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The Official Voice of the Municipal Police Associations in Alberta

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From the President

— *Curtis Hoople* —

“Who Cares?”

Welcome to the first issue of the Police Beat for 2020. As your President, I have the privilege to provide our membership updates on AFPA business, while taking the opportunity to leave you with a thought to ponder based on experience, training, and genuine care for every member of our police family. This brings up the discussion on “Who cares?” and what interpretation do you extract from these two words while you navigate through your policing career.

Are you in the phase of your career that you perceived the question to be asking is, “Who cares about Police?”. The modern policing model has challenged the legitimacy of policing and our abilities to make a positive impact in our communities. AFPA plays a part by addressing these issues with Ministers of Legislative Assembly (MLA) which include Minister of Justice – Doug SCHWEITZER and Minister of Finance – Travis TAVES. AFPA has provided letters to Honourable SCHWEITZER to express interest in sitting down with the UCP Government to discuss Police Act reform and real policing issues within Alberta. This has led to your AFPA Executive being invited to meet personally with Honourable SCHWEITZER in March. AFPA has provided formal feedback to Honourable TAVES to express our concerns and stance when it relates to the health of the Special Forces Pension Plan (SFPP). AFPA wants to ensure your future is protected and healthy for generations to come. AFPA cares about our Police.

Are you in the phase of your career

that you perceived the question to be asking is, “Who cares about me and my family?” First Responders, including police, endure life changing events or horrors that create permanent damage to your sense of normal. While Police are forced to continually adjust and tweak their new normal definition, we need to ensure someone is caring for our police and their families. AFPA is continually monitoring police health within Alberta and ensuring we are engaging partners like the Alberta Association of Chief of Police (AACP) or municipal police Associations. This includes police budgets which could directly impact wellness programs that provide essential services for members and their families. AFPA cares about you and your family.

Are you in the phase of your career that you perceived the question to be asking is, “Who cares about how the Organization impacts me?”. Every municipal police agency requires internal and external policies and procedures that dictate how the company conducts business within their communities. There are some policies or procedures that impact the membership at a Provincial level. One of these overarching policies and issues relate to the provincially supported ‘Zero Tolerance’ Marijuana Policy. AFPA has initiated conversations and discussions with AACP on establishing an agreement on a more reasonable ‘Fit for Duty’ policy which is the standard across all agencies across western Canada. AFPA has encouraged the AACP to consider a fit for duty while determining a fair process to identify

an acceptable level of understanding on language required to consider parameters around marijuana versus alcohol. The AACP is fully aware the Western Provinces all have active ‘Fit for Duty’ policies except the RCMP (28 Day), Alberta (Zero Tolerance) and Toronto Police (30 Day). AFPA cares how your Organization impacts you.

Are you in the phase of your career that you perceive the question to be asking is, “Why should we care?”. This is a fantastic question and if you find yourself questioning what your local Associations or AFPA Boards do for you, then I encourage you reaching out and asking the hard questions. You will find AFPA Directors, throughout this magazine, provide you insight on what motivates them to serve you, the members that serve our communities. These Directors are committing their time and attention to issues that matter to their fellow Brothers and Sisters. They volunteer time away from their families so they can be informed and ready to represent the membership. We are all in this together and we are stronger united. AFPA continues to look at ways to advocate for policing and depend heavily on our members being invested in their career. Please reach out to your local Associations or AFPA representatives. It is AFPA's priority to listen and provide a voice for the members that police our Alberta communities. I can proudly say this AFPA Board cares about your success, safety and health. ■

Take care,
Curtis Hoople – AFPA President

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From the Vice President

Mike Baker

For this edition of the 10-4 magazine, I want to re-visit an issue I have reviewed previously, as it affects each and every one of us, on an almost daily basis. As police officers, we can never seem to get our share of it, despite its importance in other aspects of our lives. Even though we complain that we can never get enough, it's the first thing we tend to sacrifice, in our hectic lifestyles. The commodity that I am referring to is sleep.

Sleep is near and dear to all of us, yet it is one of the first things that we start to neglect once we enter careers as police officers. Complicate life with the introduction of a family and a couple kids and before long, we develop sleep issues.

I myself, have struggled to achieve quality sleep, for the majority of my career. I have just completed my second sleep study in under a year, and the fourth in my career. To be honest, for the longest time, I had no idea that I had any sleep issues at all. I am one of those people who can fall asleep in the blink of an eye. A lot of us are that way. Problem being is that it is usually due to exhaustion.

Sleep is as essential to our health, as diet and exercise. It is a key element in maintaining both our physical and mental well-being. Short-term sleep deprivation can lead to symptoms such as irritability, cognitive impairment and memory problems. Once we start to build sleep deficits, our ability to concentrate and problem solve are cumulatively reduced. We become moody, impatient and are quick to anger, all of which negatively impact

our personal and professional lives.

If we continue to neglect sleep over the period of many years, officers start to develop chronic health issues such as high blood pressure, weight gain and heart disease, just a few of the serious long-term consequences. Research shows that sleep deprivation can directly impact an individual's blood pressure, leading to long-term hypertension consequences such as heart attack or stroke. Shift workers have been shown to be at 23% higher risk of heart attack than their daytime counterparts.

I don't want our readers to misinterpret the message I am portraying. Shiftwork is essential to policing; we all knew that when we signed up for this job. I have spent over twenty years working shift work and unfortunately, I have developed many of these negative side effects. It wasn't until I took a serious look at root causes of these problems and determined that many of these concerns, linked back to inadequate sleep behaviors.

We can minimize the negative impacts that shift work has on our bodies, with the proper information, development of sound behaviors and utilization of support structures available to us. Our employer has many resources available to us, to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep issues. Speaking from my own experience, Psych Services and the Center for Sleep and Human Performance, have been pivotal in helping me recognize and address my personal sleep challenges.

The CPA is in tune with challenges members face, in relation to shiftwork

and sleep. We consistently work with the CPS to address issues surrounding scheduling and deployment, with considerations given to officer wellness. Workplace fatigue is known to be one of the top contributors, when it comes to workplace incidents and should be at the forefront of any discussions, relating to impairment in the workplace.

