

In Defence of Life

Edmonton Prolife's Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

'educating for life'

February 15, 2003

I Was Once a Blastocyst

(psst... and so were you!)

Paula Rebstock

President of Edmonton Prolife

In 1968, Pierre Elliot Trudeau had just won the leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada, and by doing so became prime minister. The day after his victory, the new prime minister promised to work "with all [his] strength to bring about a just society." A year later, thirty-four years ago this May, abortion became legal in Canada. In the ensuing years, individual human rights have been increasingly championed while the most basic human right, the right to life, has become less a right than a privilege for the strong or the wanted. The "just society" was to be characterized by its inclusiveness. In reality, membership in the human family has become characterized by increasing exclusiveness. It is a tenuous membership that can be withheld or revoked depending on circumstances.

Science tells us that individual human life begins at conception. And yet, in Canada, we are unwilling to extend protection to all human life. There is no protection for the unborn. (As I write, our Canadian parliament is debating the use of the very smallest human beings for scientific experimentation: harvesting these little ones for their stem cells.) We have hidden their humanity behind their scientific names: zygote, blastocyst, embryo, fetus. These names only tell us of their developmental stage, but are used to deny persons their humanity. Robert Latimer became a poster-boy for the self-proclaimed compassionate, inclusive society. His daughter Tracy was excluded from that society, and our modern intelligentsia celebrated her exclusion.

Often, science is thrown in the faces of the lay men and women who stand in defence of life. We are asked, "What do you know? Where is your degree? Where are your scientific credentials?" This is yet another form of arrogant exclusion. Be certain, the most important credential is already ours. It is our personhood. We are human persons, and it is as human persons that we stand in defence of all other human persons.

Science doesn't exist outside the moral order. The dignity of human life is not dependent on size, age, or ability. It does not depend on whether someone else wants that life or not. The dignity of human life belongs to the very person. It is intrinsic, not to be subject to others' whims, however "noble."

In a democracy very often our voice is our vote. When we are bullied into silence, we allow ourselves to be disenfranchised, to be excluded. In this newsletter, we have outlined how in the Greater Edmonton Area one can access basic information on life issues. We have provided links to important pro-life, pro-family websites. We've highlighted some of the simple but effective pamphlets EPL has to offer. In small ways, we all can learn to use our voices to defend the weakest and most vulnerable members of our human family. Speak up or your silence will speak for you.

On February 17th, Albertans will celebrate Family Day. On behalf of Edmonton Prolife, I thank all of you who work to bring about a truly just society, in which all persons are welcomed into the human family.

Inside this Issue

- | |
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| 1 – President's Message |
| 2 – Fundraiser for Life, Calendar of Events, EPL Board |
| 3 – Mr. Isinger Goes to Washington |
| 4 – Reviews: <i>Abortion Rites</i> and <i>Teen Sex: Reality Check</i> |
| 5 – Bill C-13, Life Issue Brochures, Campus Prolife |
| 6 – A Salute to Motherhood, Demonstrations, Life Principles |
| 7 – Website Update, Our Sponsors |
| 8 – Life Canada, Alberta Prolife, Membership Form |



*Not only for every idle word but for every idle silence
must man render up an account. - Ambrose*

Fundraiser For Life



Through the *Safeway Community Caring Coupons* program, every time you shop at Safeway, you can support Edmonton Prolife's educational work. Each booklet costs \$20.00 and consists of four \$5.00 coupons, plus two bonus coupons for 10x Air Miles and savings on Safeway products. The \$5.00 coupons can be used any time you spend a minimum of \$50.00. Use is *not* restricted to any specific month but they must be used before the end of 2003. With the sale of each coupon booklet, Edmonton Prolife will earn \$8.00 - that means 40% from every booklet sold goes directly to our organization. If you would like to purchase one or more booklets, please give Ethna a call at the office at 425-1637 or Liz at 434-5089. We will mail you the booklet immediately. A cheque for \$20.00 per booklet should be made out to Edmonton Prolife. This is a way that you can get your friends and neighbours to help our cause.

