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Global Street Paper Summit held in Athens, Greece

This year Alberta Street News was well represented at the International Network of Street Papers Summit in Athens, Greece from June 13 to June 16 since editor Linda Dumont and writer Joanne Benger both attended. The street paper movement has 112 papers from 35 countries and 10,300 vendors at any given time, 23 million circulation per year with all papers combined. In additions to street papers that are members of the INSP, there are also independent street newspapers such as the one in Quebec City and the Toronto paper in Canada.

For more on the conference, go to our special section on pages 10 to 13.



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**THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE
CONTRIBUTORS.**

Moon walking

By Timothy Wild

It was about 9 o'clock and, to my ears at least, the music was rather loud. The DJ was playing the eternally crowd-pleasing songs of Michael Jackson, together with spinning a spectrum of some newer, certainly less memorable, music. The bass amp was thumping and I felt the pulse. Everyone seemed to know the words, and they literally danced their hearts out. Most of the people were dancing on the floor, but a few of the braver ones were expressing their art on the small stage.

Dance is a very subjective subject and I must admit that some were doing better than others. But, without a doubt, all were dancing a lot better than me. And the faces of the people were lit up with joy. Friends were dancing with friends. High fives and fist bumps were all around. Everyone seemed to be having a great time. There was a real sense of community and democracy on the dance floor. As it should be. The place was filled with smiles, laughter and music. Just a typical 9 o'clock. Music, dancing, companionship and fun.

However, the interesting thing was that this was the scene at 9 a.m. on a weekday, and the young people were individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. There were also a number of canes, walkers and wheel chairs grooving to the beat. The dance floor was in the main area of an agency that provides day programming for people with a variety of issues that cause them to be on the social and economic margins of society. The aim of the program is to promote recreation, inclusion and activity.

And this was certainly the case. As mentioned, there was a sense of community, acceptance and fun. It was beautiful.

I had been having a bit of a bad time at work and was feeling a bit demoralized, but experiencing this simple expression of joy warmed my heart, gave me a long overdue dose of activist energy, and showed me the importance of providing supports and services that can help people belong, and truly feel included in society. We all want that. We all need that. We all deserve that.

And, as always, that gets us back to the importance of social policy. After all it is effective and efficient public policy, and not charity, that truly ensures social rights of citizenship.

***Dance is beautiful.
It is a foundation of
community.***

We need social policies in place that support individuals, families and agencies that help increase the opportunities for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities. At the individual level we must ensure that people receiving AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) get an income that is adequate to support meaningful social, economic and cultural participation. To her credit, Premier Alison Redford certainly made AISH levels more appropriate by raising the monthly amount to \$1588 a few years ago. But it is important to remember that AISH provides an income that is still below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off Lines (generally

regarded as the poverty line). More can still be done here. Coupling AISH increases to the changes in the annual cost of living, as well as linking it to the concept of a "living wage" would be welcome advances. It would be a good start.

It is also important that funding to the overall program of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) is adequate enough to support the needs and aspirations for inclusion of individuals and families, together with providing supports to community based supports and services. Furthermore, it is essential to augment the capacity of family caregivers by providing them with options, choices and supports to help them manage the varied and complex dimensions of their family member's life. Hopefully the PDD review will provide supports for these individuals and families. That would be a tremendous advance.

I still have "Thriller" and "Beat it" ringing in my ears. They are great songs. And I hope I will carry the memory of this event forever. It was a wonderful and truly democratic experience. People just want to be free to dance like no one is watching. That is the artistry of a just, humane and inclusive society. Progressive social policy should help people figure out whatever that actually means to them, and provide access to the stage. We all want to dance in our own way. To be sure, as I am personally aware, some are more graceful and polished than others but let's support it. Dance is beautiful. It is a foundation of community.



Are jobs obsolete? Could be.

By
Allan Sheppard

Are jobs obsolete? Could be. (Second in an open-ended series prompted by our city's creation of yet another task force aimed at ending poverty: EndPovertyEdmonton.)

Oh why don't you work like other folk do?

How the hell can I work when there's no work to do!

Hallelujah! I'm a bum...

My father was born in 1899. He and many thousands of men (the labour force was mostly men in those days) struggled through what might have been the most formative and productive years of their work and family lives hopping trains to look for jobs during the Great Depression. They were called bums: dismissively by many of their peers who were lucky enough to have incomes, however meagre; ironically by themselves, who had nothing to live on except, with luck, a sense of irony.

They were deemed lazy and shiftless by respectably employed folk, but I hope that was more out of guilt (at having a precious job in hard times) or fear (of losing that job to a bum who had more skills or was desperate enough to work for less). But that label was not fair, certainly not for my father.

Dad finally found steady work as the Second World War approached, then secure union work on Alberta's Coal Branch after the

end of that conflict rebooted the economy.

I had arrived by then. I recall a time when my dad worked double shifts for more than a year: 8 hours at the backbreaking work of firing three boilers that provided steam to a power plant, and 8 hours monitoring, servicing, and maintaining the plant's generators, compressors, pumps and other equipment vital to the operation, safety, and comfort of the mine and its community of miners and their families.

I never met anyone who worked harder for what was, even with two jobs at a union wage, a relative pittance by today's standards and expectations: Except for my mother, who worked just as hard and for much longer, having outlived her husband by decades and supported a family of four after he took sick and later died.

My parents were not unique; they were part of a generation that worked (and fought) harder and with less reason to hope than the generations of native-born and immigrant citizens who came after them; who stood on their shoulders to build and enjoy a standard of living my parents' generation did not dream of or receive enough credit for. (The lives and efforts of their Aboriginal brothers and sisters were even harder, more hopeless, and less rewarded, a reality that I have acknowledged many times in past and will return to.)

Now the lucky streak—not theirs but ours—is ending. After almost a half-century of postwar growth, and a few decades of millennial and post-millennial stagnation (brought on or compounded

by environmental degradation, economic inequality and inequity, globalization, and technological development) we seem to have circled back to the dilemma that my parents and their generation faced: how to survive in an economy in which there are thousands (millions worldwide) of unemployed or under-employed (but willing) workers and no work to do: certainly no meaningful work; no satisfying, prideful work; no well paying, family-building and -sustaining work.