As we work to address these challenges, here are some tips members can use to improve the quality of their sleep:

Limit caffeine. When used properly, it can enhance alertness, however it should be avoided during the second half of your shift. Make sure you stop several hours before you plan to sleep, to ensure it will not inhibit your ability to fall asleep when you get home.

Minimize exposure to bright light. Keep a pair of wraparound sunglasses and a ball cap in your vehicle. Minimizing your exposure to bright light on your drive home, will expedite your ability to fall asleep when you arrive.

Create a sleep environment. Minimize all light if possible. Utilize blackout blinds or a room with no windows. It is best to sleep in a cool temperature-controlled environment. Many shift workers benefit from an ambient sound, such as a fan or white noise machine.

Educate your family. Help your family understand the importance of sleep and consequences of diminished sleep. Everyone benefits when the shift worker isn't a grouchy ass!

Utilize strategic napping. A 20-40-minute nap can restore/extend

alertness a few hours later into the day as well as enhance performance.

Plan and prepare your meals. Avoid heavy meals many hours before sleep. High fat, high sugar foods that are readily available to shift workers,

negatively impact our ability to get sound restful sleep. Hydration is imperative for the maintenance of proper sleep cycles and cognitive function, so ensure you carry a water bottle everywhere.

Stay safe out there and feel free to contact me with any further inquiries via email at mbaker@backtheblue.ca.




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Service and Attitude....The Rest Just Happens

From the Secretary/ Treasurer

—*Marc Gaumont*—

Greetings from the Windy South! I would like to bring to your attention an issue that is fast becoming a budget and policing issue for all of our police services in the province. For a little background; in 2003 I was fortunate enough to be selected to the Forensic Identification Section of the Lethbridge Police Service and this is where I would find my next work home until 2011.

During this time there was some great advancement in DNA processing and that type of evidence had moved from Major Crimes such as a Homicide to the lesser crimes of Break and Enter. This was done when Primary Designated Offences were included in the DNA processing exhibits. When this all came to light some 17 years ago, I remember a visit from one of the Lab personnel who presented a “what we can do” presentation to our organization when it came to DNA processing. This included taking a swab of an object that was handled by the suspect and getting a DNA profile. So yes, I requested and sent away a rock for DNA processing for a Break and Enter Investigation and I’m sad to say, I never got a profile on that one!

I guess the point of the visit from the lab personnel was a push to have agencies consider DNA when processing every scene as opposed to just processing those scenes with conventional forensics such as Fingerprint Processing and Scene

Photography of evidence including footwear, tire tracks and tool marks.

Fast forward a couple of years to the Pickton Investigation that began to unfold on the west coast. I had heard that due to the volume of DNA exhibits that needed to be processed in hopes of identifying victims of the serial killer there was a slowdown in DNA processing across the country and led to a lab dedicated to the processing of the single crime scene for their DNA exhibits. I’m not completely sure if one was the result of the other, but for us processing scenes in Alberta, we would have an April 1 DNA submission day and you would put in as many DNA exhibits as possible before the lab would let us know that they had reached capacity and to hold all processing until the following year. This was also short lived as the labs were able to expand their staffing and process the exhibits required by police investigators. After all, we are in the business of solving crime!

So why then is this article even being written and hopefully still read by our Police Members in Alberta? The long and short answer is money! The province has up until now fully funded the labs and the processing of the exhibits; however, that is no more. The province has now pushed that funding back to the Municipalities and has resulted in a big budget line item for our Cities. How much you ask? For a city such as Calgary and Edmonton,

it’s close to 2 Million Dollars and for our City it’s just under two hundred thousand. It appears that the pendulum is swinging the wrong way as we are no longer in the business of just solving crime, but in the business of considering the financial obligation to solving our crime! You don’t have to tell Police that solving small crimes can lead to bigger criminals and the progression of Russell Williams from being a Break and Enter guy to a Break, Enter and commit homicide guy is a great example.

As police leaders in the Province both on the Management and Association sides, we need to monitor this change of funding going forward. Our Government can’t say that we are going to be tough on crime and fund \$30 million toward A.L.E.R.T and Crown Prosecutors and then pull back funding for Lab Processing of DNA exhibits. This funding model seems like a bit of a shell game.

I am hopeful that we will not see a drop in service that we provide our communities across the province and truly only time will tell, but we need to ensure that our public receives the best possible service when they call in their time of need, not the best possible service that a budget allows.

Take care and be safe, ■

Marc Gaumont
Secretary/Treasurer
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Diane Colton

From the Director/Editor

Darryl Hubich

Welcome to the Spring issue of the Alberta Police Beat, thanks for reading! Having written articles for this magazine since its inception in 2014, it can be challenging for me to come up with “fresh” ideas to share with readers. I find it especially difficult, as editor, given that I am always aware of all of the other contributions made by AFPA board members and try my best to minimize any duplication of themes.

While I was struggling with some “writer’s block” recently, it dawned on me that I have been a police officer for 20 years!! I began to ask myself what influenced my career choice?

Of course, there are the usual suspects.

TV and movies- they always make being a cop seem really cool;

Family tradition-my father was a RCMP member (although due to divorce he lived two provinces away);

When I look back, those influences played a role, but what really made me committed to pursuing this wonderful career, was my own personal experiences and interactions that I had with police. I grew up in Regina, Saskatchewan, so the experiences that I will touch on have to do with the Regina Police Service (RPS).

Like most young people, my exposure to police was limited to seeing police cars driving around and being stopped and ticketed occasionally by RPS members. Pretty “routine” interactions. I can, however, look back on 3 very distinct situations where the actions of RPS members had a very positive influence on me as a young man trying to find my way and, ultimately,

in the career that I chose.