Upcoming Events

- **March 21- 22, 2003** – *Alberta Federation of Women United for Families* annual conference: *Human Rights Gone Wrong*, Calgary. Call AFWUF at 403-228-2190 or visit www.afwuf.org
- **Saturday, April 26, 2003** – *How to do a Pro-Life Youth Presentation* Workshop presented by Mark Isinger and Joanne Pollock. Special guest: Stephanie Gray of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform. There will be a small registration fee, which will include a pizza lunch. Call Alberta Pro-Life at 1-877-880-5433
- **Saturday, May 10, 2003.** – *A Salute to Motherhood!* (see p. 6) Phone for tickets.
- **Wednesday, May 14, 2003** – 34th anniversary of the passing of the Omnibus Bill, legalizing abortion in Canada. Show your solidarity with the unborn. Peaceful protest at the steps of the Alberta Legislature at 10:30 –12:00. noon. Signs will be provided. Bring a picnic lunch for afterwards.
- **Tuesday, June 3, 2003** – Edmonton Prolife's Annual General Meeting 7:30 p.m. at the EPL office. All members are encouraged to attend. Consider coming on board our Board!
- **Saturday, September 20, 2003** – Love Them Both Walkathon 2003. Mark your calendars!
- **November 6- 8, 2003** – National Pro-Life Conference, Edmonton – *Life 2003 Silent No More* – Keynote speaker: David Reardon – Elliot Institute (www.afterabortion.org)



For information on any of the above events, call the Edmonton Prolife office at 425-1637 or email us at edmpl@interbaun.com

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Editorial Committee: Paula Rebstock, Liz Stolee, Eileen Rebstock Layout: Eileen Rebstock

EPL Board: President: Paula Rebstock, Vice-President: Denise Fedoruk, Past President: Anne Wansink, Treasurer: Liz Stolee, Recording Secretary: Eileen Rebstock, John Wallish, Glen Woolger, Mary Zak.

Office Manager: Ethna Scammell

New board members welcomed. Meetings first Tuesday of each month at EPL office. All EPL members welcome to attend.

Mr. Isinger Goes To Washington

Mark Isinger
Sherwood Park



This past month, I had the privilege of attending the annual Rock for Life training and activism weekend in Washington, D.C. with Joanne Pollock and Treena VanStratten. Many, many thanks to Alberta Prolife and Edmonton Prolife for making my trip possible. It was an amazing and continually eye-opening experience. There were about 200 people from across the U.S., primarily youth, who attended. We stayed in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where all of our training took place. The U.S. Capitol building is only a five minute walk away from the Hyatt, and it could be seen through many of the hotel room windows. The Hyatt is accustomed to hosting Senators, Congressman, and other people of high political influence, so it must have been quite a shock to have a couple hundred “radical” pro-life teenagers running around for four days.

Our training consisted of afternoon sessions covering relevant pro-life issues from RU-486 to the myth of overpopulation. We also learned about some of the outreaches of American Life League: Crossroads, STOPP International, and of course, Rock for Life.

The other half of our schedule, activism, took place in the mornings, and it was something I really enjoyed. Youth need action. We need something tangible to do, and activism provided a positive outlet for us. Our activism consisted of prayer and picketing outside of many influential buildings: Planned Parenthood, Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom, the Supreme Court Building, and the Food & Drug Administration. We **prayed** to ask for mercy, not only for the people in the buildings we stood outside of, but also for ourselves.



We **picketed** to show why we were there and how we felt. Bryan Kemper, the founder of Rock for Life, would lead the protest, while a priest named Fr. Tony led us in prayer. Bryan continually stressed the necessity of being peaceful and non-condemning, because we, the youth, were representing the pro-life movement. It was a beautiful experience, united with so many other youth from across the continent for the same purpose: college students, punks, preps, homeschoolers, and everyone in between standing up for the pre born. I made many friends from across the U.S.: Seattle, St. Louis, Boston, Dallas and Atlanta.

