

971 AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

RCAF ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

January 2012

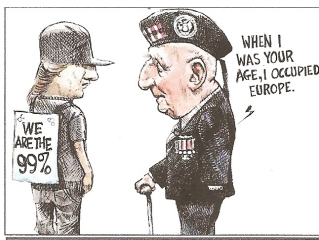
Colorado Springs
www.971WingAFAC.com



Russ and Joan Barber send some warmth from Bouchard Gardens
- all leaves, no flowers in this area.

Social Calendar

- Nov 05 Not only did 51 of us enjoy a great evening at Jim Berwick's but so did a score of ducks who also appreciated Jim's generosity. As Margit could not make the party, Roy decided to purchase a cake. Roy never got the sergeant stage out of his blood as he remains a great scrounger, falling into amazing deals. He happened upon a huge wedding cake being offered cheaply when the wedding was called off.
- Nov 11 A very impressive Remembrance/Veterans Day. RAF, RCAF, and RCAFA wreaths were among the 10 laid. Darrell Levitt was again Master of Ceremonies, LtCmdr Bonita Mason was the chaplain, and LGen Tom Lawson gave a speech that deserves to be published. 14 Association members attended.
- Dec 09 Three Wing couples enjoyed the Regular Force Christmas party in the Crowne Plaza Hotel.



Stolen from:
Air Vibes.
Vancouver Island Aircrew Association - by Russ Barber

INPUTS AND THE FRUSTRATING SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN A POLARIZED SOCIETY: Many inputs are promised, but few arrive, so this time I was about to call in the Occupiers for people who were not too afraid, too shy, or too lazy to voice their opinions. But I delayed as I had this issue almost finished when I wrote a letter to Maclean's questioning their cover and support for the Tar Sands, This sparked what I have sought for 25 years with these newsletters - a discussion on vital world problems. So, I have gone into overtime, revising the whole issue and producing two extra pages. How lucky can you get?

The Editor's Corner

Tar/Oil Sands, Cycling, Relatives, and Friends

My most prolific and prompt correspondent is my nephew, David. David is an Ottawa lawyer who led the onslaught against the tobacco industry and continues to fund Air Canada jets as he advises governments in 4 continents. He is also a keen cyclist who maintains a bicycle in London to use in his almost-weekly visits to the UK. Recently I asked him for some statistics on his cycling and for his comments on Andrew Nikiforuk's devastating attack on the Tar Sands and the Alberta government in his book "Tar Sands". Reckless leasing out so much of Alberta, tall toxic tailing ponds up to 14 miles long, thousands of wildlife killed annually, enormous loss of fresh water and natural gas, money resulting in more misery than happiness in Fort McMurray, acid rain ruining lakes, and all this for the benefit of foreign oil giants and markets. His reply:

Since I started keeping records in 2007, I have logged 354 rides of over 100 miles each, and with many of the rides being well in excess of 100 miles. It gives me a total distance of over one and a half trips around this planet. That is something astronauts can do while eating lunch, but for me it has taken a bit longer. In addition to fresh air and exercise I get to learn a lot about history, agriculture, small town economics, architecture, etc. and it seems I make new discoveries on each ride. For instance, with all the leaves off the trees yesterday's trip gave me a first-ever view of the remains of what had once been a crossing of the Jock River near Richmond. I also, for the first time, went past a beautiful old stone Catholic church that I'd never knew existed. Another nice thing about cycling is that it is relatively easy on the joints. The best thing is that the technology behind bikes is improving faster than I am ageing, allowing me to cycle farther, faster and more frequently than I could in my 20s!

My chief concern about attacks on the oil sands is that campaigners act as if this is a supply side problem. If the oil sands create problems they seem to think we can solve the problem by just shutting them down, or at least curtail further development. Yet in the absence of fundamental shifts on the demand side for fossil fuels the absence of production from one source merely transfers production to other sources that are often at least as bad. Whether that be drilling in other environmentally-sensitive areas as the Gulf of Mexico, the new offshore Brazilian discoveries, the Venezuelan oil sands, shale oil, Californian heavy oil, the Caspian, etc. the fact is that oil extraction is progressively more environmentally destructive than was the case when light sweet crude could be pumped out of the early wells of the oil age.