There are differences between our dilemma and the one our forebears faced during the Great Depression. The postwar social safety net is robust enough to save most of us (in Alberta and Canada, though not necessarily other parts of the world or in our own Aboriginal communities) from abject poverty. Though under constant ideological threat, that safety net is still sufficient to keep all but the most vulnerable and marginal among us off the streets—which means that all but the worst levels of poverty remain invisible. But off the streets is not necessarily in or anywhere near the lap of luxury—or even within the domain of modest and secure comfort: a living wage.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council calculates the full-time hourly rate for a living wage in Edmonton at \$16.70. Alberta's minimum wage is \$11.20; it would take a 50 per cent increase to raise it to living-wage level. Not many employers, especially those in small, local, family businesses would—or even could—absorb so

substantial an increase in an essential cost. substantial an increase in an essential cost.

One common half-answer to the dilemma is for governments and non-profit organizations to subsidize businesses that cannot afford to pay a living wage with a variety of direct and indirect relief payments to underpaid workers: social assistance, child and other tax credits, health care premium adjustments, transit subsidies, food banks, community kitchens among them. It's a makeshift system that keeps a leaky social/economic boat afloat but does little to make significant way toward a true end to poverty.

The full-time hourly rate for a living wage in Edmonton at \$16.70. Alberta's minimum wage is \$11.20;

A second half-answer is to import temporary workers from places where poverty is far deeper than it is here and the living wage is so low that workers can afford to come to Alberta to work at or near-minimum wage without the full standard of living, the safety-net benefits, and the long-term opportunities our workers expect—not as an entitlement, but as a right of citizenship. Notably, we still subsidize the employers, the (now temporary-foreign) workers, and also the foreign remittance economies that are able to survive (if not thrive) courtesy of a globalized economy greased by low-cost international travel and cheap, fast, and trustworthy international transfer of money.

A third answer, more beloved of and available to large national and multinational businesses, is to outsource production to low-cost, poor (certainly poorer than Canada or Alberta) countries, again thanks to cheap and reliable travel, transportation, and transfer of money—and

communications technology.

A fourth answer, again more beloved of national and multinational business, is automation and robotization, tied to artificial intelligence. Technology has made much menial and skilled labour obsolete or transferable, generating a downward spiral in pursuit of the lowest costs: and a race to the bottom in terms of social benefits and security. Relatively simple but complex jobs—driving cabs, transit vehicles, transport trucks, for example—are clearly threatened by self-driving vehicles (even riderless bicycles!) and drones that can deliver almost anything almost anywhere. And brace yourselves you comfortable, middle-class professionals: the time is not far off when the scut work done by prestigious professionals—lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, managers to begin a long list—will be done by computers. Despite resistance that fetishizes professional competence and insight, the transition is already under way; and it won't be long before skilled work of those professions, plus seemingly untouchables and indispensables, such as judges, legislators, professors, teachers, journalists, researchers, etc., will be capable of being—and therefore inevitably will be—taken over by computers more efficiently and, (arguably) where it matters, more objectively than is now possible.

We will inevitably be told that new jobs will be created designing, maintaining, evolving, and disseminating the technology. We should not buy that bridge.

Experience with the transition in low-skilled work has shown that, over time alternative jobs created in response to technological change eventually dry up. Syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer, in an article that has informed much of my thinking here, paints a stark portrait of technology as a job creator: "In the 1980s, 8 per cent of new jobs

created in the developed economies were in entirely new occupations, from call-centres to computer programmers. In the 1990s, only 4.4% of the new jobs involved newly invented occupations. In the 2000s, only half a per cent did." (gwynnedyer.com, Universal Basic Income, 06 June 2016).

These changes and the social, economic, and technological contexts in which they have occurred have generated what Dyer calls a "gigging economy" in which often over-qualified workers drift between low-pay, short-term, without-benefits jobs that may sustain a life but will never generate enough stable income to support a modestly comfortable and secure lifestyle, including a family and a mortgage. All of this is occurring at a time when wealth is still being created and productivity is growing. That's not a bad thing; the bad thing is that these benefits do not trickle down to the average worker as was hoped and promised when the technological transition began in earnest during the 1980s.

"The real problem," as Dyer puts it, "is figuring out how to distribute the benefits of automation when people's work is no longer needed." There is a growing consensus that a solution to that challenge—changing the elimination of jobs as necessary factors in economies and societies from a social burden to a liberating opportunity—may lie in a concept once known (and rejected) in Canada as a guaranteed annual income, now known more broadly as a universal basic income. It's an idea whose time may not yet have come, but which cannot be ignored, certainly not by EndPovertyEdmonton, as it looms on the horizon.

I'll turn to the pros and perhaps some of the cons of a universal income next month.

WHY NOW? WHY NOT?

I am now remembering my past.
Why do I dream about that past?
If through the day I deal with the past.
Can I ever sleep peacefully at night?
Why do I wake at dawn to think?
I want to deal with my past head on.
They made me into a liar and therefore a con.
For fear of themselves being called crazy.
I might be nuts, but I know it for surely.
It's not contagious if you befriend me.
Silence is golden yes. But deadly truly.
For us who are sick and take pills daily.
This is our lot, lets talk, mental illness.

by Lanky and M.T.

HEALING WORDS



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SOME PEOPLE SAY

Some people say, "what goes around comes around."

Some people say, "you reap what you sow."

Other's say, "it was fate."

Yet other's say, "only the good die young."

Some people say, "you reap what you sow."

Other's say, "always expect the worst."

Yet other's say, " only the good die young."

Some people say, " live and let die."

Other's say, "always expect the worst."

Other's say, "it was fate."

Some people say, "live and let die."

Some people say, "what goes around comes around."

By Lanky Sunday, May 29, 2016

YOU AND ME

Our coasts meet ,

In the strait of sparkling imagination,

While our thoughts are intertwined,

The secrets of our life .

The new light affects the vessels of my hopes,

While you pray for me now .

I am leaving the time of darkness,

I leave the chains of overweight loads

In the aura of your hug I imagine myself,

On the horizon of the new mission I am waiting for you.

By Remza Lagarija



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My thoughts on doctor assisted suicide

By Sharon Spencer

I am a born again Christian and a Canadian baby boomer. I am proud of both. However I am deeply saddened by the passing of the new bill that allows doctor assisted suicide. Even the senate tried to amend the bill, but parliament pushed it through anyway. As one more of our Christian morals comes to an end I am amazed that no-one is aware of how our beliefs are being continually and methodically eroded. All of these things have occurred since Justin Trudeau has been in office. It has been all in just such a short time.

