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#44

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RYAN JESPERSEN

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More than just a "radio talk show," this podcast helps me think critically and see points of views from all sides. I never feel like it's trying to sway my political views, but rather it keeps me informed about things that matter regionally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. I appreciate the easy to consume format and variety of topics and guests. Keep it up Ryan and the Real Talk team!

PS - I have been listening since day one, and the show is the best it's ever been right now. I love the dynamic of Ryan and Johnny!

— Aqu11

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25 OF OUR FAVOURITE THINGS

A highly subjective, lovingly curated list of (and from) Edmonton's most notable

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ON THE LOOKOUT In the next issue of *Edify*, we discover why Edmonton punches above its weight in Canadian industrial design; dive deep into the Indigenous indie music revival; and try on blue-collar couture.

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Contributing Editors

Starting in this issue, we've assembled a team of expert writers and consultants to help us cover every corner of the city — from arts and culture to business and design. Each of them brings deep local knowledge and a sharp point of view.

Q: What excites you most about covering your beat in Edmonton?



MICHAEL HINGSTON
Culture

The complexity. Culture encompasses everything from literature to film to music to sports — and I'm excited to explore how Edmontonians use these fields to understand and interact with one another and the city around us.

Michael Hingston is the author of three books, co-publisher at Hingston & Olsen and owner of Porch Light Books



TRACY HYATT

Food and Lifestyle

I'm intrigued to explore the city through the lens of food because so much of what is written in these pages will become Edmonton's recorded history, reflecting our culinary traditions, immigration patterns and personal identities.

Tracy Hyatt is a freelance food and travel writer and the founder of the Curious Canada newsletter



DANNY ROSS

Fashion and Design

Edmonton is fortunate to have a variety of strong college and university programs in both fashion and design. While Edmonton's

rich design history is exciting. I am truly inspired by our current wave of designers, makers and craftspeople.

Danny Ross is an arts professional and business strategist, sometimes "masquerading" as a natural dye and textile designer



MICHELLE DEANNE SCHULTZ

Visual and Performing Arts

I'm excited to share with *Edify's* readers the incredible artists, programming and institutions that are building the kind of city that keeps bringing me back. I always get particularly excited for the summertime when the arts spill onto the streets through

festivals, outdoor programming and public art.

Michelle Deanne Schultz is an art consultant, strategist and curator focused on contemporary art



SCOTT MESSENGER

Business and Health

I admire business owners for their ability to identify a need, their aptitude for problem-solving, their tolerance if not appetite for risk and much more. Unable to emulate any of that, I feel that the next best thing is to write about it.

Scott Messenger is the author of Tapping the West, a book about the development of Alberta's craft beer industry

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KIDS ON THE BLOCK

This spring, on the first warm day after a long winter, I took my kids for a downtown bike ride. We left from our home in McCauley, the only neighbourhood my son and daughter have ever known, and turned onto 96th Street to test out the fancy new paved bike paths. As we pedalled past a safe consumption site, a man on the sidewalk shouted, “Kids on the block!” His voice carried down the street, and I watched as people around him quietly tucked away their pipes and foil. Some greeted us with smiles.

At first, I was amused. *Every community has its busybodies*, I thought. But then it happened again — a woman, a block later, calling the same phrase. And the same quiet shuffle and warm greetings followed. By the time we returned home, I could anticipate it at almost every corner. Curious, I asked around. No one knew exactly where the phrase came from, but everyone seemed heartened by it and even proud.

Somewhere in the past year, a kind of street code had emerged — a recognition that children deserve a buffer from certain adult realities. It was a small gesture that reflected a big sign of mutual respect. The kind that makes a place feel more welcoming.

McCauley is not what most people picture when they think of an ideal neighbourhood. Quite the opposite. I’ve had police come to my doors to investigate serious crimes. I’ve seen and responded to overdoses here, sometimes with my kids. I’ve had tools stolen from my yard and at least one attempted break-in caught on camera. But I’ve also experienced immense kindness from housed and unhoused neighbours alike. And while there have been tense moments for me and my kids, they’ve been far outnumbered by moments of warmth and courtesy.

That’s why I keep thinking about those four words: “Kids on the block.” They’re a code of care, not enforcement. A quiet pact between people with very different lives, an unspoken agreement that we’re all neighbours, regardless of how we cope with hard times.

In this issue, we asked Edmontonians what makes a great neighbourhood. Their answers surprised us — not because they were radical, but because they were deeply human. The number one factor wasn’t street parking,



boutiques or river valley access. It wasn’t bike lanes or lack thereof. It was good neighbours.

And that means all neighbours, even if they don’t have a fixed address to show for it.

Yet this rarely enters the political conversation. Instead, debates about what makes a city liveable tend to revolve around property taxes, policing and the perceived erosion of public order. Nowhere is this more amplified than downtown, which has become a political proxy for urban decay. Yes, the core has borne the brunt of visible addiction, housing insecurity and mental-health crises. But Edmonton is not unique in this. Cities across Canada are grappling with the same issues. Still, we talk about downtown revitalization mostly in terms of economic return and workforce safety, doubling down on enforcement rather than the social supports that would benefit everyone.

Great communities aren’t built on amenities alone — and certainly not just for the middle class. They’re built on compassion: the small, everyday ways we look out for one another. So when we imagine better neighbourhoods, let’s imagine them as networks of care, where respect travels both ways, across fences and sidewalks.

Omar Mouallem
 editor@odvodpublishing.com

YOUR TURN

RE: June 2025 issue

I thought the June issue did a great job of touching on the issues that are at the forefront in our city right now in interesting ways, featuring people I haven't heard of.

- Justin Archer, Partner, Berlin Communications

Last month, we hosted a family wedding with 200 guests coming from Canada and around the world. We wanted to give out-of-town guests a taste of Edmonton, so we curated gift bags with local items including the June edition of *Edify*. It was the perfect way to show off Edmonton to our guests and advocate for all the wonderful things going on in our city.

- Karen Oshry

RE: "Skip the Starter Home" June Issue

Your editor's note on buying a "starter home" was a wonderful read and really resonated with me. Like you, I enjoyed the experience ... UNTIL I didn't!

- Shannon Kernaghan

"Shop Around the Corner: Mod Uncorked" (Ed Home & Style newsletter)

I wanted to say a huge thank you to Lauren Kalinowski for the wonderful article featuring our shop. My passion for sustainable fashion practices, community and inclusivity has never faded. I know our current political and economic climate is causing so many to struggle financially and emotionally. I don't typically say nice things about myself but I'm so happy that I created a place that allows every single person that comes in here to feel welcomed, loved and cared for, and to be able to afford clothes without causing their wallets to scream.

- Limor Webber, owner of Mod Uncorked

Want to comment on a specific story or topic we've covered? Send us an e-mail with "Your Turn" in the subject line to editor@odvodpublishing.com, or, for those of us who still like putting stamps on things:

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Letters may be edited for length and/or clarity.

Crossword Puzzle Answers (page 66): ACROSS: 1. Dim
4. Sum 7. KDS 10. Ice 11. Ube 12. Rah 13. Reg 14. Montoya
16. Trauma 18. A Nun 19. Get 20. Rose 21. Tsar 23. Amre
24. Wean 25. Sra. 26. Aritd 27. Nicket 31. Gelatos 33. IPA
34. Ese 35. Hoe 36. New 37. Rad 38. ETS 39. Den
DOWN: 1. Dirt 2. Icer 3. Mega 4. Summer 5. U-boat 6. Men
7. Kronor 8. Day Use 9. Shane 15. Tarmac 17. Uganda
21. Teresa 22. Salled 23. Arises 24. Wager 25. Snoot
28. Kind 29. Epee 30. Lawn 32. The

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THE POWER OF GOOD QUESTIONS

The long life of memes, similar to clichés, is evidence of an underlying, brilliant truth conveyed with minimal words. Our shared understanding of a meme connects us. Take, for instance, the popular meme of the sardonic, yet lovable, character Shrek that can begin with an infinite number of creative captions, but ends, always, with the same singular statement: *Good question*. The sarcastic wit of the meme is amplified by the variety of questions that warrant the same answer.

Answering questions is a big part of my work life. Around this time every year I need to provide answers to several questions on a business insurance form. It's a challenge to get it done and it's not because I don't have the necessary knowledge or understanding regarding details of the business. The problem is that some of the questions aren't clear. Does it mean this or that? I don't want to give an inaccurate answer — it could affect my insurance coverage — but the answers differ depending on the interpretation of the question.

It's also true that the right question is essential. I was in labour with my first baby, and in the middle of a contraction, when the on-call physician asked me if I could sit down. I was flummoxed. *I was sitting down*. Granted, it was the middle of the night and she looked as if she had just woken up, so the language centre of her brain was likely still asleep. And for me, well, comprehension was not exactly my priority. There was, can I say, a pregnant pause as I made eye contact with the nurse who corrected the question: "Can you stand up?" Yes, I can.



In my life as a publisher and volunteer board member and everything in between, I find that questions and related answers often start with a different understanding or a different premise. The starting point doesn't matter as long as we seek to understand because that's how inspiring questions have a chance to surface and prompt us to conjure a new idea or a new appreciation.

Edify's summer issue has long focused on asking readers who make Metro Edmonton their home about their favourite things. This year the editorial team also asked what makes a great neighbourhood, or a great neighbour. These questions focus on what is good, memorable and worth sharing. It's the simple authenticity of asking real questions of real people. It's not marketing copy, or tourism advertorial, or bought-and-paid-for influencer commentary.

As we learn what some residents say about our city, let's ask ourselves what we appreciate about Edmonton. Now *that's* a good question.

Trudy Callaghan
Publisher

A handwritten signature of Trudy Callaghan in black ink.

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NIGHT ON THE TOWN

Your guide to a safe and enjoyable time out

EDMONTON'S VIBRANT bar and restaurant scene continues to grow. With so many choices, it can be hard to pick the right place for your next date night, family dinner or celebration with friends. But some venues really raise the bar — and you can discover them through Best Bar None, a voluntary accreditation program that serves both the public and industry. Every bar, restaurant and venue in the program offers a higher level of service and safety to patrons.

"Safety and hospitality can be synonymous with a good night out — the culture is shifting," says Eric Baich, director of social responsibility with Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis. "I do think now there's a much broader understanding of the DrinkSense principles — that having a good time doesn't mean that you can't be safe."

The program brings together industry, law enforcement and different levels of government to improve experiences for patrons and staff, with a holistic approach to a better nightlife in the city, and the province.

"Hospitality is an important part of any city or town," Baich says. "When everyone's working to make hospitality a positive and vibrant part of a night out, that's the common ground that can bring everybody together."

Some of the things that set Best Bar None establishments apart are hard to spot on first glance. But patrons can feel the difference — these venues are committed to safety, excellent service and preventing problems like fights, drug sales and sexual harassment.

And it's also about the level of service and pride that staff take in their establishment.



"When you make an extra commitment to safety, it really opens up the doors for hospitality," says Baich.

Best Bar None establishments vary, from nightclubs to neighbourhood haunts, breweries to fine dining restaurants. Live music, karaoke or a patio to soak in the sun — there's something for everyone.

"It just makes sense to choose an establishment that raises the bar," Baich adds. "With a little proactivity

you can maximize your fun and have a safer night."

Baich advises, "Keep in control, set limits, make good decisions and look out for each other."

Choosing a Best Bar None (BBN) establishment is the first step to a better social outing.

Visit bestbarnone.ca to find accredited venues and make the most of your night out.



“When everyone's working to make hospitality a positive and vibrant part of a night out, that's the common ground that can bring everybody together.”

— Eric Baich

Look for the Best Bar None sticker — these locations have achieved this designation.



What to consider when planning your night out

- **PLAN A SAFE RIDE HOME**
Make a plan ahead of time for how you'll get home: transit, taxis, ride shares or a designated driver are all great options.
- **LOOK FOR BEST BAR NONE ACCREDITATION**
Venues with BBN accreditation adhere to a higher standard of hospitality and offer superior patron experiences.
- **READ REVIEWS**
See what locals and guests are saying about Edmonton's best establishments.
- **BE MINDFUL**
Drink water between alcoholic beverages, eat a snack or meal to slow alcohol absorption and keep track of how much you're drinking.

Use the BBN bar finder for accredited venues with the amenities you are looking for.



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Cool Stuff

O-day'min Rising

Edmonton is transforming nearly five acres of surface parking into **Warehouse Park**, a year-round public space designed by gh3 and landscape architects CCxA. The downtown site will feature a basketball court, fitness zones, fire pits and toboggan hills. At its centre is gh3's sculptural pavilion, a striking monochromatic structure that honours the park's location in the O-day'min ward (Anishinaabe for "strawberry" or "heart" berry) and symbolizes a place of gathering. Known for marrying bold form with civic purpose, the Toronto firm has left its mark on Edmonton with nearly a dozen public projects, including Borden Park's natural swimming pool and pavilion, plus multiple utility buildings and transit centres. Already a winner of a 2024 Canadian Architect Award of Excellence and named by *Azure* as one of 2025's defining projects, the park is set to open by year's end.