In addition, much oil is now sourced from very disreputable regimes. Not only does that cause huge ecological damage but the oil money actively harms the countries involved. An African doctor friend of mine who was once head of the African Medical Association has worked all over that continent and told me at a recent UK meeting that the estimate is that 94% of the funds provided to Nigeria are lost to corruption. Even while Nigeria flares off its gas while producing oil, thus adding greatly and unnecessarily to global warming. I think the flow of oil money to the Persian Gulf creates huge problems, and agree with Sam Harris that religious belief is the greatest challenge currently facing humankind. Yet the oil from Saudi Arabia is funding the global proselytizing by the hate-filled Wahhabi sect, and allowing the election-stealing and Holocaust-denying Iranian regime to become nuclear armed.

Coal is an even bigger problem in terms of environmental damage and global warming, and the growth in coal consumption in places like China is simply dramatic. I get the Economist's Pocket World in Figures book each year and looking at the phenomenal increase in Chinese coal production and consumption is pretty depressing. The US has a very destructive addiction to coal, but China has more than replicated the size of the entire US coal market simply in its *increase* in consumption in the past few years. Even some of the attempts to move to alternative energy sources have proven to be very destructive, as Trish has found with wind farms. Those giant blades kill an extraordinary number of birds, and Ontario is like other jurisdictions in heavily subsidizing the construction of such facilities on major migratory routes.

So, yes, I agree that the oil sands are destructive. I am also encouraged by new technologies that are far less intrusive, and in the creative abilities of our species to extract energy with less environmental destruction. (Continued on page 8)

DUKE MACISAAC

succumbed to a massive heart attack in Boyton Beach, Florida, 13 November.

Miss you, Duke!

Duke was born in Glace Bay, NS, 15 Jun 1932. After graduating from St. Francis Xavier University, he taught school in Manitoba then graduated from Dalhousie in medicine. He practiced in New Waterford before serving in 3 hospitals in Montreal. He became chief of urology with the US Army at Fort Dix in the rank of LCol, and was later transferred to Colorado Springs where he joined our Wing in 1993. He and Claudette hosted several of our social events. In 1999 they returned to Montreal then retired in Florida where they have a daughter and family as well as a son and family in Toronto.

Duke is the 26th member our Wing has lost since its founding in 1983.

A SPITFIRE'S BROWNING MACHINE GUN, (one of 8 carried) after 70 years in a Donegal bog, still fires. This Spitfire was one of 20 paid for by the Canadian Weston family and was flown by Bud Wolfe, a Yank in the RAF, who baled out from a crippled aircraft in December 1941 to be incarcerated by the neutral Irish. So far the one gun tested still fires at the rate of 940 rounds per minute.

LEE TREVINO - a true story: One day, after joining the PGA tour in 1965, Lee Trevino, a professional golfer and married man, was at his home in Dallas, Texas, mowing his front lawn, as he always did.

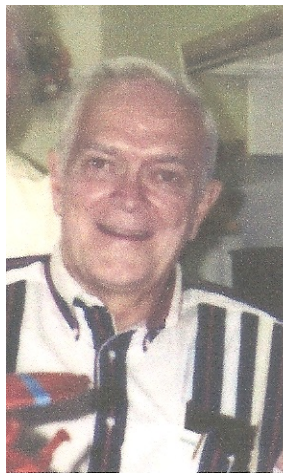
A lady driving by in a big, shiny Cadillac stopped in front of his house, lowered the window and asked, "Excuse me, do you speak English?"

Lee responded, "Yes M'aam, I do"

The lady then asked, "What do you charge to do yard work?"

Lee said, "Well, the lady in this house lets me sleep with her".

The lady hurriedly put the car into gear and sped off.



