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Did You Know?

Cranston has two separate organizations working to make our community the best it can be!

Cranston Community Association (CCA)

cranstonca.com • cranstonca@gmail.com

- Membership is voluntary (\$20 per household within Cranston, \$30 per household outside Cranston).
- Protects and advocates for the interests of the neighbourhood; is the community voice.
- Past hot topics have included cell phone tower placement, congested intersections, and zoning.
- Direct contact with our City Councillor, MLA, Calgary Police Liaison Officer, Federal MP, and others on a monthly basis.
- Run events such as the Community Cleanup, Festival of Lights, and organizes the *Cranversations* newsletter.
- Partner with grassroots minor soccer programs.
- Run solely by volunteers; generally meet at 7:00 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding July/August) at Century Hall and all are welcome!

Cranston Residents Association (CRA)

www.cranstonra.ca | 403-781-6614

- Membership is compulsory for all households in Cranston; fees are collected annually each April.
- It is a not-for-profit organization that is professionally managed and operated.
- Operates, maintains, and manages amenities within Cranston owned by the Cranston RA including Century Hall with its indoor and outdoor facilities including gymnasium, tennis courts, splash park, and ice rink. They also maintain the Windmill, Art Park, and Direct Control corners.
- Responsible for Century Hall's programming. Kids and adults can take part in all sorts of wonderful activities such as dance, yoga, basketball, and art classes.
- Additional events such as Stampede Breakfast, Farmers Market, and Winter Wonderland are also organized by the Cranston RA with help from a variety of generous sponsors.

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Apple Crisp

by S. Law



If you have had the chance to stop by your local Farmers' Market, I'm sure you've seen an abundance of apples. What better way to deal with such an overhaul than by making something delicious. Personally, my favourite way of using fresh apples is making apple crisp. It's easy, requires almost no tools, and is always a hit. If you've got some apples to spare, why not give it a try!

Ingredients

Filling:

- 2 cups of apples, sliced or chopped
- ½ cup of white sugar
- 2 tablespoons of cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon of nutmeg

Base/Topping:

- 1+1/2 cups of rolled oats
- 1 cup of flour
- 1/4 cup of brown sugar
- ½ cup of butter or margarine
- 1 teaspoon of salt

Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 425°F degrees and prepare a 9 x 9-inch baking pan.
2. Begin by washing and cutting your apples into thin slices or small chunks. There is no need to peel them unless desired. Place all the apples in a bowl with your white sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Massage everything together until your apples are well coated. If the mixture seems too dry you can add a teaspoon of lemon juice to add a bit more liquid.
3. In another bowl, combine your oats, flour, and salt.
4. Take your butter or margarine and tear it into chunks overtop of the mixture. Begin crumbling the butter between your fingers, turning the dry ingredients into a slightly wet mixture.
5. Press around 1/3 of the oat mixture into the bottom of your pan. Press very firmly to create a solid base.
6. Pour the apples into the pan and spread evenly.
7. Taking the remainder of your oat mixture, add the brown sugar and mix gently, do not fully combine, the lines of brown sugar are what caramelize on top of your crisp.
8. Add the rest of the oat mixture to the top of your crisp, it doesn't need to be pressed, just evenly distributed across the top.
9. Bake in the oven for 30 to 45 minutes until golden and bubbling. Remove it from the oven and let it rest for at least 20 minutes. Serve with vanilla ice cream, whipped cream, or anything else of your choosing!

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When Grief Becomes Complicated: Strategies for Dealing with Complex Grief

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych | info@nancybergeron.ca



Grief is a natural response to loss, but it does not follow a fixed timeline. For many of us, the pain slowly softens and life begins to open up again. For others, grief stays intense, persistent, and disruptive long after the loss. This is often called complex grief.

Complex grief is more than missing someone. It can feel as if time has stopped. Months or even years after the loss, we may still feel as though the death happened yesterday. You may struggle with intense longing, difficulty accepting the loss, or trouble imagining a meaningful future without the person who died. Everyday reminders can bring overwhelming pain, making it hard to work, maintain relationships, or enjoy activities you once valued.

Complex grief can sometimes be mistaken for depression because both can involve sadness and withdrawal. The difference is that grief is centred on the loss of a specific person and the longing for that relationship. Depression usually involves a broader loss of pleasure, ongoing hopelessness, and negative beliefs about oneself. It is also possible to experience both at the same time.

Six Coping Strategies for Complex Grief:

While complex grief can feel overwhelming, there are approaches that can help. Evidence-based treatment

often includes grief-focused therapy, which offers a safe space to process the loss, explore painful emotions, and gradually rebuild meaning and connection. Some people also benefit from cognitive behavioural strategies, which can help identify unhelpful thoughts such as guilt, self-blame, or the belief that life can never feel meaningful again.