Food for Tomorrow

From rogue orchards to rooftop gardens, a growing urban agriculture movement is feeding Edmonton

On a recent summer morning, I walked my dog to Laurier Heights Food Forest, a community orchard with fruit-bearing trees and berry bushes. Chopper sat patiently beside the bushes while I gathered our favourite sun-warmed raspberries and chatted with my 94-year-old neighbour who became a community league member to help maintain the forest.

Like many, she initially thought it was a City of Edmonton project, but in fact, it began as an unsanctioned initiative by long-time residents Marilyn Dale and Karen Wilk, who first imagined creating a community orchard in 2018. They pitched their idea to Community Services in a *Dragons' Den*-style competition and won \$1,000 towards the purchase of trees and plants. That was the easy part.

After almost a year of navigating the paperwork and still not getting anywhere, they took matters into their own hands. “We went completely rogue,” says Wilk, then president of the Laurier Heights Community League, which is how we met. (Full disclosure: I joined the board in 2023, and now volunteer as communications lead.) With a small army of “guerilla gardeners” (amongst the volunteers, a master orchardist and permaculture expert), they rented a bobcat and started digging and planting — government approval be damned.

The City eventually sanctioned the project and permitted its expansion. It’s a good thing too, considering that it just cancelled the City Farms program, a five-acre urban farm that produced over 114,000 kilograms of fresh produce exclusively for Edmonton Food Bank clients. With household budgets stretched thin and food prices continuing to rise, we need to think about feeding ourselves. Food forests are one simple way to help. Sharing food from our personal gardens is another.

The Yard Becomes Farm

Canadians have a long history of growing their own food in difficult times. During the Second World War, communities across the country planted Victory



Avi Levin’s PHD Farms self-serve sidewalk market in Ottewell
INSET: Cherries from Laurier Heights Food Forest

Gardens to reduce pressure on transportation networks needed to move soldiers and supplies and boost morale. During the pandemic, tending gardens was a practical pastime and a meaningful way for people to stay grounded. For some, it also became essential to their well-being and sense of resilience.

When Avi Levin lost his job as a molecular virologist in 2018, gardening helped manage the stress of unemployment. Within a few years, his stress-relief garden in Ottewell was producing more than he could eat, so he set up a small market cart in his front yard to sell extra apricots,

herbs and vegetables for cheap. Today, Levin’s Ottewell property, including his home and renovated garage, is a veritable urban farm. Starting in December, he grows hundreds of seedlings on rolling metal racks in time for the spring opening of his self-serve market. I visited him just before the May long weekend to buy organic, home-grown seedlings for my garden.

Levin is soft-spoken and reserved — until you ask about planting. “People just don’t know that there are so many things you can grow here,” he says, showing me the vines on an arched trellis that will

eventually produce Arctic Kiwi (similar to a regular kiwi, but smaller and fuzz-less). A weather station on a tall pole above his roof monitors rain, wind and temperature.

Like the food forest, Levin thought it was better to ask for forgiveness than permission. But now his operation, PHD Farms, is one of 104 officially registered urban agriculture developments — that is, “development that involves growing fruits, vegetables, plants, or raising chickens or bees in urban areas for use beyond personal consumption.” He rotates his “crops,” experiments with soil composition and keeps an intricate spreadsheet for planting dates — “but the rest is up here,” he said, tapping his head.

Roots of Resilience

Last year, Levin’s property handily won first place for Edible Gardens in Front Yards in Bloom, another municipal program discontinued this year to focus on “core services.” (It’s now being resurrected by the Edmonton Horticultural Society as a pilot program with community leagues.) While cutting the beautification initiative was controversial, the overall impact pales in comparison to losing the City Farm and suspending funds for Sustainable Food Edmonton’s largest program, a community garden initiative supporting urban agriculture projects across the city.

With household budgets stretched thin and food prices continuing to rise, we need to think about feeding ourselves.

Edmonton Food Bank sends out 40,000 food hampers monthly, double the amount since 2021, according to program director Carrie-Anne Cyre. When we met at the north central food bank depot on a morning in April, about a month after City Farms was nixed, the line of clients was already twenty deep. Folks used wagons, suitcases, backpacks and bags to transport food

home, not knowing the hampers might be lighter this summer, at least when it comes to produce.

Last year, in addition to collecting leftover and excess goods from grocers and restaurants that would otherwise become waste, Cyre’s team started collecting their leftover seeds to start a seed bank. This spring, those seeds and seed packets were distributed to clients, encouraging them to grow their own produce.

Over at Sustainable Food Edmonton, community garden facilitator Junetta Jamerson (Top 40, ’09) had a couple dozen pending applications for new or expanding community gardens when she learned the non-profit’s flagship program had been defunded. Jamerson encourages people to get creative with the spaces they have: “Even if you have a pot, even if it’s not a real pot, and it’s just a bucket that you put a hole in the bottom, start building these skills — get your hands in the dirt.”

When food insecurity is at a high point in Alberta, the decision to cut these programs seems short-sighted. From what public information I gathered, the total cost to the public for funding the City Farm and Sustainable Food Edmonton program combined was about \$500,000. In the meantime, organizers and volunteers with all three initiatives are looking for alternative funding to increase food resilience. As well, Kingsway Mall is nearly doubling its rooftop garden output to more than 136 kilograms of produce for the Edmonton Food Bank — a tiny fraction of what City Farms offered, but it’s not nothing.

Growing and sharing food, planting a food forest, or starting a community garden won’t fix food insecurity, but they do help build what Jamerson calls “an ecosystem of care.” As food security concerns grow, grassroots efforts and creative thinking will be essential where publicly funded programs fall short. Lucky for Edmonton, more and more people are beginning to cultivate that kind of food resilience from the ground up. **ED.**

—Natasha Chiam

THE GROCERY BILL

When money is tight, food is often the first compromise. For some, that’s about cheaper ingredients. For others, it’s skipping meals.

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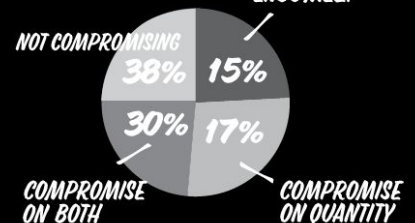
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2021

FOOD OR FINANCES?

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Edmonton Stingers guard Sabry Phillip



photo RYAN PARKER

Sports

Home Court Hero

Sabry Philip's journey home is bigger than basketball

When Sabry Philip stepped

onto the Edmonton Expo Centre court in a Stingers' jersey for the season opener on Mother's Day, it was fitting on so many levels. After an eight-year journey, from TRC Academy in Ontario to New York's Stony Brook Seawolves in the NCAA's elite Division I, the 24-year-old Edmonton-born talent came home to play for the city's Canadian Elite Basketball League team.

For the first time in years, Philip sang "O Canada" before tip-off. "To this day, it brings chills down my spine just thinking about it," he recalls. "It's been quite a journey. A lot of ups and downs."

The 6'4" guard had to overcome four surgeries during his college basketball career. His final year was particularly challenging — battling injuries while competing at the top level of collegiate sports and juggling the start of an MBA program. During those low points, Philip says he was motivated by the sacrifices of his parents, who fled war-torn South Sudan in 2000, especially his mother, who raised him as a single parent. In fact, it was his mother who first introduced him to basketball, setting up a hoop in the basement as an alternative to the Bugs Bunny cartoons he devoured as a child. "I didn't want to have anything to do with it," Philip says with a laugh. But after watching *Space Jam* — which starred legend Michael Jordan and his beloved Bugs Bunny — he was hooked. "I loved the way [Jordan] was able to fly in the sky. He just seemed almost like a superhero."

It wasn't until after he went off

to the University of San Diego on a basketball scholarship that the Stingers played their inaugural game with the newly established Canadian Elite Basketball League in 2019, soon becoming league champions in 2020 and 2021. That was in part thanks to its all-star hometown hero Jordan Baker, who also happened to coach Philip at Harry Ainlay High School.

Philip is only the second Edmontonian to suit up for the team since Baker retired in 2022. (The first, Aher Uguak, now plays in Germany.) Though Philip says he feels no pressure to be the new hometown hero, he knows firsthand how a local success story can inspire. He remembers going to University of Alberta Golden Bears' games and lining up for an autograph from Baker. And it was Baker, now the Stingers' head coach and general manager, who recruited Philip as a guard.

"He was always a great person with a contagious smile that players and people gravitated towards," says Baker, recalling his high school talents. A natural and gifted athlete, he says success on the court, back then, came easily for Philip.

The team also recently signed another homegrown talent, Fareed Shittu, fresh off his college career, hoping the 6'6" forward will help bring home another championship title this fall. Now that Philip and Shittu are finally home, they're excited to inspire another generation of athletes to follow in their sneakersteps. **ED.**

—Karen Kwan

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Eat This

Cream Cheese and Tobiko, Please

Ukrainian sushi may look familiar, but one bite reveals a genre all its own. Cream cheese replaces rice in some rolls, baked cheese tops others and smoked fish stands in for raw. This hearty, comfort-forward take on Japanese cuisine emerged in post-Soviet Ukraine in the mid-2000s and has followed war refugees abroad. In Edmonton, you'll find it at places like **Ester** and **Sushi Me SD**, where rolls come melty, crunchy and unabashedly rich. Expect cream cheese, torched salmon crowned in golden crusts and unagi-drizzled bites that favour indulgence over tradition.

Tastemakers

Andrew Fung's Second Act

Juu.Ku channels the spirit of XIX Nineteen into something bolder and unmistakably personal for the Hong Kongese chef

Walking into Juu.Ku, chef Andrew Fung's new restaurant in Terwillegar, is like climbing into the sleek interior of a red-and-black lacquered bento box.

Divided into sections, Juu.Ku is designed to offer diners several different ways to approach its pan-Asian menu. Couples may enjoy the side-by-side seats at one end of the restaurant, while larger groups might want a dim sum-style roundtable. No matter where you sit, you'll have a view of three large and stunning portrait paintings with Japanese iconography by Tim Okamura, a Sherwood Park-born superstar of the art world.

Juu.Ku is the Japanese word for "nineteen," or rather XIX Nineteen, the name of Fung's flagship restaurant located next door. While his first spot immediately earned the Hong Kong-born chef a reputation for tireless attention to food and service when it opened in 2012, his new venture is the restaurant that Fung, now 47, has wanted to open since culinary school at NAIT.

Driven by a creative east-meets-west collision of style and craft, Juu.Ku reflects Fung's roots, but also his evolution as a chef. And with the success of XIX Nineteen tucked under his chef whites and the backing of loyal investors for the \$2.2 million build, Fung says the time feels right to make his dream come true. "Nineteen was a great show," he says. "We wondered, can we do another great show?"

The answer is yes.

We began our night at the cozy bar, sipping an Umeshu Sidecar. Headly with



ABOVE: Chef Andrew Fung in his new restaurant Juu.Ku

RIGHT: Seafood chow mein, lamb siu ma, king prawns wonton with Thai red curry coconut broth

the floral scent of plum wine, the cocktail paired well with two appetizers: a poké taco finished with a salty snap of Canadian caviar and a classic NYC Chinatown pork and shrimp eggroll with a crunchy shell. For our next course, we moved to the sushi bar. Munching through the signature Juu.Ku roll, a collaboration of cream cheese and crab meat with spicy mayo, we marvelled as chef Jack Lee prepared sushi with a blow torch and a razor-sharp knife while answering numerous questions by diners. It was impressive, and just plain fun to watch.

Fung took several research trips to Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong for Juu.Ku's menu, getting inspired by classic Asian dishes like Peking duck and xiaolongbao (soup dumplings). Even the extensive cocktail list is anchored by those traditional elements, from the citrusy smack of yuzu in the Yuzu Sour to the condensed milk found in the Vietnamese-inspired coffee martini. The deliciously tangy garlic green beans are tossed with that Hong Kong staple, XO sauce. The stand-out Kurobuta pork char siu (honey-glazed and barbecued) is served with a small dish of sawsawan, a Filipino vinegar-based dipping sauce that

balances the sweet meat. That same char siu can be found stuffed inside a bao bun with pickled carrots and fresh herbs on the upscale dim sum menu, which at eight items is much more approachable for inexperienced dim sum diners.

Altogether the Juu.Ku experience is curated to please patrons, down to the tiniest detail. Each table setting is adorned with a miniature dragon-shaped metal sculpture. The dragon cradles a soup spoon and a pair of chopsticks, a tribute to Fung's Hong Kong childhood, when he'd fidget with similar utensil holders at wedding banquets.

Fung recently brought 200 of the dragons home in his bag from Hong Kong — a small symbol of a culinary dream realized. He says the curio is a touchstone for Chinese people of a certain age. But I suspect everyone will find the dragons, along with the whole affair, no less enchanting. **ED.**

—Liane Faulder



What's Cooking?

Juana Inés

Now open in Manchester Square, Juana Inés is a vibrant Mexican restaurant named after 17th-century philosopher and nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. The space bursts with personality — pastel walls, floral arrangements and surrealist iconography. The menu draws from the owners' roots in the central Mexican Querétaro, blending homestyle comfort and street food staples, from suadero tacos with slow-stewed brisket to mole enchiladas and tangy chicken tinga. With plans for a speakeasy bar upstairs, Juana Inés is a bold return for the owners.