NOTHING IS MORE VITAL THAN

NOTHING: Nothing is the mother of the Big Bang. Nothing makes up most of the Cosmos. World scientists are searching for Nothing. Vast sums are being spent on Nothing. Detectives are searching for a fugitive named Higgs who is hiding in Nothing. Nothing makes sense to our best brains but confuses most of us. If Nothing is found we will be much more knowledgeable. It was so a number of times in the past. Mathematics were cumbersome until 2300 years ago when the Babylonians conceived a symbol for Nothing, followed by the Indians 1383 and the Europeans 809 years ago, finally leading to the delights of cartesian geometry and calculus. But zero, although a leap in human thinking, is just a symbol marking the boundary between positive and negative numbers. The real Nothing awaits us, perhaps in CERN, perhaps in a spark emanating from your brain. Uncover the mysteries of Nothing and the world is yours! Embrace Nothing and whole new vistas may be ours.

A BELGIAN BEAUTY ET AL: Mainly through daughters actively seeking data on the careers of their WWII fathers, I have been rewarded with new contacts and information on over a dozen friends lost for over 60 years. Two of these, Don Edy (London, Ontario) and Bobby Laumans used to star in amazingly-good plays we wrote and produced. Don was a handsome 33 RAF Sqn pilot in North Africa. Bobby had escaped Belgium to become an RAF pilot. Both were shot down to end up with me in Stalag Luft III. Bobby played female roles. He had the looks and figure that, when dressed for the part, had us climbing the walls. So it is great to learn that he flew 30 years for Sabena Airlines, including the Montreal run, became chief pilot, worked in Seattle on the 707, 727, 737, 747, married an English girl, with many Alberta relatives, and has 3 daughters. Sadly he is now quite deaf. I learned this from Barb, Don's daughter who has the energy, intelligence and writing skills that I remember in Don who published a book on POW life "Goon in the Block". Living in Calgary, Barb visits her Dad, now a widower and suffering from advanced macular degeneration, frequently and retyped his book when a publisher asked for a reprint years after the first edition sold out.

Post war the cast for our play, "Messalina" reenacted it in the UK to help Red Cross coffers.

WEATHER PREDICTIONS: A new chief on a remote reserve in Alberta was asked if the coming winter was going to be cold or mild. As he was raised in a modern society he knew not the old secrets, so to be on the safe side he told his people to collect lots of firewood.. Being practical, he phoned a week later, Environment Canada, asking their forecast, and was told it would be cold, so he warned the tribe to collect even more wood. Two weeks later he phoned again, getting this reply “It looks like this winter is going to be quite cold.” So he urged everyone to redouble their wood collecting.

As the wood piles mounted he thought he had better check again, this time being told “Absolutely, it will be the coldest winter ever.”

“How can you be so sure?” he asked.

The meteorologist replied, “The natives are collecting huge piles of wood.” (From Peter Tutt)

DRUMS OF WAR: Ignoring the disasters of so many recent military adventures, idiots, caring for their own short-term gain, are urging a military strike on Iran. This has all the earmarks of the Iraq “Weapons of Mass Destruction” illusion. Iran’s government is not popular, even with its own people, but we are more at fault than it is and we have done it more harm than it has us. We now allow 6 powers in the area to be nuclear armed: US, Russia, India, China, Pakistan, Israel. Not counting nuclear, Israel’s military capability ranks #10 while Iran’s is #12. Iran has been the victim rather than the aggressor and, if you talk to Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, or Turkey, it is Israel that is the aggressor to be feared. It accepts generous US aid but declines US advice. It has an illegal nuclear arsenal we refrain from criticizing while condemning Iran’s only-suspected aim. Israel’s survival demands an approach that is more considerate of its neighbours. It has the ability to seize a great opportunity.

Is not Iran much less of a danger than man-made global warming, excess population, habitat destruction, or a tribal US congress?

The survival of all of us demands recognizing real world threats, few of which can be solved by military force.

VOYAGER 1 and 2: When I despair of the human species I find solace in the likes of NASA scientists who designed and launched in 1977 two remarkable vehicles powered by plutonium 238 that is good for 50 years, producing energy equal to 3 light bulbs. Voyage 1 is now 11 billion miles away and Voyage 2 is at 9 billion. Commands from earth take 13.5 hours to reach them and confirmation another 13.5 to be received. A year ago Voyager 1 advised that charged particles around it had come to a stop indicating it had entered our solar end zone estimated to terminate 12 billion miles away.

