



Probus Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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Probus Events:

October 19

David Percy will spoke on Alberta's Energy Future. He pointed out that changing circumstances in Canada and the USA. For example, Key Stone was approved and then then after the recent election it was canceled. He explained the source of fracking. It was done to extract gas from the deep rock to supply gas for Chicago. This was later adapted to recovery of oil. As a result of this innovation, North America was awash in oil and gas. Prior to this USA wanted our oil and a trade agreement was signed to ensure access. Biden now is pushing to get oil price to be as low as possible. The USA still wants oil and gas. He showed a slide that demonstrates the integration of the pipelines between western Canada and the USA. Now he notes that any pipeline from Canada to the USA is viewed in a negative light.

He shared a slide which graphically displayed the change in Oil price over 2019 and 2020. In April 2020 the price became negative. The price drop was initiated by Saudi Arabia to punish Russia for not toeing the line on volume cuts. Within 3 months Russia was in line and the price rose. Now the price is quite good for Alberta. These kinds of fluctuation have occurred in past. Oil prices are quite unpredictable.

Since prices vary a great deal, Alberta Government revenues fluctuate as well. The increase gas price is reflected in the price of Liquid Natural Gas (LNG). Over the latter half of 2021 prices have increased dramatically. The impact on the UK and Japan will very significant this winter.

The biggest impact now on the energy sector is the increasing concern with climate change. For example, the International Energy Agency advised in August 2021 that all development of oil and gas should stop immediately. This makes sense from an environment perspective but will increase the OPEC's share of the market to 50%. This may be a problem. World consumption will continue to increase to 2040. Even if sustainable development model is met, oil and gas will continue to be consumed.

Another example of energy issues, Germany is experiencing energy shortage. Recently, it has not gotten enough energy from wind. In response it reopened its coalmine in what was East Germany. The energy issue is exacerbated since Germany has also abandoned nuclear power. This has led to unusual political challenges. Another example, in UK major industries have shut down due to high gas prices due to price of LNG.

Alberta is positioned to be the world supplier of energy. But we need to move away from the unwinnable battle of the past. We now must focus on carbon capture (CC). What we have done to date on CC has proved to be useful. We also use carbon to repressurize old oil fields.

Another impact on energy in Alberta is the phasing out Coal and moving to renewable energy.

Another important change is that which is occurring in indigenous relations. Energy east stumbled due to several issues associated with indigenous relations. Contributing to these challenges was the move to give Cabinet the final decision. Cabinet did a poor consultation as it led up to its decision on TMPL. Meanwhile industry moved forward the impact benefit agreements with tribes. These proved to be somewhat ineffective. Industry has now introduced participation Agreements. He shared several examples of the impact of these agreements on the positive views of projects held by tribes.

David then answered several questions from the members. His presentation was very informative.

October 26

Bev Dietrich presentation entitled "Sitting Pretty: History of the Toilet". The talk included evolution of the toilet, development of toilet paper and outhouses. In about year 2000 she was involved in the setting up of several exhibits. Her museum's part was the toilet exhibits. These exhibits toured for several years showing at several museums. Many of which had fun with it. She shared several stories about the exhibit. The exhibit included an outhouse, working toilet, and other educational displays.

With respect to the evolution of the toilet, we started with ancient Rome. It built quite a few public toilets throughout the city. A number were elaborately decorated. To support these toilets the Roman built an elaborate sewer system. Rome exported their toilet technology to many sites in the Empire. The management of wastes degenerated with fall of the Roman Empire. As a result, cities like London experienced the spread of diseases.

Castles included Garderobe on the side of a castle which was the toilet of the day. Next was the development of the Gong Fermor, these were men who collect waste from pits at night. Sir John Harrington developed the water closet in 1596. At that time, he wrote a book on the subject, and in it he discussed his water closet. Next, Alexander Cummings patented the water closet with an "S" trap. We use the "S" trap to this day. Following this invention was the pan water closet. She shared with us the step-by-step development of different toilets over following years.

Finally, Thomas Crapper patented the valve that we still use to flush a toilet. He was plumber by trade. He made several innovations leading the 9 patents. No all proved to be successful. He acquired a patent for the flush mechanism. By the 1880's he was the royal sanitary engineer. Apparently, the saying of going to the crapper evolved because the American soldiers in WWI would go to the toilet and saw the Crapper name on the water tank, thus they started saying that they were "going to the Crapper". A Rev Henry Moule invented the compostable toilet. While very useful, they did not last due to the effort involved in maintaining them.

Next, she discussed the history of the chamber pot. These pots came were made of a range of materials. Also, she found that people now adays did not realize what they had when they acquired a chamber pot. This led to rather unusual used for the chamber pot. The artwork involved placed on chamber pots were quite remarkable and amusing. Another style of pot for women was the Bourdalou. There were more types of pots she illustrated for us.

We heard about the evolution of the outhouse. An outhouse provided privacy and moved the facility to outside the house along with its smell. She showed several examples of outhouses and what they were made of. The building was over a privy pit, which allowed ready access to facilitate the cleaning out of the pit. There is a "Privy Diggers" association who investigate old pits to collect the many objects dropped down these pits.

She spoke on to the history of toilet paper. She mentioned the many different devised used as a toilet paper from seas shells to corn cobs. The first papers were in England in the 1880's. These papers were in sheets. The first rolled paper were invented by Walter J. Alcott. In 1935 splinter free toilet paper was a big seller. Initially roles were not perforated, as we all know, the roles are now perforated. She also showed the many uses of toilet paper.

She set the stage for the great debate how to set up the role. Essentially, should the paper to go over the role or under it. She mentioned that this was a very controversial subject.

She then moved on to the subject of public washrooms. Now, these are again becoming more common. They now automatically clean up after use. We were told that Japanese toilets have many features.

Bev shared this unique presentation and many stories she learned in the development of the presentation. It gave us something to think about as we sit on the subject of the talk. Including thinking about the 2.5 billion people who do not have access to sanitation on November 19th, world toilet day.

Interesting aside

Yet another blast from the past. I was very fond of what were called shaggy dog stories. Here is one a remember. I apologize in advance.

One day the chief adviser to the King came forward to report that a fair maiden was held captive in the north. The King stated that she must be rescued. So, he called for his greatest knight. The adviser told him that the knight was on a quest and unavailable. So, the King called for his second-best knight, again this knight was unavailable. Thus, it went for each of his knights. So, he called for whoever was left.

A small very old decrepit knight in rusty armer stepped forward. The king charged him with the task. The knight ready to leave climbed on his mount, a shagging dog. He was too small to ride horse. He set off on a bright sunny day waving at the peasants as he traveled north. As he progressed the weather changed. It became miserable. The wind blasted the heavy snow in his face and the temperature plugged. He was concerned that he would not make it. Finally, he saw a light in the distance. He and his dog struggled to the light finally coming upon an Inn. Arriving at the Inn he knocked on the door. The Inn Keeper opened the door a crack and stated that he had no room left. People were sleeping everywhere. The knight exclaimed his desperation. The Inn Keeper opened the door wide to show how busy it was. In doing so, light flooded he yard and the exhausted dog revealing the blood and ice on the face and feet of the dog. At the this the Inn keeper exclaimed...Come in. I cannot turn a Knight out on a dog like this!!

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