Of course, the climax of the week was the 30th annual March for Life on January 22, held every year on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the supreme court decision that legalized abortion on demand in all 50 states. Our Rock for Life contingent joined an estimated 100,000 others who marched on the Supreme Court. The March was basically a giant parade, the largest I have ever seen, but quite a different parade. As Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua, Archbishop of Philadelphia put it, “We are not here to celebrate, but to mourn.” We marched, shoulder to shoulder, down Constitution Avenue, so thick that you would not have been able to cross the street. The parade was so long, that people were still reaching the Supreme Court three hours after the March began. The March had 10 times as many people as the anti-war protest four days earlier! President Bush addressed the March from St. Louis and assured us that banning late-term abortions was at the top of his agenda. I was overwhelmed and encouraged at the conviction of so many people who, like myself, profess the tragedy of abortion.



This trip was confirmation to me that the pro-life movement is alive, well, and gathering momentum in the United States. I hope and pray that we, as Canadians, can follow suit, and I hope and pray that you and I may do everything in our power to see that we do. The battle is ours, but the war belongs to God, and because of that, we need not be afraid. God bless Canada.

Reviews



***Abortion Rites: A Social History of Abortion in America* by Marvin Olasky**

Reviewed by Eileen Rebstock

Abortion is a modern issue. In defending the right to life, we are entering uncharted waters. There is no past to look to for guidance in today's struggle. Right?

Wrong. Abortion was very common during the nineteenth century, and indeed was tolerated by the law, the press, and the general population. And it was a brave but small coalition of journalists who exposed the practice of abortion, doctors who educated the public about the facts of life, and ordinary citizens who established support for women in crisis pregnancies that shut down and criminalized the lucrative abortion industry. Sadly, this victory was overturned, and Olasky also chronicles the events that led to today's toleration of abortion.

Much in Olasky's history will be familiar to today's pro-lifers. A certain Dr. W.C. Lispenard wrote in 1854 that abortion "is exclusively the affair of the mother. She alone has a right to decide whether she will continue the being of the child she began. Moral, social, religious obligations should control her, but she alone has the supreme right to decide." (p. 110) Other promoters of abortion insisted that every child should be a wanted child. One hundred and fifty years have passed, and still the pro-abortion rhetoric is the same. Then as now, euphemisms were in full force. Abortion was innocently referred to as restoring a woman's menstrual periods. Notorious abortionists such as Madame Restell grew prosperous and well-respected off the profits of their business.

In sketching out this history, Olasky presents many lessons that we can find in the successful nineteenth century pro-life movement. "The adage "those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it" states the problem backwards as far as today's movement is concerned. The goal of today's pro-lifers *should be* to repeat a nineteenth-century past in which abortion was successfully fought by moderate means under conditions that were spiritually far from ideal." (p. 306) Education about the beginnings of life, a tireless witness to the brutality of abortion, and support for pregnant women are the building blocks of recreating that success.

This book can be borrowed from the EPL office.

***Teen Sex: Reality Check* by Stephen J. Genuis M.D. and Shelagh K. Genuis, BScOT**

Reviewed by Therese Gervais, reprinted from *The Rose*

When sexual activity among adolescents is considered, its negative aspects are generally focused on two areas of concern: the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy and the possibility of acquiring HIV/AIDS. Much less attention is given to the possibility of acquiring a sexually transmitted disease other than the above-mentioned. If addressed, other STDs are most often presented as a potentially serious but much lesser problem.

This book challenges that perception. The writers contend that all STDs are indeed serious infections and can be devastating for those afflicted, for their future spouses, their families and indeed very costly for society as a whole. Given the impressive credentials of Dr. Stephen Genuis, a practicing obstetrician and gynaecologist with many years of clinical practice, and the thoroughness of the research done in producing this book, the information presented cannot be ignored.

