



Probus Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

January 2021

Editor: Ken Hoffman

Website: www.probus-central-edmonton.com

Email: probus.cent.ed@gmail.com

January 19 Event:

Kim Wanat, Artistic & Managing Director of Edmonton's Opera NUOVA, spoke to us about Opera NUOVA. Kim has worked as a teacher in the U of A Drama Department for the last 29 years. Focusing on teaching voice. She started Opera NUOVA in 1998 and it was in place one year later. She decided to set it up because she could not find appropriate training programs for her students anywhere in Canada.

Opera NUOVA (Newly United Operatic Vocalists Association) is not-for-profit. Its Mandate is:

Opera NUOVA is dedicated to the advanced training and promotion of operatic vocalists and collaborative pianist across Canada, offering a bridge between the academic and professional world.

To build interest and assist in fund raising they established an arts season that includes dinner cabaret series, School Tours, sing along events and opera & Musical Theater Productions.

It focuses on young performers and developing skills. NUOVA holds an intensive training program to 6 weeks in the spring. Program participants are selected based on auditions Kim conducts throughout Canada. It includes courses that do not typically occur in university programs. This is followed by a festival that is recognized as the largest opera and music theatre festival in Canada. It features performances from participants of the NUOVA Spring intensive program. What is unique about their selection of operas is that they pick lesser known operas and cutting-edge operas.

She emphasized that Opera NUOVA not only develops singers and pianist, it provides students from all aspects of theatre, such as set design, stage management, directing, etc. These students are drawn from the U of A drama department.

Her presentation was passionately delivered. She demonstrated NUOVA success by identifying artists who graduated from its program and are working all over Canada and internationally. She punctuated the presentations by showing videos of performances from students of the Opera NUOVA. This unique and successful program is a jewel of the Edmonton arts scene.

January 26 Event:

Carole Estabrooks of the U of A School of Nursing spoke on elder care in Alberta and the impact of COVID. The title of her presentation was: "Can trust be restored: COVID-19 and its impact on Long Term Care." Carole has an impressive background in the study of seniors' care. She has been involved in major studies on COVID 19 and seniors care throughout Canada. One of which was done for the Royal Society of Canada on Covid-91 and long-term care. She also testified before several Committees.

She started by saying Canada has been successful at extending the life span. As a result, we have an aging population with many advanced age-related health issues, such as dementia. This increases cost of care e.g., about \$250,000 a year to take care of a dementia patient.

She was involved in TREC (Translating Research in Elder Care). TREC is a research program focused on developing solutions for improving the quality of care provided to nursing home residents, enriching the work life of their caregivers, and enhancing system efficiency.

Restoring Trust report did not provide anything new. It simply emphasized that the long-term care system is broken. This is well known because it has been pointed out in a number of reports from investigations of various crisis in Long-term care in Canada. The tragedy she found was that nothing has improved. She was particularly critical nursing homes. For example, in the first wave 81% of Covid-19 deaths in Canada occurred in nursing homes, the highest rate of any country globally; currently ~70%.

70% of people in care in nursing homes are in wheelchairs. This is problematic since mobility is an important part of maintain seniors' health. The fundamental issue in long-term care is staffing. Staff are struggling with lack of training, low pay, and high risk of burnout. Though, staff have strong commitment to the job and people in care in nursing homes. The goal of care is to ensure that individual in care have a higher quality of life, experiencing joy and other positive aspects. One point she made is that the work environment, referred to as "work contest" is important. The more favorable environment the higher percentage of care aids complete tasks.

She described the work force in nursing homes. It was characterized as older, untrained, English not the first language, and many working more than one job because pay is so low. The fact of multiple jobs contributed to the increased transmission of COVID 19 in care homes. People "in the know" were aware of the pending disaster when COVID arrived. Another issue is the jurisdictional squabbles that exist between provinces and Federal gov't in elder care. The constitution assigns it to the Provinces, thus no nations standards and no federal transfer payments.

The Royal Society study looked many possible recommendations. The challenge was that there was a to many, and they had been made elsewhere several times, so after a heart to heart that came down to a few critical ones. The first one was to address the workforce issue.

She demonstrated an amazing understanding of the issues, and passionate concern. She remains committed even with the frustrations she experiences. The Q & A session was equally enlightening.

As a person who is getting closer to the needing of elder care, I find the presentation most concerning presentation. Thanks to Mel and crew for organizing this very relevant presentation.

Interesting aside

The local pastor wrapped up his sermon on temperance, with:

“If I had all the beer in the world a would dump it in the river.”

“If I had all the wine in the world a would dump it in the river.”

“If I had all the whiskey in the world a would dump it in the river.”

Then the Choir master rose rather sheepishly to ask the members to open their hymn books to the final hymn of the day number 465... “We shall gather at the river”.

Stay Healthy and Enjoy