GROWING MEAT WITHOUT MURDERING ANIMALS is another promising venture, currently led by the Netherlands. A small bit of muscle taken painlessly from, say a pig, can provide myosatellite cells that, with a growth serum and a vibrating scaffold that helps cells produce proteins and muscle that can be shredded, with flavours, iron, and vitamins added, producing meat in sausage-like form. Replicating a thick steak may be a decade off.

The world’s 1.5 billion livestock consume 40% of the world’s cereal grains, despoil 70% of arable land and 8% of the water supply, and produce 20% of anthropogenic greenhouse gases. Deforestation of the Amazon is 80% due to cattle ranching. Many human epidemics have animal origins.

So, this is a revolution whose time has come, Sure, there will be unforeseen problems and setbacks, but the goal is worth it.

Please pass the In Vitro meat.

FORMIDABLE DEFENCE: In September 1939 when Canada declared war, I was working in the Royal Bank in Napanee, Ontario. I was also a member of the Militia so I was immediately assigned to a shift to guard the town’s large brick armouries. There I was, at age 20, marching up and down, toting a Lee Enfield rifle and bayonet.

We were quite successful. No sabotage or invasion ever occurred! We were never issued with any ammunition. Heavens no! Our mere presence was enough to scare off any ill wisher. All wars should be fought that way.

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Book

Reviews



AVIATION IN CANADA - BOMBING AND COASTAL OPERATIONS 1939 - 1945
BY LARRY MILBERRY, CanAv Books, Toronto, 2011, 272 pages

This massive work contains 661 photographs and mention of 1,388 individuals including several pages devoted to the crew of one minor contributor known today as Ye Olde Scribe. Here is just one example, picked at random: John Alexander Powell was born in Maidstone, England, educated in Montreal and Jamaica, earned an RAF commission at Cranwell in 1929. While rising to the rank of Group Captain he earned an OBE for organizing the Rhodesian Air Force, then a DSO and a US DFC before being killed in Aug 1944 flying a Mustang over Yugoslavia. This book, embracive as it is, can only begin to depict the slaughter, the sacrifice, and the material destruction seen by two Canadian WWII operational commands. While Bomber Command suffered the highest casualties - 59%, Coastal Command ranged further afield - The Arctic, North and South, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, etc. So many stories that Larry has revived for us.

There are copies of log book entries, letters home, leaflets, church memorials, newspaper columns, and a list of the 24 officers commanding 6 Group squadrons who became casualties: 18 killed, 4 POWs, 1 evaded, and 1 an escaped POW.

It is simply impossible to adequately thank Larry for the years of research and interviewing (the vast majority now dead) he has devoted, at small financial return, to broadcasting Canada's aviation history.

BEHIND CANADIAN BARBED WIRE by DAVID CARTER
Holmes Printing, Medicine Hat, 1998, 2nd printing 2004, 254 pages

An Anglica clergyman, David was a member of the Alberta Legislature 1979-1993 and speaker 1986-1993. He has published 6 books on western Canadian history and 2 on poetry

This is the story of 46,000 German military incarcerated in Canada during WWII. They were guarded by the "Alley Cats" so named from Colonel Alley who was the first Director of the Veterans' Guard of Canada organized in May 1940 mainly with Boer War and WWI veterans. Later they were known as Taylor's Toothless Tigers when Col Taylor became director. By 1945 they numbered 15,000. They were responsible for guarding vital installations as well as POWs.

Initially, Carter describes the camps in Banff, Kananaskis-Seebe, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Ozada, all in Alberta plus Bowmanville, Gravenhurst, Kingston, and Kitchener, in Ontario. Oldham, England, had a centre for processing POWs en route to and from Canada. He does not include the smaller bush camps in northern Ontario and Manitoba that were described in the November newsletter.

Carter tells the story of 7 German POWs who were tried and hung for murdering fellow POWs whom they accused of giving information to the enemy. They were hung in Lethbridge but are now buried in Kitchener.

Also included are tales of the 171,000 Ukrainians who had emigrated prior to 1914, many of whom were incarcerated as Austrian enemy aliens in WWI.