The first story was how, on a Friday night, I was out playing pool with some friends at a local establishment. I drove and thus had only had a beer over the time we were at the pool hall. One of my friends had a few more than that. As we left, my friend got into a verbal argument with someone at the business, and I had to tell him it was time to go. On his way out, with his adrenaline going, he slammed the glass door behind him, shattering the door. We heard the smash and quickly left. Looking back, I clearly made a bad decision that night, but hindsight is 20/20. I told my friend that if the cops came I was going to tell the truth and we would offer to pay for the damage. The next night I was hanging out waiting for evening plans to be made amongst my friends when there was a knock at the door. I remember looking outside and seeing a marked police car and two officers standing on my front step, my heart was racing!

When I answered the door, they identified themselves and asked if they could step inside. Of course, I invited them in. They saw I was watching Hockey Night in Canada and they quickly built some rapport with me as we discussed the game briefly. Then they explained that they were at my house because of the incident the night before and had identified me from my plate number, pretty simple stuff, but I was impressed with their investigative skill! As I had told my friend the previous night, I explained exactly what happened and said that we were definitely willing to pay for the damage we had caused. The of-

ficers stated that they couldn’t promise me anything but would talk to the business owner. With the “business” part of their visit out of the way, I remember them spending another 5-10 minutes watching the end of the game (remember this was before the days of us all having information at our fingertips with smartphones). When they left I called my buddy and we agreed we better start saving some cash. The next night we heard that the business owner had agreed to the proposal and we got him the money, along with an apology letter within a week.

The second occurrence occurred while I was living in a large apartment complex. I was awakened by an early morning phone call from a RPS member who asked if I knew where my car was. “Of course”, I said, it was in my assigned parking spot. The officer asked if I could check, which I did from my 3rd floor window. I was shocked to see that all that remained in my spot was a small pile of window glass. The officer explained that RPS had recovered my vehicle in a parking lot kilometers from my place. He walked me through exactly what I needed to in order to get my car back and the steps I needed to take with insurance. This was very reassuring as a naive 19 year old kid.

The last event I will mention was a time where my friend and I had picked up our girlfriends at a concert and we were “cruising” Albert Street in my Chevy Camaro. My friend and I were in the front seats and the girls were in the small back seats. In my rearview mirror I saw, what appeared to be a police car following me, soon, there was another one. I am not sure if it was

poor timing or due to the anxiety we were all experiencing in the car, but my friend said he needed to pee, so I pulled onto a side street so he could relieve himself. Before I could stop the car what had been two cars behind me was now 4 and lights and sirens came on. I quickly pulled my car over.

What happened next, I now know was a textbook “high risk” vehicle stop as one officer directed us out of my car one by one over the PA while officers had their spotlights on us with guns drawn. We all ended up face down on the asphalt as officers briefly searched the car. I remember thinking that it was kind of overkill for a guy who was just going to have a quick pee outside. Although it seemed like a long time, within a couple of minutes, we were all helped to our feet by two officers on scene as two police cars left the area. The two that helped us up, took a few minutes to explain that they stopped us because there had just been an

armed robbery committed by two young males who had fled the scene in a dark coloured Chevy Camaro. Once they had us out, saw our description, and quickly checked my car, they were confident we were not involved. I remember them apologizing for the confusion and giving us their names should we have any concerns.

The point of these stories is not to explain that I often found myself in the wrong place at the wrong time as a kid, but to serve as a reminder that every interaction we have with someone can leave a profound impression on their lives. My stories are minor, imagine how impactful it can be for someone when we chose to take a few extra minutes with them when they are in crisis or maybe have just lost a loved one.

As we become more seasoned as officers, the easier it is to focus on all of the terrible things that we are exposed to and how difficult our profession can sometimes be. Please take an op-

portunity, as I did while writing this, to recognize that we, as police, have the unique ability to greatly influence people’s lives everytime we deal with them. We cannot control the appalling, traumatic calls that we may find ourselves in from time to time, because it is the nature of our chosen occupation. What we can control is how we treat people everyday we come to work. These ‘routine’ interactions can, oftentimes, be the most impactful; whether the person we are dealing with is a ‘suspect’ in a mischief or the ‘victim’ of a stolen auto as I was.

Thank you to those members of RPS who played a role in me deciding to choose this honourable, rewarding career! Thanks to each of you, who do a great job everyday and likely don’t realize the difference you make in people’s lives!

Go Riders! ■



From the Director

Chris Young

Dealing with Your Demons

In the Spring of 2000 I was working in the shipping and receiving department of a large department store in Calgary. I had only been out of the military for 6 months. I remember it being a difficult transition from a very rigid existence in the military to a much more relaxed one in civilian life. My girlfriend and I at the time were living in a small one bedroom apartment in the neighbourhood of Glamorgan. One habit that I picked up in my time in the military was drinking alcohol to excess. I didn't drink all the time, but when I did I usually drank until I was intoxicated. It was a way that I would blow off steam, especially at the end of the work week. I worked hard on the loading dock. It was a physical job and it required me to work shift work; usually very early in the morning or late at night.

One early morning an event occurred that would impact me forever. It was 4 am and I was just starting my shift on the dock. I was working with two other guys. One was a young 18 year old kid who dropped out of high school and was drifting from job to job. I'll refer to him as "Brian." The other was close to 30 and had another job as an accountant. He worked the shipping and receiving job for extra money to augment his accounting wage. I'll refer to him as "John." We had two tractor trailers to unload, we also had to take the merchandise up a freight elevator and stock the shelves. We unloaded the first trailer and took a quick 10 min break. We unloaded the second trailer and started placing the boxes of merchandise on the stocking carts. Brian and I started taking the carts up the

freight elevator. We usually liked getting the merchandise stocked as quickly as possible because it meant that we usually got to go home earlier. John liked taking his time. He was a smoker and he usually would take a couple of smoke breaks and avoid the stocking all together. I remember this irked me a bit. I saw it as lazy and I didn't like the idea of me stocking shelves while this guy smoked. John shouted out to me, "Chris, I'll be right there to help you. Gotta have a smoke before I have a nic fit."

