



Diane at the Opening of the Fish Creek Bridge
Photo Courtesy of the Calgary Sun

February 2005 Newsletter

**Alderman
Diane Colley-Urquhart**

Ward 10 Voting Controversy

As a result of Council's request for a public inquiry into Ward 10 allegations of voting irregularities in the October 18th municipal election, the Province of Alberta has agreed to conduct a less-costly provincial inspection into the matter. Bob Clark has been appointed as Chairman and has committed to conduct a portion of the inspection in public. I have sent Mr. Clark a letter requesting the opportunity to appear before him in the public portion of the inspection to convey what I know, and when I was told about various aspects of the situation. I had brought forward a motion at Council in December that The City also conduct an internal review of staff actions, but I was unable to gain support from my colleagues to move this forward.

With the terms of reference for the inspection defined, I look forward to appearing before Mr. Clark, and ultimately his report and recommendations. Premier Klein has also stated that a review of the Elections Act is forthcoming, both at the municipal and provincial levels. It is imperative that public confidence be restored in the electoral process and that any loopholes are closed to prevent this situation from occurring again. The Calgary Police Service, under S/Sgt. Jim Fair, continues to investigate allegations of criminal wrong-doing and again, I remain confident that through both these processes and with the Elections Act review, we will achieve an electoral system that will restore public trust and respect.

ENMAX Controversy

In mid-December, the Board of Directors of ENMAX exercised the "without cause" provision of Mr. Bob Nicolay's contract and removed him as President and CEO. The news came as a surprise to me and to those Members of Council who are not ENMAX Board members, as just a week prior at the ENMAX Annual General Meeting, Council was given the sense that all was fine within the utility. Members of Council were not briefed of the decision beforehand and learned of the move through the media. Aside from Mr. Nicolay's removal, I have always been in favor of the province's move to deregulate the industry and the benefit to the consumer that competition brings. At the same time, I have always had concerns about the ability of a publicly owned utility to effectively compete in a deregulated environment. I am still convinced that an internal audit of the ENMAX is necessary and am pleased that Council's Audit Committee has included this audit as part of their 2005 workplan.

More Checkstops Needed

The Christmas season was marred by the death of a friend, Paula Ashby, who was killed in a car crash, allegedly involving an impaired driver the morning of December 12th. Paula was a fitness trainer on her way to work at the YWCA's Fitness on Fifth, when her vehicle was broadsided just before 7:00 AM. Due to financial constraints, the Calgary Police Service currently conducts Checkstops four nights per week and over the past year, successfully charged 3,296 motorists for driving over the legal limit. In December 2004, fewer Calgarians were charged with impaired driving than the previous Christmas season, and the Calgary Police Service and community action groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving are to be commended for raising awareness of this irresponsible and deadly behaviour. What these statistics do not acknowledge however, is that some people are still driving drunk in the morning after an evening of drinking or after drinking heavily at noon, as often they are unaware that with a blood-alcohol level of .200, it takes eight hours to reach a safe driving limit. I will be meeting with Chief Jack Beaton to discuss how the Checkstop program can be improved and then will ask Council to increase funding to this valuable program.

As always, you can contact my office regarding these or any other civic matter at 268-1624, by email at dcolley@calgary.ca, or through my website, www.aldermandiane.ca. Alternatively, you can contact 268-CITY (2489).