



Probis Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

September 2020

Editor: Ken Hoffman

Website: www.probis-central-edmonton.com

Email: probis.cent.ed@gmail.com

Probis Events:

September 15 David T. Chapman

David T. Chapman spoke to us about **Wild, Weird and Wacky weather**. David started photography at 16. He is interested in weather events and nature and has become a storm chaser. In the course of his work, David has studied meteorology, ornithology, and the Northern Lights, also known as the Aurora Borealis. His career focused on Ontario. He currently lives in Niagara area.

His deep understanding of meteorology was matched by his impressive photographic skills. His stunning photographs illustrated many rare meteorological effects, some being familiar, others being rare.

His presentation was delivered as a video which he spoke to as it unfolded. What we saw was an array of weather events and he describe each of these events.

As an inveterate storm chaser, David showed how tornadoes and funnel clouds are formed from differences in temperature at different heights. The leading edge of a serious storm results from cold air moving into warm air to form a 'shelf cloud' at the line of convergence. There was even one example of a funnel cloud formed in winter from snow.

And just when you thought that you knew all there was to know about lightning – we learnt that it could strike upwards, as shown in one rare photograph. A negative charge on land and a positive charge in the cloud creates this effect. It was also very surprising to learn that the usual downward form of lightning can strike land 20 kilometers away from the storm.

Addition Events included:

- Various cloud formations
- Lake effect storms, which can deliver major snowstorms and heavy winds
- Ice bridges these result from winds blowing ice ashore and later winds carving them out.
- Artic sea smoke
- Funnel clouds, including cold core funnels
- Rain and hail
- Northern lights (he noted that we likely had a better view these from Edmonton due it being further north).
- Steam devils
- Hoarfrost

And on a closing, optimistic note, our speaker forecast 'a gentle fall' on account of la niña. His many great pictures can be found by the following the link that Yves included in an email.

September 29 Garry Smith,

Garry Smith, a national and international expert on gambling and related addiction talked to us about **Gaming in Alberta**. He led the Gaming Research Institute of Alberta for many years. It identified problems related to gaming. During this time, gambling in Alberta became much more extensive than other provinces and many countries. He has lectured on problem gambling at three Canadian universities and appeared as an expert witness in at least six court cases. He has also advised judges and other members of the legal profession, as well as social agencies.

From prohibition under the Criminal Code in 1892, gambling was later legalized for horse racing and summer fairs in the 1920s, and for bingos, carnivals, lotteries and casinos during the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1990s, video lottery terminals were legalized in hotels. The same machines were known as "slots" when installed in casinos. Their introduction was contentious, resulting in public debate and the maximum number being set at 6,000 for the province. For the operator of a single slot machine, the proceeds are \$30,000 p.a., leading to fewer "table" games such as poker, blackjack, etc.

The number of casinos is now the highest Canada at 24, whereas Toronto and Montreal have only one each. Five of these casinos are operated by First Nations, which share the proceeds with other First Nations. Other casinos operate under the "charity" model whereby a charity can register for a share of a specific casino's proceeds every two years or so. Gambling proceeds of the provincial government are \$1.4B p.a., a significant amount. However, recent news reports are that it has had a major decline this year.

Other forms of gambling (such as racing, sports, and lotteries) are stagnant. Bingo halls in the province have declined to just ten.

The "hold" (the amount held back by the house) is 30% from slot machines, 46% from sports betting and 55% from lotteries. These odds are not well-known and very much better odds are found in Las Vegas.

Gambling addiction is mostly related to the ease of playing the slots, due primarily to their speed and glitziness. Consequently, addicts maybe driven to theft, such as embezzlement, to feed their addiction. This addiction can lead to loss of family, malnutrition in children, unemployment, homelessness, and lack of financial resources. Short of reducing the number of machines and limiting access, gambling addiction is hard to prevent and to treat. A small amount of government revenue is spent on prevention and cure.

In the week of September 27, the provincial government announced that on-line gambling will be available 24/7 through the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Corporation. It is possible that the on-line version of slots will cause further addiction.