Other helpful coping strategies include:

- **Maintaining routines:** Create a simple daily structure that adds predictability, even in small ways. For example, wake up at the same time each morning, eat breakfast before checking your phone, or take a short walk after lunch.
- **Allowing space for grief:** Set aside time to feel, remember, or express your grief instead of holding it in all day. You might journal before bed, light a candle on a certain day, or look through photos and write down a memory.
- **Staying connected to supportive people:** Reach out to people who can listen without trying to fix your feelings. You might text a trusted friend, attend a grief support group, or invite a family member for coffee.
- **Caring for your body:** Focus on one or two basic physical needs each day, since grief can make self-care harder. You might drink a glass of water when you wake up, eat something with protein at breakfast, stretch for five minutes, or go to bed at a consistent time.
- **Practicing self-compassion:** Notice harsh self-talk and replace it with a more understanding response. If you think, "I should be over this by now," try reminding yourself, "I am grieving something important, and healing takes time."

These strategies do not erase grief, but they can make it more manageable and support healing over time.

When to Seek Professional Help

It may be time to seek professional support if your grief feels stuck or overwhelming for a long period, especially if it is affecting work, relationships, sleep, or daily functioning. You may also benefit from help if you are avoiding reminders of the loss, struggling to imagine a future, or experiencing intense guilt, numbness, or hopelessness that does not ease with time.

Back to School Safety

by Alberta Health Services



Alberta Health Services EMS would like to remind parents and students of some basic safety tips as the school year begins again this fall. Pedestrians and motorists both have an important role to play—road safety is a shared responsibility.

Motorists

- Distracted driving carries a \$300 fine and three demerit points in Alberta. Avoid the use of mobile devices or engaging in any other behavior that diverts your attention away from driving.
- Give right-of-way to pedestrians who have activated overhead crossing lights, or who are waiting to cross from a street corner.
- Other than parked cars, it is illegal to pass another vehicle in a school or playground zone during posted hours.

Around School Buses

- Flashing amber lights mean a bus is slowing down to stop—motorists should do likewise.
- No matter which direction you are coming from, stop when approaching a school bus with activated flashing red lights—unless the bus is on the opposite side of a divided highway from you.

- Driver courtesy goes a long way. By simply being alert and cautious when approaching a school bus, you are contributing to school bus safety.

Pedestrians

- Cross only at marked crosswalks, or street corners that have clear visibility from all directions.
- Make eye contact with all drivers before crossing the street and keep distractions to a minimum.
- When activating overhead crossing lights, pause before stepping off the curb to ensure motorists in both directions have come to a complete stop.
- Stay within the crosswalk lines.
- Obey pedestrian lights at intersections. Cross the street only when you see the 'walk' sign and only when all cars have come to a complete stop.
- If you are with young children or pets, hold your child's hand firmly and keep a solid grip on leashes when crossing.
- Remember: Children learn by observing. By demonstrating safe crossing habits, you can reduce the chances of your child being involved in a preventable auto/pedestrian collision.

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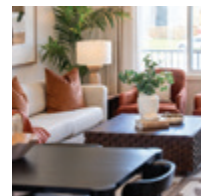
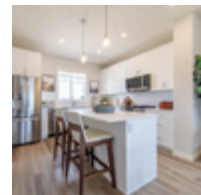
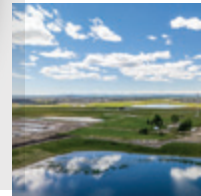


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Changing Your Financial Narrative

Karen Boudewyn | Senior Wealth Advisor



In the earlier parts of this series, we explored how beliefs, cognitive biases, and emotions shape financial behaviour. Now we arrive at a pivotal step; changing the narrative.

Awareness is powerful, but transformation happens when we begin to rewrite the beliefs that no longer serve us. Many of the financial patterns people experience like hesitation, avoidance, lack of confidence are not simply about knowledge or income. They are often rooted in long-standing beliefs that quietly influence decisions over time.

The encouraging reality is this: beliefs are learned and they can be changed.

Recognizing Your Financial Story

Everyone has a financial story. It is the internal narrative that shapes how you think and feel about money.

This story is often formed early and reinforced through experience:

- Messages from childhood about money.
- Past financial successes or mistakes.
- Cultural or family attitudes toward wealth.
- Experiences during economic uncertainty.

Over time, these experiences form beliefs that feel factual even when they may be incomplete or outdated.

Common examples include:

“I’m not good with money”, “Investing is too risky”, “I’ll

never get ahead”, “It’s too late to start.”

These beliefs don’t just sit in the background, they actively influence behaviour.

From Fixed Mindset to Growth Mindset

One of the most important shifts in rewriting your financial story is moving from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset, a concept popularized by Carol Dweck.

A fixed mindset assumes abilities are static:

- “I’ve always been bad with money.”
- “I don’t understand investing.”
- “This is just how things are.”

A growth mindset, on the other hand, recognizes that skills and understanding can be developed:

- “I can learn how to manage money effectively.”
- “I can improve my financial knowledge over time.”
- “Small steps can create meaningful progress.”

This shift doesn’t change your situation overnight, but it changes how you respond to it.

Reframing Limiting Beliefs

Rewriting your financial story begins with identifying and reframing limiting beliefs.

This doesn’t mean ignoring reality — it means challenging assumptions and creating more constructive perspectives.

