

# EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION & ACTION



## TWENTY FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY JULY 15, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.



# OUR VISION

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The Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action is recognized as a vital organization that addresses faith issues locally, nationally, and globally. We model a solidarity that embraces both the diversity and the commonality of faith groups.

# OUR MISSION

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The Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action promotes peace and facilitates interfaith harmony among our members and our local, national, and global partners through educational programs, social action and modelling respectful pluralism.

# EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION & ACTION

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The Edmonton Interfaith Centre was founded in December 1995 to promote respect, friendship, harmony and understanding between people of various faiths. Our programs aim to help people live together as good neighbors. The Interfaith Centre has lay and clergy members from many different faiths and has about a dozen different religions represented on its current board.

The objective of the Interfaith Centre is to educate its members and the wider community about the diverse religious faiths present in Edmonton. We have a long history of success in developing programs which communicate the importance of embracing diversity. We have implemented a wide variety of projects, large and small, which have brought together people of many faiths to discuss critical issues facing our community. These include lectures, prayer services, dialogues and presentations, and the Centre also works to raise awareness about local and global discrimination and to model a non-discriminatory lifestyle.

On an ongoing basis the Interfaith Centre provides speakers to schools across Edmonton, addressing the diversity of religious expressions found in the community. The Centre facilitates visits

to houses of worship both for children and adults and also coordinates interfaith prayer services throughout the year. We have hosted the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect conference twice, presented workshops both locally and internationally at every NAIN Connect for over twenty years, and at four Parliaments of the World's Religions.

We are particularly proud of our partnership with the City of Edmonton. Since 2006 we have had a permanent, changing display at City Hall, called "Celebrating our Faiths". We have also implemented or created program material for use throughout the community such as the two peace posters created by local graphic designers, a booklet, "Seeking Peace...Visions of Peace from Twelve Faith Traditions", the "Walking Together" curriculum, and the "Faith in the Classroom" component of the "Safe and Caring Schools" booklets used by the Alberta Teachers Association.

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre looks forward to continuing to serve the community through the two arms of education and action.

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JULY 15, 2020 - AGENDA

- ▶ Welcome & Introductions
- ▶ Approval of Agenda
- ▶ Minutes of Last AGM (June 2019)
- ▶ President's Report
- ▶ Coordinator's Report
- ▶ Treasurer's Report
- ▶ Committee Reports
  - Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative
  - "Building Bridges" video
  - Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative
  - Celebrating Our Faiths
  - Concert
  - Gender Based Violence
  - Interfaith Explorations
  - Lunch & Learn
  - Membership
  - North American Interfaith Network Connect-2019 & 2020
  - United Nations International Days: Peace Sept. 21 & IDERD March 21
  - Invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial – July 19, 2020
  - World Interfaith Harmony Week
- ▶ Nominations Committee: Approval of Board & Executive
- ▶ Any New Business



# MINUTES - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## JUNE 12, 2019

### HELD AT THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

**Attendance:** Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Audrey Brooks, Guy Blood, Yvonne Collinson, Karen Farkas, Avau Fast, Heather & Len Gierach, Kevin Grenier, Shiraz Kanji, Lawrence Loyek, Kara Murray, Pauline Paulson, Netta Phillet, Kathie Reith, Manish Shah, Virginia Sharek, Kimberly Umpmey, Larry Wright.

Meeting called to order by President Pauline Paulson at 7:40 pm. Pauline welcomed everyone and expressed our thanks to Kara and Lisa from the Church of Scientology for their hospitality in their hosting of our AGM. After a brief introduction Pauline mentioned that the first year of her term has been busy and enjoyable. She then led us in prayer. Len moved that the agenda be accepted, seconded by Kathy. Kara moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Audrey.

The detailed reports in the Twenty – Third Annual Report cover the work done in the 2018 -2019 term by individuals and committees. These minutes will only include brief summaries or comments in regard to the reports given.

**President's Report:** Pauline read her President's report that was in the Annual Report

**Coordinator's Report:** Netta encouraged everyone to read her report in the Annual Report. She gave a quick over view of her work along with some high lights.

**Treasurer's Report:** Kara gave a brief treasurer's report and directed people to read the financial statements included towards the end of the annual reports.

**Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative:** Audrey Brooks gave the progress report in regard to the work of the CRIHI. She reported that so far 8000 homeless have been housed with an 85% success rate of newly housed making it work.

**Celebrating Our Faiths:** This is a program that is unique to Edmonton. No other city in Canada has a permanent display in their City Hall to teach about different faiths. The program has gone well this term.

**No Room in the Inn – Rev. Larry Wright:** NRil has raised and is still raising funds to assist projects which help the hard-to-house. Since its inception in 1999, NRil has raised a total of one million dollars towards a different housing project each year.

**Concert – Audrey Brooks:** Our annual concerts are an opportunity for many to share their cultural treasures. A special feature of the concert is the presentation of an award to individuals who have championed interfaith cooperation.