Up the elevator I went and pulled the cart over to the far end of the stock room. It took me about 30 minutes or so to unload the cart and get everything put away on the shelves. I remember becoming agitated that John still hadn't come up to help me. As I was walking back toward the freight elevator, Brian pulled another cart past me. I asked him if John had come up and assisted him. Brian replied, "No. The lazy bastard is smokin and jokin again."

This infuriated me. I remember going into the freight elevator shaking my head. The elevator door opened and I yelled, "Hey! Where are you dude?"

There was no response. I walked at a brisk pace to the rear of the loading dock where the trailers were parked. "John! Come on! How long does a smoke take?"

I went down the stairs and that's when I saw something that will most likely stay with me forever. John was pinned in between our forklift and a trailer. His left arm was limp. His skin was a blueish colour and saliva was dripping from his lifeless mouth. The heavy rear end of the forklift had pinned

his upper chest and he was trapped in between it and the trailer. I called out for help a couple of times, which got Brian running to the dock. I yelled out to Brian to call 9-11. At first Brian kept asking me what was wrong and then he saw the scene. Brian turned pale and began to panic. I locked eyes with him and told him, "Brian call 9-11 now!"

I had limited experience on the forklift. However, with the position that John was in, the only way I was going to be able to provide any first aid was to attempt to drive the forklift away from him. The steering in the forklift was in the rear wheels. The propane tanks, (which fuelled the forklift), basically sat on top of the rear end. The forklift was parked on an angle, on a slope in the lower loading dock area. When John was attempting to turn off the propane tanks the forklift swung and pinned him. I fired up the forklift and began stepping on the gas. Just then Brian came running and pointed out that John's head was in an extremely awkward position and the moving of the forklift was actually placing his head in danger of being crushed. I abandoned the idea of moving the forklift for fear that moving it would only injure John more. I asked Brian if he had called 9-11. Brian didn't answer me. He just kind of stood there - frozen. I ran up to the upper part of the loading dock and saw the phone receiver sitting on the desk. I picked it up and said, "Hello? Is anyone there?"

The voice on the other end replied, "Calgary 9-11."

I quickly explained the situation and provided the store name, address and loading dock entrance location. As I

was talking to the 9-11 Communications Officer; Brian came running with a palette jack. I asked the Communications Officer to, "please hurry," and I dropped the phone receiver on the desk. I went running to the lower dock back to the scene. Brian was attempting to lift the forklift with the palette jack. It was a feeble attempt. EMS, Fire and Members of CPS attended. Efforts were made to save John, including throwing a metal chain around the forklift and using a truck to pull it off him. It was all in vain unfortunately. John died right there on that loading dock. He had a young daughter. I think she may have been 4 years old at the time. To this day I can still feel the sorrow, loss and tragedy that was that event.

I tried to be a "tough guy" afterward. I didn't have any emotional reaction. I didn't allow myself to. Nor did I really take a moment to process what had happened. I just did what I knew. I soldiered on. I remember Brian being distraught and I consoled him and told him that he would be alright. Our department manager arrived on scene and I had to tell him what had happened. I ended up consoling him as well. Afterward I went home, told my girlfriend about it and attempted to go on like nothing had happened. I went to work the next day. I was in a kind of haze, almost robot like. I worked most of my shift when one of the store managers came down to the dock to see me. She was not happy that I was at work and felt I should take time off. I refused. She even told me that she would see to it that I still got paid and again I blew off the idea. I kept working. In fact I came in for every shift. I shouldn't have, but I did. Maybe it was my ego, or maybe I was just being stubborn and wanted to prove something to myself. Whatever it was I didn't pay any attention to my own feelings or mental comprehension of what had occurred. The store management team brought in a crisis counsellor and made all employees, including myself, see her. I went and

sat with the counsellor. We talked a bit and I was very resistant to the whole thing. I didn't like talking about the incident and I didn't like talking to the counsellor. I told the one store manager that I didn't need help and I didn't need to see the counsellor. She made me see the counsellor again, one more time. Again, I didn't get much out of it and looking back it is because I didn't allow myself to. I buried my feelings on this whole disaster as deep as I could. Remember that habit I mentioned earlier? Well that assisted me with burying or more like drowning the issue. I didn't drink every day. I never showed up to work drunk or hungover. I was a "weekend drinker". I consumed alcohol when I was on my days off and man did I drink. Drinking made me numb and allowed me to avoid facing the tragic event I experienced. Looking back it was a horrible way to deal with what I was experiencing internally. I found that once I started to drink that I couldn't stop. I got physically sick a lot and for my girlfriend, I wasn't much fun to be around or live with.

My girlfriend gave me an ultimatum. She told me that I was the love of her life, but if I didn't curb the drinking she would be gone. I realized how important she was to me. We had been through a lot together and I knew that truly she was the one for me. In my mind I could hear myself say, "If you lose her, you will lose everything." I couldn't allow that to happen. Every fibre of my being screamed out to me to not allow this to occur. I curbed the drinking. It took a lot of her support and understanding, but I was able to slowly become a controlled "sociable drinker" again. I didn't need to get drunk every time I decided to drink. I could have one or two and actually stop. We also had a newborn baby girl to look after and I began to realize that it was grow up time for me. Did I lose control and drink to excess again? You bet. Sometimes I became emotional when I was drinking. I think that was my inner self attempting to release the

pain I was holding on to. My girlfriend recognized this and told me that I never really dealt with the incident. I would react badly and with anger sometimes and we would argue about it.