Examples of reframing include:

“I’m bad with money” → “I haven’t learned the right strategies yet”
“It’s too late to invest” → “Starting now is better than not starting at all”
“I’ll never have enough” → “I can make consistent progress over time”
“Investing is too risky” → “Not investing may carry its own risks”

These small shifts in language can significantly influence behaviour and decision-making.

Building Evidence Through Action

Beliefs don’t change through thinking alone they change through experience.

One of the most effective ways to rewrite limiting beliefs is by creating small, positive financial actions that build evidence over time.

This can include:

- Setting up automatic savings contributions.
- Reviewing your finances regularly.
- Making gradual increases to investment contributions.
- Tracking progress toward specific goals.

Each small win helps reinforce a new narrative: “I am capable of managing my financial life.”

The Role of Consistency

It's important to recognize that changing beliefs is not a one-time event — it's a process.

Old patterns may resurface, especially during times of stress or uncertainty. This is normal.

What matters most is consistency:

- Returning to your plan.
- Continuing small, positive actions.
- Reinforcing new ways of thinking.

Over time, consistent behaviour begins to reshape belief systems.

Creating a More Empowering Financial Identity

As beliefs begin to shift, something deeper starts to change — your financial identity.

You begin to see yourself as:

- Someone who is learning and improving.
- Someone who takes thoughtful financial action.
- Someone who is building long-term stability.

Bringing It All Together

Rewriting your financial story doesn't require perfection or dramatic change. It starts with awareness, followed by small, intentional shifts in thinking and behaviour.

Over time, these steps create meaningful and lasting change.

Your financial story is not fixed. It evolves with your experiences, your decisions, and your willingness to challenge old assumptions. Own Your Financial Mindset

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A Small Act of Kindness Can Change a Day

by Rebecca Pink, Registered Provisional Psychologist



Kindness may seem like a simple gesture, but I believe that it's one of the most powerful things we can offer another human being and ourselves.

We live in a world that moves quickly. We are often rushing from one responsibility to the next, reacting instead of pausing, making assumptions instead of asking questions. It's easy to forget that every person

we encounter is carrying a story that we know nothing about.

The person that seems impatient may be overwhelmed. The friend who's been quiet may be grieving or dealing with things privately. The parent who appears distracted may be carrying worries they haven't shared with anyone. Even the people who seem to have it together may be quietly fighting battles no one else can see. The truth is that we are all living complex realities. That is why kindness matters so much.

Kindness isn't about having the perfect words or fixing someone else's problems. Sometimes it's a smile, a little extra patience, a warm greeting, a great big hug, or choosing compassion over criticism. Sometimes it's simply giving someone the benefit of the doubt and being open to their perspective and being aware of subjective realities. Perhaps the person who needs that kindness today is you.

We can be incredibly generous with others while being our harshest critic. What if we extended ourselves the same grace we so willingly offer those we love, respect, and care for? Imagine what could happen if each of us choose kindness first. Every person is carrying a story and lived experiences that we may never fully understand. We may not know what someone else is carrying, but we can always decide how we show up. Kindness, no matter how small, has a way of reaching further than we realize. Sometimes the smallest moments of compassion are the ones that stay with us the longest.

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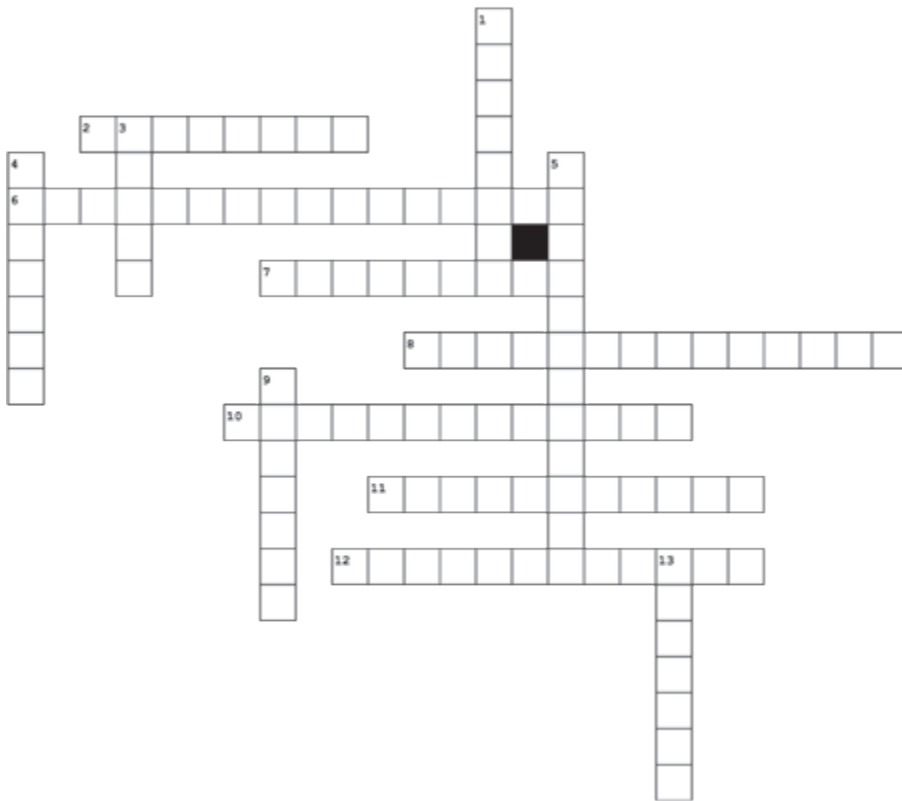
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March	26	41	34	\$514,950	\$512,250
February	26	32	33	\$565,000	\$555,000
January	26	38	16	\$455,000	\$446,000
December	25	12	18	\$616,000	\$593,500
November	25	20	33	\$599,900	\$585,000
October	25	37	43	\$579,900	\$570,000
September	25	55	32	\$669,950	\$662,250
August	25	34	32	\$497,500	\$475,000