At this point Pauline drew the group's attention to the vision and mission of the Interfaith Centre.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JUNE 12, 2019 - MEETING CONTINUED HELD AT THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

**Gender Based Violence – Guy Blood:** This is a new committee struck in 2017 dedicated to reducing the harm caused by gender - based violence.

**Lunch and Learn – Netta:** This program takes place at noon and generally has a good attendance.

**Membership – Guy:** The committee is looking at the possibility of taking a video to different houses of worship to promote membership.

**North American Interfaith Network NAIN Connect 2018:** This was a huge event. Netta provided a detailed report in the annual report. Kathy Reith went over some of her high lights of the conference. She said it was a privilege to be on the planning committee for the conference. Many things were outstanding – Romeo Dallaire, bus tours were excellent, opening and closing circles were wonderful, and she met many delightful people.

**World Interfaith Harmony Week – Len:** This year was the first attempt to organize events around this new celebration. The week was extremely cold which affected the attendance of the planned events.

**Nominations Committee: Approval of Board & Executive:** Board members are elected for a two-year term. The following members were elected or re-elected last term (June 2018) and have indicated their willingness to continue to serve one more year: **Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Avau Fast, Len Gierach, Zohra Husaini, Shiraz Kanji, Nasim Kherani & Virginia Sharek.**

The following members are completing the second year of their term and present themselves for election for another two-year term: **Audrey Brooks, Karen Gall, Farah Jamil, Kara Murray, Pauline Paulson & Kathie Reith.**

**We say ‘Goodbye and thanks for your service’:** to Paula Kirman (4 years) and Dinesh Burad (2 years)

**The members of the executive committee** will continue serving their current terms, with the exception of a change in Secretary, once ratified by the membership:

President – **Pauline Paulson**

Vice President – **Guy Blood**

Secretary – **Farah Jamil & Virginia Sharek**

Treasurer – **Kara Murray**

Past-President – **Shiraz Kanji**

Joining the board are **Mitra Knight & Manish Shah**, returning for another term is **Karnail Singh.**

Guy made the motion for adjournment, seconded by Audrey. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm. Minutes submitted by Virginia Sharek.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT PAULINE PAULSON

Another year has come and gone - each seeming to flee by faster than the last one. Although I was unable to attend as many events as I would have liked I am grateful for those I was able to be present for: some of the Lunch and Learn events including presenting at one; the Islamic History Month presentation at City Hall on October 22. Also in October I had the honor of being a guest at the Fijian Day celebration. In November I helped out at Just One World sale at St Basil's. February brought our annual multicultural concert at the Unitarian Church - another most enjoyable afternoon. The last part of my term has been a challenge due to everything being shut down by the pandemic. We cancelled our April board meeting but held executive and board meetings in May via Zoom. I want to wish our incoming President well during his term and I plan to be around to assist him where needed. I also welcome our new board members. I also thank the Board for giving me the opportunity to serve EIC over the past several years.

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT NETTA PHILLET

I try to attend any events where I can talk about the Centre, hand out brochures and sign people up for our mailing list. One example was the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation celebration of Canada Multiculturalism Day on June 27th, we had a table outside CBC radio in City Centre Mall with music and dancing and a lot of people to talk to. The city held two Wellness Fairs for their employees which Len and Virginia attended for us.

In August Guy and I accepted an invitation to meet the UCP caucus, this was a first as far as I know.

Lewis Cardinal conducted three river valley walks in August, this was one of the highlights of our NAIN conference in 2018. There were 60 participants, I was able to attend one and it was excellent.

On September 11 we hold our annual UN Day of Peace celebration, in 2019 there was a theme of climate change urgency and we had a more diverse program. Audrey Brooks planned it, here is an example what can be involved in a one hour event: invite the mayor, book the city community flag pole, fill out 2 forms for the city, provide proof of insurance, finalize and print program, pick up the key to the flag pole, give thanks (2020 Multifaith Calendar) to councillor, pick up our peace flag after a few days and return to its owner who also lent his PA system, with a calendar!

Also in September I spent a weekend training to be a Blanket Exercise (BE) facilitator. The invitation came from the U of A Alumni Relations. I did this on my own time and hope that it might lead to our getting involved with holding BE's at synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, Buddhist and Hindu temples and other non-Christian houses of worship. The lack of knowledge about this aspect of Canadian history among "newer" Canadians was mentioned several times as part of the larger picture of ignorance of the reality of Indigenous issues. Under Guy's leadership we have made a commitment to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission calls to action. Sales of the Multifaith Calendar is a main focus for a few months of the year: advertising,

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT NETTA PHILLET

contacting former customers, invoicing, mailing and delivering. As always we were selling at Just One World, thanks to Shiraz, Kathie, Manish, Pauline, Jagjeet and former board member Randy Haluza - Delay for helping.