-Omar Mouallem

12042 107 Ave.,
IG: @ines.restaurant



ABOVE: Wilson Wong and Will Chen, co-owners of Boa and Hare
LEFT: Chicken tinga and suadero tacos at Juana Inés

Boa & Hare

Inside Chinatown's quiet Pacific Mall, Boa and Hare brings a spark of fresh energy with its modern, daytime cafe. Founded by Winnie Chen (of Fu's Repair Shop), her brother William and friend Wilson Wong, the spot blends casual comfort with culinary creativity. The menu features a curried pork bao, Taiwan-style jajiang mian and drinks like a layered strawberry matcha latte. Its inviting interior — cloth lanterns and a friendly, low-key vibe — draws a younger

crowd without excluding families. With the founders recent revival of the nearby Vietnamese joint Van Loc and future plans for a cocktail bar, plus Little BonBon ice cream by Yelo'd across the street, we're excited to see a new generation of Chinatown business owners.

-Omar Mouallem

#127, 9700 105 Ave. NW,
Pacific Mall
IG: @boaandhare

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The Mayor Who Wants to Get Edmonton Back on Track



The Better Edmonton Launch Party, May 2025. Photo by Nick Hirshmann.

There's something comforting about someone who simply gets things done. No drama, no grandstanding—just a steady hand, a clear plan, and the kind of leadership that feels like common sense. That's what Tim Cartmell is offering Edmonton. And the more you get to know him, the more you realize he's exactly the kind of mayor this city needs.

Tim was born and raised right here in Edmonton. He grew up on the north side, met his high school sweetheart Cathy (a south-sider), and built a life that many of us can relate to: running a small business, raising three kids, juggling school drop-offs with hockey practice and Oilers playoff games. He knows what it feels like to manage tight budgets, delay your own paycheck to make payroll, and try to build something meaningful in a city that isn't always easy to navigate.

He also knows what it means when a city starts to lose its way. When snow isn't cleared on time. When LRT projects go over budget and past deadline. When people no longer feel safe walking in their own neighbourhoods. When young people give up on the idea of owning a home, and seniors on fixed incomes feel like they're being taxed out of theirs. He sees it—and he feels it too.

That's part of what makes Tim different. His background isn't in politics—it's in engineering. He's someone who sees something broken and wants to fix it, not just talk about it. He wears the Iron Ring on his finger, a symbol of duty and responsibility shared by Canadian engineers, and carries that same sense of accountability into public service. He's not trying to be flashy. He's trying to be useful.

After two terms on City Council, Tim has stepped forward with a full team of council candidates under the Better Edmonton banner—a group of community-minded, hard-working Edmontonians who are ready to restore some order, some kindness, and some momentum back to City Hall. They're not interested in political games. They're interested in clean streets, safe communities, and practical solutions.

What sets Tim apart isn't a slogan or a list of promises. It's how personally he takes the job. When he talks about Edmonton, he's not delivering soundbites—he's sharing the stories that shaped him. His great-grandfather, who helped build Edmonton's arts community. His parents, who taught him the value of humility, hard work, and showing up for others. And his wife Cathy, whose quiet strength and commitment to community have been at his side every step of the way.



Together, they've built a business, raised a family, and made their life right here in Edmonton. That lived experience isn't just his backstory. It's what guides how he leads: steady, grounded, and fully committed to building an Edmonton that works for every family, not just his own.

Tim isn't running for mayor to add another title to his name. He's doing it because Edmonton deserves a city government that's as dependable as the people who live here.



The Capital Conversation, May 2025. Photo by Nick Hirshmann.

He wants to bring the same care and discipline to City Hall that families bring to their own homes—where every dollar matters, where plans are made with purpose, and where decisions are based on responsibility, not politics. Tim knows that when a city runs well—when it's safe, clean, and reliable—it takes pressure off everyone. Parents can focus on their kids. Seniors can stay in the homes they love. And all of us can feel a little more confident in the place we call home.

He also knows that real leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about surrounding yourself with good people, listening carefully, and showing up for the hard conversations. That's what his Better Edmonton team is built on—a group of doers, not talkers, ready to help him get things moving again.

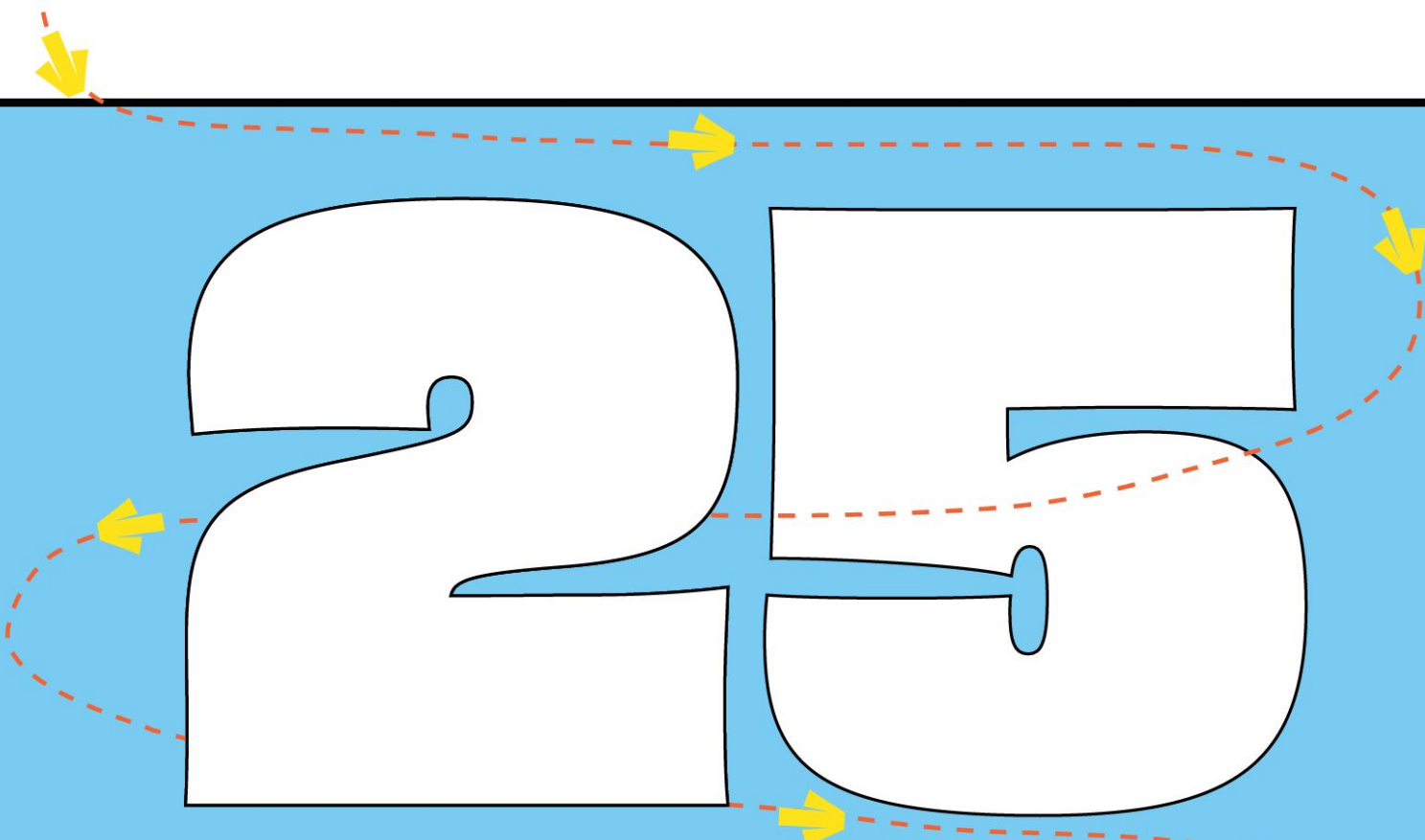
This election is more than a vote on policies. It's a decision about trust, character, and values. And if you're someone who's looking for a mayor who listens like a neighbour, approaches challenges like a problem-solver, and leads like someone who knows this city inside and out—then Tim Cartmell is someone worth getting to know. On October 20th, vote for a Better Edmonton.

**Make a
Difference in
Edmonton's
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votebetteredmonton.ca



Tim & Cathy Cartmell at the Edmonton Riverhawk



25

Favourite THINGS

A highly subjective, lovingly curated list of Edmonton's best

We all have those special places and dishes we return to again and again — the perfect scoop of gelato, a tucked-away trail, that go-to shop and stunning landmark. For *Edify's* annual 25 Favourites list, we asked tastemakers, community builders, creative minds and one beloved lynx to share the things they love most. Add a few picks from the *Edify* team (and some spirited debate) and you've got a bucket list to pack your summer — or your year.

PHOTOGRAPHY CURTIS TRENT



OMAR FARAH

Content Creator,
The Farah Kitchen



FAVE THING SWISS DONAIR

8308 144 Ave. NW,
swissdonair.com

Omar Farah knows his way around a kitchen. As the creator behind The Farah Kitchen — an East African food blog with nearly 200,000 followers on TikTok and Instagram — he claims he can replicate almost any dish found in restaurants. However, he has never been able to recreate his favourite take-out dish from his go-to spot: Swiss Donair.

It's not for lack of trying; Farah has even bought his own rotisserie to replicate the spicy and savoury flavour of the long-standing north-side institution, but nothing quite compares to a visit to the donair shop. Farah tops his donair with ingredients not typically found in Edmonton's traditional mix of

lettuce, tomato and onion. He prefers banana peppers, pickles, black olives and extra sweet sauce — a little tang to balance out the richness of the donair meat.

"I've been going there as long as I can remember; they've been a staple in my monthly, if not weekly, rotation," he says. "My order pretty much hasn't changed in the last 20 years."

A self-professed "donair connoisseur," Farah appreciates the certain *je ne sais quoi* of Swiss, from its sweet sauce to the homey, friendly service. After two decades of patronage, it's no surprise that the front counter staff know him by name.

—Allison Stephen

ED'S PICK

Winterruption VEG When January hits, I'm fed up with double-digit below-zero temperatures. But this weekend music festival changes my whole attitude. The lineup is eclectic — punk, electronica, pop, rock, comedy, even drag. (Great for me since I don't stick to one genre.) What I enjoy more is moving from venue to venue — all in downtown and within blocks of each other. Last year, we made a Google spreadsheet to schedule our shows and maximize our festival pass. We might be at the Starlite Room for two shows, then head to Rocky Mountain Ice House for another, walk to 9910 to dance into the early hours, then repeat for two more days. winterruptionveg.com

Tracy Hyatt,
Contributing Editor
Food and Lifestyle



"MY IDEA OF HUNTING THESE DAYS INVOLVES A WELL-TIMED POUNCE AT THE SUSHI BAR."

Luckily for Hunter, his favourite seafood spot, Atlas Steak and Fish, is just a stone's throw from his Rogers Place den. His go-to dish? Roasted sea bass, but he always saves room for calamari or crab cakes. And while he has a preference for marine cuisine, Hunter can't say no to red meat and good drinks — specifically, the tomahawk steak (a decadent, bone-in cut topped with house-made peppercorn sauce prepared tableside) with a bold and warming Puck Drop cocktail featuring Alberta Premium Cask Strength rye, Aperol, Licor 43 and Angostura bitters. He even has preferred seating, a table near the kitchen so he can keenly observe the chefs at work.

—Allison Stephen

HUNTER THE LYNX

Immortal Mascot,
Edmonton Oilers



FAVE THING

ATLAS STEAK + FISH

10204 104 Ave. NW

#2710, West Edmonton Mall,
atlassteakandfish.com

Living in a landlocked city, fresh fish is tragically not as plentiful as Edmonton's No. 1 sports mascot and feline bachelor would like. Sure, Hunter the Lynx enjoys a buffet of walleye and northern pike found swimming in the North Saskatchewan River, but with his busy schedule of charity appearances and rallying the world's best hockey team to the Stanley Cup finals, he has had to adopt more of a pescatarian lifestyle.

"My idea of hunting these days involves a well-timed pounce at the sushi bar," says the disturbingly handsome lynx with washboard abs. "While my wild roots are still there, I've traded chasing rabbits for chasing tuna rolls."



VIVEK SHRAVA

Artist

"I had the privilege of co-curating an all-transgender artist exhibit with **Latitude 53**. I loved how proactive the gallery was in creating a space to feature and celebrate trans artists. As someone who grew up in Edmonton and experienced a lot of homophobia, I never imagined coming back years later to help curate this exhibit and be in a space that felt so welcoming."

10130 100 St. NW,
latitude53.org



ROBERT BURRELL

Biomedical Engineering Professor, University of Alberta

"**Northern Bear Golf** course is a challenging course with several standout holes. Holes 2, 6, 10 and 18 all feature tricky water or bunker hazards that demand precision — especially on your second shot. It's a beautiful course where a well-earned par-on-18 leaves you wanting to come back."

51055 Range Road 222,
Strathcona County,
northernbeargolf.com

THIS OR THAT

TEA VS COFFEE

RHIA ADEN

Executive Director,
The Mosquers Film Festival

Tea from Mokha Coffee House

"The Adani tea is rich, spiced and deeply tied to hospitality and sharing with friends and family. Like Yemeni coffee, Yemeni tea is as beautiful a ritual as it is a drink."