This book is crammed with the stories of individual soldiers, sailors, and airmen so takes time to digest. Of course it tells of escape attempts such as the two who almost succeeded by concealing themselves in pianos returned to the supplier for repairs. As with us in Germany the vast majority of escape attempts failed.

RCAF POINTS OF VIEW

1. By Bill Carr, LGen ret'd:

I was not involved in any way in the decision made to reinstate the 'Royal' titles to Canada's Navy and Air Force. In taking the decision though I suggest a bit more home-work should have been done. The impact of the name change on the morale of thousands of personnel serving and who have served since 1968 may have been overlooked. The Canadian Forces Reorganization Act was passed into law on 1 Feb 1968 and the RCN, the Can Army and the RCAF were abolished and unified to become the Canadian Armed Forces. Thus for 43 years(Only one year less than the life-span of the RCAF!) Canadian military personnel have honoured and honed an image of excellence at home and abroad, which is totally befitting their Canadian Military heritage. So the heart strings of not one of today's serving Air Force person could yearn for his personal 'Good old RCAF days'.

The RCAF was a clone of the RAF. i.e. Officer's rank titles, uniform, structure, motto and ceremonial processes. However, the new RCAF is not the reincarnation of the old RCAF. Sic Iter Ad Astra was approved by Her Majesty to be the motto of the Canadian Air Force on the 10 Sep '75. Per Ardua Ad Astra is the motto of the RAF. The new RCAF has a Commander, not a CAS, and he's a LT Gen, not an Air Marshal. And most importantly, today's Canadian Air Force includes, with great pride what once was the Fleet Air Arm and the one-time Canadian Army Aviation branch. When Air Command was created in 1975, the reasons it purposely avoided trying to become a reincarnated RCAF are spelled out in detail in the Catherine Ayres official report, 'The Organization of Air Command 1973-1975'

The Commander of the new RCAF has confirmed the new title of Canada's Air Force, implies absolutely no change whatsoever to current extant organizational structures, operational roles or policies.

While I personally am honoured to say I served in peace and war in the old RCAF for 28 years, I am just as proud to say, I served with the same kinds of professional airmen and airwomen in the Canadian Forces Air Force for a further 10 years.

Conclusion? Some one should have given this Royal reincarnation idea a bit more thought. I'm a dyed in the wool Royalist, but in this instance, and assuming Royal protocols have been followed, I suspect her Majesty would not be too offended were the decision rescinded.

2. By Ye Olde Scribe:

We Canadians have a continuing battle to present an identity to the world that the Australians, New Zealanders, etc who retained the "Royal" and the Union Jack, seem to escape. Like every other country we have a heritage that includes good and bad but I am one of those who finds comfort in respecting my heritage and all those who have contributed to its better aspects. My joy at the reinstating of the "Royal" has mixed origins. To me it reinstates the family of Royal Air Forces I knew in WWII and the home and umbrella they formed to include all those Europeans as well as over 9,000 from our errant daughter, the United States. Part of this family was salvaged in NATO. This "family" feeling negates the worst aspects of nationalism, and, for me, was most strong in my years in my Alma Mater, Stalag Luft III, where aircrew from over a score of countries enjoyed a "Oneness". In post war POW reunions in the UK and Canada everything was "Royal Air Forces" that ignored Canada's official retirement from the club. Of course this interferes with my desire to have others recognize the impressive contributions Canada and Canadians have made to the world. Also the term "Royal" which, to me, the UK generously shared with others, actually is embedded in numerous countries. My ancestry, 3/4 Irish and 1/4 French, has only one line originating in Northern Ireland which could be considered "British", yet, during WWII, I found fitting into the UK and RAF life so natural that I want to preserve the relationship. Besides, French and Irish history bulges with Royal families.

Having stumbled into a revolution the US tends to downplay its rich colonial experience - Spanish, Dutch, French, and British. Colonial Canada leaves us a proud French and UK heritage. Both spent much blood and treasure in building and defending the colonies and often served the Natives much better than did the settlers. British fair play to the French Canadians and the Natives prevented a US takeover. We rightly deplored French absolutism and the UK caste system yet so many among the higher echelons forged rights for the less privileged. And, with today's 1% vs 99% has the US not developed its own caste system? We should cherish the best aspects of our histories. Your views?