Bookkeeping takes a fair bit of time: completing the returns for CRA Registered Charity Information and Alberta Registries, applying for the United Church Northern Spirit Regional Council and the Edmonton Community Investment Operating grants, (we are very grateful for both of these), keeping track of donations and sending receipts, tracking memberships, payment reminders and renewals.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is an important issue to which we can bring our unique lens, please see the report of this committee further on. Due to the broad diversity and experience of our members we can emphasize that this scourge exists across all demographics, NO community is immune. There are divisive forces who want us to believe that only certain people, "others", do this. In February Guy and I attended an all-day city run (GBV) training attended by mostly Christian ministers and social workers. Rev. Al Miles, a well-known minister from Hawaii, was very direct. He said societal poisoning of men is bad enough but when scripture is added – disaster! He presented many case studies of men, including Christian ministers, who abuse their wives and children and justify it as being permitted in the Bible.

I also continue to attend sessions organized by the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee and Edmonton Police Hate & Bias Crimes unit. We are involved with this because religious background is inseparable from race, ethnicity, etc. and so is a basis for discrimination. They are improving their approach, working on relations between police and communities, including education on what defines a hate crime and what can be done. As with GBV it is a relief to finally hear more recognition, especially from the police, that the greatest threat of violence we face is from home grown, white supremacist, right wing, neo-Nazi types, not the mythical terrorist from somewhere else we have been told to fear.

COVID 19 has sadly curtailed all our programs of course but for me it is an unexpected gift of time to do some much needed catch/clean up in the office. There are a lot of photos, programs, news clippings, etc. that must be evaluated, keep or not? As well Rob and Don down sized and each brought several boxes of files that need going through. And we've had about 100 books donated that must be sorted, catalogued and shelved. I've prepared the year end financial statements and the annual report as usual with a bit less time pressure than usual.

As I enter my 15th year in the office I want to thank the board and membership for your constant support.

## TREASURER'S REPORT KARA MURRAY

Due to the health precautions put in place for COVID 19 we have been unable to get the current financial statements audited as of yet, however they have been reconciled and provided "as is" at this time. There are a few things to bring to the members' attention in regard to our annual budget. Our yearly Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions Concert brought in more income than it has in the last couple of years. This is largely due to a small entrance fee, a successful silent auction and some generous donors. We have been fortunate enough that we had the means in the casino fund to provide a \$5,000 donation to both the Edmonton Food Bank and Women in Need (WIN) House to help alleviate some of the pressure they would be facing during the pandemic. Ensuring the health and safety of Edmontonians during this time was an action that the board didn't hesitate on. We are very proud to demonstrate an interfaith commitment to community wellness. We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the Northern Spirit Regional Council of the United Church for their ongoing financial support; they are our largest faith – based donor and because of them we are able to continue and forward our work and vision. We also thank the Edmonton City Investment Operating Grant and the Edmonton Community Foundation which administers our two funds, including the Lavinia Singh Fund for Peace, and many individual donors and faith groups.

## CAPITAL REGION INTERFAITH HOUSING INITIATIVE (CRIHI)

AUDREY BROOKS | [INTERFAITHHOUSING.CA](http://INTERFAITHHOUSING.CA)

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre has been critically involved in the Capital Region Interfaith Housing initiative since two board members attended the first planning meeting years ago. It was recognized that for too long it has been mainly the Christian churches which have been at the forefront of a faith-based approach to this issue, for both historical and geographic reasons. This issue concerns all citizens of course, and we were instrumental in creating the CRIHI, bringing together members of 23 different faith communities in 2011 to sign a Shared Interfaith Statement on Homelessness & Affordable Housing. We are helping build relationships across the city with a view to encouraging more groups to participate in dialogues about helping those in need, and we support the annual Faith Leaders Build Day with Habitat for Humanity. Our board member Rev. Audrey Brooks serves on both the education and strategic planning committees.

## CELEBRATING OUR FAITHS NETTA PHILLET

Since 2006 we have enjoyed a partnership with the City of Edmonton, prompted by a comment to Mayor Mandel that City Hall belongs to all citizens and should reflect the diversity of faiths found here. It is a successful program which advances our mission and that of the city, to be a place of inclusion. Keeping a new display moving smoothly in and out each month can be difficult. As with so many other things it was cut short in the spring when City Hall had to close; in the last year we celebrated:

- Indigenous Awareness Month in June
- a special event of the Edmonton & District Council of Churches for “No Room in the Inn”
- the Baha’i faith
- Islam Awareness month in October
- Domestic Violence Awareness in November
- Eckankar in December including a showing of our “Building Bridges” video
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Our Concert & World Interfaith Harmony Week
- Sai Baba

We also unveiled a new Augmented Reality addition, once again the city took the initiative to contact an instructor at NAIT; he and his students are creating “live” visual complements to the displays. Two have been done, a nativity scene for Christmas and the seder table for Passover. Several more were underway but once again COVID19 cancelled classes so we hope all those which were started will be finished. I attended a few meetings at City Hall and it was very cool to see the students combining their new technology and traditional aspects of faith with which they might not have been familiar.