Why are my fellow Christians not up in arms to protest and demand that these things are not stopped? We are the silent majority. Our country was created on the premise that He shall have dominion from sea to sea.

The baby boomers are the largest group of people born in Canada at any given time. It is sad to say that we are aging. As we age we need more medical attention; it can be a huge cost to medicare and don't forget it is all about the almighty dollar.

Even in Alberta it is very hard after 60 years of age to get the operations we require unless we are working or have influence. Ageism is being noticed acutely by others in my age group. We are becom-



ing dispensable. Some believe this is the way to get rid of the burden of those of us who are less productive to society, such as the elderly, mentally ill and the severely handicapped. One of my greatest concerns about euthanasia is now that this has begun, where will it end?

I myself, have many painful conditions which I have to face every day. It is far from pleasant and can be a strain and a drain on my life. However I believe God gave life and will take it as His divine wisdom sees fit. Through Him I can receive grace to live each and every day.

I have faced this dilemma first hand. In the case of my own mother, who suffered so badly for so long that she asked me to assist her in ending her life, basically to murder her. She made it sound innocent, "If it gets so bad, can you just put a pillow over my face?" You can't believe the remorse and grief I felt denying her request. But I knew by agreeing, that God and the law would hold me accountable.

I firmly believe that once we die we face Christ and are sent to heaven or hell. People who need to be freed from their infirmities must realize that without being born again they will be tormented eternally. Through euthanasia, people are making a choice without even considering the heaven or hell issue.

Our whole life is built around the question, "What have you done with Jesus? Have you repented of your sins? Have you asked Him into your heart? Do you know Him personally?"

**Weary your days
And long your nights
Absent the approval
Of the Authorities**

The Keepers....

**The Correctors...
Of original mistakes,
Of gardens of Eden,
Of political correctness,
Of punctilio,
Of standards,
Of perfection,
Of religio-dogma,
Of dog-eat-dog,
Of righteous melodrama,
Of idiot ideology,
Of right thinking,
Of appropriate feeling,
Of true class,
Of high art,
Of low comedy,
Of real men,
And (naturally)
Of their women**

By Robert Wilde

The Joys of Walking

By Joanne Benger

- 1..To stay fit I walk the dog every day even though I have no dog.
2. I try to look strong so I dress to emphasize my size when I walk alone.
3. Even if I am not carrying a cell phone I talk into one as I encounter people.
4. I walk on the opposite side of the street when I go past parked cars or groups of people.
5. I talk to barking dogs in fenced in yards to let them know I am a friend.
6. I greet dog owners but I never touch their dogs.
7. I carry a bit of cash in case I encounter a yard sale.
8. If I stop at a yard sale I never enter a building.
9. If people stop to ask directions I keep my distance and holler out information.
10. I move sharp objects off the road so they won't puncture tires.
11. I don't wear ear-buds because I want to hear traffic sounds and approaching people and animals.
12. Walking companions are OK if they walk at my speed.
13. A gentle breeze is OK but I won't walk when there are wind warnings.
14. A fine mist is OK but I don't walk in a heavy downpour.
16. If people think I'm homeless and stop to give me cans, I thank them politely.
17. Warm is OK but I don't walk when it is over 30 degrees C.
18. I never walk unarmed. A glass bottle swung in a plastic bag should fend off man or dog.
19. I move fallen branches off the road if I can.
20. I pick up lost ball point pens and most still write.



Are You Searching for Meaning ?

By Linda Roan

Man's Search for Meaning is a book that can be read and reread. It is a book about a man by the name of Viktor E Frankl, who miraculously survived the years spent in the Nazi network of concentration and extermination camps. The main focus of this book however, is more about the sources of his strength to survive. He who has a "Why" to live can also bear almost any "How". While imprisoned, Viktor Frankl thought about his family, and about the lectures that he would give after the war, and about the psychological lessons to be learned from the Auschwitz experience.

To quote from Dr. Frankl himself, "Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your Freedom to choose how you will respond to a situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel, think and do about what happens to you."

Throughout the book are real life experiences of Viktor Frankl and others. This turns theory into real

ity. In the midst of loss, pain and suffering, it is possible to find meaning...that there is a point to suffering.

The theory that Dr Frankl developed is called, Logotherapy. Logos is a Greek word which denotes "meaning". It focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's and women's search for such a meaning. Looking for and finding meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man.

The "Will to Meaning" is opposite to the "pleasure principle" on which Freudian psychoanalysis is centered. Also in contrast to "Will to Meaning" is "Will Power" on which Adlerian psychology focuses. If we could only have enough pleasure, maybe our lives would be better! Maybe if we had more will power, we could be happier. Viktor Frankl makes the case that neither pleasurable experiences nor striving for superiority brings happiness.

Are you looking for meaning in your life...something to live for? The content of this book will go a long way to point us in the right direction in finding the reason for living," Meaning to Life", no matter what our circumstances.



Keynote speaker Nicholas Voulelis and The Journalists Newspaper



By Linda Dumont

Veteran Greek journalist Nicholas Voulelis is director of the Journalists Newspaper, a paper run as a cooperative in Athens. The paper was born Nov. 5, 2012 from the ashes of respected left wing paper Eleftherotypia, which was one of the early victims of Greece's economic crisis. It employs 150 journalists who lost their jobs after the left wing paper and other Greek papers went bankrupt. The paper is independent of any major financial backer, publisher or political party. It has become one of the most popular papers in Greece. The paper covers all political matters.

"The paper has too much democracy," Voulelis said, "150 unemployed journalists publish it and the editorial staff consists of six to nine editors. Regardless of title or former experience all journalists receive the same wages – 800 Euros per month, minimum wage, so they can support their extended families in a nation without social welfare."

**Left - Editor Linda Dumont at the Acropolis
Photo by Joanne Bengert**





Eloenas Refugee Camp

By Joanne Benger, Photo by Linda Dumont

Eleonas Refugee Camp was one of the places toured by INSP delegates. The site of the refugee camp is where a new soccer stadium and its parking area were to be constructed before the economic collapse. Lefteris Paoagiannakis, Deputy Mayor of Athens, led the tour of the camp that began in the arrivals area. People without papers are assigned to the houses that are white metal trailers similar to those found at work sites. The camp has three sections with 720 people in section A, which we toured. The army built sections B and C and manage them. A is a year old, B is four months old and C is one month old. Between the three sections there are a total of 2,395 refugees, 833 of them are children, with 65% of the refugees women and children. There are 56 pregnant women in the camp, and 15 babies have been born there.

