



ALBERTA FEDERATION
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The Official Voice of the Municipal Police Associations in Alberta

CANADIAN PUBLICATIONS MAIL: Agreement No. 42846013

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ALBERTA POLICE BEAT is published bi-annually
by iMarketing Solutions on behalf of
ALBERTA FEDERATION OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS
#14220 112 Avenue NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5M2T8
www.albertafpa.ca
publication agreement number: 42846013

PRINTED IN CANADA
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From the President

Chris Young



Social Media and Association Responsibility

Greetings all, and welcome to yet another edition of Alberta Police Beat magazine. I hope this finds you all well. It would seem that we are headed toward “better” times with most of the pandemic restrictions being lifted. A welcomed change for most. Hopefully, we can have our AGM in person in sunny LA (Lethbridge, Alberta) this May. It would be good to get together again as it has been a very long time. Fingers crossed.

It’s been a trying few years with the pandemic and social upheaval. Not to mention the anti-police sentiment that has swept North America in particular. I can’t help but think how much of an influence has social media platforms played in intensifying events and situations? A study conducted by Harvard claims that social media can have a harmful effect on teenagers in particular. There are multiple experts and documents (articles, papers etc.) claiming that it causes depression, anger, and fuels negativity and animosity within our society. Cyberbullying, the relaying of false information (“fake news” as former US President Trump famously would say on a regular basis), and networking and coordinating of organized crime, hate and terrorist groups has increased significantly since social media began. Is it a coincidence? I doubt it, to be honest. We have become a society that is fed instant information on a constant basis. Society seems to crave the speed of the information, and a lot of times, it appears that facts are not a necessity. This can be more than problematic. This can create an absolute frustrating conundrum for us all.

Now social media is not all bad. There are many positives concerning it. For one, it can be a fantastic communication tool. Never before could organizations, associations, businesses, etc. reach out to their respective audiences/memberships on such a grand scale. From Politicians to regular everyday people, social media has enhanced the ability to communicate and interact with one another. I use Facebook myself to interact with family, friends, colleagues, and members. Several of our Association Presidents use both Facebook and Twitter for the same purpose. It can be an asset if used properly and responsibly. And I stress using it responsibly.

Many law enforcement critics use social media to paint police in a negative light. Often these critics post with a negative passion that appears to be fuelled by pure hatred. Again, facts do not seem to matter to many of these fierce critics. A lot of misinformation and inaccuracies are posted. The platform that seems to stand out the most with regards to this issue is one that I affectionately refer to as “angry bird” – that being Twitter. The realm of keyboard warriors and uneducated experts. The platform is rampant with negative posts and attacks regarding every subject. It’s the tabloid of social media platforms in all honesty. These offside posts are not okay, and members of our respective Associations often desire them to be addressed. However, here is where the responsibility portion comes in. Association Executives, Board Directors, and members themselves need to realize that when responding to inflammatory posts the need to remain

measured and professional is a must. Otherwise, you can appear as twisted, negative, bias, and uneducated as the individual that made the inappropriate post. A great example of responding to and addressing inappropriate posts is Canadian Police Association President Tom Stamatakis. Tom is always measured and professional. He brings up facts and never gets emotionally compromised. He responds the way all Association Presidents should respond.

It can be difficult to keep one’s composure, however, in today’s environment surrounding the occupation of law enforcement, it is a priority. Let’s face it, some of the radical personalities on social media, such as Twitter, are looking to make a name for themselves. And they will happily do so by embarrassing and destroying anyone they can goad into a fight. Emotions should be checked when challenging those who seek to tarnish the police. Depending on who the individual is or their motivations; the correct response maybe none at all. Some of these personalities have a small following. By sounding off on them, half-cocked, you could end up just increasing the exposure that they so desire. Something to truly keep in mind. It is all too easy to fall down the rabbit hole when interacting with these individuals and giving the impression that you are in a cage match with them. At the moment it will feel good, and most members will applaud the action. However, one slip up, or one wrong word or phrase and you could find yourself on the alter of sacrifice in the world of cancel culture and social justice. Association leaders need to be aware that their actions and

words not only reflect upon themselves they also reflect upon their membership. Getting in an emotional, childish squabble doesn't help anyone, especially our hard-working members. It does little to no good at all. By jumping down the rabbit hole you risk looking like the problem. You could lose your credibility and that is something that leaders need to be mindful of.

The same applies to members themselves. First, do you really want to disclose your occupation all over the internet? I'll give an example. A colleague of mine, who is a member and does not sit on the Association Board, felt compelled to address someone who posted an inappropriate video that took aim at the police. The member revealed their occupation as a police officer in their response. The member was relentlessly attacked by keyboard warriors. As a member you have to not only think about the repercussions to yourself. You must think about your family and your fellow members. Again, cooler heads prevail, and emotion needs to be checked. Does there need to be a response from you on this? Are you making the matter worse? Also, you could be facing some jeopardy at work if you end up violating your Service's social media policy. Is it worth it?

Members have not always agreed with the Association response on social media either. The problem is that members do not always have the full facts themselves. I personally have had members make emotionally charged comments to me on social media regarding what their Association has said or not said. These comments have not always been professional or respectful.

However, despite that, my response has always been professional, respectful and I have done my best to explain the facts to the member making the comment. It is most unfortunate that the members making these emotionally charged comments did not simply take the time to text, email, or phone either myself or another Board member to get the full story before making their comments. In a way, the member jumping on the keyboard is no better than fierce critics that post on Twitter. Take a breath. Reach out respectfully to find out the full story. There may be more going on with the issue or situation that you are not aware of.