5344 Admiral Girouard St. NW,
mymokhacafe.com

NATHAN MISON

Founding Partner
of Diplomat Consulting

Coffee from Take Care Cafe

"My favourite is the flat white with oat milk from Take Care Cafe. It's my local coffee shop — I always go with my dog — and they know my order so well they sometimes bring it to me when I'm stuck on a call."

9621 Whyte Ave. NW,
takecarecafe.co

WHYTE VS 124 STREET

MEGAN DART

Executive Director,
Fringe Theatre

Whyte Avenue

"The entrepreneurial punk of Whyte Avenue speaks to me on a soul level. This neighbourhood has called to my artist heart since I first moved to the city more than 20 years ago."

LIANE FAULDER

Food Writer

124 Street

"I live just off 124 Street and 107 Avenue, and it's by far my favourite part of town. It's the combination of historic streets lined with mature elm trees and a nearby commercial thoroughfare alive with restaurants, coffee shops, the Grand Market and Irrational's craft beer patio."

SKATING VS SKIING

MICHELLE CHEN

Pharmacist and Yogalife
Studios Instructor

Skating at Victoria Oval

"Tough one — but I'd say skating, mostly because it's easy to plan and feels more social. There's tons of space and a bit of magic in Victoria Skating Oval with the extra iceway that winds through the trees and feels especially scenic at night with all the hanging lights."

SHAFRAAZ KABA

Senior Project Manager, Stök

Cross-country skiing in Gold Bar Park

"I first tried cross-country skiing 30 years ago in Gold Bar Park, and it's had everything I've needed as a skier ever since. There are easy loops around the pond and challenging terrain that still gives me a thrill. One of my favourite routes includes a sharp downhill turn to avoid crashing into a bridge over the ravine — always an adrenaline rush."

GELATO VS ICE CREAM

ADRIANA DAVIES

Author, Historian and Curator

Gelato from Italian Centre

"The Italian Centre Shop in Little Italy has always been more than a store — it's a cultural gathering place. Going there after Sunday Mass was a family tradition, and having gelato was a huge treat. For me, it's the pure taste of lemon melting on the tongue."

italiancentre.ca

JONATHAN GALLO

Managing Partner, Gallo LLP

Ice Cream from Kind

"If I have to pick, it's ice cream — specifically the mint chip from Kind. It's super creamy without being too sweet, and I love that they use real mint and dark chocolate instead of the usual artificial stuff."

kindicecream.ca



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR **SALMA LAKHANI**



FAVE THING **SYMPHONY UNDER THE SKY AT SNOW VALLEY**

August 20–23,
winspearcentre.com

Since long before she became Alberta's Lieutenant Governor, Salma Lakhani's family would make an annual trip to Hawrelak Park to soak in the serene outdoors and ethereal sounds from the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. And though there have been some changes over the years — like, say, her daughters growing up and moving away and, more recently, the festival temporarily relocating from the beloved amphitheatre during park renovations — she never forgets to tick Symphony Under the Sky off of her summer bucket list.

There's something magical about the warm late-summer air, the glow of string lights and the hum of the orchestra floating over a sea of picnic blankets and lawn chairs. Lakhani remembers once bringing bells so her daughters could play along during Tchaikovsky's dramatic *1812 Overture*. That moment — the crowd chiming in, the cannons roaring — remains her favourite memory of the festival's 30-year history. She's looking forward to another year of classical and contemporary, which this year includes Beethoven and Haydn alongside Broadway tunes and Hollywood scores.

—Brooklyn Hollinger



KATHERINE O'NEILL

Chief Executive Officer,
YWCA Edmonton

"The Cocoa and Rose Body Lotion from Pura Botanicals is an unexpected pairing that just works — rich, floral and utterly comforting. It smells like heaven and gets you through a long, dry Edmonton winter. The company's founder, Lane Edwards, lives in my neighbourhood, and I can remember when she was first mixing her potions at home like a mad scientist, trying to get Pura off the ground. It's now sold internationally!"

**10120 124 St. NW,
purabotanicals.ca**



QUINN PHILLIPS

Director of Marketing,
Edmonton Downtown
Business Association

"I can't go into **Shop Chop** without buying something — the adorable, quirky items always get me. I went once for work and asked my boss to make sure I didn't buy anything... and still left with a mug covered in cats — I needed it, OK?! They also carry my favourite hair product, R+Co, so I can pick up practical things while I'm at it too."

**10265 107 St. NW,
shopchop.ca**

JOHNNY INFAMOUS

DJ and Producer, Real Talk
with Ryan Jespersen



FAVE THING DOUBLE DRAGON

10524 Jasper Ave. NW,
double-dragon.ca

Back in 2008, DJ Johnny Infamous flew in from Vancouver to play a weekend gig at Union Hall, skeptical he'd enjoy any part of it other than the payday. The night he arrived, it was 25-cent highballs and a lineup around the building — on a Thursday in February. "I was like, what's going on?" he says. "It was a rager at, like, 9:30." By the end of the weekend, he was sold. He moved to Edmonton a month later and has shaped its club scene ever since.

Things have changed since then. There used to be way more live venues. Basements with bands, clubs that played everything — those are mostly gone now. That's part of what makes Double Dragon, which opened in 2023, feel special. "You walk in and it feels like going to an EDM show in the year 2000 or a punk rock show in the late '90s."

Located in the Alberta Block building, the venue shares a space with Fu's Repair Shop, where showgoers can enjoy all-night dim sum and craft cocktails.



"You get that high-end production, but it still smells like skate shoes," he jokes. "It's punk rock, and it's elite at the same time."

Johnny DJs at Double Dragon about once a month, often for themed parties thrown by Mojo Live, a Toronto collective. One of his favourites was last summer's Brat-themed Charli XCX night, where "the island of misfit toys all came together," he says, describing an eclectic crowd. On any given night, the lineup might feature EDM, pop, reggae or even happy hardcore, with everything from local hip-hop battles to touring DJs. And though his wife's not much for late night parties, Mr. and Mrs. Infamous can always agree on chef Winnie Chen's food.

—Omar Mouallem



Omar Mouallem,
Editor-in-Chief

Rolled Pistachio "Booza" Ice Cream at Cedar Sweets When I say rolled ice cream, you probably think of those gimmicky franchises flattening bland ice cream and stuffing it with junk food to make it taste less blah. But the rolled ice cream I go out of my way for is Cedar Sweets' "booza" — Middle Eastern ice cream made with a clotted cream called ashta, then turned over with dried rose petal flakes and pistachio crumbs, then sliced like a loaf. Its silky, stretchy texture comes from salep, a powder made of ground orchid root. Found in "Little Lebanon" in Castle Downs, with another spot in Jasper Place, it's sold by the kilogram to treat a party. [multiple locations, cedarsweets.ca](https://cedarsweets.ca)



LAURA KINGHORN

Vice President of Partnerships and Community Relations, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce



FAVE THING

BLISS MEDISPA & INTEGRATED WELLNESS

5954 Mullen Way NW,
blissmedispa.ca

Laura Kinghorn has to schedule relaxation. As the vice president of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, she holds a fast-paced and demanding position that keeps her in constant motion, fluttering between meetings, community engagement and public events — not to mention multiple volunteer commitments. “If I’m not prioritizing myself, I get sick, completely run down and my body shuts off for me,” she says. To avoid burnout, she makes a nearly monthly pilgrimage to her favourite recharging station: Bliss MediSpa.

Bliss offers a full range of premium services with medical expertise, both Western and Eastern, allowing clients to enjoy pedicures, acupuncture and private primary care all under one roof. For Kinghorn, it’s the perfect blend of luxury and self-care, especially the refreshing facial treatments that leave her feeling ready to show up fully for her team, community and herself.

—Allison Stephen

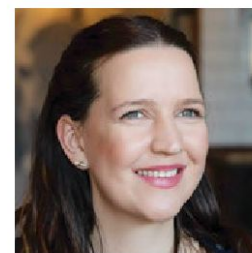


SAMI HAVEL

Pitbull Energy Services

“Le Belle Arti is my favourite furniture store. Orlando Milite, the creative force behind it, has furnished both our Calgary and Edmonton homes with a level of artistry and detail that rivals the world’s top design talents. But beyond his impeccable eye, it’s his warmth, humility and deep respect for his clients that truly set Le Belle Arti apart.”

16844 111 Ave. NW,
lebellearti.com



CAITLIN FULTON

RGE RD + The Butchery

“Kelty Pelechytk Fine Jewellery is vintage-inspired, handmade and often crafted with reclaimed gems or one-of-a-kind antique stones. Kelty’s aesthetic blends elegance with organic charm, and her approach is refreshingly low-pressure and deeply personal. Her pieces feel storied, substantial and designed to be worn and loved for generations.”

keltypelechytk.com

ED'S PICK

Michelle Deanne Schultz,
Contributing Editor,
Visual and Performing Arts

Indigenous Art Park (ÎNÎW) River Lot II ∞ Curated by Candice Hopkins of New York’s Forge Project, the site artworks by Canadian Indigenous artists created specifically for this park are a gem of the river valley. Amy Malbeuf’s *iskotew* is a large-scale sculpture that reads “fire” in Cree syllabics. The vibrant pink, yellow and blue colours were inspired by the beadwork of a Métis fire bag in the Royal Alberta Museum collection. Duane Linklater’s large-scale reproduction of a 9,000-year-old buffalo bone hide scraper also draws from the archives. The park was named one of the 50 best international public art projects by the Americans for the Arts’ Public Art Network in 2019 and included in the Thames & Hudson book *Destination Art (Art Essentials)*, so I feel fortunate to be able to visit regularly.



CAITLIN BODEWITZ

Executive Director,
SNAP Gallery

“The **Tawatinâ LRT Bridge** crossing the river from Louise McKinney to Cloverdale is my favourite work of public art. It features over 500 paintings depicting the river valley’s flora and fauna, as well as the area’s First Nations, Métis and settler histories. Walking over it feels like flowing through the water with the artwork — arrowheads merge into canoes, birds into bison, flowers into dragonflies. The story physically takes you on a journey through the rich Indigenous legacy, both present and historical, while recognizing the complex relationships of settler guests on this land and encouraging everyone to be stewards of the natural world.”



LAUREN HUGHES

Owner, Mousy Browns

“The **dog-walking trail in Mill Creek Ravine** feels like a hidden gem in the heart of the city. In summer, it’s lush and serene — perfect for long walks with your pup. There are benches to rest, beachy spots for dogs to cool off and easy access to the off-leash area just north of Argyll.”



ZEINA SLEIMAN

Author and Director of the Colbourne Institute
for Inclusive Leadership at Norquest College



FAVE THING

PICKING ROSEHIPS ALONG THE RAVINE

One day, author and educator Zeina Sleiman was walking along the Mill Creek ravine, looking for edible plants, when she stumbled upon rosehips, the small red fruits that develop after the rose’s petals fall off. “It was this really nice way to find that the earth is always giving us little hints of hope,” says Sleiman.

The daughter of Palestinian refugees, the author explores the hardships of exile in her debut novel *Where the Jasmine Blooms*, but it also draws on the natural beauty of her homeland. Some of her fondest memories are rooted in her aunt’s garden in Lebanon, where she’d spend her summers surrounded by avocado trees, eggplants and “the best oranges” she’s ever tasted.

While roses weren’t part of that landscape, Sleiman finds a quiet joy in the wild ones that bloom along the ravine — a small but meaningful link to the beauty she grew up with. More than just delighting the eye, rosewater is a key ingredient in Levantine cuisine. While the plant can be used to make jams, syrups and even vinegar, Sleiman prefers rosehip tea. Another delicacy is her homemade kombucha, which she sweetens with maple syrup. Now, whenever she goes for a walk, Sleiman often carries a bag with her for the edible hidden treasures she might find.

—Brooklyn Hollinger

★ THE ★ FINAL CAMPAIGN ★

EXPERIENCE, NAME RECOGNITION AND A LIFETIME OF SERVICE COULDN'T SAVE AMARJEET SOHI FROM A HARSH POLITICAL RECKONING. WRITER **CURTIS GILLESPIE** EXAMINES WHAT WENT WRONG FOR THE MAYOR AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE MOOD OF OUR CITY.

PHOTOGRAPHY ADRIEN VECZAN



ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 28, A LITTLE AFTER 10 P.M., AMARJEET SOHI, THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE FOR THE FEDERAL RIDING OF EDMONTON SOUTHEAST, ENTERED THE ROYAL PALACE BANQUET HALL.

A large and majority Indo-Canadian crowd had been waiting for a couple of hours, dining on some excellent curry and watching election results come in across two giant screens. They were there to cheer on Sohi's hoped-for return to Ottawa and, if so, almost assuredly a cabinet post.

Sohi had a lot going for him, considering Prime Minister Mark Carney personally asked him to relinquish the mayor's chair to run in the newly created riding of Edmonton Southeast (a split from the former Edmonton Mill Woods riding, now Edmonton Southeast and Gateway). It seemed wise on Carney's part and, although Sohi was coy about it, it was a no-brainer for the mayor too. After all, Carney had re-energized the toxic Liberal brand, Donald Trump was creating all manner of trouble for Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives, and Sohi, reading the municipal tea leaves which had him polling at 26 per cent approval last year, had to have known a second mayoral term was a long shot. And so, back into federal politics he jumped.