A few years later I found myself fulfilling a life long dream of becoming a Police Officer. I witnessed a lot of horrible, cruel and tragic incidents as all Police Officers do throughout their career. In particular the incidents that seem to resonate the most are the ones involving young children. However, despite these situations and incidents adding to the stress that I was already carrying - I managed to do okay. I had and still have a good support system at home as my girlfriend ended up becoming my wife. She continued and still continues to be my strongest support. Still every now and then I found myself having "bad days". I have always had a good sense of humour. I've gotten a lot of joy out of making people laugh. However, during the 7th and 8th year of my career I found that I would get depressed sometimes and have a general overall feeling of unhappiness. It was never crippling - my wife and family wouldn't allow that, but they knew when I wasn't myself and they always gave me a lot of understanding. One particular evening, approximately 12 years ago, I attended a retirement party at a friend's house. This friend was and still is a Detective that I had the privilege of working with during my time in 2 District. We had another friend who was retiring and the party was for him. There was alcohol at the party and nothing got out of hand or anything, however I had just enough that at one point things came flooding back. I remember I was sitting in my friend's living room and we were talking. We were having a great conversation and reminiscing about funny incidents, calls and stuff that happened during our time together in 2 District. At some point the conversation became more serious, about some of the stuff we have had to deal with over the years. I ended up sharing the tragic

event of John's death at the department store years ago. I remember at one point without even realizing it, I was completely sobbing to the point where I stopped telling the story of what happened that terrible day. My friend said nothing at all. He simply listened and at the point where I broke down emotionally, he hugged me and let my cry. I remember apologizing to both him and his wife and he told me, "No. Don't apologize man. You need to release this. Get it out Dude. I'm here for you." I haven't cried like that since I've been a little kid I'm sure, but man did I cry. And I needed to. I needed the release. I had a couple of similar sessions with my wife and again I sobbed. My cup was over flowing and if I hadn't had my wife, family and my friend and colleague I'm sure I would have ended up giving way to the dark depression that was beginning to grip me. These people I have mentioned didn't have to do a whole lot either. They just had to listen really and let me know that they loved me.

I've written about this because post traumatic stress and operational stress

is real. I believe that every member has a degree of stress. You can't witness and be involved in the traumatic events that we have experienced and continue to experience without it affecting you in some way. These things stay with you whether you like it or not. They manifest themselves into depression and self destructive behaviour. I consider myself very lucky to have the wife, family and friends that I have because they made me face my demons and get through the issues I was experiencing. A positive that has come out of the horrific experiences that I have experienced is that I believe it has made my personal relationships stronger. It makes me appreciate the people in my life more. It has also assisted me in relating to Members experiencing difficult times and assisted me in providing them better support and understanding both as a Association Representative and as a Firearms Instructor. I'm in a unique position where I can assist a Member coming back to work after injury, stress leave or after a Officer involved shooting as both their Instructor and their Representative. And the

biggest thing I have found when talking to someone that is struggling is that just listening can be one of the biggest things I can do to really help someone feel a little better than how they felt when they first show up at the range. I've assisted many Members experiencing difficulties and stress and it was recently that I remembered the assistance and support I received from others. I made it a point to thank them for their assistance and explained that by being there for me they truly assisted me.

No matter how dark things seem, or how bad things get - you can always reach out find the support that you need. I've actually been there. I know how things can be difficult, but don't let it defeat you. There is plenty in the world worth living for and you owe it to yourself to make the best of the life you have been given. We spend a career assisting others. Please take the time to assist yourself. Speak up, share and talk to the people who care and love you. ■

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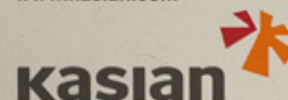
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From the Director

— *Damien Cordrey* —

What has your Association representative done for you lately? A question that you may be asking yourself or have heard others ask in passing conversation. To answer that question, you will have to ask yourself if you know who is on your Association and what does your Association do. Don't feel embarrassed if you don't know that answer to that question because the reality for most of us is that we really don't know what our Association does on a daily basis. It's kind of like my car insurance policy; I know I have insurance; I know the name of my insurer, but I really don't know all the ins and outs of my policy; until the day I need to use it.

When I first started my policing career, I didn't take much notice of the Association and didn't feel I really needed to. Everything seemed to be running smoothly, because I was getting paid every two weeks and all I wanted to do was catch bad guys. But at some point, you start to take notice of the dues coming off your cheque every month and you begin to ask; what am I actually getting for this money? That's a great question and one that I think everyone should take the time to ask and investigate. Not because your Association warrants investigating, hopefully, but because you should know exactly what is happening with your money and who are the people you have entrusted to represent the interests of the membership.

If you take a look at your Association board of directors, how many of them do you actually know? For those that you don't know, have you taken the time to find out who they are and

what they do on the board? Knowing who you are voting for and why you are voting for them is an important step in creating a team that will be best suited to represent the interests of you and your colleagues. Voting for popularity, name recognition, or an incumbent may not always be the best choice. Just because a lot of people know a name, or a person is well liked by many, doesn't always guarantee that they will be the best person to represent your interests. Nor does being an incumbent mean that the person is working diligently on the board or taking an equal share of the workload to ensure you are getting the quality of service you deserve from your board. Learning about who your board of directors are will naturally open the door to learn what they do and will also in turn keep them accountable for their production to you and your colleagues.

But now, to help get you out of the gate and on target, here are some of the things your board members typically work on. The largest part of our time is supporting our members. This means being available to our membership when they need us. We will meet regularly with members to discuss issues affecting them, whether it's personal or work related. We are always available to support our members in times of need, from taking them out for a coffee to talk, providing representation in a grievance, assisting with legal affairs, WCB claims, LERB and Human Rights hearings and attending disciplinary hearings etc. The health and wellbeing of the membership is our number one priority and is the focal point that guides the decision making

by your board in all matters.

In the interest of health and wellbeing the board plans social activities for the membership. The Edmonton Police Association plans and sponsors seven different social events throughout the year. This is to encourage camaraderie among members, providing them a safe environment to relax and enjoy some fellowship with co-workers. But in larger part, it is to provide the opportunity for the families of our members to feel included and that they are an equally important part of our larger police family. The families can come and meet other police families in a safe and social setting, participate in fun activities and create lasting friendships and support networks. Creating these moments for our members through social event planning is largely rewarding for our directors and they take great pride in planning these events. Aside from the social events the Association plans, we also plan member hockey tournaments, softball tournaments, and golf tournaments. All designed to provide that opportunity to build stronger interpersonal relationships with your co-workers in a relaxed, fun setting, to blow off some competitive steam, and provide a fun way to maintain your personal fitness.