There are politicians and police commission members that are finding out the hard way that their posts and ill-thought-out comments can come back to bite them. Inaccurate information, personal bias and uneducated posts are damaging outspoken individuals daily. Ruining one's reputation for a quick sound bite is not wise and if you are in business or politics, the damage can be lasting. There is a saying that Google never forgets. Well, neither does social media. What is placed on the internet is basically there forever. Individuals that are elected or appointed to positions of power should be cognizant of the affects of what they say. Dollars to donuts it often does not work out well for those who do not act appropriately, nor speak professionally.

I am not a religious man, although I was raised a Roman Catholic. With this being said, there is several versus' in the Bible that refer to speaking unwisely and out of turn. The one that

has stood out to me regarding this is the following:

"Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin."

Proverbs 13:3

The politicians can comment and post all they like. However, it is a double-edged sword, and that sword can be awfully sharp in terms of one's professional/political career.

That is why the Association response should always be measured and professional. And when it comes to use of force incidents, the Association must always consider the involved members. Jeopardizing the involved members to make the membership as a whole "feel good" for 5 minutes is never the right option. In the words of my Calgary Police Association colleague, President John Orr:

"The answer is always protect the involved members. The choice is very easy in that situation. Every time."

Johnny is right. The Association response should never be emotional and should always be about the facts. As the good book says, speaking out of turn comes with consequences. Let them be the children in the conversation and we will be the adults. When necessary, we should respond. However, the response should always be measured, professional and responsible.

Be safe my friends.

Chris Young - AFPA President ■



From the Vice President

Curtis Hoople



How do you want to be remembered?

Don't blink. Your policing career will flash before you and mystify you every time you hit a career milestone. Reminders of how senior you are when recruits are promoted or mentors retire. Tragic reminders of mortality and vulnerability when fellow colleagues fall into severe circumstances that take their lives or end their careers well before their prime. This has caused me to reflect on how I want to be remembered and what I will leave for generations to follow.

Every day, I come across police stories with elements of triumph, tragedy, and perseverance. I log onto social media platforms and read inspirational reflections on career triumphs, celebrations of longevity and tributes of influences that made it possible. The same social media can also expose darkness which shares riveting testimonies of how this policing profession destroys and leaves irreparable voids. Every scenario is memorable, but how do you want your memoir illustrated to the world after you log off for your final shift?

In almost twenty years of policing, I have been fortunate enough to meet hundreds of incredible men and women in the Edmonton Police Service and services or organizations across North America. I have swapped war stories with icons, legends, notorious and troubled souls. I have been humbled, disturbed, and awe-struck by members that have battled real-life villains while transitioning to sympathize with the most vulnerable persons. All the while trying to create some normality in their lives away from policing. What do the people you have impacted or influenced remember when they hear your

name or see your picture or engraved what in the mess hall?

These are legitimate questions. You should desire the opportunity to leave a mark in a profession that rarely gives attributions or so-called "pats on the back." The key is to continuously reflect on the reason and motivation behind your journey that drew you to this profession. This act of humility will ground you and create focus which is priceless when dealing with unpredictable fluctuations throughout your career. Controlling your path is critical but being able to evolve and adapt is what gives you strength and resilience. Your story is customized to highlight your strengths while exposing your vulnerabilities.

My time with AFPA is coming closer to ending, but I know my story and experiences are memorable. I will never be able to thank all the people that trained me, walked with me, or depended on me. Like many before me, I wanted to leave a piece of me for future generations. I was scrolling through LinkedIn when I read a post illustrating "Rules for a Father to Son." This inspired me to write my personal "10 Rules for a senior Association Director to future Association Director." This is my duty and commitment to ensure Police Associations stay strong when policing is struggling to redefine its role in this modern world.

Rule #10 - In-Person Contact is essential. In the day of social media and zoom meetings, we need to work harder to stay in touch with our membership. They need personal contact (handshake, smile, voice) to feel sup-

ported and heard.

Rule #9 - When entrusted with confidential information. Protect it! This simple concept should be a no-brainer, but the Association business can test these waters. Really explore and learn essential Association governance (in-camera), legal jargon (with or without prejudice) and what you will do when entrusted with intimate and personal testimonies. Yes, you are still a police officer when conducting Association business. Utilize your resources to educate and prepare yourself for all scenarios.

Rule #8 - Have fun and laugh. Members need to know your Association Directors are human beings. Be vulnerable and show emotion. Bring life to a room and instill confidence in your membership. They need that breath of life and certainty they are being cared for and represented.

Rule #7 - Remember who you work for: The Members. They are the people that supported you and entrusted you with their dues and interests. You are not in these positions to advance your career. You should be focused on educating yourself to be excellent at your job as a director. Trust me, the skills and training you receive in the Association will benefit you in future roles. It comes naturally; just embrace the role and stay focused on the mission and objectives of your Association and membership.

Rule #6 - Be humble and thankful. You have been given a gift to represent the membership. Invest into this role and continue to thank the membership for giving you the opportunity. Take

praise when warranted but use the successes to build on future triumphs.

Rule #5 – Write down your dreams and visions. Before my time in the Association, I wrote down many dreams and visions I thought would work well in the Association. I have looked back to those notes and have been very proud to be a part of their inception. Writing them down also assisted me with constantly referring to see if an idea could trigger a new initiative or project. I smile whenever I look at my notes from the past.

Rule #4 – Stay informed and always listen before speaking. This is difficult at times. First, finding time to educate yourself while dealing with daily business can be challenging. You need to make time because it will pay off during your term. Then you can sit back and listen to the views and opinions of all parties you deal with. This could include the membership, the organization, politicians, and social influencers. You need to listen and discover the root of the issue or problem no matter who.

Rule #3 – Build a team. An influential Association requires a team that respects, protects and stands up for each other. Recognize police Associations are constantly tested, which challenges team dynamics. I know this is shocking, but police can be opinionated and motivated to self-promote. You need to welcome conversations and debates. You need to embrace all strengths and work together for a common goal or objective.