But as the numbers rolled in on election night, it was clear that the voters of Edmonton Southeast were only slightly more impressed with his record than the rest of the city. In the end, his record and name recognition counted for nothing — if not less than nothing. Sohi would end up losing to Conservative Jagsharan Singh Mahal by nearly 7,000 votes. In Edmonton Gateway, the Liberal candidate, a virtual unknown named Jeremy Hoefsloot, pulled almost the same vote percentage as Sohi. (He lost to Conservative Tim Uppal, who beat Sohi in 2019 and is now back in Ottawa as an MP for the fifth time.) If someone as unknown as Hoefsloot could match someone as well-known as Sohi, that doesn't say much for the mayor's reputation, political machine or vast well of experience.

In the media scrum after his post-defeat speech, a reporter asked Sohi if he had any insights about the humiliating result. He said only that they would analyze the data later. But the truth is that no analysis is required. The loss was not due to Liberal fatigue, given the party's triumphant comeback. Nor could Sohi claim that voters didn't have enough time to get to know him. It surely wasn't due to an electrifying campaign from his inexperienced Conservative opponent, a candidate who appears to have only run a competent campaign without much fanfare.

The plain fact is that Amarjeet Sohi lost because he's unpopular.

Yet even that doesn't quite cut to the heart of the matter. The real question is, why did a man widely regarded as a solid and experienced public servant, a candidate so strong that the prime minister made a point of asking him to run, so wholly fail to inspire voters?

I HAD VISITED WITH SOHI at his campaign office a week before the election. The energy was good at headquarters and at the doors of his would-be constituents. He appeared confident when I asked him about the roots of his passion for community service.

"I don't think it was a moment," he said. "It was more of a progression of my work as a community activist." He recalled what it was like for him to move to Edmonton in the early 1980s as a 17- or 18-year-old with almost no insight into the Canadian way of life. "I couldn't speak English, and I faced a lot of barriers," he said. "But what I remember is that Edmonton helped newcomers integrate. I have always had a deep appreciation for community organizations and services. They need to be supported and strengthened."

Sohi embraced the values and practices of his second home to a degree that many birthright Canadians take for granted. A core element of his political temperament was forged during his time as a political prisoner in the late 1980s. Sohi, a young Sikh with artistic aspirations, returned to the Indian province of Punjab during political unrest to study community theatre and explore his homeland through the new lens of equality he'd acquired in Canada. Indian authorities, however, were on high alert due to the Khalistani movement agitating for an independent Sikh state in Punjab. Although Sohi was in fact a secular with anti-fundamentalist views, the government accused him of travelling to India to train with Khalistani terrorists. He was jailed.

His family feared the worst, knowing that people too often disappeared into the sinkhole of the Indian extra-legal system. But remarkably, a CSIS officer did some informal research and found no suspicious activity on Sohi's part. His findings became a foreign policy *cause célèbre* and Mill Woods Progressive Conservative MP David Kilgour wrote to India's high commissioner and prime minister requesting the charges be dropped.

Despite these interventions on his behalf, it still took 21 months for Sohi to be released — 21 months during which he was interrogated, beaten and had to go on a hunger strike to gain access to improved food and library materials. After he was freed,

INDIA'S GOVERNMENT ACCUSED YOUNG SOHI OF TERRORISM AND JAILED HIM.

Sohi returned to Edmonton. He has rarely spoken of how the experience changed him other than to say that Canada and Edmonton have made him who he is. After years of driving a taxi, then a bus, he ran for City Council in 2004. He lost, ran again in 2007, won, took a run at federal politics in 2015, won one election, lost another, took some time off, then returned to local politics, vying for the empty chair in the centre of council chambers.

Though it was only four years ago, he launched his mayoral campaign during a period of considerable societal distress as we grappled with the fallout of COVID-19. Against a backdrop of misinformation, blame, trauma and fear, Sohi's low-key and



undramatic style suited the public's need for stability and certainty. In interview after interview, he emphasized addressing issues of mental health, addiction, poverty and homelessness, and for this he won the 2021 election handily. But the years that followed have been complicated, to say the least.

"The electorate is just grumpy," Dave Cournoyer, a longtime commentator on Alberta's municipal and provincial politics, told me. "They're frustrated with the state of the city, with inflation, with rising property taxes, with affordable housing and probably some leftover frustration coming out of the pandemic restrictions. Whoever became mayor was going to bear the brunt of all that frustration."

Part of the issue, says Cournoyer, is that Sohi was immediately saddled with extremely large capital projects, such as the LRT expansion and significant infrastructure repairs. He also inherited issues such as bike lane bickering, which were small in fiscal terms but large in the public consciousness (and grew larger as the populace returned to office work). The UCP government has also taken to increasingly sticking its nose into municipal affairs on big and small ticket items (including Bill 20: the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, which allows for party affiliations on municipal election ballots for the first time this fall) and that, says Cournoyer, has not made council's job any easier. None of these things were Sohi's fault or idea particularly, and some of them he has had no control over, but as mayor, they are nevertheless his responsibility and therefore his problem.

Sohi's methods and manner may not have helped manage his quandary. Perhaps during the pandemic his "steady hand on the wheel" approach was appreciated, but something more combative and bolder might have served him better. Stephen Mandel and Don Iveson were big personalities. Sohi was not. He wants to be collaborative and inclusive, but perhaps trying to work collectively with so many diverse interest groups made it seem that he didn't have any ideas or juice of his own, that he was a bureaucrat forever reacting rather than a leader blazing a trail. "There just never seemed to be enough direction from the mayor's office," says Cournoyer. "And there's no doubt that his time as mayor

wore down his reputation and probably cost him more than it helped him during the federal campaign."

Much of the country gravitated to Carney's Liberals on the promise of stability, moderation and, you could argue, the status quo in the face of Trump's tariffs and "51st State" taunts, but that was not the political story out here. Albertans wanted change, and Sohi, ever the moderate, was not seen as an agent of change.

"I AM NOT DRIVEN BY IDEOLOGIES," Sohi told me the week before the election. "Regardless of which party, a politician's focus should always remain people, to serve them and make their lives better. I'm a good example that when you actually invest in people, you not only help them to be successful in their life but you are building their capacity to give back to your community."

Those who have become close with Sohi over the years have often remarked on his compassion, his concern for community, inclusion and his belief in equality. When he has spoken on the campaign trail during his numerous runs for elected office, his words have often carried a thoughtfulness and rarely sounded rote or canned. And accepting that it's hard to ever truly know for certain, the warmth he radiates in person seems authentic.

Yet for all his ability to connect with people, for all his laudable impulses to serve, for all that his nature seems genuine, the reality is that he has failed multiple times over his career to ignite voters as a group. One has to wonder if his integrity, his principles, his values — to be brief, whatever essential decency you ascribe to him — have made him a good politician rather than a successful one. The two are rarely the same.

Politics is a ruthless blood sport. Roughly since Pericles of Athens, politicians have been telling voters on the campaign trail that it's their job to represent all people and not just the ones who voted for them; that we only succeed when we all work together; and that community comes first. (Oh, and that they are agents of change.) Sometimes they might even believe those things. But mostly politics and political races are about winning. As I recall Rod Love, Ralph Klein's long-time chief of staff, telling me when I interviewed him many years ago, "Principles in politics are wonderful, but they don't mean fuck all if you're not in power. If you're in power, great, then go ahead and talk all day about your principles. But if you're not in power, fuck off."

The expletive-free version of that is, "nice guys finish last."

Amarjeet Sohi, by all accounts a nice guy, hasn't always finished last and has won often enough that his principles and values have had a positive impact on his community. But why, then, does his political career as a councillor, member of Parliament and especially as mayor feel faintly underwhelming? Is it him? Or is it us?

The answer, of course, is both. We regularly bemoan the polarized, tribal, nasty, shallow state of politics and yet when candidates of substance and honesty raise their hands, too often we consider them dull and uninspiring. Sohi has always operated generally in a spirit of modesty. But is modesty a virtue in the political sphere? Or is it just dull? Do we want people in power whom we trust or who excite us?

All we know is that the numbers are the numbers and they indicate that voters increasingly viewed Sohi more as a political relic than a vehicle of forward progress. "Currently," says Cournoyer, "the most valuable currency in politics is shamelessness." If true, that doesn't bode well for centre-left candidate Andrew

Knack, who is trying to balance a socially progressive platform — emphasizing affordable housing and mental-health services — with a “back-to-basics” focus on growth, affordability and safety, all anchored by his smiling “nice guy” persona. Running as an independent, the three-term city councillor has called the new model of partisan municipal slates “poison,” warning it will bring fighting and negativity to council. As he told Real Talk host Ryan Jespersen the morning after his campaign launch, “I don’t think you have to become a fighter to get things done in politics.”

On the other hand, Tim Cartmell, the apparent mayoral front-runner who founded the centre-right Better Edmonton Party, seems to recognize the unpopularity of Sohi’s discreet approach with his promise to “fix what’s broken” and “get shit done.” Yet, when you drill down on Cartmell’s platform, it’s even more boilerplate than Knack’s: a promise to focus on basic services, to create safe streets, to practice fiscal responsibility, to identify inefficiencies and to create a 100-day post-election action plan to look at safety, snow clearing and road construction. Whatever he lacks in imagination, he makes up for in scrappiness and self-assurance. If Sohi possesses these qualities at all, he doesn’t like to show them. His humility, it seems, is too entrenched.

During our interview, he told me a story about his first federal run in 2015, which seemed to embody his distaste for political theatre. During the campaign, his 101-year-old father took Sohi aside and said to him, “I know you are worried you’re not going to win, but I want you to remember that what you say today and what you say during this election is going to reflect on you and who you are. Do not do anything that you will end up regretting.”

BACK AT THE ROYAL PALACE for the election night party that never was, I took a moment to speak with a couple of Sohi supporters named Randeep Dhaliwal and Deepak Sondhi. Dhaliwal told me that politics has always been Sohi’s passion. “It doesn’t matter if he wins or loses tonight,” said Dhaliwal. (It was still early in the night, before the numbers finally told us which one of those it was going to be.) “He’ll always be serving his community. He wants to serve the public.”

Sondhi agreed. “Remember, he started as a bus driver. Then a councillor, then a federal minister, then Mayor. I didn’t support him because he was a Liberal or a Conservative or whatever. I supported him because he’s a friend of the community. Fingers crossed!”

Crossed fingers didn’t help. By 9:15 p.m., the mood in the room felt conflicted. It seemed clear by then that the Liberals would win, but not with Edmonton Southeast. It was now simply about waiting for Sohi to arrive and make a speech acknowledging the reality of the result. But by 9:45, he still had not shown up. At 10 p.m., big groups of people began to leave. You could almost see and hear people asking themselves, *Where is he?*

Then the giant televisions showing the election results started glitching and, almost eerily, the ballroom lights began flickering. The metaphor (the bulb of Sohi’s once-bright political career powering off) was as obvious as it was uncanny.

Sohi finally arrived about a quarter past ten. After shaking a few hands and giving out a few hugs, he went to a stage festooned with his campaign’s posters and banners, the whole production now looking more sorrowful than festive. Once at the microphone, he signalled to his staff to shut off the televisions still blaring away in the corner. For some inexplicable reason, no one seemed able to do so. After a moment, the screens went blank but the sound remained on and somehow louder. The sound finally



went off but the lights above him kept popping and crackling. If ever there was a series of signals that perhaps this was not meant to be, here it was.

The whole thing was shambolic. And yet, despite undoubtedly just wanting to get it all over with, Sohi kept his cool and handled his concession speech, and the media scrum that followed, graciously. He had referred to his future previously, but when asked by reporters what his City Hall plans were, Sohi reiterated, firmly and formally, that he would be finishing his term out as mayor and would not run again. He seemed to take a beat to absorb the full meaning of the statement, that this may in fact have been his final campaign.

When he finally left the stage and began moving through the hug line toward the exit door, I expected him to go through these motions and then call it a night — and a career. But to my surprise he didn’t rush at all. He lingered, looked people in the eye, made each person feel noticed and appreciated ... all while the lights in the room continued to flicker like a bartender flashing the house lights at last call.

Once he made his way through the line of supporters, Sohi found himself strategically situated by the exit door leading out to the foyer and the parking lot. I imagined his staff had planned it that way. But instead of proceeding through the exit, he turned the other direction, towards the bar and the main part of the banquet hall. There were still quite a few people standing and sitting around in pods of four or five. As Sohi moved deeper into the room, he kept circulating, making his way from group to group, exchanging handshakes and conversations, until he’d basically settled in with the crowd, drinking what looked like a double shot of straight whisky.

At that point, for reasons I am wholly unable to explain, the lights in the room began to work again. The flickering stopped. A kind of calm returned to the room.

By now, it was close to 11 p.m. and yet Sohi continued to seek out every single person remaining in the hall. If this had been a week prior to the election I would’ve simply passed it off as a politician working a room. But the election was over. He’d lost badly. The biggest humiliation of his political career. I wondered if a part of him was relieved at the result, unburdened by the pressure and expectation.