The refugees are of 16 nationalities. The minister of the Interior is responsible for more than 45 refugee camps. Borders are closed for now but will reopen after Ramadan in September.

There is one family per trailer house. The maximum occupancy is supposed to be 8 people but in some cases there are 10 with the babies. The army provides 50,000 portions of food twice a day, and the people eat in their own houses. Each has an air conditioner that

was donated by a big company.

Refugees are free to go into the city and they get free Metro tickets. They can buy food on their own and most have stoves and appliances. Some get money from friends and relatives, and the Rescue Society gives \$140 Euros per family each week.

There was a problem with electricity when everyone used the air conditioners, so there were ten days without power and people protested in the streets.

“This is not a permanent solution but it is a Hilton compared to the camps,” said the deputy mayor. “It will take up to a year. They will stay until they get better accommodation. Greece doesn’t have benefits money (welfare).”

Doctors Without Borders have a doctor working on site, a retired dentist donated his chair and dentists volunteer their time.

There are six Olympic athletes among the refugees. The Iranian athlete is continuing his training in archery and Greece is covering his expenses. Two Syrian athletes are also training.

The adults in the camp complain of a lack of activity, but the children adapt well. It is easy to keep children busy. They have no school at present, but school will start in September.



Invisible City Tour

By Joanne Benger and Linda Dumont

On the first day of the conference we went on the Invisible City tour that includes visiting the office of Shedia, the Greek Street Newspaper. The paper is only three years old, and was started in response to the economic collapse that left so much of the population unemployed.

The Invisible City tour is a project of Shedia. Lambrose and Maria were trained to take be tour guides. Adults pay six Euros and children and students pay 3 Euros, with half of the money going back to Shedia and half to the tour guide.

Lambrose, 54, became unemployed three years ago and was homeless. Now he lives in an apartment in a building that was once a four star hotel. It has 125 residents of which 10% are women, ranging in age from 28 to 90 years of age. He told us that many of the five star hotels built for the Olympics in 2004 have been turned into residences for the homeless. He was very proud to show us the balcony of his fourth floor apartment.

It is estimated that there are 6000 homeless people in Athens. They have two main problems –accommodation and medical and dental care.

The hotel that became a homeless shelter four years ago initially housed Greeks but now legal and illegal immigrants are accepted as well. Because of the border problem it is now estimated that Greece has one million immigrants. Legal ones have the right document.

Lambrose said, “The unemployed can follow one of two lines – they can end up in prison or in a cemetery or they can choose the honest way.” Before he became homeless, he had honest work all his life and paid his bills.

During the two hour tour, Lambrose showed us various agencies that help people as well as buildings that house people who were on the street. He used an interpreter.

He said, “Homelessness isn’t next door. It’s our door. Three years ago there were no homeless people on the streets.”

Left: Lendrose conducting a tour





Above : Shedia vendor at work, Photo by Linda Dumotn

Shedia - the Greek Street paper

By Linda Dumont

Shedia, the Greek Street newspaper, is only three years old. Most of the vendors had jobs. They lost their jobs and in a few months they lost everything and were all alone. With the economic crisis and no welfare, vending is how Greeks in desperate need support themselves.

For the vendors, selling papers is a “real job”. They are not supposed to accept any donations, and they give receipts for each paper sale. People pay three Euros for a paper. Vendors wear special red vests and red hats while at work.

Shedia provides sporting activities for the vendors including football, basketball, and floor hockey for the elderly.



Above: A Greek guard at the parliament building. The long tassel on his hat represents tears for those fallen in battle.

Photo by Linda Dumont

WRITERS' CORNER

In the April issue I wrote about the Writers' Corner on our website albertastreetnews.org. In this issue I am printing the first chapters of two of the books that have been submitted so far. *I Am Widow* is already a completed work and as I finish editing the chapters they will be put on the web page. *One Grain of Sand* is a work in progress and more chapters will be added over time.

Submissions are welcome. The newspaper has limited space, but we can put the complete book length stories on our web site

I Am Widow

By Joanne Benger, B. Ed.

Joanne Benger is a well known humorist and best known as the author of *A Farm Wife's Almanac*

Chapter One

A Man's dying is more the survivor's affair than his own. – Thomas Mann

I was totally unprepared for widowhood. John was big and healthy and strong and still rode a motorcycle. We walked an hour every day to keep our leg strength up for long motorcycle trips and we were into prevention (which did not prevent). We were non-smokers and none – drinkers and we ate healthily with lots of fruits and vegetables.

We were planning to buy a new motorcycle and we had already discussed our summer trips when he died.

Riding the motorcycle we had mixed with younger people. Members of the Retreads and UMCi are considered older motorcyclists because they are over 40 so we often rode with people half John's age. He was still as fit as any of them and he had not lost his reflexes.

John had lived with me in a utopian world without funeral homes, cemeteries, coffins, dying people, seniors, clubs, flower shops wreaths, hospitals, canes, walkers, wakes, home care and hospice visits. Sure we knew they existed but so do Ebola, coral reefs, kindles, tornados, ship wrecks, igloos, wars, famines, lotto wins, Trump Tower and millions of things that have not touched our lives.

Like many who lead normal, boring organized lives, I was totally unprepared for an end to my

life style, death and grieving. I didn't even know there were seven stages of grief. I just assumed that all widows had to worry about were the funeral and will settlement. I didn't expect overpowering feelings to enter into it.

I knew dying people went through five stages identified by D. John Kubler-Ross: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance or resignation.

John died in his sleep unexpectedly so I never got to share those stages with him, anticipating grief. One widow told me how she and her dying husband discussed the funeral and how she would carry on alone.

I entered grief cold turkey so I experienced the seven stages outlined by Father Robert E. Kavanaugh: shock and denial, disorganization, volatile emotions, guilt, loss and loneliness, relief, and reestablishment.

I am still at Stage 5 - loneliness. The first three stages were frightening at times. Someone told me a widow once wrote a book called, "I have lost my husband not my mind". I have never located the book but that is how I felt at times. I slid through guilt quickly. I felt no guilt over our married life or his sudden death. I wish he had lived longer, of course, but that was out of my control.

