



Probus Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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Editor: Ken Hoffman

Website: www.probus-central-edmonton.com

Email: probus.cent.ed@gmail.com

Presentation: June 20, Dr. Sheree Kwong See, Alberta Seniors Advocate

On June 20th, Dr. Sheree Kwong See, Alberta Seniors Advocate spoke to us about her role and how her Office helps seniors navigate the complexities of various services provided by a wide range of organization. She stated that if someone contacts her, for any reason, they will do their best to help. She punctuated this statement with examples of a person calling to help with finding "Uncle Joe", urgent request for assistance because the person was in the middle of a gang war, help with Telus and assistance with government programs.

Dr. Kwong See is the first permanent Seniors Advocate with a three-year appointment starting in September 2016, the Office was established in 2013. She is considered a Canadian expert on the psychology of aging. Dr. Kwong See is currently a tenured professor of psychology at the University of Alberta. She has conducted substantial research on cognitive aging, age stereotyping and ageism. She is also an award-winning instructor. In her teaching and research Dr. Kwong See has been a passionate advocate for aging issues for over 20 years. She is seconded to the Government of Alberta during her tenure as The Seniors Advocate. She sees this arrangement as an advantage because she is not beholden to her employer since she can return to the U of A at any time.

If one wishes to contact the Office here is the information:

Monday - Friday 8:30 am- 4:30 pm MT (except statutory holidays)

Phone: 1-844-644-0682 (toll free) 780-644-0682 (in Edmonton)

Speak to us in your preferred language. Contact us to arrange free language interpretation services.

Fax: 780-644-9685 TDD/TTY: 1-844-392-9025 (toll free)

Email: seniors.advocate@gov.ab.ca

Mailing: 6th Floor, 9920-108 Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 2M4, Canada

When you do contact the Office, you will be linked to a Senior Advocate Representative who will listen and help to resolve your issue.

She spoke about the importance of building capacity in her Office. The Office has six staff and is housed in the Seniors and Housing Ministry it was established by a Ministerial Order and she reports directly to the Minister. Her mandate is twofold:

1. Help individuals resolve issues
2. Investigate and report on system service issues

She is currently travelling throughout Alberta to connect with seniors and explain the role of her Office. It was an informative presentation. We learned of one more avenue to help seniors.

Tour: June 24, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village

We toured the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village which is east of Edmonton just past Elk Island Park. If you have not been there, we encourage you to go. We were able guided by Mary who has the most remarkable ability to walk backwards with comfort. She started by presenting a history of Ukrainian settlement in western Canada and the reasons for it. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village is an open-air museum where costumed role-players recreate the life of early Ukrainian pioneers that settled in east central Alberta from 1892-1930. We stepped back in time to hear real stories of hardships and triumphs in Canada's oldest and at one-time largest bloc settlement of Ukrainian pioneers.

The group met at the Visitor Centre around 10:30am. As there was a great deal of walking to do, those that wished had carts available. The following pictures show the mustering of the group and the Village.



One of the most interesting parts of the tour was the fact that the people working at the Village were in character "all the time". The grainier worker was a young man from the states. While our guide, while not guiding, was the wife of the constable. We also spoke with the store owner who allegedly ran moonshine business. He shared the some of his ingredients with us these included spoiled jam, wheat, dandelions and seemingly anything else that might ferment. He would not share the recipe thought because he did not want the competition. We encountered people making bread and other who just finished cooking lunch on their wood stove.

We started at the Church then received a lesson on workings of a grain elevator:



Here is picture of one of the restored farms:



We also visited one of the homesteads that would have been built in the early days of settlement, circa 1900. Learning that the settlers brought with them their experiences for example they had a concern with window and chimney taxes. Which they did not know were not levied in Alberta. We also attended the house/office/jail of the Alberta Provincial Police Constable. The following are a picture of the old homestead and the constable:



It was a beautiful day for a great and interesting tour. Our guide provided a constant stream of information on the people and places that made up the village. Her informative response to the many questions was another highlight of the day. Finally, we wrapped up the tour by enjoying the authentic Ukrainian cuisine.

The tour was a great way to wrap up the years' worth of tours and we thank Joe and Gordon for their good work.