



The Probe

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All in a Day's Work

Alan Neal was our June speaker, talking about hosting a live radio program and some of the things that can go wrong.



Alan was introduced by his father, Wib, an unusual situation, but not unique. Alan's first comment was that Wib had approached him a while ago saying, "I want someone interesting to talk to Probus. How do I get in touch with Kathleen Petty?" 7 years later ...

After 7 years with the CBC as a segment producer, reporter and fill-in host, in 2003 Alan became host of *Ontario Today*, followed, in 2006 by *Fuse* and *Bandwidth*, and then, in 2009, *All in a Day*. Although this is a span of almost 20 years, Alan is not a long term CBC employee - for much of his time he was on contract - sometimes as short as a two day contract. He claims the record for the longest period working without having a job. When they moved into the new building, his co-workers looked at the floor plan and asked, "Where's Alan's desk?" It was the one marked 'FL' for free-lance.

Originally *All in a Day* was 2 hours and involved 9 people - producer, host, researchers, etc. Now it is 3 hours and involves 14 people. Work starts at 9am, putting together the outline of the show. Three hours is

18 - 10-minute segments: news, human interest, reviews, music and anything else which pops up. Alan's objectives are to find an angle (particularly when the basic material is dull), to achieve a balance - every story has two sides (3 for politics) - and to try to find a novel perspective.

In the next 5 hours, the outline is fleshed out, interviewees are contacted and scheduled, then Alan goes live and things change. The crew scrambles to handle calls like, "I'm stuck in Queensway traffic" or, "The Boss called a meeting, I can't get there until ..." Alan, of course, knows nothing about this until he gets a message in his earpiece, "Mr. X is late but Ms Y is here so she will be next." Later, Mr. Z comes on and immediately suffers an attack of microphone paralysis and has to be coaxed to say anything at all. They solved the problem for one regular by using a directional microphone held far enough away so that it did not bother him.

Then there was the guest who was moved up the schedule but Alan did not get the message so he was using the wrong set of prepared questions. The guest knew he was out of sequence and realized that Alan didn't. He tried his best to answer. When it was over and he was leaving the building he recognized the latecomer and told him to hurry up, they were waiting for him.

Alan's philosophy? "You just have to roll with it - and have something up your sleeve."

Dan Kelley asked about the recent 401 crash which happened while the show was on air. The OPP now tweet information so the latest news was immediately available. Even so there were problems. There were 23 injured, 4 of them seriously. Someone added the two numbers and it was aired as 27 injured, not 23.

Robin Rousham asked how many managerial levels there are between a host and the top. Alan thought that that was an excellent question but did not know the answer. However he expressed confidence that they were all important.

Questions continued for some time on both the show and the CBC.

Alan is married to singer-songwriter and ballerina Jill Zmud. Wib has been going around with the smug smile of a new grandparent.

Eclectic Mixture

As we have come to expect from our In-house speakers, the topics ranged far (England, Europe, Antarctica, Malaysia) and wide (stretch pants).

Magna Carta at 800

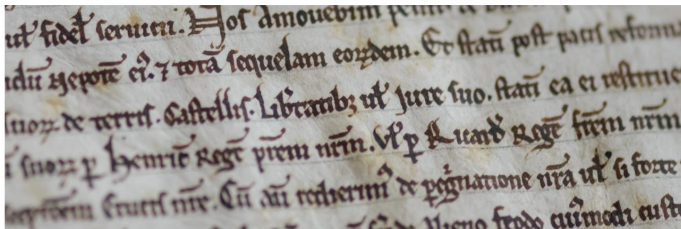
King John signed the original Magna Carta at Runnymede in June 1215. **Robin Rousham** took us into the events surrounding the signing.

King John had failed in his attempt to regain lands lost in France, an expensive failure which had left him in debt. His recourse was to raise taxes increasing the discontent among his Barons. They went as far as to desert John in a battle against the Welsh, hoping that the Welsh would kill him.