Loss and loneliness blind sided me without warning. I never realized how alone I would feel without John. I know I must move on to the final two steps on my grief journey but this is where I am now.

Lots of widows and widowers have gone into bereavement cold turkey as I did. Even those with pre-planned funerals tell me the emotional side was a total surprise. Over and over people have told me that sudden death is easier for the departed but harder on the survivors. Someone also told me that sudden death is harder on us at first but we recover faster. I'm not sure if this is true. I may never recover.

I feel glad that John never knew the pain and indignity of a long illness when I read in memorials that say:

In tears we saw you sinking
We watched you fade away.
Our hearts were almost broken
As you fought so hard to stay.
But when we saw you sleeping
So peaceful, free of pain,
We could not wish you back
To suffer that again.

During the shock and denial I wasn't alone in a vacuum. I was notifying people, writing up his obituary and making funeral plans. The funeral, writing a card of thanks, and sending thank you cards took place while I was disorganized. At the same time I was trying to comfort others and keep the house running.

I forced myself to live an organized life. I ate by the clock because I felt no hunger. I exercised. I went to bed and got up at the usual times even if I didn't sleep. I forced myself to be a good citizen, paying the bills, dressing neatly and mowing the lawn. My goal was survival. I felt no joy but I was trying to function logically in a world that was disorganized and out of control.

I was lucky. The money John had inherited and planned to spend on his new motorcycle paid for the funeral. Some widows tell me their greatest problem during these early stages was financial. An unexpected expensive death followed by funeral costs left them destitute and desperate. Other widows tell me they had another problem overshadowing everything – family feuds. I was lucky. The entire extended family approved of my traditional funeral plans.

One crying widow told me she followed her husband's wishes for "no funeral by his request".

His relatives were very upset. When she was crying, one in-law said, "If you had loved him you would have had a funeral."

Feuds over remains are common. Some want to bury the ashes, others want to scatter and then the debate is over where to scatter. These individual problems are not factored into the seven steps but they do exist. I was lucky when it came to money and family and I hope you are, too.

Somehow we all muddle our way through shock and denial and disorganization. Funeral over, we think the worst is over. We say good-bye to the last visitor and mail the last thank-you card with relief and then....

This is my story. If I repeat myself or get emotional, please forgive me. I am still grieving.

Chapter Two

To die must be an awfully big adventure. - Peter Pan

We have a streamlined death industry in this country. When sudden death occurs there are lots of professionals to steer us along during the early dazed days.

John died unexpectedly in his sleep at about 4 a.m. on St. Patrick's Day. He was sleeping at my side as he had for 42 years. I woke at 8 a.m. and found him cold and turning blue. I called 911 and that set things in motions. Even though I said he was dead, the 911 operator still had me do chest compressions until the ambulance arrived just in case, and I stayed calm as I followed orders.

The ambulance men were friendly and I answered all their questions as best I could. I wasn't aware of them phoning or communicating but soon the RCMP and coroner arrived.

I answered more questions and gave information but I can't remember what was said. I do remember that at one point the RCMP officer wanted to see John's identification and I fetched his wallet which lay on top of the dresser. Then I remarked, "In all the years we have been married this is the first time I have looked in his wallet."

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albertastreetnews.org**

WRITERS' CORNER --FICTION

One Grain Of Sand

by Valentina Lane

"One Grain Of Sand" is the compelling story of a young woman raised in the strict confines of a religious cult. Shameful family secrets and events beyond her control propel her into a world that she is ill-prepared for. Sarah is helped along the way as she finds kindness, compassion, purpose and love in a world she was taught to condemn. Follow her harrowing journey from the bondage of a false religion to the freedom and blessing of true faith in Jesus Christ.

Prologue

The slate gray car moved slowly along the narrow stretch of pavement, echoing the dull gray of the cold November sky. Bare fields sparsely covered in snow and peppered with wheat and hay stubble stretched out on either side of the highway as far as the eye could see. Here and there bluffs of barren trees sheltered farmsteads and barns and graineries. Fields of dull black earth dusted with snow waited quietly for spring planting; everything was cold, gray, quiet and eerily still. Only the quiet hum of the motor and the low drone the driver's voice broke the stillness.

"Soloman's Vale," the green and white country road sign was unremarkable in itself, looking like any number of road signs that dotted the rural Alberta highway. The car slowed pulling slowly over to the narrow shoulder then stopped near the sign. The lone occupant of the car bowed his dark head and gripped the wheel with such passion that his knuckles showed white in the gloomy interior. "Oh Lord," he prayed aloud, "Lift the darkness that clouds the minds and hearts of the people of Soloman's Vale; set the captives free! Speak to their hearts, Oh Father, and let them see the truth. Use me, Oh God, to bring them the message that they need to hear," he continued on in silent prayer. At length, a truck horn blared and the man jumped in his seat, jolting him back to the present. Slowly he looked around him as if seeing it all for the first time. The cloud of darkness and deception that seemed to hang over the horizon was almost tangible. He drew in a deep steadying breath; he was here on a mission and with God's help he would preach the truth. "Oh Lord," he

prayed, "let the light of your love free some soul tonight from this spirit of oppression."

As one grain of sand turning, shifting, sliding down, causes the ripple that can topple the whole sand castle, so too the effectual earnest prayer of a righteous man avails much. The winds of change, for good or ill, were blowing into Soloman's Vale.

Chapter One Because of Andrea

Sarah ran the comb through her long ash-blond hair thoughtfully. Today she wore it loose and flowing nearly to her waist, but soon she would wear a bun or a crown of braids like the married women. She pulled her hair into a long pony-tail, then twisted it into a bun to see how she would look. If anything, it made her face look more plain and well-scrubbed than usual. Vanity was a sin, she knew, so letting her hair fall, she did not linger looking into the small mirror. Sarah smoothed down her floor-length gray skirt that was teamed with a high-necked white blouse and sturdy flat shoes. No, she would never be the beauty that her sister, Andrea, had been and truthfully she was glad of it. Andrea had used her beauty to attract the heathen and she had paid a heavy price. Andrea..... she wasn't supposed to think about her or ever voice her name. Why would she think of her now, on the very eve of Rueban's proposal. Sarah knew that he was going to ask her to marry him tonight, for he had already asked father for her hand in marriage. It wasn't often that one got **the same chance twice, and father was still reeling from the**

the same chance twice, and father was still reeling from the blow that Andrea had dealt him when she had spurned Rueban's affections and run away. But Sarah, good, plain, sensible Sarah would put things right and poor father would be able to hold his head up in Soloman's Vale again.