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September Crossword



Visit bit.ly/mycalgaryanswers
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Across

2. Used for carrying textbooks and other school supplies, this item is a back-to-school essential.
6. This American band is known for their classic songs, "Let's Groove" and "September."
7. These bears are the smallest variety found in Canada.
8. First airing in 2013, this fun kid's cartoon follows a young boy with his gem companions across the galaxy.
10. Make a stop here in September and you will find a variety of apples, pears, and figs for sale.
11. *The Long Walk*, a film starring Copper Hoffman, is an adaptation of the novel by this famous author.
12. *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*. The album released September 22, 2023 was written by this up-and-coming pop singer.

Down

1. This vibrant blue stone representing loyalty and the divine is also the birthstone for September.
3. This bright purple flower is considered September's primary birth flower.
4. Born September 4, 1981, in Houston Texas; this famous singer got her start in the girl group Destiny's Child.
5. This English author wrote *Animal Farm* and *1984*. These novels are typically assigned reading in schools even 80 years after their release.
9. In the world of theatre, speaking the name of this Shakespearean play is considered bad luck. Instead, they refer to it as, "The Scottish Play."
13. This mythical beast is sometimes called, "Canadian Nessie."



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Cranston Residents

Do you have your membership cards for Century Hall? All residents over the age of 10 are now required to have a membership card for entry to Cranston Century Hall Park and facility. Membership cards will also allow you to register for programs offered by the Cranston Residents Association (CRA).

Century Hall Updates

Did you know as a Cranston resident you have access to the Century Hall Tool and Equipment Library! Here you will find a variety of tools and outdoor sports equipment that you can borrow and enjoy for free! We have paddleboards, snowshoes, kayaks, skateboards, games bins, drills, ladders, saws, tools, you name it! Inquire today to learn more!

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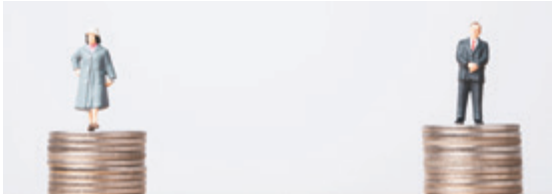
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Broken Hearts and Broken Investment Portfolios

by Christopher Bungay, Divorce Lawyer



Divorce does not just break your heart. It also breaks up your investment portfolio. According to Alberta law, investments that were acquired during a marriage are defined as family-owned property. This means that, after most divorces in Alberta, each spouse is entitled to 50% of any investments that were purchased during the marriage. There are two important points to remember about this 50/50 splitting rule:

- It applies regardless of which spouse purchased the investments.
- It applies to the initial investment purchase, plus any growth in the investment that occurred during the marriage.

The following scenario of a fictional couple demonstrates how this works: The Johnsons were married in 1990. They did not live together until after the marriage started. Unfortunately, things did not work out, and they separated in May 2026. Shortly after their 1990 wedding, Mr. Johnson bought \$100,000 in shares in the popular fast food chain McDonald's. These shares were bought in his own personal name. His wife, Mrs. Johnson, was not listed as a shareholder. On the date when this couple separated, the McDonald's shares grew in value from \$100,000 to \$4 million dollars. In this scenario, as part of their divorce, Mrs. Johnson would be entitled to 50% (\$2 million) of the total \$4 million in McDonald's shares.

50/50 Applies to RRSP Investments

Even if Mr. Johnson had purchased the McDonald's shares within an RRSP, his wife would still be entitled to 50% of the value. While RRSPs protect your investments from being taxed while they grow over the years, RRSPs do not protect you from the consequences of divorce.

If the \$4 million in McDonald's shares were held in Mr. Johnson's RRSP, he would likely be required to transfer \$2 million of these shares into Mrs. Johnson's RRSP account as part of the divorce proceedings.

