



The Westwoodian

Connecting you to Westwood Unitarian Congregation **February 2010**

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It has come to my attention that there were two mistakes made in the February newsletter. One article was missed altogether (below); one article was incomplete (on the following page). In both cases, it was **not** the fault of the committee or individual submitting the articles.

My apologies,
Deidra Helmig
Westwoodian Editor

Health Care Challenges—a Public Form

Westwood's Social Justice Committee was invited to attend the first planning meeting for this event by Lloyd Lovatt, formerly minister at Knox Metropolitan United Church, probably because of the successful all-candidate political forums we sponsored in that church. Edda Loomes and Elaine Roberts are part of the planning group together with representatives from St. Paul's, Knox Metropolitan, Pleasantview and Garneau United Churches, as well as St. Stephen's College and the Quality of Life Commission.

You are invited and encouraged to attend. The speakers are outstanding. Fred Horne is the chair of the Standing Committee on Health and a frequent spokesman for the government on health issues. There is speculation that he may have a new job by the time this goes to print, but.....

Here is the information you need to attend:

Where? St. Paul's United Church, 11526 – 76 Ave.

When? February 23 from 7-9pm

Why? To build a common understanding of the challenges facing our health care system, leading to possible actions.

Who? Panelists include, MLA Fred Horne, Parkland Institute's Diana Gibson, former hospital chaplain Rev. Dr. Neil Elford and nurse researcher Dr. Donna Wilson. They will speak on the hot button issues facing Albertans in this ever-changing health care field. There will be an opportunity to ask questions.

GEA Questions

Last month I gave my answers to some questions our Westwood membership have asked about the Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA); here are some more of my answers.

*Christine Watts
Member of the Social Justice Committee*

If we join, would I be expected to be involved ?

Only members that have a strong interest in any of GEA's projects and who have the time and energy to be involved will go to the GEA meetings. Typically 3-5 members in a GEA organization our size go to additional meetings (besides rallies). Over the past year, 3 of our members have been involved in GEA meetings and 25-30 members have gone to rallies at city hall on two occasions. In the previous year about 20 members bought local food baskets at a rally and many of our members participated in our local foods dinner inspired by GEA. If we join GEA besides paying a membership fee to support GEA's activities our level of involvement will be similar to what it has been in the past year. Except for one important addition:

Membership in GEA would require one assembly of our members each year to determine what our current concerns are and help GEA decide what projects to work on for the year. This assembly would require 1 hour after church on Sunday. In addition each member would be invited to participate in a half hour, 1 to 1 conversational meeting with another member which is a powerful tool that GEA uses to strengthen its member organizations and help determine what issues are forefront in people lives. These meetings are the brick and mortar of GEA's success and GEA calls them relational meetings.

What is the purpose of GEA?

To provide citizens with a voice that can be heard over well moneyed special interest groups such as large corporations and unaware/misguided policy makers. To clarify what we want the world to be and determine how to get there. To determine the foremost concerns on people's minds and decide if we can do something about it. To build relationships with a wide range of citizens, organizations and policy makers and learn from each other and grow.