Rule #2 – Take care of yourself. This is critical. You must be healthy before you can help others. This role will have many trying days that will wear on you physically and mentally. You need to find time away from the business, recharge your batteries, connect with family and friends, and continue to exercise and eat well. These simple ingredients will give you the strength and longevity required to represent hundreds or thousands of members.

Rule #1 – Stay true to yourself. The policing career changes us enough. Don't

allow the heaviness of Association work to change your core values. From many wise police officers and mentors, I have learned that policing is rewarding but can be harmful to your soul. Anything is possible if you continue to remind yourself why you joined Association work. Lean on your support networks, and they will help you stay true and focused. I want to be that person who can walk away proud of what was accomplished and how you made people feel. This will be the ultimate victory and exactly how you want to be remembered.

Take the time to reflect, continue to inventory your path and impress what you want to leave the membership and the organization you worked for. Love what you do with your policing Association career. This love will be reflected in how you care for the membership and how you impact lives. Good luck, and I will remember how you dared to step up and start a career with your Police Association!

Curtis Hoople - AFPA Vice President ■

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From the Secretary/ Treasurer

Marc Gaumont



Well, I'm a rookie again..... at 48! The year of 2022 has brought some changes in my career as I went back to the street after an 8-year hiatus in tech crimes. I thought I would take this opportunity to discuss some changes that have occurred over my 25 year career and especially since the first time I was a rookie at 22.

I was hired in late 1996 and really started my policing career in 1997 after my stint in recruit training and riding with my field training officer (FTO). The City of Lethbridge was about 65,000 people and my first day without the FTO consisted of three of us Constables hitting the street for C Team. I don't remember the first call I got back in the day, but I do remember the other two Constables being busy in the office with paperwork while I drove around the City, terrified of getting a call!

Now that I have been sent back to the street, I thought I would share what I have seen as the difference in policing since that first day so many years ago. I think the easiest place to start would be with the uniforms and gear. Shockingly, the core of the uniform (pants, shirt and boots) really has not changed over the years, and that's kind of sad. I was hired shortly after we ditched the baby blues and moved to the dark blue tops and this has been the consistent uniform throughout my career. The conversation at the time was that the uniform colour change was a great improvement, but thinking about our uniforms now, not too much has changed. I can still pick up some Danner boots, and we still wear the red striped dark blues that seem to flood out on the length no matter how long

you get the seamstress to make them!

Looking at the rest of the gear, there have been great improvements, with the external armour carrier being the most obvious. Back in the day I was outfitted with an external carrier and an internal carrier and the difference between the two is that the external allowed for the vest to be easily removed when sitting at the computer or to be detached on one side while cruising in the Patrol Car. Going back to the street this time, I was outfitted with an external vest that allows for me to move my radio, handcuffs and flashlight off my belt. It may not seem like a big deal, but not having the handcuffs in the lower back or the radio on the hip really does make a difference when riding in the vehicle for a 12-hour shift. I also noticed that the amount of less-lethal options has grown since the days of a baton and pepper spray being the only ones available. Members are now outfitted with bean bag shotguns, and there are options for the Arwen should the need arise.

Another substantial change in policing can be found in the mobile office that is contained in the patrol vehicle. The fleet certainly looks a lot different now than it did in 1996. The Ford Crown Vic or the Chev Caprice were the ones to rule them all, and that has drastically changed to a variety of fleet options with different makes of trucks, SUVs and cars. I can definitely appreciate the truck and not climbing down or struggling to get up from the cars today! I'm not sure on the bigger centres in Alberta, but I know that fully electric police cruisers are being used in the world today and I suspect that the EVs will be kicking out a police

package in Canada sooner than later.

Radio chatter sure has changed. When I started my career, the use of 10 codes and the 500 codes were a common practice. Now we simply use plain language but looking back, a common phrase on air was "10-8 for 10-6" and if you dusted off the old LPS notebook you would know that I was heading back to the police station to make a phone call. Yes, we did not have a phone in the car or a computer for that matter so I also distinctly remember having my spouse contact dispatch to relay a message for me to call home if she ever needed me to. Remember the smartphone was many years from being developed.

Speaking of technology and smartphones, I must say that technology has completely changed policing over my career. I should have known I was in trouble when I brought out the old paper notebook while everyone else had their phones out to use their Smart Squad Application as their notebook and really for everything else that we do. I must say that it's been quite the learning curve, and I still feel that it's weird when we roll up to a call and wait a few moments for the recent event to populate electronically and remotely on my phone to allow me to open up my notes. And now having the ability to audio record all my statements (I sure don't miss handwriting those!), take scene photos and upload both of them along with my notes to the file when I'm done the call has been such a great change. Back in the day and at the end of the shift or sometime during the shift we would need to make sure to photocopy our notes while redacting any call that was on the same page and

not associated and then redact any names for the call that shouldn't be included in any disclosure, and then photocopy the notes again to sign and attach to the file. I'm not even sure that we keep paper files anymore!

So what about the actual police work, the day to day? One of the first things I noticed is that we still run short on members coming to work every day, and it seems that we have and will always be hoping our police numbers increase for the better. I know that most of our police services in Alberta and across the country are struggling with the budget and making the most of what we have but will remain ever hopeful that we can continue to increase our authorized strength. I know that the defund movement has caused some strain on the Administration, and I believe most of us know that we will be riding out this budget crisis for some years to come.