I felt I had seen all I needed to see. It was close to 11:30 p.m. The screens were off. The banquet hall staff were clearing the buffet table. About 50 people were milling about. Among them, a campaign volunteer stacking signs in a rather forlorn pile on the stage, and the mayor himself, laughing during what appeared to be a light-hearted conversation. As I left The Royal Palace, I couldn’t help wondering if he might end up being the last person to leave. **ED.**



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WHAT MAKES A GREAT NEIGHBOURHOOD?

by **Brooklyn Hollinger, Omar Moullem**
and **Allison Stephen**

illustration **Drew Shannon**

↓
We put this question to our readers in our annual survey, expecting to hear about leafy boulevards, nearby grocery stores or quick commutes, but what came back was more heartfelt and revealing. Yes, people mentioned parks and paths, cafes and community centres. But above all, they talked about people.

It wasn't so much the proximity to the river valley or the walkability score that made their neighbourhoods feel special but the spontaneous front-yard chats, the neighbours who shovel walks for each other, the friendships that

formed over shared fences and summer block parties.

More than any one amenity, Edmontonians told us that a great neighbourhood is one where people feel seen, safe and connected, where the third spaces like libraries, rec centres and coffee shops aren't just conveniences, but backdrops for community.

In the pages ahead, you'll find reflections, flow charts, infographics and short reads that reveal what locals value most — and why the best neighbourhood might not be the trendiest or most affordable, but the one where you're greeted by name. *-Allison Stephen*



WHAT'S THE BEST NEIGHBOURHOOD YOU'VE LIVED IN?

ALBERTA AVENUE

"Alberta Avenue has beautiful old character homes, quirky yards and neighbours that actually know each other and hang out. It also has walkable shaded streets, lots of small local shops and restaurants, festivals and amenities." *—Olena Ingerova*

Est. 1894
Population: 6,581
Hidden Gem:
Coliseum Steak and Pizza

NORTH GLENORA

"I love my current neighbourhood of North Glenora. It's such a warm, beautiful community, and despite its small size, it's full of diversity and energy. It is convenient, walkable and feels like home." *—Kristine Tonks*

Est. 1950s
Population: 2,043
Hidden Gem:
Bliss Baked Goods

STRATHCONA

"The Strathcona neighbourhood — just steps away from Mill Creek ravine where I can get in my run. Afterwards I can walk up and get a delicious brunch at Darling. At night, I can people-watch on Whyte Avenue or take in a show at the Grindstone." *—Chantal Lacasse*

Est. 1891
Population: 9,173
Hidden Gem:
Alhambra Books

WELLINGTON

"Wellington in Edmonton is the best neighbourhood I've lived in. It's peaceful, safe and walkable with nearby schools and stores. The neighbours are kind and always say hello. It has a true community feel." *—Tina Kiklevski*

Est. c. 1946
Population: 3,194
Hidden Gem:
Hathaway's Diner

AVONMORE

"Avonmore is by far the best. I always look forward to the warmer days when my neighbours spend more time outside. Hard to make it down the street without stopping to talk to multiple people." *—Alaina Thursby*

Est. 1950s
Population: 2,131
Hidden Gem:
City of Edmonton Reuse Centre

WĪHKWĒNTŌWIN

"The Wihkwēntōwin neighborhood has been an amazing place to live. It's so close to the downtown core, but is tucked away so it's really quiet. The shops, cafes and bike trail are awesome to have." *—Nicole Cari*

Est. 1890s
Population: 18,180
Hidden Gem:
Paul Kane Park



MORE HIDDEN GEMS FROM OUR READERS

- Bonnie Doon:** La Cité Francophone
- Hillview:** Reinette Cafe and Patisserie
- Riverdale:** Little Brick Cafe and General Store
- Hazeldean:** Luna Mexican Restaurant

THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR



What does it actually mean to be a **good neighbour**?

To most of us, neighbourliness means waving hi on our way to work, pushing that snow shovel an extra few metres to clear the next sidewalk, maybe lending a cup of sugar. But for Tammy Greidanus, a resident of Glen Allan in Sherwood Park since 2009, being a good neighbour means knowing all of the neighbours on your block and looking out for one another.

Once a summer, as many as 60 of her neighbours pack sleeping bags, snacks and head to Gilmore Park to cozy up for a movie projected on a big screen. On another occasion, they held a bike parade to raise funds for a new playground. And every May 4, they dress up like *Star Wars* characters to pick garbage off their streets.

"I always say that the force is strong in our neighborhood," says Greidanus. That's an understatement — they even have their very own neighbourhood YouTube channel.

While it may sound a little extra, many participants in our neighbourhoods survey shared stories that could inspire anyone to be a better neighbour, like fixing a faulty step, closing accidentally left-open garage doors and literally mending fences. One reader was even invited to live in their neighbours' home during renovations while the owners were away on an extended vacation. Still, many readers preferred those with good boundaries who never stuck their noses in others' business.

It got us thinking, what makes a great neighbour? There's "no one recipe," says Neal LaMontagne, a professor in urban and regional planning at the University of Alberta.

Oftentimes, there's pressure to have close relationships with your neighbours, even when we don't desire them. In

that sense, neighbours are a lot like family members: part of your life whether you like it or not, so you better find a way to get along.

But LaMontagne prefers a garden metaphor when it comes to neighbour relations. "Ideally," he says, "it all works together, it's cared for, it's tended and yet it's a little unpredictable."

We've all had our fair share of the good and the bad. Neighbours who, for better or worse, like to keep to themselves, and neighbours who can chatter your ear off (okay, that one's for worse). While it's perfectly acceptable, and often preferable, to keep a polite distance, there are many mental health benefits to being social with your neighbours.

Studies by Hey Neighbour Collective, a Simon Fraser University project researching the benefits of social and community connection, found links to lower risks of depression and cardiovascular disease, higher levels of physical activity and higher self-rated health. According to its evidence backgrounder, "How Does Social Connectedness Between Neighbours Support Health and Well-Being?," people with strong social connections (including with their neighbours) have up to a 50 per cent lower risk of premature death, a benefit on par with quitting smoking or maintaining a healthy weight.

Even though there is no all-encompassing definition of what it means to be a good neighbour, amicable interactions between people in a community can be more than just a smile and a wave. It can turn into annual movie nights, building a playground together or even something as simple as getting to know each other's names.

—Brooklyn Hollinger

YOUR TURN

WE ASKED READERS FOR STORIES OF THEIR BEST NEIGHBOURS

"I lent my kitchen machine to my neighbour around Christmas time so she could make sugar cookies. And she gave me some cookies as a thank you."

—Lynsee Leahy,
Mill Creek



"One rainy day, I got a text from our neighbour, who was worried that our gutters were blocked because rain was overflowing them. He went up the ladder, cleared the block and saved us from a possible nasty water situation!"

—Teresa Clouston, Mills Haven
(Sherwood Park)



"We had a newborn and were in those early, sleep-deprived days. Our next-door neighbour — a motorcycle enthusiast — would walk his bike down the street before starting it, worried the noise might wake us or the baby."

—Deepti Babu, Deer Ridge (St. Albert)



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the uplands
AT RIVERVIEW

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In The Uplands at Riverview, natural elements such as parks, playgrounds and walking trails are seamlessly integrated, and amenities such as schools, recreation facilities, and shopping are nearby.

The community offers a quiet, secluded setting in West Edmonton that also allows access to major driving routes when needed.

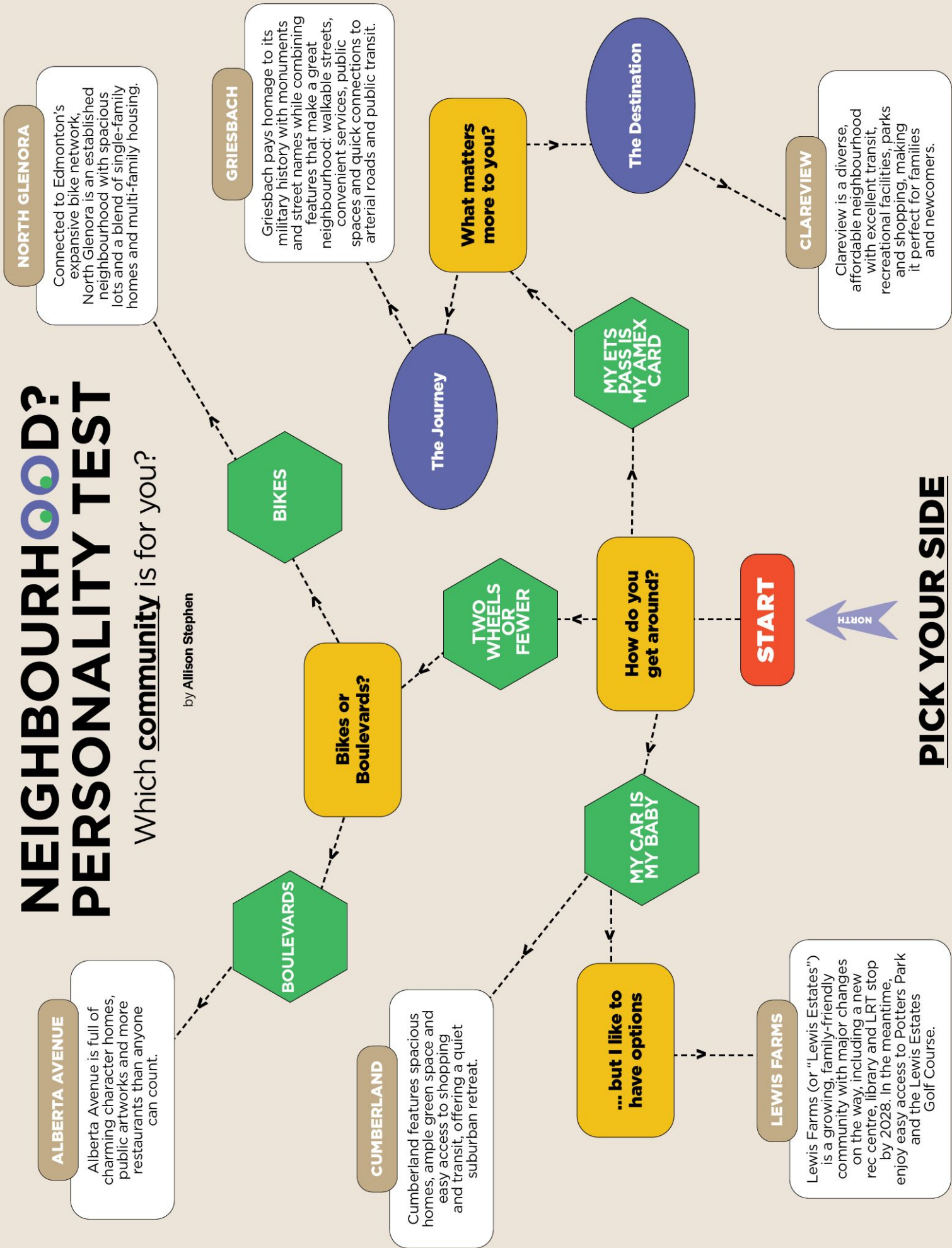
4 Home Styles • 14 Home Builders • 9 Showhomes
NEW SHOWHOME NOW OPEN!

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NEIGHBOURHOOD? PERSONALITY TEST

Which **community** is for you?

by Allison Stephen



PICK YOUR SIDE

The fast-growing suburban neighbourhood of Tamarack offers something for everyone — excellent rental communities, attainable family homes and a large shopping centre featuring a fantastic movie theatre. With easy access to major roads, getting the kids to parkour is no problem.

I don't have time to daydream about the ideal — my kids have piano, gymnastics and parkour today!

ACTIVE

LEISURELY

Are you feeling social?

YES
I love running into people at the farmers' market and people-watching on a patio with good food and friends.

NOT REALLY,
I want to beat the Costco crowd, grab a drive-thru coffee, then settle back at home.

RITCHIE
Home to many restaurants, shops, a plethora of breweries via Happy Beer Street, Ritchie is charming, trendy, walkable and community-minded.

SUMMERSIDE
Suburban bliss with a private lake suited for paddleboarding, "beach" days and living that vacation vibe all year long.

Parkallen combines a great community league with fantastic parks and playgrounds conveniently located near Annie Rue Ice Cream and The Colombian. Centrally located, it's an ideal place for families and professionals to put down roots.

Treat the family to ice cream and craft coffee, then let the kids run wild in the park with our neighbours.

I want to hit the trails, then stop by my favourite shops and local library before settling into my book.

TERWILLEGAR
Terwillegar has a strong sense of community — it's peaceful, family-friendly, close to nature and independent businesses, plus easy freeway access when you're itching for the city.