There was a brother coming from the Montana Vale speaking at the temple and everyone would be there. It wasn't often that there was a guest speaker but Pastor Andrew Stone had come highly recommended. He could sing, play piano and guitar, and would probably teach them some new praise choruses. Sarah was looking forward to it, for although she would never admit it, she often found Pastor Soloman's sermons boring. Mother had been acting strangely all day. Instead of her usual stoic self she had been humming hymns and there was a light in her gray eyes and high colour in her cheeks. Perhaps she was ill, or just excited about Sarah and Rueban's upcoming union. Whatever the reason, it was nice to hear mother hum a tune instead of heaving deep sighs all the time. Come to think of it, she hadn't heard mother hum a tune since Andrea left. Andrea again! Why did that name keep cropping up in her mind today? Sarah schooled herself not to think of her sister but everything suddenly reminded her of Andrea. Because of Andrea; it was as if everything in Sarah's life began and ended with Andrea. Because of Andrea she was here now, anticipating an engagement to Pastor Soloman's son, Rueban, who had once been engaged to her sister. Sarah would become the next matriarch of Soloman's Vale, not Andrea, who would have ruled with grace and love. Andrea's name was never spoken in the Vale, her memory wiped clean everywhere, it seemed, except in Sarah's heart. Andrea's every belonging, her clothes, her small worn shoes, her sturdy white underwear and all her journals had all been burned in the Vale square. Even her blue hairbrush with shiny strands of glossy black hair still clinging to it had been hurled into the cleansing fire.

Oh yes, Sarah had seen the beginning of Andrea's downfall coming but she had felt powerless to stop it. If only Andrea hadn't had that questioning heart, always wanting to find things out for herself. Sarah sighed heavily, regret

flooding through her. She had seen the signs of Andrea's rebellion yet she had not gone to Father as she should have at the beginning. She could have saved the whole family so much shame and heartache. Andrea had started to read and study the Bible for herself and Sarah remembered her saying: "Why does Jesus say one thing and Pastor Soloman preach another. Look Sarah, Jesus says that if we confess our sins, he forgives us, so why does Pastor Soloman say sinners must be shunned and cast out. In the book of Matthew, Jesus says we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us." Andrea's beautiful blue eyes seemed lit with a strange inner glow as she pressed her small hand to her heart and declared, "I want to follow this loving and forgiving Jesus, not the one Pastor Soloman talks about."

Sarah had been horrified and clamped her hands over her ears crying, "You must never ever question Pastor Soloman, Andrea----Do you want to burn in hell? We are the only chosen ones, we should be so content," she had grabbed Andrea's Bible and tried to pry it from her fingers. "You're reading things wrong; you just need Pastor Soloman to explain things to you."

"Look, " Andrea continued in her soft voice, "It says here that we are to spread the Gospel of Good News to everyone. Salvation's not just for us , its for everyone who believes, can't you see that."

"No, No," Sarah would cry out. Their conversations always ended the same way with Sarah flatly declaring, "Stop it, or I'll tell father." If only she had.....

Slowly their friendship became strained and Andrea spent more and more time alone reading her Bible silently. . She no longer confided her secret thoughts to Sarah but wrote endlessly in her journals that she kept under her mattress. Each night she spent a long time kneeling by her bed in silent prayer. Sometimes Sarah would catch Andrea watching her with a look of such pity it scared her..

Sarah worried and fretted but feeling some misguided loyalty to Andrea she held her peace.

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Bikers help make a difference at Ride for Dad



Ride for Dad Honorary Road Captain and Global Television personality Gord Steinke is getting ready to lead a parade of bikers on their 265 km journey to Tofield, Mundare and back to Nisku industrial area in Leduc

Story and Photo by John Zapantis,

455 bikers were riding out on Highway 2 south of Nisku looking for a killer, ready and willing to even the score, but this killer was no rival from some biker gang, just a killer disease known as prostate cancer. The spirit in riding for those who live with the disease made this hunt worth while for a good cause during the Telus Motorcycle Ride for Dad.

The annual fundraising event was held on Saturday June 11 at Blackjack's Roadhouse Parking lot in Nisku industrial area in Leduc County.

Riders, who gathered pledges while helping to raise public awareness about prostate cancer, left the starter's gate at 10 a.m. on a 265 km journey that took the bikers all the way to Tofield, then to Mundare and back to Nisku, Alberta

Prior to the starting of this ride,

a brief stage presentation, (confronted by a disruptive heavy rain-fall) commenced at 9:45 a.m. where several keynote speakers either spoke about their personal battles with prostate cancer, while others gave their greetings and views on the disease.

Keynote speakers included MC and organizer of the event, Edmonton Prostate Cancer Support Network volunteer Terry Willisko, City of Leduc Mayor Greg Kruschke, Leduc County Mayor, John Whaley, Telus National Sponsor representative Kelly Keen, Global Television news anchor for the 5 to 6 slot and senior producer Gord Steinke, Terry Evans and Road Captain Nelson Santos.

Edmonton Prostate Cancer Support Network volunteer treasurer and prostate cancer survivor Terry Kirkland was on hand for the event working there providing ride participants with an array of information on prostate cancer.

In an interview with ASN, he shared a wealth of information on his insights and personal experience battling prostate cancer.

Terry Kirkland, 68, was diagnosed for prostate cancer at age 62. At the time his P.S.A. test confirmed that he had a reading of seven on the Gleason scale that determined he had prostate cancer.

Prior to being diagnosed for prostate cancer, he said he was lacking a sexual drive. The problem was starting to interfere with his ability to sexually satisfy his wife of many years.

Kirkland said, "I think the first symptom was the lacking of libido and at that particular point, you start looking at why that would be. As you explore, you get to find out exactly what path you get caught on ultimately."

His wife's personal experiences and insights as a nurse had her suggesting to her husband that he have a P.S.A. test conducted to determine if he may have prostate cancer.

After finding out that he had been confirmed for the disease it came as no surprise that his wife (the nurse) was right all along!