As for the calls we attend, I do know that talking to people hasn't changed, but noticed I'm a lot better at it now than I was at 22. Age and life experience both on and off the job changes a person's perspective, and I find I'm a lot more patient now than I ever was when I started. I recall being dispatched to a family dispute in my first year. The parents were struggling with their 17-year-old daughter and recent "behaviours" and were hoping police could set her straight. I was thinking to myself that I have more in common with someone 6 years my junior than

the parents, and frankly, what do I know about raising a teenager? I can't recall exactly my advice at the time, but I know that I was completely wrong after raising two daughters of my own.

One thing that I have noticed that has impacted policing is that drugs have changed everything. I don't think I need to expand on this as the opioid crisis is very familiar to our readers, but "back in my day," the drugs we were chasing down were the marijuana grow ops and the theft of power that went with it. I'm not sure if the mental health crisis goes hand in hand with the opioid crisis, but it seems that there are a lot more mental health calls that we attend now than ever before. Police in Lethbridge are trying to deal with mental health calls in a different manner with PACT Officers consisting of a police officer and nurse working together and dealing with as many repeat mental health calls as they possibly can, but when a person is in crisis, police are called.

Finally, the last thing I have noticed was the fun, or I suppose the lack of it. Now don't get me wrong, I came back to policing in the middle of a pandemic and am well aware that we are much busier now than in the late '90s, but I was recently speaking with some retired members who reflected on policing, and I noticed that the stories we recalled were all about the fun we had at work and about some the tricks we would play. We clearly had a lot more time on our hands! One of the

stories was regarding our night shifts. Back in the day we worked 7 nights in row, starting at 11 pm and ending at 7 am. Early in the week of nights, a couple of us loaded up a bunch of water balloons and stashed them away on the roof of one of the downtown businesses. We couldn't execute our plan on the first night but knew that the slower nights of Monday and Tuesday were fast approaching. When things finally slowed down we ended up piling up a bunch of debris in the middle of the road in front of the business and had dispatch send the downtown van to investigate. Sure enough, he arrived and we blasted him with as many water balloons as we could!

I'm not sure how much patrol work I have left in me, and only time will tell, but I can tell the reader that I am having a great time back on the street and find it ironic that I'm back on Team C where I started out my career. I think the team and the fine police officers I work with make the biggest difference. Being part of a team is one of the best things about policing. I still believe that we have a great career full of different opportunities and have found that 25 years seems to have flown by. Don't wish away time and enjoy the little things because before you know it, you're on the final leg of your career.

Take care and be safe,

Marc Gaumont
Secretary/Treasurer ■

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From the Director/Editor

Mark Flynn

Welcome to the Spring issue of Police Beat Magazine – The Alberta Federation of Police Associations bi-annual publication that provides up-to-date perspectives on the policing profession, essential topics, as well as federal and provincial legislation updates.

As we slowly start getting used to our new everyday lives in the post-Covid-19 era, many changes have happened in the police world. We have seen numerous policy changes and technological acceptance by the police sector, making it possible to do our jobs faster, more efficiently, and remotely if required.

One of the areas where we see the prolonged adverse effects is our recruiting, which has affected many agencies' ability to staff their services thoroughly. The safety measures put in place to limit the spread of Covid-19 also made it near impossible to effectively recruit, hire, and train new personnel during the peaks of the outbreak. The trickle-down effects of this have left many agencies short-staffed, causing the collapse of specialty units, increase pressure on patrols and a genuine fear of an increased rate of officer burnout married with increased stress and pressures on the well-being of our members. There is no doubt that these are challenging times, and I commend you all for braving this storm.

In this article, I want to share a recent experience with you, which has finally concluded recently, and I learned a great deal from it. I hope sharing this story with you will increase your knowledge of the WCB process and encourage you to reach out if you ever find yourself in a similar situation.

In September 2019, I injured my knee in a charity basketball game where our service members were up against a local college team. During the game, I fully ruptured my patellar tendon (along with several other ligaments and tendons), which required immediate surgery. Due to complications, I spent several days in the hospital and was finally released and sent home about a week after the incident.

I was very fortunate to have my supervisors and members of my administrative team go to bat for me and explain to WCB that community engagement is one of the required duties of a police officer and that it may not be an everyday event as part of my regular duties, it did still fall under the responsibilities of a police officer.

At first, my claim to WCB was denied, but upon review of a claim's adjudicator, she explained she made her decision based on one straightforward question: "would I have sustained this injury if I was not an employee of the police service?" this answer made it much more apparent for me, and she overturned the decision and accepted my claim.

Once my claim was accepted, I was offered home maintenance assistance to help with the increased costs of home and property care as I could no longer do it myself. At the time, I was so very fortunate to have enough family and friends to offer to come help with these chores that I thought I didn't require it. I also enjoyed the company when they would visit and help me with tasks.

As my recovery progressed into the summer months, I was set back with

further complications and fear of another surgery to correct a tendon that pulled my kneecap out of its track, causing my leg to lock out for sometimes up to 2 days. I was still dealing with intense pain and swelling. Fortunately, with the aid of powerful anti-inflammatory medication and specialized physiotherapy, I was able to progress through the setback without another corrective surgery.

After just over nine months of modified duties, I returned to full duties in the fall. I fought many physical and mental battles to get myself back to full duties, as I felt that is what I needed not to let the injury 'beat me'. I found out very quickly that I had changed, and I needed to change how I worked to be able to continue working. If you have ever heard the story of the young and the old bull, I realized I needed to become the old bull. If you haven't heard the story - ask a friend. Even though I was the young and energetic go-getter in my mind, I had to restrain myself because my body couldn't keep up. My knee injury took my ability to run, among other things, which has numerous side effects on its own; however, I made it work. I even engaged in one successful speed-walk foot pursuit!

Because I was too head-strong to admit I needed help, I found myself pushing myself on my days off, trying to do chores around the house myself. I was still suffering from bad swelling. When I pushed it, it often resulted in me being couch-bound with my leg elevated the following day to alleviate swelling and the associated pain.