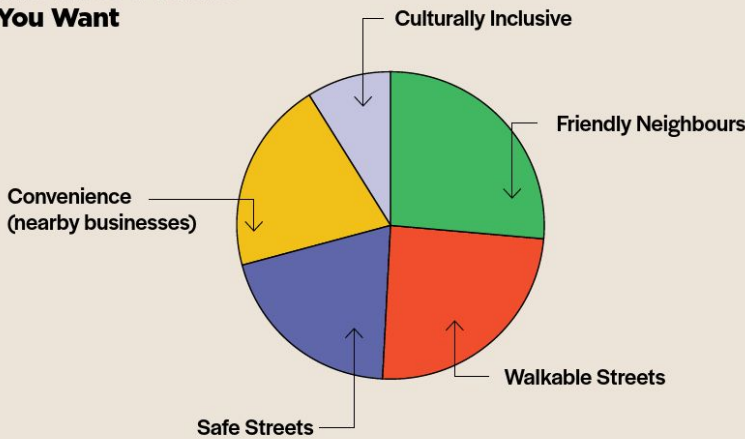


WHAT MAKES A GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD

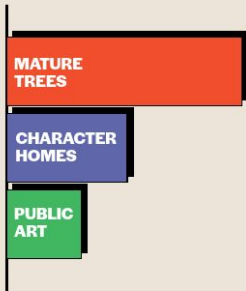
A GREAT NEIGHBOURHOOD?

We asked — you answered. Here's what *Edify* readers said matters most in a community by **Omar Mouallem**

The Vibes & Values You Want



Most Desired Aesthetics of a Neighbourhood



Top 3 Most Desired Public Amenities

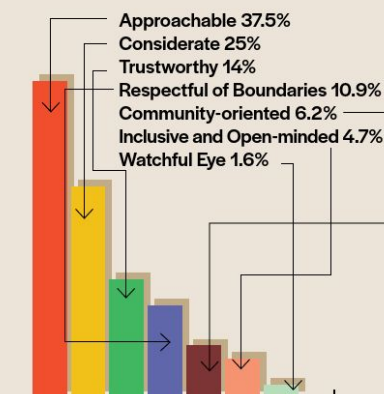


Is Parking Overblown?



Only 8% of readers valued convenient parking, yet parking-related disputes dominated civic discussion this year — from protests against mobile-only meters and new residential fees to neighbourhood revolts over bike lanes. Meanwhile, you told us that you value walkability, safety and green spaces much more. So why are we fighting over curbs instead of community?

The Qualities of a Good Neighbour



Third Spaces Matter

A “third space” is where people gather outside home and work. These spaces are vital to any thriving, people-centred community, and our readers clearly cherish them. When we asked about your third space, the top three most cited places were a library, coffee shop and, yes, West Edmonton Mall.

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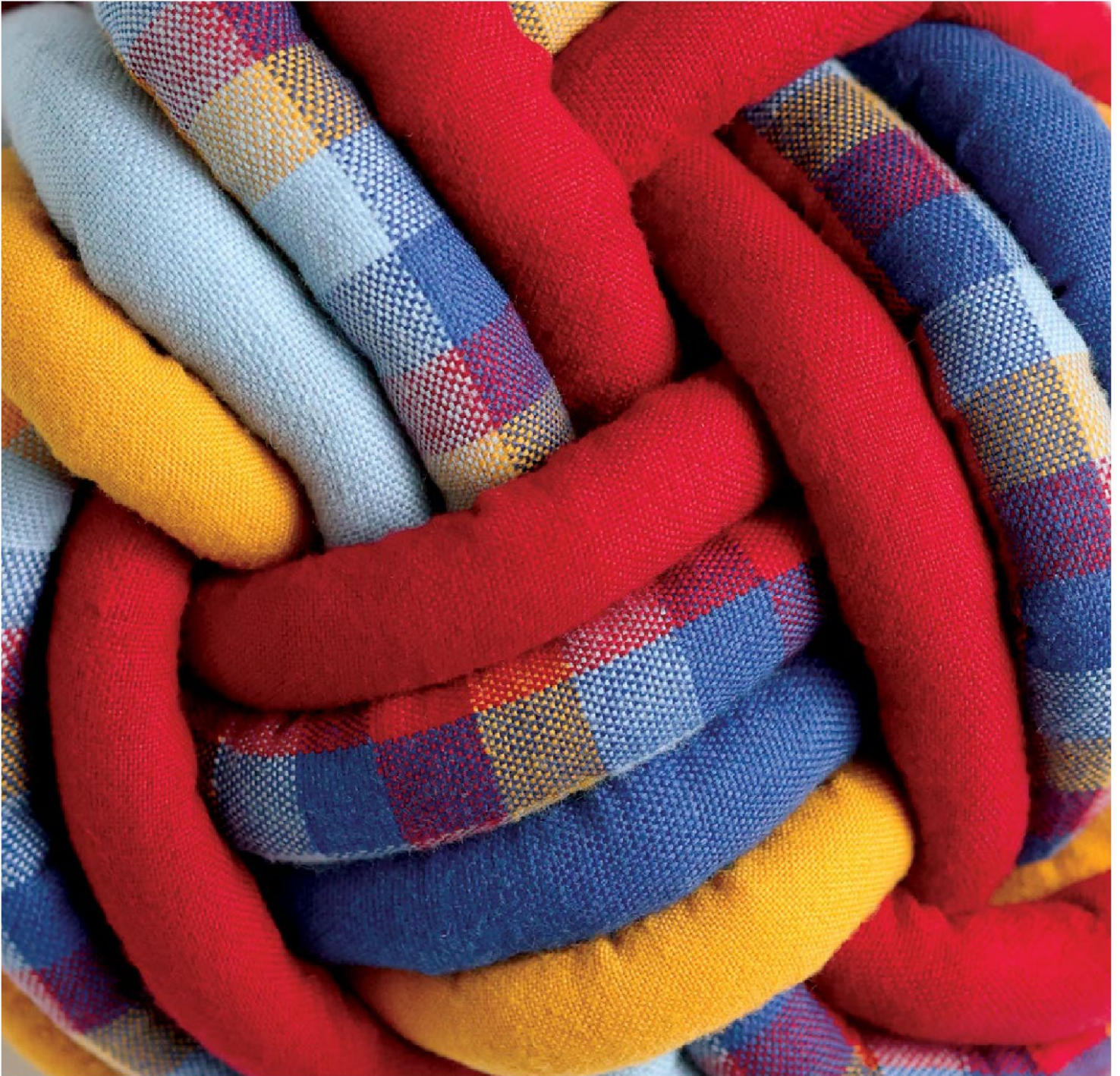
Gum disease can affect anyone. When they do, it's important to consult a specialist who focuses on the health of your gums and the supporting bone structure of your mouth. A periodontist can help you get back on track, especially if you're experiencing implant-related complications. Contact a periodontist today at albertaperiodontists.ca



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Look

Fashion
Architecture
Textiles
Design



Textiles

Threading the Mind

In her debut solo exhibition ***Symptomatology***, Edmonton textile artist Jessica Fern Facette weaves a personal journey into vibrant form. Diagnosed with ADHD in her 40s, the founder of Fern's School of Craft recognized the calming, rhythmic act of weaving as a form of bilateral stimulation — a therapeutic technique that engages both hemispheres of the brain. Her sculptural tubes and double-woven panels blend order and chaos, reflecting the sensory experience of neurodivergence. With bright primary colours nodding to childhood, the works are both joyful and self-aware, inviting viewers to consider cognition not as disorder, but as biological design. On view at Alberta Craft Council Discovery Gallery until July 12.

THE HOUSE THAT FOUND THEM

A mid-century gem by two of Canada's pioneering female architects became the perfect match for a couple drawn to open space, natural light and quiet intention





When Darren Jacknisky and Shelley Robertson bought the house they now call home, in 2005, they had already been looking to move for some time. The couple and their young daughter had outgrown a 900-square-foot condo, but the search wasn't going well. They saw a series of houses that weren't right — in some cases not making it past the curb. Finally, their realtor brought them to a mid-century home in Westbrook Estates built by the architectural duo Wallbridge and Imrie, Canada's first female-operated architecture firm. The split-level house proved to be exactly what they were looking for. Even though there were no street-facing windows, and the front entrance held an unassuming look, there was a refined aesthetic to the exterior that hinted at something bold hidden inside.

I visited the house on a warm Thursday morning and immediately understood what Jacknisky and Robertson had seen 20 years earlier. The clean lines that define the exterior continue into the front entrance, where sets of stairs can take you up into a rustic den, or downstairs into the main living space. Both floors look out on a green blanket of trees.



This emphasis on nature is a defining detail of Wallbridge and Imrie homes. In addition to modern finishes, like kerfed windows, the duo also designed houses that favoured backyard views. Looking out the window into Jacknisky and Robertson's backyard, you feel as if you are in a forest retreat rather than a city neighbourhood.

When it came time to renovate, the couple added new flooring and other changes consistent with the home's character. The house was built to feel open and free; they didn't want to change that. They removed one wall between the kitchen and the living room, and they stripped out some carpet on the upper level. They remodelled built-in cabinetry with bamboo that complemented the mid-century design. Decades later, the architecture has also been complemented by the couple's eclectic collection of paintings, prints, carvings and ceramics.

"You want to surround yourself with beautiful things," Robertson told me.

Some of the art comes from people Jacknisky, a nationally renowned photographer, has met during his career (including a sketch Alex Janvier made of Jacknisky's camera during a portrait sitting), but Robertson gets credit for sourcing most of the pieces. "I never go out looking for something in particular, but the good things seem to find me," she said. The same could be said of their home. **ED.**

THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE ARCHITECTS

In the mid-twentieth century, Edmonton-based architects Jean Wallbridge and Mary Imrie became trailblazers in a field dominated by men. The pair studied architecture separately, becoming the third (Wallbridge) and fifth (Imrie) women to register with the Alberta Association of Architects. When they opened their own firm in 1950, they were the first all-female architectural partnership in Canada.

Like many female architects of their era, much of the work they completed was domestic (larger, more lucrative projects typically went to male-run firms). Imrie and Wallbridge excelled at working with residential clients, both because they took pleasure in their work and because they listened to their clients, building homes that suited their needs.

Their projects were often defined by signature details — clean lines, open spaces and elegant and unassuming finishes. The pair also created homes that prioritized the rear of the house, emphasizing natural spaces rather than street views.

In their time, their legacy was critically overlooked, but *Quiet Modernism*, a new book by Sarah Bonnemaïson, an architecture and planning professor at Dalhousie University, hopes to change that.

According to Bonnemaïson's research, part of their story was kept hidden during their lifetimes out of necessity. In addition to their professional partnership, Wallbridge and Imrie were romantic partners — a fact they kept secret from many in their lives. The pair worked at a time when queer sexuality was illegal; they had to be careful with whom they were open.

As architects, Wallbridge and Imrie designed for ease of movement. They had successful careers and travelled frequently, and one can't help but wonder if openness was of interest in part because it was something they were denied in their personal lives — if the necessity of secrecy led them to create freedom and openness in each home they built.



Architects Jean Wallbridge and Mary Imrie



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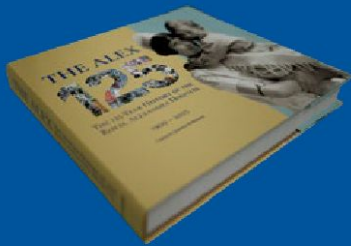


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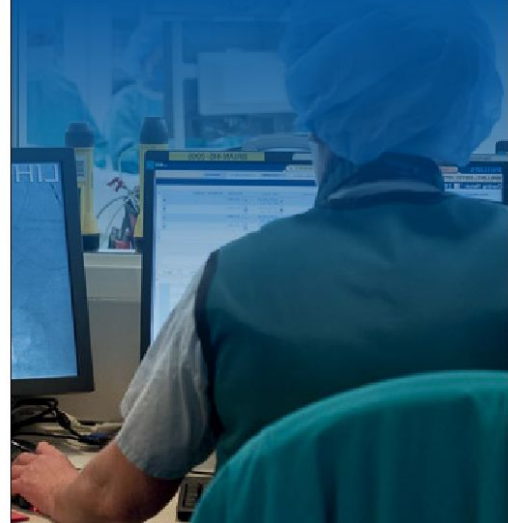


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Stage

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“SUNNE”

A few years ago, I was making work inspired by the sun when I learned that “sunne” was once feminine in Old English. That sparked an origin myth I wanted to stage. I collaborated with Stephanie Dover, who made sculptural pieces — including this headdress — and performed the myth as I photographed her. —Zachary Ayotte

Todd McLean manager
of Flashback Records



CLASSIC LISTENING

Flashback Records is more than just an operation — it's an artistic craft built from personable connection

by **BROOKLYN HOLLINGER** photography **BUFFY GOODMAN**

AT A TIME WHEN ENDLESS ACCESS TO MUSIC rests at our fingertips, it might surprise you to learn that record album sales in the U.S. — that is, analogue music — have grown from 3.5 million to over 43 million since 2009. It's even outpaced CD sales. What explains the vinyl revival? It's not just their timeless quality or nostalgic appeal of owning physical media — though there's that — but the technological brilliance that produces a profound and superior sound. Just ask Todd McLean of Edmonton's vinyl factory Flashback Records.

Growing up in the 1980s, McLean was raised on his parents' collection of southern gospel and quartet band LPs, though of course, his own tastes veered more toward bands like Petra, Van Halen and Journey. However, while most friends bought cassettes, young McLean was already building his vinyl collection.

