakeside living at it's best!  
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**Crawford Plains \$189,900**  
Carriage style condo in Tamarack South. 2 bed, 2 bath. Private Balcony.  
ML# E4449225

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