The meeting began on June 10th and an agreed text was produced on June 15th. While it was hailed as the “Birth of Freedom and Death of Tyranny” there was little trust on either side. John tried to get it annulled by the Pope but died in October leaving his 9-year-old son, Henry III, as his successor.

A second version was agreed in 1217, the first time the name Magna Carta was used. A further revision in 1225 is considered the definitive text.

Today, four exemplifications of the original 1215 charter remain in existence, held by the British Library and the cathedrals of Lincoln and Salisbury.



*A snippet of the Salisbury Cathedral exemplification.
The language is Latin—but very abbreviated.*

Echoes of the Magna Carta exist in the constitutions of many countries, including Canada and the United States. “To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay, right or justice.”

An Antarctic Adventure

Joan Evans tackled the difficult task of condensing “19 glorious days and 600 photographs” into 10 minutes.

In Buenos Aires, Joan boarded the Norwegian Expedition ship, the MS Fram (“Forward”) named for Roald Amundsen’s ship of almost a century ago. First stop—after 2 days of rough seas—the Falklands and Rock-hopper penguins. More penguins, a muddy jeep ride from Port Stanley, and this time Genatoo penguins.



Joan Evans in cold-weather gear, a Chinstrap, a Gentoo, a pair of Rock-hoppers and some King penguins. Note the (disinfected) rubber boots in the bottom left picture.

Two more days at sea, accompanied by hundreds of birds including giant petrels and albatrosses and landfall at South Georgia. Shore expeditions start with a small boat to get from *Fram*, but before that all seams of outer clothing had to be vacuumed and the rented rubber boots washed in disinfectant. South Georgia is the ‘Jewel of the Southern Sea’ with ice-capped mountains rising 9,000 feet and King penguins. The penguins share the shore with fur seals and 4-ton elephant seals.

Half Moon Island, in the South Shetlands, is home to yet another kind of penguin—this time the Chinstraps. The final port of call was Port Lockroy, a wartime base now restored as a museum and souvenir shop. Then several days at sea traversing the feared Drake Passage and disembarking at the quaint port of Ushuia at the southern tip of Argentina.

Throughout the trip there were lectures and films of the various explorers’ expeditions, glaciers, birds, plants, fishing, ecology, climate, etc. an education in itself.

Malaysian Airlines Flight MH 370

For over a year the world has been speculating on the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH 370. The aircraft disappeared on 8 March 2014, while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. The flight last made voice contact with air traffic control at 01:19 less than an hour after takeoff. Three minutes later it disappeared from



The crashed plane in happier times

ATC radar. Malaysian military radar continued to track the aircraft for an hour as it deviated from its planned flight

Keith Walker, our aviation expert, talked about the possibilities, including hijack by North Korea or Putin, shot down by a US plane, suicide, insurance scam and major problems with the plane, electrical and/or mechanical. His ‘educated guess’, based on a previous incident on the ground in Cairo, is that there was a short circuit in the oxygen supply creating an intense, oxygen-fed fire. This could have knocked out the crew and the transponder.

After the Cairo fire there was a service bulletin issued by Boeing, followed in 2012 by a directive BUT airlines were allowed 18 months to fix the potential problem. The question is whether or not the airline applied the fix to this particular aircraft as it was close to the 18 month limit. Keith was quite scathing on the length of time allowed.

Keith continued his scenario by assuming that the crew were incapacitated or dead, the aircraft would become depressurized and one engine would fail before the other, causing a turn.

A week after Keith’s talk, parts of the plane washed up on Reunion Island, but the mystery is still unsolved.

Frankfurt to Copenhagen

“I like trains.” were **John Wright**’s opening words as he took us on a somewhat roundabout journey through northern Europe. John and his son, Peter, used a EurRail Pass to visit a dozen cities in first class comfort.

One of the highlights was a walk across the Mohne Dam. There are no signs of the damage caused by the Dam Busters but the huge expanse of the lake behind the dam gives an indication of the force let loose.

The main purpose of the trip was to see the Belgian For-

mula 1 race at Spa in the Ardennes. The Ardennes are known for the Battle of the Bulge and for rain. A covered stand helped but a 2 km walk to the bus didn’t.