50/50 Does Not Apply to Investments Before Marriage

The 50-50 split rule does not apply to investments made by one spouse before the relationship began. For example, let's say Mr. Johnson bought \$100,000 in McDonald's shares in 1989, the year before he married Mrs. Johnson. In this scenario, the original \$100,000 investment would belong exclusively to Mr. Johnson alone after the couple separated/divorced. However, Mrs. Johnson would still be permitted to share in any growth in value of the McDonald's shares which occurred after the day they were married. In other words, of the total \$4 million, Mr. Johnson would get \$4.1 million and Mrs. Johnson would get \$3.9 million to account for the initial \$100,000 investment made by Mr. Johnson before their marriage, which belongs exclusively to Mr. Johnson.

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Rental Rates

www.cranstonra.ca

CRANSTON
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

	Dimensions	Capacity	Hourly Rates		
			Resident	Brookfield Community	Non-Resident
Heritage Hall ABC 2652 sq. feet	34 ft. by 78 ft.	135 Guests	\$97.00	\$109.00	\$122.00
Heritage A 1037 sq. feet	34 ft. by 30.5 ft.	50 Guests	\$64.25	\$72.95	\$81.00
Heritage B 850 sq. feet	34 ft. by 25 ft.	40 Guests	\$53.00	\$60.00	\$67.00
Heritage C 765 sq. feet	34 ft. by 22.5 ft.	35 Guests	\$53.00	\$60.00	\$67.00
Heritage A & B 1887 sq. feet	34 ft. by 55.5 ft.	90 Guests	\$75.00	\$84.65	\$95.35
Heritage B & C 1615 sq. feet	34 ft. by 47.5 ft.	80 Guests	\$69.35	\$78.00	\$87.20
Vista 639 sq. feet	18 ft. by 35.5 ft.	30 Guests	\$55.60	\$62.75	\$70.40
Riverside 534 sq. feet	17.5 ft. by 30.5 ft.	25 Guests	\$55.60	\$62.75	\$70.40
Legacy (Board Room) 369 sq. feet	18 ft. by 20.5 ft.	15 Meeting	\$34.45	\$37.75	\$41.80
Gym 5159 sq. feet	57 ft. by 90.5 ft.		Party Package Only	Party Package Only	Party Package Only

Minimum two-hour rental for Heritage Room(s)

Additional Charges

Mandatory after-hours security fee applies for rentals ending between 9:00pm and 1:00am.

Mandatory after-hours teardown fee applies for rentals ending between 8:30pm and 1:00am.

SOCAN and Re:Sound fees apply for bookings with music and/or dancing.

\$300.00 damage deposit on credit card required for all bookings serving alcohol and/or requiring after hours

revised February 6, 2025 - prices subject to change

11 Cranarch Road SE – 403-781-6614 ext. 3 – rentals@cranstonra.ca



Century Hall Rental Policy & Procedures

CRANSTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Booking Requirements

1. Signature on Rental Contract
2. Full payment – due upon receipt of Rental Contract
3. \$300.00 Damage & Liability Deposit on credit card. Refund will be issued 3-5 business days after event date, pending management review
4. Proof of Personal Liability Insurance – Homeowner Insurance – (Providers Name, Policy Number, Expiry date)

Failure to provide the booking requirements within **one week** from the date of booking will result in the rental being cancelled.

Rentals with alcohol are required to provide:

1. Party Alcohol Liability Insurance – www.palcanada.com or www.duuo.ca (due 10 days prior to rental)
2. Liquor Permit – available online at www.aglc.ca (due day of rental)

Rentals using third party contractors/vendors (caterers, bar tenders, decorators, etc.) are encouraged to provide:

1. Certificate of Insurance from each vendor and when possible, have Cranston Residents Association listed as additional insured.

Temporary Bookings/Holds are not permitted. Bookings are on a first come first served basis.

Advanced Booking

Residents can book a maximum of **one year** in advance. Bookings for a full one year in advance can be booked on the 1st of the month of the year prior – see example below

Ex 1: Want to book your wedding for August 12, 2026? Your booking would be accepted as of August 1, 2025

Brookfield Communities can book a maximum of **11 months** in advance. Bookings for a full 11 months in advance can be booked on the 1st of the month, 11 months prior – see example below

Ex 1: Want to book your wedding for August 12, 2026? Your booking would be accepted as of September 1, 2025

Non-Residents can book a maximum of **10 months** in advance. Bookings for a full 10 months in advance can be booked on the 1st of the month, 10 months prior – see example below

Ex 1: Want to book your wedding for August 12, 2026? Your booking would be accepted as of October 1, 2025

Changes to Rental Agreements

Two weeks written notice is required for all rescheduling/change requests.

All changes (extending time, room, date, rescheduling or cancelling) **must** be done in writing.

A \$20.00 Admin Fee may be applied.

