



PROBUS Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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March 2 - Jeffrey Hansen-Carlson

Jeffrey Hansen-Carlson, President and CEO of Prairie Sky, spoke on Edmonton's Prairie Sky Gondola proposal. He was ably assisted by 2 members of the Prairie Sky team: Claire McDonald and Krista Wright. All have "day" jobs as well. Claire is a volunteer with Prairie Sky.

The project, when completed will run a Gondola from Edmonton Centre to White Avenue. The project came out of brainstorming session. It was selected as the number one project. Also, the Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board published a report on the viability of urban gondola in Edmonton. These 2 events were independent of each other.

Technical data on the Gondola, includes:

- 5 stations along the route
- Incline length of 2545 metres
- Horizontal length of 2544 metres
- 20 towers
- 86 cabins, each taking 11 minutes for a one-way trip

The project team has completed the first 2 phases. The second phase having been completed. The 3rd phase is expected to take 18 months and involving extensive consultation and moving the project plan to a shovel ready stage. The project will be completed in compliance with the 6 principles set out by the City, some of which are:

- No public funding
- Open books to the City
- Robust engagement
- Minimal ecological footprint

The Business case completed in phase 2, demonstrated the viability of the project. For example, round trips are projected to be 1.7 million per year. That level of ridership shows significant number from locals and visitors. This is sufficient ridership to provide the foundation for sound business case.

Also, important is the value proposition for Edmontonian, this proposition includes: provide a utility, contribute to skyline, create jobs, create revenue for City, etc. The project will support the Ross Dale development plan. Some other interesting pieces of information, include:

- This is one of the first Urban Gondolas in Canada
- Funded provided by investors, they are looking at debt and equity financing
- 1.7 million trips are 15% of capacity
- Trip cost is based on a dynamic pricing model
- Conservative estimate of capital cost is \$155 million

The presentation was quite interesting and well received by the club members. It was followed by an extensive Q&A.

As a final note, I think Mel must add a tour of the Gondola to his list.

March 16 - David Goa

David Goa's presentation is titled "Living with Muslims - On engaging Islam and our Muslim neighbors: local and geo-political considerations." David has an impressive CV which includes current teaching activities, major research projects, lengthy list of lectures and writing extensive.

He spoke about his relationship with Muslims using this a basis for us to think about Islam. He first encountered Islam as a boy. From his early experiences with Islam, he was exposed to a positive and friendly view of the Islam. In the 1970's he started building the cultural collection at the Royal Alberta Museum. As part of this, he began field research in religions of the people who call Alberta Home. He shared with us anecdotes of what he saw such as the Muslim and Jewish communities working together. The initial followers of Islam present in Alberta were Lebanese, who had come over to take part in the fir trade. In subsequent years (the 1980's) the nature of the Islamic community expanded extensively as people from many other counties arrived. This saw a fundamental change in the leadership of the faith, to a professional form headed by an Imam (prayer leader).

Islam is supported by 5 pillars, these are:

1. Shahada (Creed) – there is no God be the God and Mohamed is the profit of God
2. Ramadan – the time of fasting and the importance of the month of fasting
3. Zakat – obligation to give a portion of their income to charity
4. Hajj – pilgrimage from Jeda to Mecca
5. Salat – Obligation to pray 5 times a day

He also shared with us the nature of 2 branches of Islam, these are Sunni and Shia. The difference between these branches found its roots in the early days of Islam. The difference was view on who the authority of the Profited passed to. Sunni believes that the authority dwells in the community. The Shia believed that the authority passed to son-in-law of Profit. He also shared is views on the root of the current geopolitical conflicts involving Islam. For example, he discussed Turkey current state and how it began and evolved.

His presentation employed stories he heard and what he had learned through his studies and travels. He showed a considerable depth of understanding. It was much appreciated. Again the presentation was followed by an extensive Q&A.

March 23 - Sue and David Williams



Sue and David Williams present “Ready to Come About” a story of an improbable year sailing the North Atlantic. The presentation dealt with the trip across the Atlantic and the book Sue wrote entitled “Reading to Come About” (book Promo Code SUEW25 on publisher website). Sue read from her book, while David and Sue took us through a slide show of the trip. David had a lifelong interest in sailing, while Sue participated in trips around the great lakes, she did not share his passion. Sue and David experienced personal challenges starting in late 2005. In response, Sue suggested that sailing across the Atlantic Ocean was an opportunity for her and David as well as their three sons. In May 2007, Sue and David cast off from Hamilton harbour.

The preparation for the trip were extensive, starting with acquiring an Alberg 37 ocean ready sale boat named Inia. With no “blue water” experience they prepared for the trip though reading, and courses. They prepared the craft by installing a full range of safety equipment. The craft was narrow and deep; therefore, it was well able to withstand a significant wave striking from the side. This proved to be important due to the unusual number of gales they encountered.

The trip started in Hamilton Ontario then:

- 23 days to the Azores
- 12 days to Portugal
- 4 days to Porto Santo and Madeira
- Short trip to Canary Islands
- 8 days to Cape Verde Islands
- 23 day to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands
- 7 days to the Bahamas
- Chesapeake Bay then home

The statistics on the trip:

- 373 days
- 11,000 nautical miles
- 14 offshore passages
- 86 days at sea

The trip was eventful. They experience bad weather, engine trouble, health issues, constant motion, a tangled net, etc. They illustrated these with anecdotes, such as:

- Needing to learn how to “heave to” at sea
- Figuring out how to use the mechanical self steering system
- Fixing engines leaks
- Unhooking a net from the propellor

- Repairing rigging

Apart from the challenges they faced and mastered they also saw most remarkable sun rises and sun sets, whales and dolphin. They measured the trip as a success not just because of the experience, but also when they saw the growth in their children.

As to now, they would like to sail. However, they had to sell the Inia. David and Sue continue to work in their fields. Sue also wrote a successful book on the trip and is now writing a second book which is a fiction story.

Stay Health and Enjoy