Your board is also educating themselves throughout the year, learning new case law with police act, criminal, labour law, human rights and harassment. All of these are issues that can potentially affect your membership and the board of directors are typically the first point of contact for you in these situations. When you call a director for advice you expect to get up to

date and accurate information. We are constantly learning and developing ourselves and our new board members so that you can feel confident in the advice or direction we provide you. All of these areas are constantly changing and evolving and require the board to be aware and attentive to these fluid changes.

Communication is key to you understanding what issues the Association is dealing with currently and will provide the board feedback from the members on these issues. The Association tries to utilize all avenues of communication to reach its members so we spend time posting and monitoring our Facebook account, posting on and monitoring the website, preparing articles for magazines, preparing monthly newsletters, hanging posters in divisions, creating surveys to solicit feedback, holding general meetings for the membership to attend and most importantly, attending patrol parades and unit meetings. We are constantly looking for new ways to better reach our membership through apps and digital media but really nothing compares to face to face time with our members. If you haven't seen a board member on your parade or unit meeting in a while, then call the office and request a representative to attend. The board does its best to be proactive but if you'd like to see a representative just call the office and we will make ourselves available to you and your team.

We have our monthly board meetings which can last anywhere from 4-5 hours to discuss new issues arising, concerns relayed from our members, charity requests, legal issues, social planning updates, financial affairs and investments, property maintenance and development, sporting events planning, budget planning, SFPP in-

formation and committee updates. Board members will sit on sub committees and attend additional meetings to provide member feedback and input to the service on such issues like dress and deportment, OHS, Alberta Federation of Police Associations, the Canadian Police Association and the Special Forces Pension Plan committee, to name a few. The sub committees also meet to organize the sports and social events and decide on appropriate charity requests. The board will also meet quarterly with the Chief's office to bring up the most relevant and pressing issues of the membership to ensure meaningful discussion and prompt the necessary action.

Of course, we can't forget contract negotiations. During contract negotiations is the one point in time when we know that everyone is reading their emails from the Association because everyone wants to know what is happening with our contract. When we aren't in negotiations, we are constantly preparing for the next round of negotiations. Collecting statistics, collaborating with lawyers and Associations across the country to research and develop new tactics and strategies, but most importantly we are consulting our membership regularly to find out what is important to them and what they would like to see our board try to change within the contract. We are educating our membership to understand the challenges we face within the negotiating process, city and provincial budget constraints and create a deal that is fair for our members while ensuring we maintain a standard upon which other Associations rely on across the country.

I could keep going but I think this gives you a good start to understanding some of the things your Associa-

tion board of directors provides to you. I encourage you to engage your board, learn who they are, make sure they are truly contributing to the workload and accurately representing the best interests of the membership. And although you may say that your board hasn't really done anything for you directly, remember that every time we represent a police officer in a grievance, WCB claim, criminal matter, harassment allegation, labour complaint, human rights tribunal, or any other matter, we are representing you too. Every good piece of case law or precedent we set is to your advantage so hopefully you won't have to go through the same hardship your fellow colleague endured before you. For every family event the Association plans and sponsors, even though you don't have kids, you can still attend and socialize with your co-workers or take comfort that we are providing a safe environment where your colleagues can bring their families and build those friendships and support networks.

I will leave you with one final thought. All the tasks that I have listed above are done by people who already have a full-time job, most have spouses and children with a myriad of family commitments as well as their own personal interests and hobbies. Most of them commit themselves to this position because they truly care about the people they work with and they want to do their part to create a better work environment and a better home environment for those people. By talking with your board members, you will know if this is their true motivation. We are all a family and we need committed people willing to step up and protect those that dedicate their lives to protecting others. ■

From the Executive Director

Howard Burns

The Value of a Pension

About the author / disclaimer:

Howard Burns is a retired Calgary Police Service sergeant and past president of the Calgary Police Association. He is the current executive director of the Alberta Federation of Police Associations (AFPA) and chair of the Special Forces Pension Plan Sponsor Board. This article is written based on his personal experiences and should not be construed as investment advice of any kind. The information contained within is believed to be accurate, but not warranted as such.

In the fall / winter of 1985, I was in my grade 12 year of high school and I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up. Many of my friends were applying to colleges and universities and most seemed to have a plan for the future. Not me, I was lost and the future appeared to be quite a daunting prospect. Growing up in small town British Columbia, there were plenty of natural resource-based jobs available, but that didn't strike me as the right path to take.

After combing through numerous post secondary academic calendars (hard copy in those days), I came across a Criminology - Law Enforcement Program offered by Mount Royal College (Calgary). I applied, and after some testing, I was eventually accepted into the program and began my journey towards a career in law enforcement. I excelled academically at Mount Royal (Dean's Honour Roll) and secured employment with Canada Customs (now Canada Border Services).

I likely would have remained with

Canada Customs, had it not been for the attractive pension offered to Alberta municipal police officers through the Special Forces Pension Plan (SFPP). ***Even at the ripe old age of 20, I recognized the attractiveness of being able to retire after 25 years of service and I set my sights on becoming a member of the Calgary Police Service (CPS).***

I was hired by the CPS in November 1988 and remained a sworn police officer until my retirement in December 2016 (28 years). Looking back, I have nothing but good things to say about the CPS. The organization was great to work for and treated me very well. That being said, policing is a very difficult job. It is inherently dangerous, often negative and requires a high level of commitment and personal sacrifice. Not everyone is willing or able to endure a full career in policing. Case in point; about 40% of my CPS recruit training class (24 recruits per class) left the CPS prior to retirement eligibility and most left policing altogether. ***I can tell you from my own personal experience that there were times when I considered leaving too. I can unequivocally say that it was the attractiveness of the pension that kept me in policing for the long haul.***

During my time with the CPS, I had the honour of being elected by my peers to serve as the president of the Calgary Police Association (CPA). It was then that I came to realize that although CPA members valued their police pension plan, many did not understand the actual benefit they would receive upon retirement. Some were overly optimistic and others had no

real idea of what their actual retirement pension would be. Through a variety of written mediums, I set about trying to educate CPA members about their pension plan and the importance of retirement planning. I recently came across a communication piece I wrote to CPA members about 7 years ago and it was the catalyst for this article.