In the Spring of 2021, I reached my mental and physical breaking point and reached out to WCB for help. This

is where I realized that denying earlier support because I was too proud and lucky enough to have supportive friends and family had set me back. They deemed that my case was closed, and because I didn't require any home maintenance assistance then, I wasn't eligible now.

From April until September, I was sent to doctors, physiotherapists, x-rays and assessments multiple times per month because a form wasn't filled out correctly, a doctor's wording on their report didn't use the correct language, or because of a lack of information. I was exhausted. I couldn't understand how they decided against the provided evidence showing physical deformities in my repaired knee that, in a doctor's assessment, 'caused mechanical impingement.'

I began researching and reading everything I could about the Worker's Compensation Act and internal WCB policies and procedures. I have heard

many stories from colleagues who have had similar experiences with WCB and just decided to give up because it 'wasn't worth the headache.' As a board member with AFPA and my association, I was not okay with this. I should be covered by my understanding of the act and my situation, and my claim should be honoured. I began an appeal process and engaged the assistance of the WCB appeals commission. Although they did assist with some clarification of the issues, I did not feel like I was a priority and at times questioned if they were separate from WCB itself as it seemed like they were more interested in closing my file than in representing my best interests.

Through various appointments and 'hoops' to jump through, eventually, medical evidence, doctors' and physiotherapists' recommendations, and finally, a WCB appointed occupational therapist all agreed that my injuries have life-long impairments, and I should be covered under the home

maintenance assistance policy.

In February of 2022, I was notified that their decision was reversed, and my claim for home maintenance assistance was accepted. This was a massive sigh of relief and confirmed that I was right in pushing for what I believed was right and didn't give up.

As I mentioned above, I share this story to share my experiences and knowledge of the WCB appeal process and encourage you all not to give up if you find yourself in a similar situation.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you would like any more details on my story or if you have any questions!

Stay positive, take care of each other, and be safe,

Mark Flynn
 Medicine Hat Police Association –
 Director ■

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From the Director

Graham Earnst



Greetings from a new Board Member

Greetings, AFPA members. My name is Graham Ernst, and I am the newest Board member of the Alberta Federation of Police Associations. I want to introduce myself and thank outgoing President Curtis Hoople for his dedication during his term. His work for the members of AFPA during the last two very challenging years has been nothing short of outstanding. I would also like to congratulate the newly elected President, Chris Young. I have worked closely with Chris over the last four years and know him to be incredibly dedicated to protecting and speaking up for police officers and representing the best interests of all of us. I genuinely believe we will do well under his direction.

Thank you as well to all the other Board members of AFPA that have served in years past, and I look forward to working with each of you to stand up for police officers all over the province.

As a bit of background, I have been a member of the Calgary Police Service for the past 13 years. I have worked my entire career in a patrol capacity. I am currently in a long-term acting Sergeant position running a patrol

team and doing my best to meet a diverse team's professional and personal needs.

I was first elected to the Calgary Police Association in January of 2018 and have held several portfolios during that time. As well as frequent member advocacy and defence, I have been the editor of the Calgary Police Association's 10-4 magazine and the primary Director on the communications strategy that we are building in Calgary.

As we all do, I recognize the importance of frontline patrol and the call response, as well as the community policing they do every day. In day-to-day interactions and because of their professionalism, police officers in Alberta are still supported and looked to in times of need.

These members are also the faces of our organizations, and as a result, face increased risk. This risk can include the obvious physical danger, media scrutiny, professional standards complaints and organizational stress as we try to cope with hatred from social media and disdain from some of our elected officials.

Working patrol my whole career, I have experienced these risks many times, which led to my desire to advocate, represent, and fight for protection and fairness for all police officers. Police officers who do their best every day to protect the cities, towns, and hamlets where they live. I believe that being a police officer is more than a job and is a calling for many. Even with all the difficulties and challenges that police officers worldwide face; I can still say I love working with my team and catching bad guys. When everything else has gone to hell in a handbasket, that will still be the best job in the world.

It is my honor and privilege to represent police officers at a provincial level as a part of the Alberta Federation of Police Associations. I will work hard to get up to speed as quickly as possible and always do my best to make sure the interests of police officers are front and center.

Thank you to everyone that picks up this magazine and reads these articles, and thank you to all members of AFPA. I am excited to get to work for you. Play safe. ■

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Guest Article

L *Tamara Anderson* —————

BA - Physical Education

CPT - Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology

Tamara is a member of Medicine Hat Police Service Fitness Unit as well as an experienced shift worker. Tamara provides the following information in relation to healthy sleep habits as police officers are often negatively impacted by the effects of sleep deprivation and shift work.

Sleep

Even a soul submerged in sleep is hard at work and helps make something of the world” Heraclitus

We all need sleep... but unfortunately sleep deprivation has become normative in our society. Arguably, it is almost assumed sacrificing sleep and eventual burnout is part of the path to a successful career and life. Sleep is for the lazy and weak...

Reality however, is that proper sleep and rest are a pillar of our well-being that profoundly interact with other aspects of what makes us “well” and what makes us “thrive”. Meaning, for example, once you sleep better.. it then becomes easier to feel good when you exercise... once you start exercising regularly .. you sleep better... and food tastes better... and relationships get better... they all work hand in hand.

However, lack of sleep is often a culprit that leads to anxiety, stress, depression, weight gain and other health problems.

Physiological Sleep Basics:

Generally, the activity of the awake brain is designed for collecting external stimuli and activity of the sleeping

brain is designed for consolidating the information that was collected by the awake brain.