Kirkland's life has been more healthy and successful since his diagnosis for prostate cancer. He's had a wonderful career as an air traffic controller for 25 years. Later in 2000, he operated his own container business and sold it finally in 2012. Despite his successful stints at an interesting career in the work professions, he's dealt with continual stress that he feels may have been the number one contributor to his

affliction of prostate cancer.

Kirkland said, "In my case I would say, if anything, stress and it's never definitive, just simple, because I worked 10 to 14 hours a day."

Years prior to his diagnoses for prostate cancer, he was prescribed testosterone, which drives males to perform sexually, but his wife suggested that the idea of depending on this enhancer wouldn't be healthy for him.

Kirkland said, "Initially, the suggestion was if my libido is down, I should be prescribed testosterone, which drives all males. So I did that, but my wife indicated that it's not a very healthy prescription to take. It's hard on the liver. I set that aside and carried on with life as it was and ultimately every year I went for a digital prostate check.. The Gleason test said, yes you're fine. However I decided to get a requisition to have my P.S.A. check, not with my doctor's approval, but it came back and it was extremely high and as a consequence that put me in the alarm situation. After I was in the offices of the urologist and oncologist I had a radical prostatectomy where they removed the prostate back in December of 2012."

Terry's made a remarkable recovery from prostate cancer. He volunteers his time giving presentations on prostate cancer as a member of the Prostate Cancer Support Network Edmonton Chapter on the first Tuesday of every month at the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute in Edmonton.

His supportive advice to those, who think they may have the symptoms of prostate cancer, is to be on top of things while having an annual check-up.

Kirkland said, "We have to take

control of our life. We can't ignore the fact that we're having some medical problem. Men are always a little apprehensive when we start talking about their plumbing. Men are also apprehensive about their going to have a digital prostate check, because a doctor's got to insert a finger up your rectum, feel the prostate and give you some advice at that point. However having said that, a lot of doctors wouldn't know a firm or a soft or an inflamed prostate check, because they do it on an infrequent basis. You get to a urologist, he can tell you by the feel itself whether it's normal. That's just the expertise of the medical world with all due respect of the GP's. You have to be cautious in doing a digital prostate check on somebody without having a follow-up on a P.S.A. test."

Global Television personality Gord Steinke, who works as an evening news anchor on the 5 to 6 slot and is a senior producer, was again the Ride for Dad honorary ride captain for the 10th year at this event.

Steinke took time out for an interview with ASN a few days after the rainy ride ended, over at the Global Television studios.

He has fond memories of his uncle Bob, who was once diagnosed for prostate cancer. When Gord was a young boy, he always looked up to his uncle as a mentor and a huge inspiration, being the example he became as a productive and winning individual.

His uncle is 84 and is from Minneapolis, Minnesota. His uncle was diagnosed with prostate cancer about 13 years ago. His whole family was shaken by the unexpected news.

Steinke said, "Back then even a decade ago, there wasn't a whole of

awareness about prostate cancer, but Uncle Bob, being the guy that he is, he's a Korean war vet, tough as nails and the best sense of humour - I think this is what got us all through this, his incredible sense of humour. He went in for treatment and now he's a poster child for prostate survivors in the United States. He's involved in all kinds of physiotherapy and swimming and he's just doing wonderful."

Steinke had a million reasons for being so inspired by his Uncle Bob's zest for life. Steinke said, "Number one is that he was so healthy. He worked for N.A.S.A and he was such a hunter and a fisherman. He's so super healthy. So this kind of shocked me that a man that healthy, could suddenly overnight be diagnosed with a life threatening disease. Then he went on fishing trips, he'd look me straight in the eye and he'd say, 'You go get your prostate check' and I was 40 then."

Since that time, Gord has never missed a P.S.A. test and continues to live in good health while working the anchor desk at Global and helping to make a difference as an honorary road captain for the Telus Ride for Dad.

Ride organizer Terry Willisko confirmed that the ride raised \$158,000 dollars for prostate cancer awareness programs and research.

That money raised will help prevent thousands of males from falling into the evil clutches of this disease that usually is known to travel like a thief in the night.

Headlights on bikers!. Lets get that thief and beat the crap out of prostate cancer!

Louise and her family

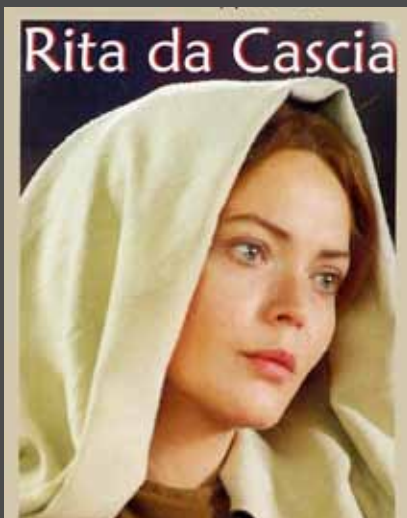
By Robert W. of Calgary

A young girl named Louise fled Germany with her family - her mom and dad and her three brothers. Their names are Ricky, Anthony and Ian. They came to Canada in 1960 where Louise went to college and so did her brothers. Louise started acting when she was 19 years old and she became a detective and then her brothers became detectives as well but Louise was clever at solving cases when she was young. The cases she solved were Louise and the Secret Tunnel Part One and Two. She also solved the Case of the House that Wasn't There Parts One, Two and Three, Four and Five the Final Act. Louise is now 61 years old and she is the twin of Ricky, Anthony is 58 years old and Ian is 51 years old. They all live in Calgary where Louise lives in a house with her husband, Tom, and their three daughters. Their names are Tina, who is 30, Samantha, who is 25, and Paulina, who is 21. And that is the end of the story. The next story I will be writing will be called the House That Wasn't There Part Five

Novena

Prayer to St. Rita, Patroness of Impossible Dreams

Holy Patroness pray for those in need, St. Rita, your pleadings before your divine Lord are irresistible. For your lavishness in granting favours you have been called the "Advocate of the Hopeless" and even of the "Impossible". You are so humble, so mortified, so patient and so compassionate in love for your crucified Jesus that you can obtain from Him anything you ask if it is His Holy Will. J.P.



Family contentment

By Ryan W. Robertson

A couple of weeks ago my three-year-old grandson told me, "Grandpa - mommy has a baby in her tummy!" the announcement meant I would have a third grandchild as that little man has an existing sister.