In February 2013, I wrote the following in a message to CPA members:

Over the years, I have had dozens of members pick my brain in relation to our pension and other investment opportunities. My usual response is our 25-year pension should be sufficient to pay most of your bills during retirement, but it won't be enough for those little extras, such as travelling. Members need to plan ahead to determine what their financial needs will be into retirement. Steps need to be taken early on to ensure sufficient funds are available.

*I don't usually offer specific investment advice, but I'm going to make an exception this one time. Most people are unaware of the **Saskatchewan Pension Plan** and even fewer know that it is open to any resident of Canada. That's right - Albertans can join! The plan has been around since 1986 and is sponsored by the Saskatchewan Provincial Government. I have personally joined as I see it as an opportunity to enhance my own SFPP pension. My intention is to collect this pension when my SFPP bridge benefit is eliminated at age 65. It works for me and it might work for you too. As with most investments, there are no guarantees. Make sure you perform your own due dili-*

gence before deciding whether it meets your needs. Comprehensive information on this plan is available on-line at <http://www.saskpension.com> I like the plan because it is sponsored by the Province of Saskatchewan, its management fees are low, and it has a history of providing solid returns (available on website). The website allows for on-line joining and contributions can be made in a variety of ways, including by credit card. There is a yearly contribution limit of \$2,500 and contributors must have available RRSP room in order to contribute. Have a look – it might be right for you.

Writing this piece definitely had an impact on my members. Shortly after it was published, I was contacted by the Saskatchewan Pension Plan (SPP) and advised that they had seen an influx of CPA members signing up and one of them had made the SPP aware of my article. The SPP asked if I would write a testimonial about the plan and I agreed. It is still posted on-

line today <https://www.saskpension.com/business.php> Over the years, I have had several CPA members thank me for making them aware of the SPP. Since 7 years have now passed, I thought it might be interesting to see how the SPP has performed. Here is what a \$10,000.00 investment made at the beginning of 2013 would look like (approximate amounts based on SPP posted annual returns):

Jan 2013 = \$10,000 (15.77% annual return)

Jan 2014 = \$11,577 (9.10% annual return)

Jan 2015 = \$12,630 (6.25% annual return)

Jan 2016 = \$13,419 (6.53% annual return)

Jan 2017 = \$14,295 (9.70% annual return)

Jan 2018 = \$15,682 (-2.05% annual return)

Jan 2019 = \$15,360 (13.99% annual return)

Jan 2020 = \$17,509

A \$10,000 investment in January 2013 would be worth approximately \$17,509 in January 2020, or approximately 75% more. That's an average annual rate of return of 10.7% over the 7-year period. I would suggest that return is respectable and appreciated by those who jumped in to the SPP back in 2013.

Who knows how the SPP will perform going forward? They certainly have a long history of providing solid returns (average of 8% annually over 33 years) and are definitely doing something right, but no one can predict the future. The best we can hope is that past performance is indicative of potential future performance.

If you think the SPP might be right for you, please perform your own research and due diligence. I am by no means endorsing this plan, but I certainly believe that it is worth a look and might be a suitable investment option for some.

Good luck and happy investing! ■



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From the Director

Rayan Najjar

Oki. Hope everyone had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year. Looks like 2020 came out of the gates with some force. Take care of yourselves and your loved ones. Know that through troubled times there is more good in this world than bad.

As I wrap up the second year of my term with the Alberta Federation, I would like to thank everyone for the opportunity. I have been blessed with good mentors and access to a wealth of knowledge in a wide range of fields. As I am set to leave the board, the member agencies are in good hands with the leadership group that currently drives the Fed.

In my final article, I wanted to share my experiences with the Blood Tribe Police Service and Association over the past decade.

When I was at Lethbridge College, I went through the Criminal Justice – Policing program. Through that program I was responsible for completing a practicum with a local law enforcement agency. I was approached by one of the instructors and encouraged to select the Blood Tribe Police Service.

My time during the practicum was eye opening and exciting. I enjoyed the pace and meshed well with the officers that were working at the time. After my practicum was over, I decided to continue to go out for a ride-along when time permitted. Eventually, I made the decision to put in my application to

become a police officer with them.

In October 2007 I was sworn in as a police officer and sent to training in Depot Division with the RCMP. I did not really know what to expect nor was I aware if this career was right for me. I was not one that grew up with dreams of becoming a police officer.

Shortly after my graduation in April 2008, I was persuaded by other officers to join the Blood Tribe Police Association Executive. When I joined the police service, I did not envision the path that I took. I was ignorant to the presence of the Association, what it was and what role it played within a police service.

I started off as a Director on the board, like most do, but after a couple years and due to members leaving the service, I became President. For the next 7 years, I held the President and Vice-President positions until I resigned from the Association this past Spring.

When I joined the Association, I did not have anyone that sat me down and told me what to expect. I did not know that my time away from work was still occupied with work. I was not aware of the stress and time commitment and its impact it would have on my family and friends. I did not know that I would be looked at and treated differently by Management or even by other members of the Association.

Working for a First Nation police service is challenging enough. Addition-

ally, being on the Association I found that I was up against challenges that do not exist for my partner Associations in Alberta. Challenges like legislation that limit your ability to enter meaningful negotiations or even hold your employer accountable when they do not negotiate in good faith.

In my previous article, I wrote about the police service's inability to retain officers. I have met with both Management and the Police Commission and explained the importance of offering a compensation package that is competitive with other agencies. Although they agreed in principle, the needs of the Association and its members usually fall low on their priorities.