Teen Sex Reality Check lists the facts currently known about Sexually Transmitted Diseases and describes the resulting, often chronic suffering that those infected endure. Case studies and stories provide a human dimension to the problem by emphasizing the impact on individual sufferers. The factors which contribute to the increasing prevalence of STDs among our adolescent population are also discussed, and finally, means by which the incidence of STD transmission among the adolescent population might be reduced are proposed.

Part One of the book outlines the extent of the problem of STDs and discusses the specific consequences for sexually active teenagers who are often unaware of the serious risks involved in their behaviour. Part Two addresses the problem. It examines the deficiencies of current public health strategies to decrease STD transmission as well as the reasons why young teens become sexually involved. The impact of popular culture on adolescent behaviour is examined also. The important role of parents and of health care providers is providing much needed information and in influencing the behaviour of adolescents is stressed.

This book should be required reading for all parents of young adolescents, health educators and public health policy makers. It would also be an excellent source of information for young teens. Dr. Genuis and his wife Shelagh are to be commended for providing this comprehensive and easy to read resource for all those interested in the health of our adolescent population.

This book can be borrowed or purchased from the EPL office, or borrowed from the Edmonton Public Library.

Bill C-13

(with files from lifesite.net)

In our last issue, we wrote about the ethics of Human Stem Cell research. We mentioned in passing that Bill C-58, the Act Respecting Human Reproduction, was before the House of Commons. Since then, Bill C-58 has been renamed as Bill C-13. At the time of this publication, the Bill is being debated in the House.



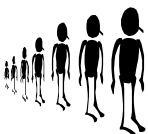
Bill C-13 is the federal government's attempt to legislate the areas of reproductive technology and research. Proponents of the Bill argue that it will end unethical research. Yet, according to Professor Dianne N. Irving, a professor of Philosophy and Medical Ethics from Washington DC, "the Bill actually "restricts", "regulates", or "bans" very few research activities that have been found formally unacceptable by almost all international bodies that have deliberated on these same difficult issues."

What does all this mean? It's really very simple.

It is a scientific fact that at the moment of conception, a new human being comes into existence, complete with everything he or she needs to grow and develop to full maturity. To destroy an embryo for its stem cells is to take a human life. Any legislation that tolerates the taking of a human life should not be tolerated by Canadians.

Bill C-13 will allow in-vitro fertilization (in which most of the embryos are discarded), all forms of embryonic stem cell research, (in which embryos are destroyed), and human cloning. While the bill ostensibly will try to stop the reproduction of human clones, it allows cloning if the cloned embryos are destroyed for research. In other words, the act tries to stop cloned humans from being born, but will allow humans to be cloned if they are to be immediately killed.

Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, an internationally respected author, thinker, and Editor in Chief of *First Things* magazine, says, "It is doubtful that it does anything to protect innocent human life, unless one were to argue, implausibly, that a life is more protected if it can be experimented upon only until termination at 14 days rather than at, say, 90 days."



For more information about Bill C-13, including the petition to the House of Commons, check out

<http://www.lifesite.net/features/stemcellembryo/>

Spreading the Pro-Life Message: What Can I Do? What Can I Say?

First, identify your target audience i.e. youth group, mothers' morning out, church group, neighbour, friend, colleague, your own children. Do you have a specific life issue that you want to address? The arguments to be made in defence of life are varied: scientific, emotional, psychological, spiritual. Know your audience. It's counterproductive to argue from a spiritual, religious point of view with a non-religious person. It might be better to base your argument on science.