He undertook a business management career in non-profit and private sectors, but maintained his passion for music, striking up conversations with touring independent artists about their albums. "I found the same recurring theme happening over and over," he says. Big-name pressing plants



rarely prioritized small vinyl orders from indie bands, leading to long waits and poor quality. Meanwhile, factories that did offer small-batch orders often did so with outdated technology that compromised sound quality. Motivated to fix the problem, McLean began learning about modern vinyl technology to start a high-quality production plant for independent artists.

Seven years later, Flashback Records is one of only about six vinyl-pressing factories in Canada, producing over 150,000 units per year. The company uses cutting-edge technology to deliver indie-friendly quantities with major-label quality.

For McLean, making records is more art than operation. He had to develop both the technical skills — like measuring the right grams of material — and the intuition to recognize high-quality vinyl. He also must determine what colour combinations pair well with the artist's intentions, in order to get the mixture right. Every individual vinyl is also inspected for scratches, cosmetic flaws and misaligned labels.

The best part, however, is seeing the musicians' reactions to the finished product. "It really makes quite an impression on them. It's a milestone." **ED.**

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Love Letters

HOLDING HANDS

Before Kathy's final goodbye, she gave me one final gift: clarity and courage to live without her

by **TIMOTHY FOWLER**

KATHERINE JEAN, a month before God took you by the hand, you took me by mine and tried to prepare me for a life without you. After calling 911 the week prior, I wasn't expecting another conversation, but you are full of surprises.

I was astonished just to find you fully dressed, that day in March, stretched out on the couch in your room at Cross Cancer Institute, fierce and warm as ever, waiting for my arrival.

"Tim," you said, "get a cup of coffee and come and sit, we have a lot to talk about."

It was a lot to take in: your great hair, your enchanting eyes, your complete frankness, your sparkling clarity. Despite being drenched in morphine, you were your complete self. We looked at each other for what seemed a long time, and you started to cry.

"I want my grandchildren to remember me," you said.

You gave me instructions, making sure I wrote them down. We agreed that I'd keep driving your car for a while, so that when I picked up the kids they would be in Grandma Kate's car. You asked me to clean up the clutter.

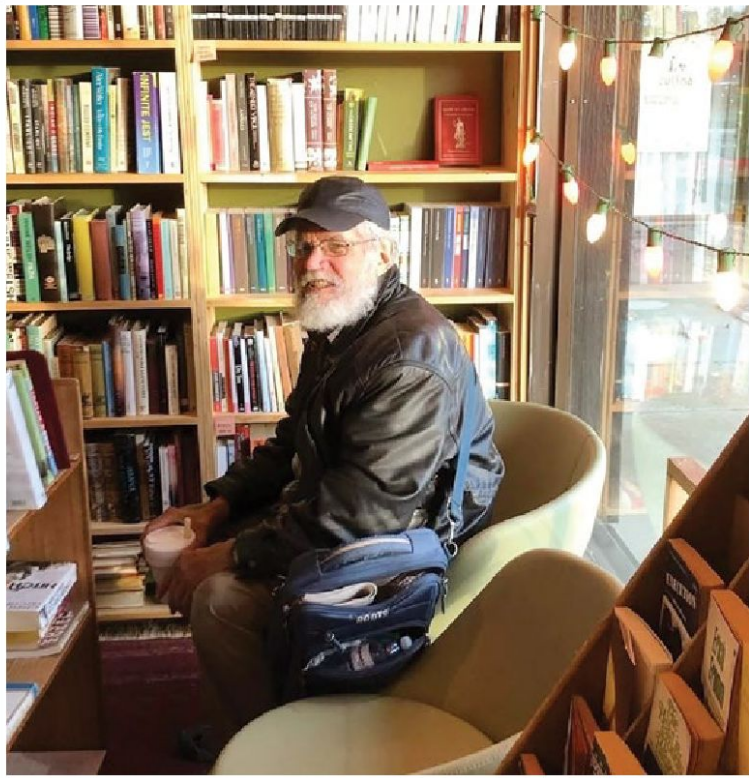
We talked for four hours, held hands, laughed, cried, and took inventory of what we accomplished together in 45 years, the crazy-good fun we had, the stack of miracles we sit on. So many perfect days, and yet I think that day in the hospital was the best of my life.

I tried to put off cleaning and decluttering, as you had asked, because it would be too painful to sort through it all, but eventually I went to work. Somehow you knew that the first place I'd tackle was your bedside table, where I uncovered a stack of love letters, every one I ever wrote you, including the Valentine's Day telegram I sent you from Australia in 1981. (You told me that was the day you decided to marry me.) My Christmas 1982 letter, the first after our wedding, when I told you "I appreciate your willingness to try, try again, bend, work, love, trust and care for me." And here you are, 43 years later, still trusting and caring for me.

How long were you planning this? Sweetie, you are the fiercest woman I have ever known.

When I told you the next day that I found the stack of love letters in your nightstand, you smiled. "Thanks for driving me and coming with me to all those appointments," you said. "Thanks for making French onion soup. Thank you for your help, Tim, thank you. This has been so much easier with you holding my hand." **ED.**

This is a new series of essays by Edmontonians reflecting on human connection. Pitch your little love story to editor@odvodpublishing.com.



Lost Ones

HUMBLE GIANT

Farley Woodland Magee,
August 27, 1951 - October 11, 2024

by **BENJAMIN HERTWIG**

FARLEY MAGEE'S FOOTPRINTS are all over Boyle Street-McCauley. If you listen carefully on a quiet day, you might still hear his voice in the wind. Coffee, books and crosswords were three of his abiding loves. On good days, he spent time with each of them, often at the same time. You might find him sitting on any of the neighbourhood's numerous park benches, sometimes in conversation, sometimes silent. He sat under the wide canopies of old elm trees, enjoying the shade, listening to the birds, breathing in the softness of the world.

As his middle name — Woodland — suggests, Farley cared deeply about nature. The way humans have harmed, and continue to harm, mother earth grieved him deeply. He had a long list of questions he one day hoped to ask God, and he made music with the angels — whatever you conceive them to be. He possessed a register and timbre like Gordon Lightfoot, and his lilting, sonorous voice came straight from the folk tradition. You could find him making music at the Bissell Centre, at the downtown library, with friends, at the annual Outdoor Way of the Cross. He finger-picked with the delicacy of someone who has experienced great pain but was determined to try and make music to accompany it anyhow.

Farley was afraid of dogs, having once been bitten. He hadn't touched one in nearly 20 years, until near the end of his life, when he met Bru, our gentle rescue, who shared a quiet, healing bond that made up for years of canine separation with every kiss. But Farley never fully recovered from the early death of his child. Some days you could see the pain of that memory sitting on his shoulders, as the child herself once might have. He wasn't ashamed to talk about his struggles with mental health. When he was feeling unwell, he would seek company in conversation, sometimes knocking on the doors of friends late in the day or popping by my bookstore after hours to see if anyone wanted to share a coffee.

His weather-beaten hat and satchel gave the impression of a man who wandered the world, as did the guitar strapped to his back. He criss-crossed the alleys, walkways and sidewalks of Boyle Street-McCauley a thousand times over, with a shy smile and kind words for everyone he encountered. The birds, the sun and the moon were his friends too.

Farley's housing situation was rough. He had to deal with neglected buildings, bug infestations, evictions and bad landlords, but he kept searching for the good, even in the hardest of times. His vulnerability was disarming, and the music he made gave others permission to acknowledge their own pain. There was no artifice with Farley. He was happy to spend time with you or sing next to you, whatever your mood, whatever your scars or skeletons.

The places Farley lived and made music in were humble. He spent no time in grand buildings or great cathedrals, but the songs and the conversations he started were themselves the cathedrals — lofty, spacious, life-giving, grounded, pointing to something beyond himself and impossible to fully articulate, though he never stopped trying. **ED.**

Lost Ones is a new series honouring local legends and unsung heroes who've recently passed. To recommend someone whose story deserves memorializing, email editor@odvodpublishing.com.



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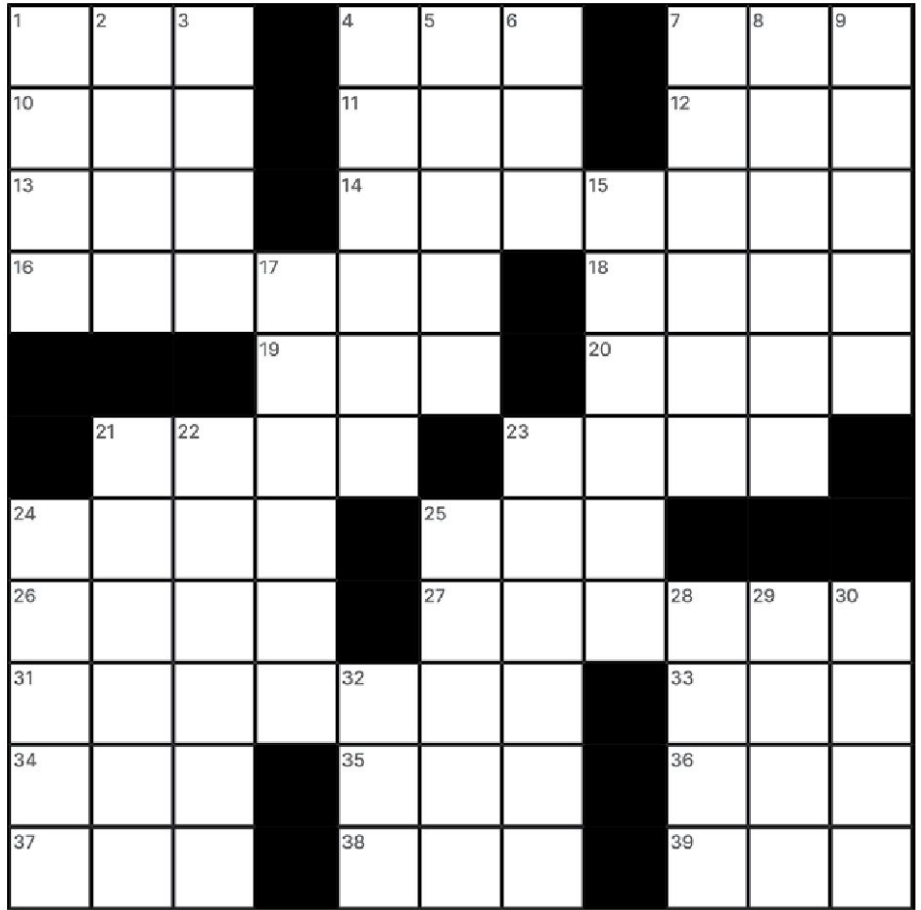
Crossword Puzzle

46 HINTS OF SUMMER



Put your memory to the test with clues from our pages

by **BRANDON CATHCART**



ACROSS

- 1. Juu.Ku menu with eight items (with 4-Across)
- 4. See 1-Across
- 7. Cheesy pastas frequently donated to the Edmonton Food Bank
- 10. Victoria Park Skating Oval surface
- 11. Staple purple flavour of Yelo'd desserts
- 12. Cry from an Elk's cheerleader
- 13. On the ___ (all the time)
- 14. Inigo of a classic movie screened at the Metro Cinema every February
- 16. What you might work through at DiveThru
- 18. A monk's counterpart (two words)
- 19. Understand
- 20. ___ hips, used to make one of Zeina Sleiman's favourite teas
- 21. Russian ruler of old, or, in an alternate spelling, a central Albertan hamlet
- 23. ___ Supply (purveyors of "facility maintenance solutions" found on 75th Street)
- 24. Gradually ease (off)
- 25. How you might address your Spanish teacher
- 26. One of the Muttart Conservatory's three climates
- 27. Councillor who lost to Sohi in 2021
- 31. Cold treats from the Italian Centre
- 33. Common order on Ritchie's Happy Beer Street: Abbr.
- 34. Ukrainian sushi combines classic Japan ___ with baked che ___

- 35. Useful tool for growing your own food
- 36. Unlikely condition for something found at Find
- 37. Word heard at a skatepark 🕶️
- 38. LRT provider
- 39. What Rogers Place is to Hunter the Lynx

DOWN

- 1. "Get your hands in the ___" -Sustainable Food Edmonton's Junetta Jamerson
- 2. What you might call an Oil King clearing the puck a little too far
- 3. Word before ___ Saver's Outlet, Meat Store, Signs, Movez Man
- 4. ___side (community with a private lake)
- 5. The German version of West Edmonton Mall's submarines, once
- 6. 49.5% of Edmonton's population (as of 2006)
- 7. Currency that might be accepted at the Scandinavian Heritage Society of Edmonton

- 8. Alberta Parks area not meant for overnight camping
- 9. Indigenous chef and author Chartrand
- 15. Surface at the Edmonton International Airport
- 17. Where many Rainbow Refuge newcomers are from
- 21. Mother of McCauley area Catholic elementary school
- 22. "That ship has ___!"
- 23. Gets out of bed
- 24. Place a bet, as you might do at the Grand Villa Casino
- 25. What you might boop at Alex Decoteau Park
- 28. Ice cream joint offering a mint-chip flavour with natural ingredients
- 29. Edmonton Fencing Club's weapon of choice
- 30. Type of chair brought to Symphony Under the Sky
- 32. Alternative to *au café*

Answers on page 11

Brandon Cathcart is a local record label owner and crossword constructor. He publishes a new puzzle every Friday at yegwords.com



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TUDOR



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