These gaps in legislation have prevented me and other members of the Association to effectively carry out our jobs in representing the membership. My time with the Alberta Federation has been constructive. Filling these gaps and making the necessary amendments to the existing legislation have been a priority of mine. This was shared by the Fed and it was reflected in the AFPA Police Act position paper.

In closing, as I leave the Fed, I encourage the new board to continue to push the agenda for First Nations police services in relation to labor and negotiations. This will allow us the ability to enter negotiations with our local government and have the legislation to back us.

Take care and stay safe. ■

Marriage Story:

— Dora Dang —

A Common Divorce Story

In the Netflix movie, 'Marriage Story,' Adam Driver stars as Charlie, a stage director who struggles through a litigious and costly divorce from his wife, Nicole, played by Scarlett Johansson. They live in New York with their son Henry who is played by Azhy Robertson. The movie begins with Nicole and Charlie attempting divorce mediation, which fails after the mediator requested that they first write about each other's best qualities. Initially they agreed to keep the divorce simple and amicable, but becomes suddenly difficult and complex after Nicole accepts a role in a television show and moves to California with their son Henry. Nicole gave up her career as a successful film actress so Charlie could establish his career as a stage director. Charlie establishes a fledgling theatre company and becomes a rising star in the world of theatre. In the meantime, Nicole loses her identity as she caters to Charlie's growing success and as Charlie becomes increasingly self-serving. Once in California, Nicole hires Nora Fanshaw, a divorce attorney played by Laura Dern, who won the Oscar for best supporting actress, and initiates a lawsuit against Charlie for divorce. The divorce becomes adversarial that leads to rising tensions, expensive lawyer fees, and ugly exchanges during court proceedings. After a destructive, costly, and emotional rollercoaster ride, the couple's legal settlement results in the splitting of assets and a co-parenting plan similar to the couple's initial private agreement. 'Marriage Story' is a great example of how costly, destructive, and emotional litigation is for the parties involved in

divorce.

"Divorce is expensive. I used to joke they were going to call it 'all the money,' but they changed it to 'alimony.' It's ripping your heart out through your wallet." –

Robin Williams

According to Statistics Canada, divorce affected over five million Canadians in 20 years since 2011. The Divorce Act is the law that deals with marriage breakdown in Canada. The Divorce Act addresses how married spouses get divorced, the care of the children after separation (parenting order, parenting time and decision-making responsibility), child support, and spousal support. In addition, on May 22, 2018, the government introduced Bill C-78 to strengthen the Canadian family justice system. Bill C-78 received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019 and most of the amendments to the Divorce Act will come into force on July 1, 2020. This new legislation makes federal family laws more responsive to families' needs. Its four key objectives are:

- Prompting children's best interests;
- Addressing family violence;
- Helping to reduce poverty;
- Making Canada's family justice system more accessible and efficient.

Given that family law affects more Canadians than any other area of law, the amendment encourages the use of alternative dispute resolution and other family justice services to improve outcomes for children and families. Specifically, the family dispute resolution process (Section 7.3, Divorce Act) states:

Family dispute resolution process

7.3 To the extent that it is appropriate to do so, the parties to a proceeding shall try to resolve the matters that may be the subject of an order under this Act through a family dispute resolution process.

What is the family dispute resolution process? Generally, dispute resolution refers to negotiation, mediation, and or arbitration. These processes and techniques are designed to help parties come to an agreement prior to litigation, which is adversarial.

Mediation and Arbitration

Family mediation is an alternative to litigation that allows the couple to come to a mutual resolution. A key benefit of mediation is that the individuals going through divorce preserve their identity and make their own decisions on how to settle the distribution of property, coordinate parenting, and determine the amount of support to be paid.

A combined family mediation-arbitration process is where a couple engage and acknowledge at the beginning of the process that they have jointly appointed a sole mediator who also acts as an arbitrator. This means that should there be an impasse in mediation, an arbitration hearing can be initiated. Furthermore, this means that the appointed mediator/arbitrator can translate agreements reached in mediation to a binding 'Consent Award'. The end result is that an arbitrator's decision or 'Award' is similar to a court order and it is final and binding.

It is important to note that a family mediator acts as a facilitator to assist in the complexities of divorce and resulting conflicts. The family mediator

is required to be discrete, diplomatic, and sensitive to the couple's situation to enable them to communicate, negotiate, and cooperate to resolve their issues outside of court. Generally, a detailed step-by-step process is disclosed to the couple at the outset with

regular follow-up once the process is initiated. All aspects of family mediation is best conducted face-to-face to ensure clarity between all parties. In the end, the family mediator/arbitrator's goal is to help couples come to an agreement that can be honoured, enforceable, and held accountable to.

"A divorce is like an amputation: you survive it, but there's less of you."

-Margaret Atwood

The amount of time required to get through any particular issue varies significantly for each individual and

is uniquely different for each couple. Unlike in the beginning of 'Marriage Story,' discussing each other's positive attributes is not a realistic approach to mediation. The discussions are not warm and fuzzy. They are difficult and emotional. You have to give yourself time to work through the dispute resolution process, and prepare your heart and mind for a healthy discussion on how to unravel the conflict in your relationship. The family dispute resolution process is voluntary, but the couple must remain committed to the process. Children benefit from the family dispute resolution process because the couple stops the retaliatory cycle of conflict of fighting with each other and come together to start working on their problems amicably in the spirit of reconciliation, not as ad-

versaries in conflict. As a result, family dispute resolution improves communication skills between the divorcing couple, and the family mediator helps the couple reach voluntary resolutions to their dispute that is timely, equitable and cost effective.

"You can come at it very aggressively and blame and blame and blame. Or you can put yourself in the garage, so to speak. Take yourself apart and clean off the bits. Reassemble."

-Chris Martin, lead vocalist, Coldplay

About the author: Dora Dang is a Chartered Arbitrator, Chartered Mediator, Certified Divorce Financial Analyst, Registered Family Mediator of Alberta and a Commissioner For Oaths in and for Alberta. She is the co-owner and co-founder of Leap! Divorce Solutions Ltd. ■



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