DARRELL'S CHRISTMASSES

The military is full of traditions from mess dinners to Trooping the Colours to simple battalion or unit sports days. SO WHY SHOULD CHRISTMAS be any different? I have spent seven Christmases in the Canadian Army and 20 in the Canadian Air Force. In many respects, the traditions are the same. As a young single private in the PPCLI, I found my first Christmas in the Canadian Forces eating dinner at the Regimental Mess Hall. Have you ever wandered by a military mess hall and taken in a smell of the odors emanating the building? Breakfast, lunch, and dinner all smell the same. No wonder “mystery meat” was the fare of the day, but I digress. I remember walking into the mess hall with the rest of the troops that remained on base for the holidays and were served a marvellous dinner. We were served by the CO, RSM, and Company Commanders and CSMs. During the dinner, the CO relinquished command of the battalion to the youngest private present as did the other senior officers, RSM, and CSMs. The new “CO” promptly gave the troops the next two days off. Unfortunately, they were Saturday and Sunday. Oh well. It’s the thought that counts. I got married a year later and began my own Christmas traditions.

While in Europe, I was to become familiar with the snowball holiday tradition. During the Christmas season, a couple would descend on a friend’s home for eggnog or a drink. They in turn would invite their new hosts to join them and proceed to another home, and so on, and so on, and so on until the wee hours of the morning when the final home was invaded. This poor unsuspecting host would not only provide a drink for everyone but also provide breakfast. I remember most of the mornings meals were eggs in the hole.

When I left the army and became an airman, some of the Army traditions I found were also carried out by the Air Force. The traditional single members Christmas dinner with exchanging of commands, and yes the Snowball. I was to be introduced to the New Year’s Levi.

The New Years Levi at the small radar sites I was on was usually hosted by the Station Warrant Officer. It was either held at the WO and Sergeant's Mess or the SWOs home. You were expected to arrive stay for a couple of drinks then depart. In most cases, a person would arrive then be carried home by his wife. As the Unit Warrant Officer in Colorado Springs, I had the honour of hosting several Levis at my home. Of course, I had the compulsory Moose Milk on hand. After all, it would not be a Levi without it.

During my Air Force career, I found myself working shift on several Christmas Days. One of the best traditions I believe I have been introduced to was my first Christmas Day at CFS Alsask working the day shift. At around noon, the COpsO, Ops WO, and DMCC Training NCO arrived to make Christmas dinner for the day shift as well as the evening shift when they arrived. I remember feeling honoured that these supervisors took time from their families to make dinner for us. It was a special day. I had my chance to repay the deed many years later when I was the Crew Training NCO at CFB Penhold providing the On Duty Crew Christmas dinner.

My father during WW II found himself spending Five Christmases overseas. I remember finding an old photo of a leafless branch hastily affixed to a stand decorated with bullets, empty Klim cans, and just about anything that wasn’t nailed down. “Instant Christmas tree”. There was also the Christmas when I was in the Army coming home for Christmas. When I arrived, the house was already decorated. The tree was up, and gifts galore were underneath. Standing reverently in a corner of the living room was a small leafless branch with a single bullet hanging from one of the branches. It took great control NOT to ask my father what it was; but alas after two days, I could not hold in my query no longer. I asked “What’s with the dead tree?” My father very seriously replied: “Have never heard of the song The 12 Days of Christmas?” This, young man, is the first gift “A cartridge in a bare tree”. That year my dad showed me the picture from Italy and told me the story. From then on, I took great pleasure in searching their house at Christmas looking for the small bare tree.

Both Donna and I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a joyous and prosperous New Year.

(TAR SANDS. Continued from page 2:

I've not yet read Nikiforuk's book, but have read reviews of it and also have a Montreal Journalist friend (Bill Marsden) who has written a similar book. They do overstate their case, but that is to be expected of people who hope to sell books and raise funds for pet causes. I was also pleasantly surprised and impressed by Ezra Levant's book 'Ethical Oil' wherein he challenges many of the attacks.