## CONCERT AUDREY BROOKS

Our “Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions” concert was held on Sunday, February 10 at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. This annual event brings together people of various faith traditions in celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week which was unanimously adopted by the United Nations in October 2010. As always our performers were exceptionally talented: an ensemble from the U of A Dept. of Musicology on various instruments under the direction of Dr. Michael Frishkopf, the Ukrainian Kobzari Band, Sebastian Barrera singing with his guitar, Amanda Lamothe on “native” flute and Keri Lynn Zwicker with her harp. Our Interfaith Advocate Awards were presented to Michael, Sebastian and our own board member Kathie Reith. Thanks to our stage manager Kimberly Lang who once again kept things running smoothly, to the volunteers who facilitated the silent auction and snacks and to Elder Pauline Paulson for sharing a First Nations blessing.



## GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

JAGJEET BHARDWAJ, GUY BLOOD, ZOHRA HUSAINI, NASIM KHERANI

This committee has made some progress on our commitment to this important issue. A survey has been distributed to members to find out where and how best we can be of service to them. We first became involved when we collaborated with the Indo-Canadian Women's Association (ICWA) over 10 years ago; they had two major projects funded by Status of Women Canada and sought our help to ensure that there was a multi-faith approach, since this wide-spread problem is not confined to any ethnic, socio-economic or cultural group. One outcome of this was a brochure: "Perspectives: Faith Leaders Speak Out - Religious Leaders' Response to Harmful Cultural Practices". A third ICWA project is involving home visits. More recently we were invited to participate in the city-led "It's Time, Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative". Our experience and contacts are helpful, we recognize that there can appear to be support for gender oppression in religious texts. We also recognize that many faith leaders are indeed actively involved in providing education and support services to their members. Various ideas are being considered and a written proposal made. We are planning an event in City Hall in November for Domestic Violence Awareness month, with our partners. The work continues.

## INTERFAITH EXPLORATIONS

KAREN GALL  
& KATHIE REITH

This is one of our original programs through which we learn about each others' faith traditions, fulfilling our mandate of education to promote the embrace of diversity. It involves visits to various places of worship; we have been to many of the mosques, gurdwaras, temples, synagogues, churches, etc., in Edmonton over the last 25 years. We try to attend a regular service which gives an authentic experience; our hosts have been very generous in giving us extra teaching, often followed by a delicious meal. We were invited to experience the "Sound of Soul (Hu)" at the Eckankar Centre in February and were there again to talk about life after death in March. We attended the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples where mass was celebrated along with a baptism. The officiant was the priest featured in our "Building Bridges" video. We thank our hosts and will continue to explore faith communities in Edmonton.

## LUNCH & LEARN

NETTA PHILLET

This noon program began in January 2008, it has always been popular but has waned in the last year for several reasons. We are exploring a new format of virtual presentations which can include the lively discussions that always followed. Thank you to those speakers who have shared their knowledge, and we welcome your suggestions. Topics and speakers since the last report were:

- Rabbi Gia Caine – "Fasting"
- Loraine Johnson - Green Burials & Death Doulas

## MEMBERSHIP GUY BLOOD & KATHIE REITH

Membership in the Edmonton Interfaith Centre from all religious traditions is very important in supporting our claim of representing all faith-based organizations. As of this year there are 3 membership categories: Member, Life Member, and Organizational Member. The newest category is the Organizational Member, which is non-voting. Our membership numbers are less than we would like. Currently, we have 147 members of whom 37 are life members. Although not defined as such, we would like to increase the membership numbers of young people. The Membership Committee named February as Membership Month to take advantage of the World Interfaith Harmony Week awareness campaign. Our web site has a membership page which is being revamped, and will, when completed, list the membership categories, fees, and benefits. A video, "Building Bridges", has been produced, and it is hoped that this will, tangentially, aid in membership enrolments. We have been using this video in meetings with various faith groups, reaching out to them to inform them of our work, and the importance of interfaith harmony. At every event we hold, we talk to those in attendance about becoming members. We will continue to increase our community presence by having information tables at major religious and cultural events.

## NAIN CONNECT 2019

was in cyber space on August 12, a half day online with a plenary and breakout sessions.

## NAIN CONNECT 2020

was to be held in South Bend Indiana, USA, in August, with the theme "Interfaith Response to Immigration/Migration", hosted by the United Religions Council of St. Joseph County. It will now be a virtual meeting in early September, details available soon.

## UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (IDERD)

AUDREY BROOKS

For many years we have commemorated IDERD on March 21, marking the massacre of unarmed civilians in 1960 in South Africa. In 1966 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed this as a day of remembrance. Canada was the first country to support the initiative, making it an annual campaign in 1989. This is in fact our signature event, we began gathering in the early 1990's to pray and sing and chant and dance to celebrate our common humanity and commitment to fight all forms of discrimination. Sadly the wonderful program planned again this year had to be cancelled due to COVID19.

## INVITATION TO THE ANNUAL GENOCIDE MEMORIAL – JULY 12, 2020

VIA ZOOM

Twelve years ago, with the support of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and the EIC, Rev. Audrey Brooks, Chaplain, founded the annual Genocide Memorial Service (GMS), which witnesses and honours people who died violent deaths because of war and other deliberate acts against them. This year the 12th anniversary will be celebrated on Sunday, July 12th at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom with the theme of “Witness, Hope, and Interconnectedness.” All peace - minded persons are invited to attend the service. Watch for the coordinates which will be shared online. Bring your prayers, thoughts and families to this important ceremony of remembrance. Contact Audrey at [audbrook@telusplanet.net](mailto:audbrook@telusplanet.net) for ways you can participate.

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK (WIHW) LEN GIERACH

Since its creation by His Majesty King Abdullah at the Plenary Session of the 65th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York in September, 2010, we have embraced this new celebration as matching what we do. Our already existing concert was the first event we connected, and we’ve had presentations on the theme of the year as well as displays in city hall. Planning has begun and we hope to engage more events and to build awareness for WIHW February 1 – 9, 2021.

## “BUILDING BRIDGES” VIDEO DOCUMENTARY LEN GIERACH

In February 2019 we hired Eric Spoeth to create a documentary celebrating the roots and activities of interfaith dialogue in Edmonton. “Building Bridges” was publicly launched in September. Since then, it has been shown at to Edmonton City Council (a short trailer of highlights), Al Rashid Mosque, Scientology Centre, Eckankar Centre, Lendrum Mennonite Church and McDougall United Church. The showings have been accompanied by heartfelt and valuable discussion. It is the hope of the committee to create additional projects in the future. At this time, the video link is available on our website and speakers (board members) are available to host discussions following the video, either online via Zoom or in person as COVID19 guidelines allow. We are very pleased with this excellent resource and look forward to finding ways for all of us to promote this catalyst for dialogue.

# INCOME & EXPENSE OPERATING ACCOUNT (NOT CASINO)

APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020

	Amount
Sales Revenue	\$9,970.95*
Northern Spirit Reg. Council United Church	\$6,500.00
Edmonton Community Foundation	\$1,142.00
Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is	\$600.00
Ukranian Catholic Eparchy (concert)	\$500.00
Donations from Organizations	\$408.00**
Concert	\$4,445.00
Membership Dues	\$2,595.00
River Valley Walk Income	\$620.00
Concert 2019 refund	\$600.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$30,217.40</b>

## SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

\* \$1120 outstanding for calendars & postage has since been paid.

\*\* City Grant \$16,500 came one week after fiscal year end.

Expense	Amount
Salary	\$30,375.24
Calendars	\$7,212.51
Rent	\$5,293.90
Office	\$3,758.74
Concert	\$1,939.57
World Interfaith Harmony Week	\$1,717.32
River Valley Walk (Guide)	\$576.72
Paypal Charges	\$81.75
Bank Charges	\$72.95
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$51,028.70</b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>\$20,811.30</b>

# EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE CASINO ACCOUNT

APRIL 1, 2019 - MARCH 31, 2020

<b>Balance Forward</b>	<b>\$15,504.25</b>
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	Income	Expenses
Proceeds	\$75,134.56	
Parliament of the World's Religions (attendance)		\$1,065.09
Rent (7 months)		\$7,670.50
"Interfaith in Edmonton" Video		\$8,283.79
Cirlcle Teaching Publishing (promo)		\$5,000.00
"Religion & Violence" Conference (attendance)		\$1,967.32
Office		\$463.45
Website & Promo		\$214.60
Directors & Officers Insurance		\$750.00
Membership in CRC & EDCC		\$270.00
Concert 2019		\$100.00
Bank Charges		\$96.00
From Regular Account - Correct 2 Bank Errors	\$35.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$90,673.06</b>	<b>\$25,880.75</b>
<b>Balance Forward &amp; Income</b>	<b>\$90,673.81</b>	
<b>Less Expenses</b>	<b>\$25,880.75</b>	
<b>Bank Balance March 31/20</b>	<b>\$64,793.06</b>	



# EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE BALANCE SHEET

MARCH 31, 2020

ASSETS	Amount
TD Bank Regular Account	\$22,213.41
TD Bank Casino Account	\$64,793.06
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$87,006.47</b>

<b>Equity</b>	
Restricted Funds	\$64,793.06
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$43,644.58
Net Income	-\$20,811.30
GST	-\$619.87
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$87,006.47</b>