Cancellation	Must be done in writing – email rentals@cranstonra.ca
75% refund	Rental cancelled more than three months prior to the rental date
50% refund	Rental cancelled between one to three months prior to rental date
No refund	Rental cancelled less than one month prior to the rental date

Tables: Height is 29.25" from floor to table top

Round – 60" diameter (seats 6-8)

Rectangle – 72" long x 30" wide (seats 6)

Cocktail – 30" diameter can be set either 30" or 42" high

Chairs: Folding 15.5" high from chair seat to floor;

34" from top of chair backrest to floor

Seat 17.5" square; back 19.5" wide by 15.5" high

(seat to top of chair) rectangle

Fall Migration is Underway: How to Help Southern Alberta's Travelling Birds

by the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society



As summer starts to cool with the dawn of fall, one of nature's most remarkable journeys is underway across Southern Alberta. Countless birds begin migrating south, travelling hundreds or even thousands of kilometres to reach warmer wintering grounds. For many species, September marks the peak of this seasonal movement, making it one of the best times to observe birds, and one of the most important times to help mitigate human-related risks.

During migration, birds rely on favourable weather and places where they can rest and refuel. They navigate using natural cues such as the sun and stars, known landmarks, and the Earth's magnetic field to complete their journeys. Along the way, they stop in wetlands, grasslands, parks, and urban green spaces throughout Alberta before continuing south.

While migration is a natural process, urban areas can present unexpected hazards. One of the greatest human-related threats is window collisions. Birds do not recognise glass as a solid barrier. Instead, they often see reflections of trees or open sky, or they mistake transparent glass for open space. During migration, when many birds move through unfamiliar urban areas, such collisions become much more common. Research estimates tens of millions of birds die each year in Canada after striking windows, with most collisions occurring at homes and low-rise buildings rather than skyscrapers.



Fortunately, small changes at home can make a significant difference.

One of the most effective ways to reduce collisions is to make windows more visible to birds. Applying patterns, decals, tape, or specialised films to the outside of glass helps birds recognise it as a barrier. For the greatest effectiveness, the markings should cover the entire window, with gaps no larger than 5 centimetres. While they cover a large area, these covers are unobtrusive and don't block the view from a window.

Reducing unnecessary outdoor lighting at night can also help migrating birds. Many songbirds migrate after dark and use the moon and stars for navigation. Bright artificial lighting can disorient them, drawing birds into urban areas where the risk of collisions with buildings and windows increases. Turning off unnecessary exterior lights or closing blinds after dark during migration season can help reduce this risk.

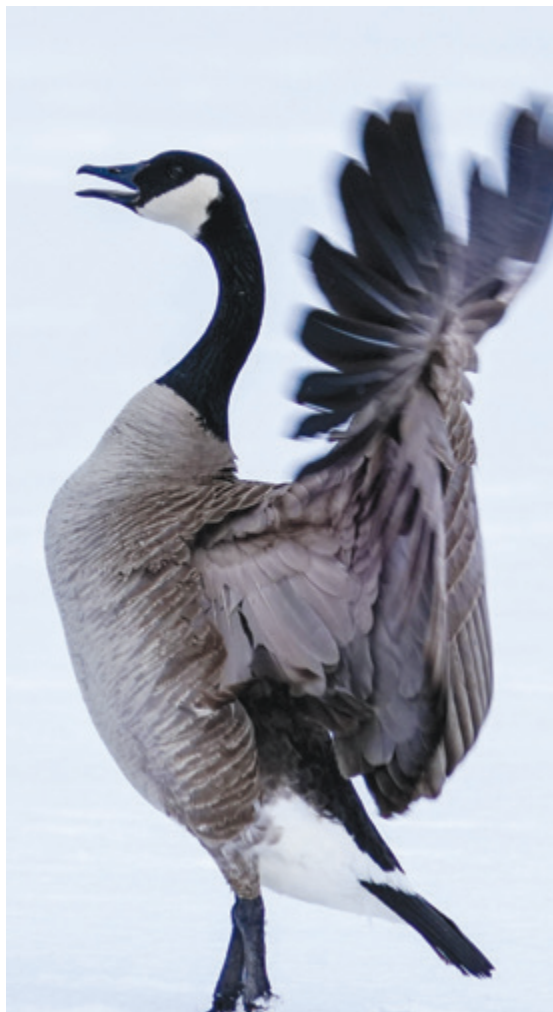
Although food is important during migration, Calgary Wildlife does not recommend putting out bird feeders.

Feeders bring many birds together around shared food and surfaces, where contaminated seed, water, saliva, and droppings can increase the spread of disease. This is especially concerning during migration, when local birds mix with visitors travelling long distances, and infections may be carried between populations.

A bird bath can provide water without concentrating birds around a food source, but it still requires careful maintenance. Replace the water daily or every other day, scrub the basin regularly and place it away from untreated reflective windows. Planting native flowers, shrubs, and trees is an even better way to support migrating birds by providing natural food, shelter, and resting places without drawing large numbers of birds to a single feeder.

Position any bird baths either within one metre of windows or away to help reduce the likelihood of high-speed collisions. Research has also shown that landscaping and vegetation placed directly in front of reflective windows can unintentionally increase the risk of collisions. Rather than removing valuable habitat, take special care of nearby glass and try to make the glass visible to birds using effective collision-prevention treatment.

Fall migration offers a chance to witness an extraordinary natural event happening right above our communities. Whether you notice flocks of geese overhead, hear the calls of migrating songbirds, or spot unfamiliar visitors in your neighbourhood, these travellers are making an incredible journey that depends on safe places to rest along the way. Small choices at home can make a meaningful difference for birds travelling hundreds or even thousands of kilometres.