But in my view all of the discussion on the oil sands misses the main point. This is a demand led rather than supply led problem. As long as we heavily subsidize the building of urban sprawl, fail to invest in public transportation, stay dependent on cars, heat and cool oversized McMansions, push the cult of consumption, keep fossil fuel taxes well below the cost of the damage these fuels cost, etc. we will invariably get lots of dirty fossil fuel extraction and fund lots of disreputable regimes. The US can get as upset as it wants about the sources of its oil, but the bottom line is that it is addicted and no addict can dictate terms to pushers.

So that is why I am redirecting my charitable dollars from those who are concerned about the supply of oil to those working to reduce demand. At today's \$99 a barrel the oil sands, and lots of other destructive extraction techniques, will inevitably be developed. But if North America and other energy hogs could reduce use to something even approximating Western Europe we'd not need the oil sands, the Wahhabi's would have trouble funding global terrorism and we could reduce the relentless increase in coal-fired environmental destruction.

Politicians cannot act on their own. They need environmental advocates to make things like petrol taxes politically acceptable. Just like I did with cigarette taxes back in the 80s. The alternative is that the failure to approve the Keystone pipeline just means the US oil addiction will be met by such things as supplies of heavy oil from Venezuela, for no net environmental gain. But most of the self-styled environmentalists I interact with (including groups I have historically funded pretty generously) are far more focused on raising funds and journeying to global conferences than in pragmatically working to protect the environment.

I am always looking for 'pragmatic revolutionaries', as they are the only type that can achieve their goals, and I live in hope that I have found them in some of the groups with whom I am currently working.

* * * * *

Our daughter, Patricia (Trish) who has worked in Wildlife in Canada, Sweden, and the US, adds this:

So Dave you have an interesting way to express a concern about "an attack on the Oil Sands." It is a precious resource, oil, under another precious resource, the boreal forest ecosystem. We, as humans exploit resources and there is a lot of demand. So part of the answer to sustainability is to reduce that demand, part of the answer is to improve efficiency in how we use those resources, and part of the answer is to improve how we extract resources. The Tar Sands/Oil Sands is one example of not extracting the resources so well. Just because it might not be as bad as examples of resource extraction in other parts of the world doesn't mean it's not bad and that we can't do better.

What I can't figure out is how this improvement in resource extraction is achieved systematically within our economic/social system. Our politics are based on a short term profitability model. So sure maybe the short term benefit of the energy extracted from the oil sands trumps short-term losses to the boreal ecosystem as long as we can reclaim the boreal ecosystem. And whether there is net gain is a big question since what we don't often factor in is the long term concerns (costs) such as truly effective reclamation of vegetative zones and wildlife communities, lingering contamination of air, soil and water, and consumption of resources that will no longer be available to future generations. We further tilt the profitability model by offering tax incentives or reduced environmental compliance to stimulate our economy. All things that are too big for me to understand very well.

TAR SANDS cont'd

So I take it back to my wind farm dilemma which is a small part of this bigger picture. It's good...green energy right? One that requires massive structures on pristine landscapes and a support network of giant transmission lines that criss-cross the country. But yes wind can be a great energy source, just like oil, it just depends on how it is done and what safe-guards we have in place. It's called good planning and for some reason good planning becomes the most contentious issue of all. Planning is seen as restricting short-term profitability since it takes long-term benefits into account. Planning involves having effective agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency. Planning usually involves restrictions.

It comes down to a value system. And right now we are running scared. When 7 billion people are screaming for the life-style we already enjoy and one we are also afraid of losing - what's a little contamination and oiled birds in a fragmented forest mean? Maybe it means a wake-up call in the form of climate change?

We need an environmental ethic that originates from the heart, and doesn't that mean that energy reform begins with education? So Dave, if you know of people that can see good paths forward, expose their ideas to us (and hurry up about it, will you?) or do such ideas have to be imposed like cigarette taxes?

Enjoy the day, Trish

* * * * *

My old friend, Fred Match of Islington, Ontario, a geotechnical engineer associated with worldwide Canadian mineral ventures and with the sands since 1963 adds: "Reclamation requirements are stringent and are being observed. We are not squandering resources, including natural gas and fresh water, which are being used in a timely and measured way. A great deal of attention, money and effort, is being expended on environmental matters. I suggest critics go up and have a look."