## NOMINATIONS AND APPROVAL OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS & EXECUTIVE

Board members are elected for two-year terms. The following members were elected or re-elected last year (June 2019) and have indicated their willingness to continue to serve one more year: **Audrey Brooks, Karen Gall, Farah Jamil, Kara Murray, Mitra Knight, Pauline Paulson, Kathie Reith, Manish Shah & Karnail Singh.**

The following members are completing the second year of their term and present themselves for election for another two-year term: **Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Guy Blood, Avau Fast, Len Gierach, Zohra Husaini, Shiraz Kanji, Nasim Kherani & Virginia Sharek.**

The new executive committee, once ratified by the membership, will be:

**President – Guy Blood**

**Vice-President – Farah Jamil**

**Secretary – Virginia Sharek**

**Treasurer – Kara Murray**

**Past President – Pauline Paulson**

Joining the board is **John Tanasichuk**, welcome.

We continue to value the contributions of our Honourary Board Members:

**Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson**

**Sushil Kalia**

**Rev. Dr. Don Mayne**

**J.V. Mehta**

## BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

**Jagjeet Bhardwaj** is a retired scientist who now devotes her life to full-time volunteer work. For the past thirty - five years she has volunteered for many organizations including the Girl Guides of Canada, Red Cross Society, the Marian Centre and the Millwoods Welcome Centre for Newcomers. Mrs. Bhardwaj is also a member of the Provincial Court Nominating Committee of Alberta. She is a recipient of the Centennial Medal from the Province of Alberta in recognition of her multi-faceted volunteer work. She has also been honoured by the Indo-Canadian Women's Association, with whom she has served as president and is currently treasurer for a third term. She also edited several publications for them. She has been nominated for the YWCA Tribute to Women of Distinction Award.

**Guy W. Blood**, *M.Sc., P.Eng.* has been a member of the Baha'i Faith since 1979, after an extensive search of all possibilities of committing to a spiritual path within a religious community. He has been interested in interfaith harmony for many years and demonstrated that interest early on by producing a weekly community television show in the early 80's, titled Unity in Religion. People from all faith traditions were interviewed using questions that focused on the similarities amongst religious traditions, rather than on the differences. That show ran for 3 years on local cable channel 10. Guy has functioned as a structural engineer since graduating from the University of Calgary with a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Work included designing bridges and buildings, providing educational seminars on cement and concrete, teaching at NAIT, and most recently, structural engineering consulting, before retiring in 2018. He has held leadership positions with the United Nations Association in Canada, several condominium boards, the Edmonton Soaring Club, and the Baha'i Faith, and is currently chairman of the Parkland County Baha'i Assembly. Hobbies have included: golf, curling, photography, and currently flying gliders and tow planes. His wife is Joan Blood.

**Rev. Audrey Brooks** (*M. Ed; M.Div.*) continues to serve as Unitarian Chaplain at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804 - 119 Street, Edmonton, celebrating over 30 years in community ministry, with a focus on pastoral care and counselling. She values her service on the EIC board with enthusiastic and dedicated members who work for cooperation and friendship with diverse faith groups and many other service organizations.

**Avau Fast** was born in Baluchistan, a beautiful region north west of India, during the British colonial period. She grew up in an area replete with different ethnicities. Later in India no matter where she lived there were churches, temples, synagogues and mosques around the railway colony where she lived. Before attending boarding school she lived with her aunt, and every morning as they walked to pick up fresh vegetables from the market, at each place of worship on the way, they would stop to pray. She recalls that she really did not mind as this gave her a few seconds to rest her weary feet. Avau looks upon India as an old multicultural country and Canada as a new one. As a born Zoroastrian she is proud to be a part of the Canadian mosaic; studying and working among different faiths and cultures has always been her interest in life.

## BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

**Karen Gall** Karen is Vice President of the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation (CMEF); for over a decade she served as Chair of the annual CMEF Harmony Brunch which commemorates the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and continues to assist on the organizing committee. Karen is lay leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton's Reform Jewish Synagogue, a member of the Ritual Committee, a founding member of the Chavurat HaShir choir and also serves as an occasional cantorial soloist. She has worked with the LGBTQ Community to support and help organize both the annual Interfaith Pride Service as well as the Pride Shabbat service at her synagogue. Karen focuses her time on successfully building bridges, using her appreciation and awareness of the value of multiculturalism and interfaith connections while welcoming opportunities to share her Jewish values and traditions with students of all ages and members of the broader community. She is working with a diverse group of people in St. Albert to establish an interfaith presence in that city and this year was awarded a St. Albert International Woman's Day award for her work advocating for interfaith, multicultural and human rights issues.

**Len Gierach** is a volunteer cleric with Eckankar and has been involved with interfaith activities in Edmonton for almost thirty years. In 2019 he chaired the committee which had a vision and hired Spoeth Creations to film our "Building Bridges" video documentary. He served as chair for the Edmonton Committee for the Parliament of the World's Religions from 2010 - 2015 and as a member of the North American Interfaith Network 2018 proposal committee. He is employed with Westlawn Memorial Gardens as a pre-need specialist. He is active as a writer, chorister with the Richard Eaton Singers, and various service work. Len and his wife Heather enjoy their five children and two grandchildren in the Edmonton area.

**Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson** has been associated with the EIC since witnessing the signatures of the Centre's founding board members to the Alberta Societies Act application, December 1995. Since then he has held a number of positions on the Centre's board and is now happy to be an honorary member. In December 2012 Rob retired from 40 years ministry with the United Church of Canada. On the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Executive Rob serves as a Past Chair and member of the Program Committee. In August 2019 Rob relocated to Wolfville Nova Scotia where he works with the local Interchurch Council to host NAIN in 2022 or 2023.

**Dr. Zohra Husaini** is an educator and human rights activist. She was born in India and migrated to Canada in 1971. She received her Masters of Letters degree from Cambridge University, England in Philosophy and her Ph. D from the University of Alberta in Sociology. She has taught Philosophy, Sociology and Education both in India and in Canada. Her academic work has been in the fields of metaphysical epistemology, education, women's studies and minority and ethnic group's studies. Her community work is extensive in the areas of community action research, human rights, promotion of interfaith relations and advocacy on women's issues. She is Vice-President of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, on the board of the Interfaith Council of Canada and Past-President of the Indo-Canadian Women's Association. At present she is working on a research project on Muslim Women, Human Rights and Law with the Intercultural Action Committee for Advancement of Women. She has received the Alberta Centennial Medal for her contributions to the life of our City as well as the Senior Women's Award and the Alberta Seniors Minister's Award (2013) for her work with immigrant women.

## BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

**Farah Jamil** is a health executive, where she has combined her love of science and business to work in several sectors including: government, health region, non-profit and academia in Canada and the United States. While in school and during her career, she recognized the need for bringing down barriers and building bridges in the realm of interfaith dialogue. Therefore, Farah has volunteered for several interfaith boards, committees and organizations, including the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP), A Common Word Alberta - Christian Muslim Interfaith Dialogue, and more. As a member of EIC Farah is committed to “help create a society which respects the richness of human diversity”.

**Shiraz Kanji** recently retired having worked in three different careers - professional engineer, Information Technology and recently as financial planning consultant. He has worked in three different countries and speaks five languages. Shiraz is passionate about public speaking and has spoken to a wide variety and sizes of audiences on different subjects including religion and Islam. He has been an active Toastmaster for over 30 years and has conducted many training seminars locally and overseas. He enjoys learning about different faith communities and participating in interfaith dialogue. Shiraz is an active volunteer, having served his Toastmasters District, his professional organizations, church and community organizations. He has also volunteered for the Provincial Government sponsored Board Development Program. His other interests include music, cinema and reading.

**Nasim Kherani** has actively volunteered her services for the last 27 years in various leadership positions in numerous organizations. They include Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Edmonton Chapter of Soroptimist International, Centre for Race & Culture (formerly Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations), Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities and is the Edmonton Convenor for the Aga Khan University, Karachi. She was born in Tanzania and acquired her first designation as a Certified & Chartered Accountant in London, England, working in public practice. After moving to Canada she became a Certified General Accountant and Certified Financial Planner and worked for the provincial government as a senior financial auditor.

**Mitra Knight** has a distinguished record in business leadership and project management and has served in various leadership roles globally. She holds a Masters Certificate in Project Management from the Schulich School of Business at York University in Canada and a Masters Degree in Leadership and Management from Landegg International University in Switzerland. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computing Science from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada. Mitra has over 20 years of experience working in private and public sectors. During those years, she focused on project management, serving as a Senior Systems Administrator in the ICT field. Mitra contributed to the long-term planning and strategic direction of information technology and the development of IT policy and budgets for a large multi-campus college. She is licensed by the Alberta Real Estate Council as a real estate and mortgage specialist. In 2013, Ms. Knight assumed the role of Project Director of a 31.062 Million CAD project in the Caribbean funded primarily by the Canadian Government. The Strengthening Distance Education in the Caribbean (SDEC) project ( a 5 year project) aimed to increase employment and income generating



## BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

opportunities for Caribbean citizens by improving the Open Campus' institutional capacity to offer increased access to post-secondary education regionally and abroad, through enhanced programmes and learning sites. As the Project Director she had extensive ties with UWI sites in all 16 English-speaking Caribbean countries; Caricom and Cariforum representatives; as well as the Canadian Development Bank. She worked to create synergy between Global Affairs Canada and World Bank, EU, IMF and private sector funded projects. As well she is fluent in several languages and is a powerful negotiator.

