



Probus Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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Presentation: September 17 – Senator Paula Simons



Alberta Senator Paula Simons spoke to our September meeting on “The Evolution of an Independent Senate”. She spoke first about some of the advantages of a non-elected House of Parliament, including:

- A hedge against majority tyranny.
- An ability to take the long view on topics that may evolve over time
 - Can explore/study controversial topics without creating a political backlash
 - Can recruit and appoint a diverse range of people who might not thrive in electoral politics

The Senate has changed rather dramatically (for the Senate) with the introduction of independent senators. While previously almost all Senators caucused with one of the parties in the Commons, now only a minority do. This leaves more Senators free to follow their own inclinations.

Tour: September 23 and 26 Stars Ambulance

On September 23rd and 26th we toured the facility of the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service or STARS. We were welcomed by Lyle Young, our volunteer guide, who gave us some background on STARS and the helicopters they fly.

STARS started in 1985, initially in Calgary but has now expanded across Western Canada. Approximately 25% of the costs are covered by government grants, but 75% is covered by private donations. Fund raising is done locally, meaning that all funds raised in Alberta are used in Alberta.



The helicopters now used by STARS are the BK117 model but they are aging. The whole fleet across western Canada is now in the process of being replaced by the Airbus H145 model. Edmonton can expect to receive its new helicopters in a matter of months.



Club member Scott Watson tries out the controls of the BK 117.