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The American Mink—*Neogale vison*

by Kristina Quapp



The American Mink is a small, amphibious weasel that inhabits wetlands throughout Canada. Weasel refers to slender, small, carnivorous mammals belonging to the family Mustelidae. While the American Mink is most abundant along the coastline of British Columbia, you may have spotted them around Calgary as well!

Minks appear in varying shades of brown and black, often with patches of white on their chest and abdomen. Like beavers, minks have two layers of fur; a dense, insulating underfur that keeps them warm, and an outer layer of fur covered in an oily sheen that prevents water from soaking through to their skin. Unlike other varieties of weasel, the American minks' coat does not turn white in the winter. While their coat grows thicker in the colder months, it remains a dark shade to help them blend into the vegetation along streams, ponds, and riverbanks. Given their habitat, the minks' paws are partially webbed, allowing them to remain dexterous on land and in the water. Minks' can range in size from 1 to 1.8 kg in weight, and roughly 60 cm in length.

During the summer months, the mink's diet shifts to take advantage of warm-weather prey. This often

includes crayfish, frogs, fish, and ducks. As the weather cools down, the minks' diet relies heavily on small land mammals including voles, mice, muskrats, and rabbits. Since the mink often resides in the water, thick brush, or on rocky river edges, it has few natural enemies. On occasion, minks will be preyed upon by coyotes, bobcats, large snakes, and birds of prey.

While predators aren't considered major threats to the mink, human activity, habitat loss, and environmental contaminants can affect the population. The minks' unique and luxurious fur remains in high demand in the fur trade. 47 American states and all Canadian provinces currently conduct limited trapping seasons on the mink, with the length of the season varying from place to place. The minks' habitat also plays a crucial role in their conservation. They rely heavily on streams, wetlands, and shores with dense vegetation to provide safe burrows, and prey to feed upon. The expansion of infrastructure development and pesticide application can impact their reproductive success and long-term health.

Mindful Mink Spotting

To see an American mink for yourself, head to densely vegetated waterways and riverbanks, particularly along the Bow River, the Elbow River, and local wetland ponds. Prime spots include the McKenzie Meadows area, Fish Creek Provincial Park, Lafarge Meadows, Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Carburn Park, Weaselhead Flats, and Lafarge Meadows. Keep an eye on the water's edge, rocky shores, and amongst the brush. Keep in mind these key points while looking for our furry amphibious friends:

- **Maintain distance:** Use binoculars or a phone lens instead of approaching.
- **Keep waterways clean:** Pack out all trash, including food scraps.
- **Stay on marked trails:** Avoid trampling riverbank vegetation. Walking off trail can degrade the shoreline and damage hidden dens.
- **Never feed wildlife:** Feeding minks can disrupt their natural diet and may teach them to associate humans with food.



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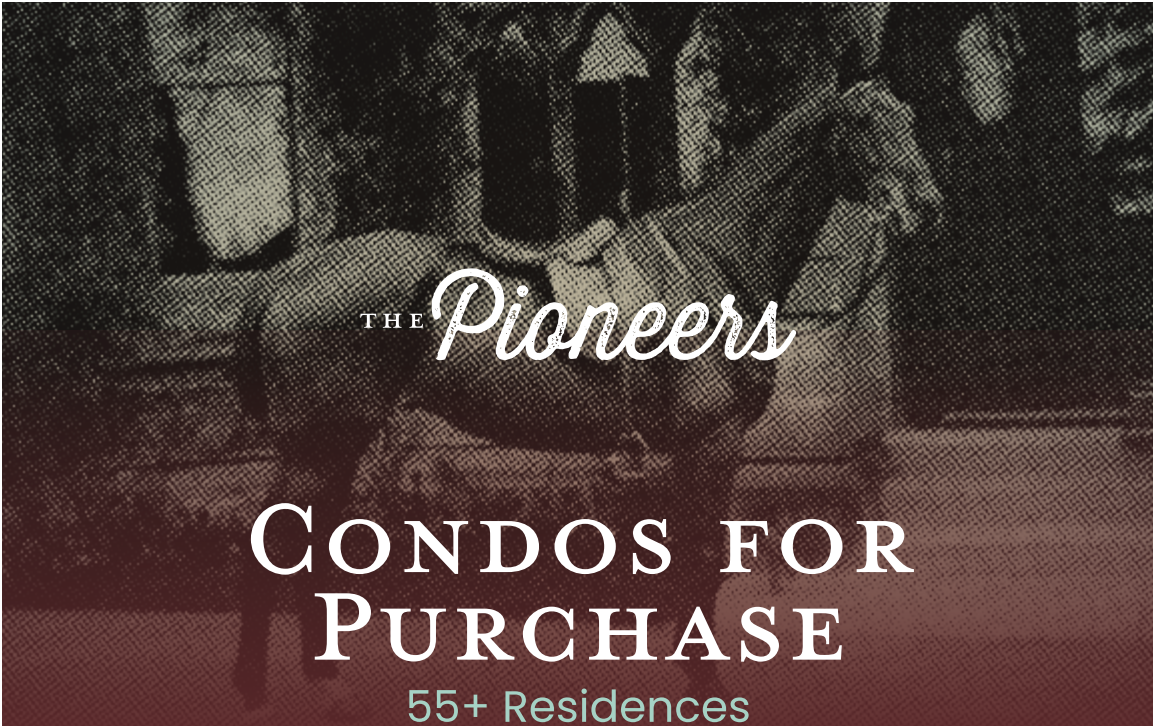
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SECTION23
DEVELOPMENTS

September's Reflection

by Michelle Macdonald, Letter Writing and Mail Club Enthusiast.