**Rev. Dr. Don Mayne** was born in Edmonton but took his schooling, university, and theological training in Saskatchewan and his master's degree at Boston University School of Theology. His doctorate is an honorary degree from St. Stephen's College. He was the founding President of the EIC, serving for five years, then continued on the Board until he was appointed an honorary member in 2011. He served on the Board of the North American Interfaith Network and was President from 2000 to 2004. He also was a founding member of the No Room in the Inn Committee of the Edmonton and District Council of Churches. They have encouraged the congregations of the Council of Churches to donate to a different community agency each year to assist with poverty and housing issues, and in 20 years they have raised over \$1 million for various service agencies.

**Kara Murray** has 23 years of experience in the not for profit industry in various capacities such as program management, funds development, human resources and governance. She enjoys various projects and initiatives and has done some eclectic ones such as produced a sold out show of the Vagina Monologues at the Jubilee, hosted a 13 episode radio series and ran her own business, Beauty Blends. She has done guest lectures at Grant MacEwan on inclusion and disability services, participated on the board for the Edmonton Sport Council as a director, and ran a million dollar research project for the province. Kara loves collaborating and working together to bring about positive social change and has done so through 25 years of various volunteer work within the community.

**Pauline Paulson** is a Metis Elder who was born and lived her young years in Northern Manitoba, adolescence on a farm in the central part of the province and the balance in Winnipeg. In Edmonton she divides her time between Native Counseling Services as a spiritual and cultural advisor, the Elders Counsel for Concordia University and Elder in residence for the HIV Drop In Centre. Her formal studies include but are not limited to a diploma in Applied Counselling from the University of Manitoba, another in Child Family and Community Services through Red River Community College (Winnipeg) sponsored by Metis Child and Family Services, and the facilitator training program "In Search of Your Warrior" through Native Counselling Services of Alberta. Her informal education includes over 30 years of participating in aboriginal ceremonies and learning from various Elders, locally, nationally and internationally. She says, "I believe Spirit led me so I can fulfill the reason I was born into this world at this time".

## BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

**Katherine Reith** says that from a young age she was taught the value of being actively involved in the betterment of her community. She works as an educational assistant and as a volunteer extraordinaire has served on many boards and worked with Bread Run, Prospect Place, Youth Justice Steering Committee, Do Likewise Society which began a Neighbourhood Centre serving the homeless, orientation for new international students at the U of A, distress lines, Outdoor Way of the Cross, prison visits and more. Another project is an awareness campaign on the effects of human trafficking and setting up safe houses. And for fun she helps at every festival in the city. Kathie believes in improving the quality of life for all people in the world to help them reach their full potential.

**Manish Shah** is a laboratory technician and a student of Jain Philosophy, Astrology and Meditation. His spiritual mentors were Jain Monk Muni Shree Tejprabh Vijayji Maharaj and Pandit Ravindra Shah. He is also an experienced public speaker in motivational and educational seminars and the spiritual functions of Jainism and the evaluation of Jain principals with the aid of modern science. One of his goals is to spread the message of non - violence given by the founder Lord Mahavira. He believes all religions are based on humanity and help us understand the importance of being human, showing us a way of living without causing damage to the environment and without breaking the law of universe. He hopes to be given an opportunity to serve humanity using this knowledge and skills.

**Virginia Sharek** is an Albertan who attended the U of A. She completed a Bachelor of Education (1967), and a Bachelor of Arts (1990). After graduation she spent a year in London, England. Upon her return to Canada Virginia taught in Calgary for one year. This was followed by a move to Edmonton to teach for an additional two years. Virginia was married in 1973 and chose to stay home to raise her two sons. In 1993, Virginia took the opportunity to serve as the ecumenical and interfaith officer for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, until her retirement in June of 2013. During those years she held a number of positions in the Edmonton and District Council of Churches, as well as in the Western Diocesan Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism. She was the representative for the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada on the Canadian Council of Churches for six years. Being a member of the "No Room in the Inn" committee since 2001 has provided the opportunity to get to know so many dedicated individuals in many organizations that are engaged in providing safe and affordable housing for people experiencing difficulties and hard times. In 2014, Virginia became a lifetime member of the EIC. With appreciation and enthusiasm she continues to be a part of the activities, educational opportunities and experiences, projects, workshops provided by the staff and members of the Centre.

**Karnail Singh**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## 2019 – 2020

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### EXECUTIVE

Pauline Paulson – *President*  
Guy Blood – *Vice-President*  
Kara Murray – *Treasurer*  
Farah Jamil & Virginia Sharek – *Secretary*  
Shiraz Kanji – *Past-President*

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Rev. Audrey Brooks  
Avau Fast  
Karen Gall  
Len Gierach  
Dr. Zohra Husaini  
Nasim Kherani  
Mitra Knight  
Kathie Reith  
Manish Shah  
Karnail Singh

### HONOURARY MEMBERS

Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson  
Sushil Kalia  
Rev. Dr. Don Mayne  
Jasvant Mehta

Netta Phillet – *Office Coordinator*





# EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION & ACTION

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**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2019/2020