Sleep and wakefulness are regulated by 2 complimentary systems in our body:

- Our sleep/ wake Homiostasis: which responds to internal cues from our body telling us to go to sleep/ be awake
- The circadian rhythm: which responds to external cues like the rising and setting of the sun

4 stages of sleep:

Our bodies cycle through the various stages of sleep throughout the night and all stages have distinct qualities and purpose.

1. Light sleep - the transition from wakefulness to sleep. During this phase we can wake easily, eyes and muscles still move, and heart rate and blood pressure go down. This lasts around 5 minutes.

2. Slightly deeper sleep - core body temperature drops, slow and stopping eye movement occurs. There is a distinct shift in brain activity compared to light sleep, where the front cortex is stimulated. It is theorized that there is

a link between the amount of brain activity that occurs during this time and performance and ability the following day. The body spends the majority of sleep time in this stage.

3. Deep sleep - minimal eye and muscle movement, very difficult to wake up. The body doesn't spend more than 30 minutes in this state at a time.

4. REM - this stage usually occurs 1 to 1.5 hours after we initially fall asleep. This stage is characterized by rapid eye movement. Breathing gets shallower and faster, blood pressure and heart rate go back up, brain waves increase in frequency resembling brain waves that occur when we are awake and muscles are in a state of paralysis.

History of Humans relationship with sleep:

Generally speaking, in ancient times humans had a healthy relationship with sleep mainly because there was no artificial light. Humans slept when it was dark and were awake when the sun was up.

Advancements in modern technology has been both good and bad for our relationship with sleep. After the invention of artificial light and the

industrial revolution, sleep began to be viewed as unnecessary and/ or an obstacle to getting more work done. Even Thomas Edison (inventor of the light bulb) adopted the view that sleep was unnecessary and would eventually be phased out of human routine and was quoted “sleep is an absurdity, a bad habit”.

It was not until the late 20th century that sleep became more valued and effectively studied by scientists. We now know that sleep is essential for survival and even if we try to never sleep again... sleep will eventually take over. Studies done on rats show that rats will die of sleep deprivation before they die of starvation. Unfortunately, today sleep is often still viewed as an inconvenient state of being that deprives us of productivity and enjoyment.

Basics of Why Sleep is Important

Throughout our lives, our relationship with sleep will go through normal ups and downs. Whether having children, health issues, travel, etc, there inevitably will be times where we struggle to get a sufficient amount of sleep. Because of this, it is important to establish standards and boundaries around your sleep to ensure you go back to getting the sleep you need.

Sleep is a time of intense neurological

activity that includes mind and body renewal, memory consolidation, brain and neurochemical cleansing and congestive maintenance. Sleep is where events are transitioned into memory or expelled. Short-term memory is transitioned into long-term memory and long-term memory is further strengthened. Sleep is also where the brain determines how our daily stimuli are organized in our brains which fosters creativity and learning. When we sleep our brain also flushes out toxins including proteins that are associated to Alzheimer’s disease.

Lack of sleep contributes to greater risk of heart attack, type 2 diabetes, dementia and lowers the immune system making people susceptible to illnesses they would normally be able to fight off. Lack of sleep also contributes to unnecessary weight gain due to hormone imbalances by increasing ghrelin (increases appetite) and decreasing leptin (lowers appetite).

Lack of sleep can lead to memory loss, decreased cognitive and concentration ability, decreased decision-making ability, decreased social ability and decreased interest in the things we normally enjoy. If you are sleep deprived.. you simply are not your best self.

Studies show that when people get less than 7 hours of sleep they are at an

increased risk to the negative aspects listed above.

The following link shows the general recommendations for sleep by age:
https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html

** Please understand that you need to listen to your body and recognize how you function best – some people are fine with 7 hours of sleep, some people need 9 or 10 hours of sleep, and this may change throughout your adult life **

Having a healthy relationship with sleep requires intentional effort. There are tons of resources on how to improve your sleep, below is a link to some basic ideas:
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/SleepHygiene.pdf>

Although sleep and dreaming are still somewhat of a mystery, we are fortunate to know a lot more about sleep that we did 100 years ago. Today we know that sleep is a fundamental need for humans along with water, food, shelter, etc. so figure out what works best for you and your household to get the precious sleep you need!

Resources:
The Sleep Fix: Diane Macedo
The Sleep Revolution: Arianna Huffington
■



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From the Executive Director

Howard Burns



IS THE DEFUND THE POLICE MOVEMENT BUILT ON A FALSE NARRATIVE?

Monday, May 25th, 2020 seemed like any other day to me. The world was tense and on edge, still learning how to cope with the emerging Covid 19 pandemic. Little did I know, that day would prove to be a watershed moment for policing across North America and the world. You see, that was the day that 46-year-old, George Floyd, was killed by Minneapolis police during his arrest on suspicion of using a counterfeit \$20 bill. His death caught the attention of the American public and proved to be a lightning rod for protests over police brutality in most major cities across the United States. His dying words, “**I can’t breathe**” became a rallying cry for protesters across the country and eventually the world.

At the time, I didn’t think George Floyd’s death would have any impact on policing in Canada. After all, it happened in another country with very different political and social issues at play. **Boy was I wrong!** In short order, his death became the catalyst for the **Defund the Police Movement** which quickly made its way to Alberta and impacted the municipal policing budgets in both Calgary and Edmonton. It was actually quite astonishing to watch (some) municipal politicians across the country (and North America) clamour to cut the very police budgets they previously whole heartedly

supported. **Emotions ruled the day and factual reality took a backseat, at least for awhile.**

Defunding the police means different things to different people. Some see it as a form of punishment for real or perceived wrong doing by the police. Many in this camp have the unrealistic goal of abolishing the police and dismantling society’s public safety framework. Others are a bit more sensible and believe that defunding involves a redefining of police responsibility and a commensurate redistribution of available financial resources. In my view, any decisions over police funding need to be fact-based and data-driven. Emotional arguments based on fallacious narratives have no place in the decision-making process.