Phone Ethna at the office (425-1637) and she will be happy to find you appropriate material that you will be able to pass on to your target audience. Edmonton Prolife has over thirty brochure titles including,

- ***What They Never Told You About The Facts Of Life*** – The fascinating secrets of life within the womb are revealed in this unique full-colour brochure. Uses amusing questions and answers to explore the world of the unborn.
- ***The Morning After Pill: What you should know!*** – Explains how the Morning After Pill works, and demonstrates that it is an abortifacient.
- ***Language of Illusion: The Abortion Slogans*** - The slogans used to defend abortion create a Language of Illusion which may sound loving and logical, sensible and democratic. In reality these slogans manipulate feelings and distort the meaning of words.
- ***Breast Cancer and Abortion: What's the Connection?*** – There is a growing interest in the link between abortion and breast cancer. Maybe it's just a lot of talk. But then, maybe not. As a woman, you owe it to yourself to get the facts.

A complete list of brochures available at the EPL office will be on www.edmontonprolife.org on March 1st.

Don't think you have to master the issues in incredible detail in order to speak out. Admit you don't know everything, but insist that what you do know is essential. The key point is that individual human life begins at conception, and each person has an intrinsic dignity worthy of protection.

University of Alberta Pro-Life Update

Campus Prolife is manning an information booth Fridays in the Student Union Building. Edmonton Prolife is pleased to be able to loan them a display board and provide them with brochures. Contact colinschroeder@yahoo.com if you would like to help out.





A Salute to Motherhood!

On Saturday May 10th at 7:00 pm, Edmonton ProLife will be hosting a *Salute to Motherhood*. It will be a joyful, light, fun look at motherhood. A line-up of short comic skits and song is guaranteed to bring a smile to any mother's face. Headlining the evening from Calgary will be comic Germaine Maxwell, a mother of nine who has laughed her way through over twenty-five years of motherhood. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be served. There will be door prizes and a special salute to all mothers in attendance. This will be our major Spring fundraiser to keep our office open and working through to the Fall. During the evening, there will be a silent auction, so if you have any new or almost-new gifts or services you'd be able to donate to our auction, please phone our office or call Liz at 434-5089. Tickets will sell for \$12 each. More details to follow in a letter to membership. The members of the EPL board look forward to meeting you there.



Standing In Defence of Life



On January 28th, defying -20 degree temperatures, about 200 pro-life supporters showed up for a peaceful protest outside the Edmonton Law Courts. That day marked the 15th anniversary of Morgentaler's successful Supreme Court challenge to the so-called abortion law. A diverse group from the very young to the old showed up to stand in solidarity with the unborn. Denise Mountenay handed out information to passers-by about the link between breast cancer and abortion.

Your next (EPL sponsored) opportunity to peacefully protest abortion will be May 14th at the steps of the Alberta Legislature. Signs will be available at 10:30 a.m. May 14th is the 34th anniversary of the passing of the Omnibus Bill that legalized abortion in Canada. Bring a picnic for afterwards.

If you have never attended a pro-life demonstration before, make a resolution to attend this one. It might seem daunting, but it isn't. You'll be surrounded by friends. These demonstrations keep the pro-life debate alive.

What You Can Do: Circle the date on your calendar, invite a friend, and be there!

Life Principles Study Groups

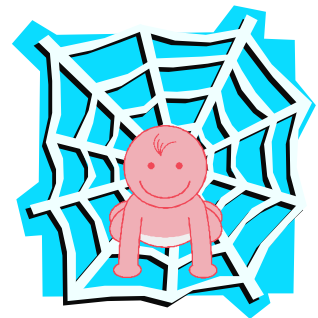
Edmonton ProLife has purchased the *Life Principles Video Series*. The series presents a uniquely rational and commonly accessible approach to explaining the underlying philosophy of the pro-life movement to a secular culture. Fr. Spitzer has captivated audiences across the globe with his unique approach to human happiness and his authentic, delightful style. Captured here in eight half-hour units, Fr. Spitzer weaves his teaching on human dignity into "a philosophy for the pro-life movement that will change the way you see the life issues forever."