* * * * *

Ye Olde Scribe has the last word: **TAR SANDS BENEFITS:** Female and male operators of those massive excavators have delicately removed a score of fossils of Albertans who dominated the province over 100 million years ago. To the delight of the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, these include a complete skeleton of a plesiosaur that cavorted in the large sea that covered the area, an anklyosaur that was encased in rock a kilometre down, and an Ichthyosaur. , , , , Care to share Your views?

ENOUGH (for now)



A CONDENSED VERSION OF A MESS DINNER SPEECH GIVEN BY LGEN (ret'd) FINDLEY

I am delighted to be here with so many old and new friends. NORAD has a proud and rich history, and I applaud the team in Colorado Springs for maintaining a high standard; and for their passion and commitment to defending our homelands. I also acknowledge that great Royal Canadian Air Force Wing you have here in Colorado Springs - 971 Slemmon Wing.

When I was invited to speak at this dinner, I asked LGen Lawson what I should talk about. He said: "just talk to them about NORAD, your experience with the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, and give us your perspective on what the future will look like". NORAD's mission has endured for over 50 years. Despite changes in threat and technology, the mission of NORAD has evolved. Perhaps no greater demonstration of that adaptability occurred on 11 September 2001. On that morning, NORAD was on exercise and executing counter-air operations against Russian strategic aviation...then the terrorist attacks took place...there was no checklist or operational plan...just great Americans and Canadians in all services - not wringing their hands over how could this have happened - but rather taking action on so many different levels to prevent additional attacks. It was a remarkable fusion of training, initiative, discipline, and sound judgment. When I got home on 11 September, I received a kiss from a neighbor, and she thanked me for my service. I told her that I was Canadian...and she replied, "I know -it doesn't matter". That remark resonated in me for the next 6 years - it epitomizes what NORAD is all about - Canadians and Americans working together to achieve a vital mission - it isn't about what flag is on your shoulder, it's about passion and commitment to defending our homelands.

You never know when an operational imperative will be presented to you. You always have to be ready.

I cannot predict the future of NORAD. As just one example of why I can't predict the future...earlier this year, Charlie Bouchard would have laughed at you if you told him that he would be commanding a NATO air mission with respect to Libya. Nevertheless I will predict that the future will stubbornly remain an uncertainty, and that the world will continue to shudder with instability. If you accept that, then I can also predict that there will be a persistent threat to our nations that is increasingly diverse and difficult to foresee. It makes sense that our nations will need armed forces for homeland defence. That means our nations will need your skills and willingness to operate with incredible diligence and stamina - and it will probably be at an inconvenient time in your lives. Be ready at all times.

The first powered flight was for a distance shorter than the wingspan on a Boeing 747. A future version of the Airbus 380 may carry 900 passengers. Yes, the aviation world has changed, and the air force that I served in has changed a great deal - the technology has markedly accelerated, the aircraft are much more sophisticated - nevertheless there is a common thread in our services that has not changed one bit from the first airman to now - people - people who are dedicated and willing to serve our great nations. It is my fervent wish that you are bored for the duration of your careers - however, history has proven otherwise. It has been a delight to be here with you this evening...to confirm yet again that it is our people who make our air forces, our armed forces, that ever vigilant and splendid organization known as NORAD - a success. That success is directly attributable to the teamwork that is the hallmark of our militaries. I have served with NATO, the UN, and with NORAD, and I have learned that you and your colleagues from all services, from all nations share a common bond - that of a determination and resolve to protect their nations - and an acknowledgement that "you can't do it alone".

If I asked you to identify the most important leader in this room, most of us would get it wrong. The most important leader in this room is you - each and every one of you - for it is you who has coped with everything in your life - it is you who has met every challenge head on - conquered all adversities - forged friendships - acquired critical skills and knowledge - committed yourself to being ready - ready for anything - and for that you have made a difference to your nations. On behalf of the people so represented here - thank you for your service.

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Merry Christmas from Ye Old Scribe (georgesweanor@comcast.net)