Here are some points to ponder when considering the arguments put forward by those wanting to defund the police.

1. **Police Brutality – Really?** As I mentioned earlier, some see defunding the police as a form of punishment for real or perceived police wrong doing. More often than not, proponents in this camp are concerned about use of force by the police, particularly in situations where it may appear questionable. The very nature of this type of concern tends to attract media attention and when media reporting isn’t prop-

erly balanced with the broader facts, it can leave some members of the public with the impression that the police are regularly using force on the public. However, **the actual facts paint quite a different picture.** For instance, in 2019 the police use of force rate in Alberta’s two largest cities averaged 0.5%. That means that in about 99.5% of the time, police officers in Calgary & Edmonton use absolutely no force when interacting with members of the public.

In most professions, a 99.5% success rate would be something to be celebrated. Imagine results like that in the medical field!! But in policing, its not good enough. Instead, Alberta police services dedicate significant financial resources annually to hold their police officers accountable (think body worn cameras etc.), despite use of force being exceedingly rare and any criminal use of force being even rarer. In a nutshell, **concerns over police use of force are much more about public perception than factual reality.**

2. **Racist Cops - Really?** Another concept put forward by those looking to punish the police is that they are racist and deliberately profile certain community members. This serious allegation is quite often accompanied by statistics demonstrating an over-representation of certain groups having had contact with the police. Carding, street

checks and over-policing are common themes used to propagate this claim. **The problem with statistics; however, is taken in isolation, they rarely, if ever, tell the whole story.** Proponents to this theory suggest that the only explanation for the over-representation is racial profiling and they ask the public to make the giant leap in logic that all police must be racist. Unfortunately, they fail to consider the many other possibilities that could reasonably explain the statistics.

It is far more likely that the over-representation of any group having contact with the police is as a result of bigger & broader societal issues (think poverty, lack of opportunity and good old fashion organized crime groups) that are often outside of police control. The reality is, police officers are generally call driven and don't often have the luxury to pick and choose where they do their work. Their activities are usually in response to complaints from the public and they deal with whoever is present when they attend to investigate. **The idea that police officers get to pick and choose where they ply their trade and who they deal with is simply ridiculous.** A careful examination of self generated policing activities might provide a better picture of what's really going on but these must be examined in proper context (location and ethnicity of the area).

Put very simply, the over-representation of any identifiable group having contact with the police is indicative of a problem, but the cause is more likely a culmination of years of societal and government failures, not the police just simply doing their job and enforcing the law.

It is significant to note that many of same groups having regular contact with the police are also over-represented in Canada's prison system. Canada isn't known as a country that is tough on crime and earning a prison

sentence here requires some serious criminality, often involving very real victims who expect justice to be served. Group over-representation in the prison system further supports the societal and government failure premise and tends to demonstrate that the police are really just doing their jobs and dealing with crime as it occurs.

3. **Divert Mental Health Calls – Really?** A popular theme for defunding the police is that they are not the best suited to deal with people suffering from a mental illness. That may very well be true, but presently there is no viable alternative operating 24 hours per day, seven days a week. In fact, the police actually inherited this role by default and have been performing it quite well for decades.

It is important to recognize that Alberta police officers are properly trained to deal with people suffering from mental health issues. Moreover, they do so on a daily basis with very little fanfare. The only time their training and credibility seems to be questioned is when use of force becomes necessary to deal with a person suffering from a mental illness. Sometimes that cannot be avoided, but we know from point # 1 above that any use of force is exceedingly rare.

Proponents of this idea suggest that funds should be directed away from the police in order to properly resource social agencies better equipped to deal with mental health matters. That sounds very nice, but it raises a bunch of questions to consider;

a. **Why are these other social agencies not already properly funded and dealing with these issues?** If the solution (better funding) is so simple, it seems odd it hasn't been done before now.

b. **Do these other social agencies actually want to take over from**

the police? Working nightshifts and responding to difficult situations may not be what some of these people actually signed up for. Forcing this type of work on to them may drive some out of the profession.

c. **Are the employees of these other social agencies adequately prepared for the violence they are likely to encounter?** People suffering from mental illness can sometimes be violent and unpredictable. Alberta has had 4 care workers murdered over the last 20 years. They were; Deborah Onwu, a Calgary youth care worker who was stabbed to death by her client in 2019; Sharla Collier, a Lethbridge youth care worker who was sexually assaulted and killed by her client in 2002; Valerie Wolski, a Camrose support worker who was strangled by her client in 2011 and Dianne McClements, a Camrose care worker who was stabbed to death by her client in 2012. The point here is these workers had appropriate training and they knew their client's history, but they were ultimately unprepared for the violence they unfortunately encountered.

d. **Why must any new funding come about through a reduction in the police budget?** Municipal budgets have a lot of moving parts and certainly some financial flexibility, so it seems strange to me that the proper funding of other social agencies has been framed in such a way that the funding must come at the expense of the police budget. Discussions of this nature appear to be politically motivated with the intent of punishing the police, under the guise of offering a solution.

e. **Wouldn't it make much more sense to actually put any new programs and processes in place before defunding the police?** If the proper funding of other social agencies actually does translate into a decreased work load for the police, then a reduction in the police budget might eventually be

justified. In the mean time, maintaining the status quo would ensure police still have adequate resources available to deal with community safety needs. The alternative is to cut police funding and hope for the best.