Several small study groups will begin in March/April. Facilitating the *Life Principles Video Series* in a public setting is an easy way you can help us spread this message in your community. This would work well with a group of older students, church groups, or with a group of friends. The video series includes a facilitator's guidebook with a complete *Life Principles* video index, full color graphics, study questions and notes on each unit, and a comprehensive Bible study for religious groups. If you are interested in hosting or joining a study group, please call the office.

In this issue, we've expanded to eight pages, and have devoted space to advertising (maximum one page.) Our advertisers will help us make it possible to increase our complimentary distribution of our newsletter into more churches and public places. To help with distribution of the newsletter at your local church or community group, please contact our office. If you would like to advertise in an upcoming issue, please call Ethna at the office for more details.



www.edmontonprolife.org
March 1st, 2003, Check us Out!



Work continues on our #1 education project for this year, which is to design and maintain a professional, accurate pro-life educational website. The basic webpage is ready to be launched. March 1st, 2003, check us out. It will include contact information, the EPL newsletters, membership forms, and links to pro-life and pro-family websites. The basic page will also provide a catalogue of some of EPL's most important resources. These resources can be borrowed from our office, but, in addition, our website will also detail whether they are available through the Edmonton Public Library and the University of Alberta libraries, as well as where they can be purchased. Eventually, this catalogue will cover all our resources.

Edmonton Prolife: Working With Others for Life

Life Canada - Edmonton Prolife has recently become an Associate Member of Life Canada, the national Pro-Life educational group. The object of Life Canada is the establishment and operation of a national association of local and provincial educational pro-life groups across Canada. In co-ordination with local groups, they seek to foster and promote public understanding and knowledge of life issues. *Life Canada News* is published six times a year. To subscribe to *Life Canada News* or to read back issues, go to www.lifecanada.org.

Alberta Pro-Life - Edmonton Prolife is affiliated with Alberta Pro-Life, the provincial pro-life umbrella group. A portion of your membership fee goes to support their work with local and national groups to effect change in our society. *The Rose* is published four times a year. To read *The Rose* online, go to www.albertaprolife.com

A Thank You And A Request

The work of Edmonton Prolife could not be done without the generosity of many in the Greater Edmonton Area. I would like to extend a word of thanks to all who have made a special contribution to EPL in these last few months, be it in cash, kind, or volunteering your time. But again, like a beggar, I repeat my request for help. However, you can help, please do so. If you are not a member, please join. If you are, find another. Numbers do count. If you are able to give a donation, we would be delighted.

Thanks, Paula

Clip out and send to Edmonton Prolife, 212, 11125-107 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5H 0X9

Yes, I would like to help Edmonton Prolife in their work in defence of life.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Annual Membership Fee (\$20) _____

Donation _____

Total Payment Enclosed _____

Payment Options

Cheque

Visa

MasterCard

Card # _____

Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

Cheques payable to *Edmonton Prolife*

Join now for easy monthly giving

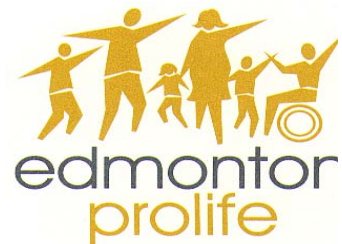
Monthly giving is an easy way to spread your generosity out over the year and provide a stable base of funding for Edmonton Prolife programs. Your annual membership fee will be covered by the monthly donation.

I authorize Edmonton Prolife to withdraw \$_____ (minimum \$5) from my bank account on the 5th day of each month. My personal bank cheque marked VOID is enclosed.

Signature _____

Date _____

Memberships and donations are tax deductible. Receipts will be mailed out at the end of the year.



Our Aims and Objectives

To promote respect for all human life from conception to natural death.

To uphold and defend the right to life, the basic human right on which all other rights depend.

To contribute to the understanding of the people of Edmonton and the surrounding areas, by education, that society has a duty to protect this right.

We are committed to peaceful actions to fulfill our mission.