It was the culmination of my grieving for the loss of my mother on February 13, 2016.

It proved to me that there is a loving God who replaces what is taken from your life with something special and continues the family legacy as time moves on.

The loss of my father nearly seven years ago was the start of the realization that life is a precious gift and that we must live each day to the fullest. Now we, the survivors, must carry on the morals and values instilled in us to mould the new additions to become caring people.

I truly believe that a good upbringing definitely gives you a head start in making good decisions as you grow. It doesn't mean you won't make mistakes for that is how we learn.

So my family will increase and despite losses in the echelon it is enriched by their former presence. They will always be remembered as the basis of the good lifestyle we now enjoy.

To my son and his wife, thanks for making my life complete. I truly am a contented man!.



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Sent in by Dawna Romine, ASN vendor

Invalidation, the murder of the soul of a child



By Maria B.

When children are born, they are divine beings, they are a true gift to the world. Unfortunately, children are born into households where parents hold and apply their toxic learning's and beliefs.

A child is born with incredible gifts, they have everything within them to be able to succeed in life if guided with love and wisdom; instead we live in a society where we think that children are objects we own and we must teach them to obey and to respect.

Obey and respect are something parents should know that they should earn, and are not mandated from an innocent child. We hold the incongruous belief that if we beat our children into submission, they will be better human beings. How can this be possible, as we are causing irreversible harm to these innocent children?

How many times as children, we heard the saying: I am doing this for your own good! How many times, when we were beaten without any explanation, we were blamed for that beating?

How many times we were humiliated and denigrated with verbal abuse and the full content of hate.

Always ending alone, in pain and wondering what you did to deserve that. How many times were we tied to the high chair and required to eat something that would make us gag. Was this done to make me a better human being?

I remember waking up in the dining room tied to the high chair,, falling asleep with my face in the soup, waking up so scared because it was so dark. Was this done to make a courageous toddler? How many times I was hit so hard that I would soil my pants and then hit more and more for soiling my pants. Was this to teach me denigration, humiliation and strenuous pain?

I could go on and on but the fact is that what my parents taught me is that when you teach children through pain, humiliation and denigration, you not only teach them to be submissive through abuse. You murder their souls through failing to recognize who they are by invalidating the incredible beings that they are through horrible abuse.

And then we are told, you should not judge your parents. They did the best they could. What a ridiculous statement!

I have been living in my life the tremendous amount of toxicity from my parents. The only thing I learned from them was how screwed up they were, how mean

and irresponsible they were and the power that they had to wreck the lives of innocent children. Thank God when I had my children, even though I made some mistakes, I swore never to beat them or humiliate them or leave them. We do not have to be perfect but if we guide children through love and acceptance and through the modelling of who we are, we can make incredible strides with children.

Being a parent is not an easy task but deciding to beat children to make them into sheep is the worst thing that you can do.

If you beat your child, denigrate it, sexually abuse it, do not protect it, leave it unattended, use verbal abuse, you are not a parent and you are doing incredible harm to that child, the kind of harm that will last for the rest of the child's life.

There are many parenting books. Seek counselling, ask for help and strive to be the kind of parent that your child will be grateful for.

And if you see your partner beat your child or treat them with verbal abuse, please step in and save your child. Being silent is being a conspirator of abuse of a child.

Children can not defend themselves, which is why they have mothers to protect them and ensure for their safety.

IN ORDER FOR CHILDREN TO STRIVE THEY NEED TO BE CHERISHED AND EMPOWERED TO MAKE THEM SEE THE INCREDIBLE GIFT THEY ARE.



By Robert Champion

It's been a rough ride being a widower coming up to four years this August 24th. Since Lorna, my common-law wife, passed away. Still trying to get used to the fact she is no longer with me but I keep reminding myself that she is in a better place. She was really sick that year. She had cancer. Glad I was with her at home when she passed away. Some people will accept the fact that there is another life after the one here on earth. Our lives here are only temporary and short

Rob's Corner in Calgary

lived. I believe with all my heart in a heaven after life. I already had visits from her, hear her call my name, felt her presence. I know she's with me always. I miss her and I still love her as much as I ever did.

What's on my mind

Thinking of going to BC near the end of August. Thinking of spending time in the Okanagan, two or three days and another three in Vancouver. Haven't been outside of Calgary since I traveled to Vancouver July 2014 by Greyhound. Like travelling at night. For instance I left Calgary at 7 p.m. and arrived in Vancouver 8 a.m. the next morning Pacific time. And it only cost me \$152 return with one week in advance. I'm in no rush to get to where I am going. Probably stay at a youth hostel. Do some souvenir historical shopping. Check out some of the sites like the beaches, maybe a museum, lakes and ocean. Stanley Park in Vancouver and Gas town. Definitely check out some of the pubs and meet some of the locals.

Summer is in Full Swing

Summer vacations, the Calgary Stampede and parade. Patios full to the brim, back yard barbecues, beach parties if you can find a beach, camping in the mountains. Cycling along side of the Bow River. T-shirt, shorts and sandals. Sun tanning in a park. Walk in a park. Taking the dog out to the park or long walks. Playing baseball. Tossing a frizz bee, football or kicking a soccer ball.

The Last Word

We never know when our time is up. Life is so short. Live for the moment, stay away from arguments, gossip and drama. Enjoy life, keep fit, keep active, ride a bike, roller blade, walk or jog. Take advantage of Mother Nature, appreciate what she has to offer. Have some good clean fun. Enjoy the company of good friends and family members.



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As Councillors we hold the conviction that safe, sufficient, and affordable housing is necessary for the well-being of Edmontonians and the City at large.

In 2015 the City saw strong developments for affordable housing. We completed the ambitious **City of Edmonton Affordable Housing Strategy**, developed the **Social Housing Regeneration** report, and contributed to the **Big City Charter** to explore creative ways to fund future affordable housing projects.

2016 holds even more action for affordable housing and ending homelessness. We're providing grants for secondary suites and renovations as part of the **HOPE** program, we're starting the **Affordable Housing Investment Plan** to give grants to the financially vulnerable, we're backing the redevelopment of affordable housing centres in Lendrum and Londonderry, and finally, we'll be updating **Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness**.

The City is devoted to ending homelessness and affording all of Edmonton the right and honour of having their own homes. ***We're well on our way!***



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The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in a white, sans-serif font on a blue rectangular background.