4. **Critical Race Theory** is a decades old American concept that asserts that racism is built into all of our laws, institutions, politics and other important facets of our daily lives. If you're familiar with the words systemic or institutional racism and white privilege, you have already had some exposure to critical race theory. At its roots, the theory recognizes that systemic racism exists and encourages open discussion. It is important because it became much more of a mainstream idea following the death of George Floyd. It is a concept used extensively by some special interest groups to forward their agendas. Some in the **Defund the Police Movement** justify abolishing the police entirely based on this theory. The interested reader can learn more about this theory here; [What Is Critical Race Theory? — CRT's Definition and Real-World Impact \(rd.com\)](http://What Is Critical Race Theory? — CRT's Definition and Real-World Impact (rd.com))

I said at the beginning of this article that; **"Emotions ruled the day and fac-**

tual reality took a backseat, at least for awhile". This was no where more apparent than in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where the attack on police began shortly after George Floyd's death. Before any sort of investigation was complete, local politicians immediately pledged to defund and dismantle the police department, amidst allegations of police racism and brutality. Similar conversations and debates took place in cities across America and Canada. It became vogue for politicians to criticize the police and to threaten defunding.

As might have been easily anticipated, what played out in Minneapolis after George Floyd's death wasn't good for employee morale or retention within the Minneapolis police department. Officers felt unappreciated and unfairly targeted. They retired and resigned in droves. Those who remained were reluctant to unnecessarily engage with the public and the result was a surge in violent crime and gun violence. Although unfortunate, this surge provided the citizens of Minneapolis with a preview of what life might be like without the police. **Most came to appreciate that the police were in-fact the solution and not the problem.** This became abundantly clear to local poli-

ticians in November 2021. Minneapolis voters soundly rejected a ballot proposal to dismantle and defund the police. Fast forward to March 7, 2022 (when I wrote this article) and the Minneapolis city council seems to have reversed course. They are expected to approve police salary increases and bonuses totaling \$7000.00. The bonuses are designed to assist with recruitment and retention as the department grapples with a severe staffing shortage brought on by the push to defund.

Since the death of George Floyd, the **Defund the Police Movement** has caused much stress and anxiety for police professionals across North America and the world; however, it appears that the tide may be turning. There seems to be a new-found appreciation for the work the police do in keeping citizens safe. United States President Joe Biden touched on this topic in his recent State of the Union address and I will leave you with his words. He said; **"We should all agree: The answer is not to defund the police. It's to fund the police. Fund them. Fund them. Fund them with resources and training."** ■

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Status: Serving Retired Other

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APGA 2022
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Edmonton, AB.
T5M 2T8

E-Transfers can be sent to: APGA2022etransfer@gmail.com
(please let us know you sent a e-transfer)

2022 Tournament Secretary: Dave RADMANOVICH – EPS
Phone: 780-983-4069
E-Mail: dave.radmanovich@edmontonpolice.ca

From the Director

Troy Forester



Greetings to all the AFPA members. I want to thank the AFPA Board for their continued support and guidance throughout my term. This is my first two-year term on the AFPA Board as a Director. Being exposed to various perspectives from other police agency representatives has given me additional lenses on how to approach my duties here on this board and the Edmonton Police Association Board. I guess you can say, “this is my first rodeo.”

I have been a police member in the Edmonton Police Service since March 2001. In those twenty-one years of service, I have worked in patrol, traffic, beats, detention management unit, report approval unit, long-term acting sergeant, and detective time in various areas. I was promoted to sergeant in 2021 and started showing an interest in the EPA Board about four years ago. I completed a one-year term as a Director on the EPA Board in 2019 and again in 2021. I was successful in winning the election for Secretary this year but took over as the Vice President as that position was vacated.

I ask myself why it took eighteen years for me to become engaged in the association?

I am not free of transgressions. I have been exposed to the investigative procedures of our Professional Standards Branch of the EPS and have utilized the assistance offered by the EPA. They have guided me through the disciplinary processes, and I now possess that knowledge for my current role. I

know the EPA exists. I know about the various family and sporting activities the association hosts throughout the calendar year. I know the previous members that were on the board over the years, but nothing triggered me to want to be part of the association. Why the change now?

I may be biased because of my current position, but I think that the association does magnificent work for its members, offers fantastic supports and delivers an excellent product. The contrarians will say different; however, they may have had a bad experience or heard of someone else’s less than favourable outcome. The EPA offers supports and advice for members who are subject to PSB investigations, represent members when going through disputes with Human Resources, and countless other labor-relation related themes unions are engaged in. I have more knowledge in my extended police career to be able to answer questions and guide members through demanding situations. I am more confident with my ability now rather than at an earlier stage in my career.

Although we know the EPA exists, it is mainly utilized when a member is in crisis. Then we are their point of contact, and hopefully, it is a matter that the association can advocate for them and come to a solution. There is the rare occasion when someone would reach out to us, thank us for what we do, and tell us to keep up the good work. I can speak from firsthand experience that the president and vice president have a heavy workload. This

prevents additional time to meet and greet with the members to hear what the concerns are. I have already begun to engage the other members of the EPA Board in tasks and roles to lighten this burden. This also gives the Directors exposure to the processes we go through, allowing them to gain experience to fall back on. This is an informal succession planning piece as police careers are constantly changing, and positions will be turned over in the future.

My goal this term is to communicate more with the members and inform them of what the Edmonton Police Association does and can assist them with. This will be done via the monthly newsletter and visiting parades to make that personal connection. It is important to put a face to a name and have the confidence that you can reach out to your representatives to get answers or information. Additionally, I have already reached out to various heads in departments throughout the service to make contact and build relationships as we will undoubtedly be working through a variety of issues members have. An encouragement to attend the Annual General Meetings we have will be delivered; these are the meetings where association-wide decisions are made, and proper representation from the members at large is needed.

The way to tell if this approach worked is to see if there are more members reaching out for assistance or if more members are aware of the EPA and what it has to offer. ■



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