Write about a relatively new social trend that you appreciate.

Dear reader,

Social trends are ever-changing, and many are for the better. One shift in particular is near and dear to my heart: the increasing value our society places on pets.

From the moment I could speak, I began asking for a pet dog. Every single Christmas I placed "dog" at the top of my wish list. The significant pressure I put on both Santa and my parents was to no avail; my parents were not "dog people".

Over three decades later, that yearning for a four-legged, furry friend had never faded. In early 2020, my family began fostering dogs from a local shelter as a "test run" to see if we could handle the responsibility. We quickly realized we could. Each time a foster dog went to their forever home, I grieved their absence. The extra work felt worth it. We were ready.

When the world slowed down in the spring of 2020, a combination of isolation and extra time made the decision to officially adopt our own dog quite easy. We weren't alone; statistics showed that an unprecedented number of Canadians brought a pet into their homes during that time. It drastically accelerated a shift towards celebrating the creatures that provide us with companionship and unconditional love.

Today, society is becoming a friendlier place for pet owners. I've noticed the City of Calgary has become exceptionally welcoming to dogs. New communities are intentionally designed with dog parks, and many outdoor patios welcome our furry friends. We even have a cat café downtown and puppy yoga throughout the city.

Our pandemic puppy, Luna, is six years old this year. She was the piece our family didn't know we were missing until she arrived and made us feel complete. She was worth the wait.

Happy writing,

Michelle

Write It Forward



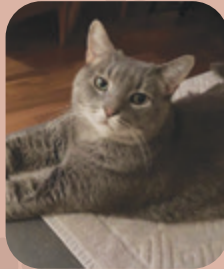
Now it's your turn to write it forward. Write a friend, neighbour, or family member about our monthly reflection.



Cats, Canines, & Critters of Calgary



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Chet, Erlton



Georgia Bell, Auburn Bay



Jack, Dalhousie



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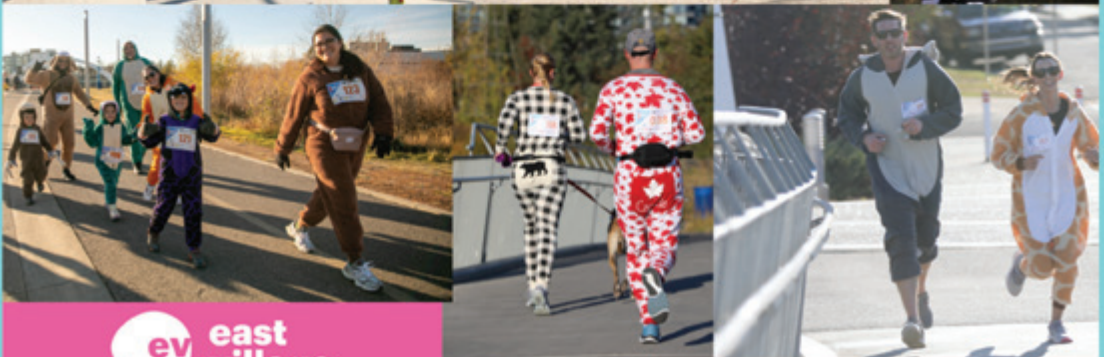
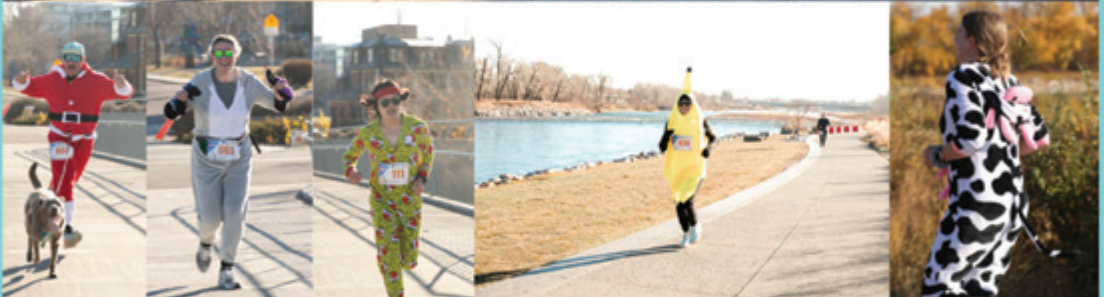
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