Train travel gave way to boats across the Skagerrak; from Stavanger to Bergen, mostly between islands and the mainland; and a side trip through a fjord on the way from Bergen to Oslo with spectacular views at every turn.

In Oslo the highlights were an antique car rally and a visit to the Maritime Museum with a replica of Thor Heyerdahl’s Kon Tiki, a fragile-looking vessel to risk 6,900 km across the Pacific. In Stockholm, a dinner with friends of Peter ended in prison! The sentence was just long enough to take ‘been there, done that’ photo. The next day, Skansen, a combination insectarium, small animal zoo, ‘Upper Sweden Village’ and botanical garden. The last stop was Copenhagen, with a side trip to Roskilde (featured in *Coast* on TVO a few weeks ago). The cathedral there is the resting place of Danish Kings (except Canute who is in Winchester). The boatyard builds longships, a tradition going back to Viking times. One, on display, had circumnavigated England, Scotland and Wales, crewed mainly by students. The ship overwintered in Dublin with a new crew completing the journey the following summer

Not a relaxing vacation, good food, a mix of hotels some of which are classified NSJ (not suitable for Joyce).

Talking Turkey

We are never sure what **Lenore Porter** is going to talk about. We thought it might be her recent vacation in Turkey but that was dismissed with, “You spend 15 minutes in front of every possible ruin.” Following an obscure reference to a ‘wax job’ we were advised on the difference between pants and tights and when it is appropriate to wear each. The biggest difference is the view from behind. There are mind-boggling possibilities on wearing tights but Lenore’s advice was, home, bicycling or the gym.



One of the 15-minute ruins

LP talk continued

Somehow the talk moved on to stress, causes and avoidance. Causes include Turkish vacations and ageing, the time of life when you attend more funerals than weddings. Stress reduction techniques include bubble-baths (Editor: I have something about Pine Sol in my notes but it is no more clear than the reference to 'wax job'), exercise, Nordic Walking (danger of some wag saying, "You forgot your skis."), colouring books (Editor: A trip to Chapters confirmed that there are adult colouring books. The definition of 'adult' was not tested.) and 'avoid people!'

Lenore says, "Stress can be energising. A high level of stress can equate to a high level of wellbeing and conversely a stress-free life is not necessarily a happy life."

A final piece of advice, "In old age take to climbing ladders." (Editor: I think that's what she said.)

September 23rd - Dr. Irene Makaryk - Shakespeare in Canada

Dr. Makaryk is Professor of English, cross-appointed to Theatre, at the University of Ottawa. As well, she is the Project Coordinator of *Shakespeare 400*, an unprecedented four-month celebration of Shakespeare that will take place in 2016.

2016 will mark the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), the most translated and performed playwright in the world. In Canada, Shakespeare has played an important role in our cultural history since the 18th century. Dr. Makaryk's presentation will explore some of that history and the various ways in which Shakespeare has contributed to our national identity

World Views - Fall 2015

Free Monthly Photo Evenings

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
971 Woodroffe Avenue (just north of Queensway)

Saturday Sept 19 Larry Frazer "France's Grotte d'Arcy" & Sholto Cole "A Taste of Paris"

Saturday Oct 17 John Allen... "Around India in 30 Days"

Saturday Nov 21 Bruce DiLabio "Birding in Cuba"

Saturday Jan 23 Barbara Adams "Colourful Morocco"

For more information call Sholto Cole at 613-721-3367

<http://worldviewphotography.ca>

Our thanks to **John Kruithof** for this update.

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* **Picnic** *
* Our thanks to **Marie-Neige** and her Staff *
* for arranging our picnic following the *
* talks. *
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Poetry Corner

Lenore echoed **Ogden Nash** who, in 1931, when pants for ladies were coming into vogue, wrote:

Sure deck your lower limbs in pants
Yours are the limbs, my sweeting
You look divine as you advance
But have you seen yourself retreating?

G. K. Chesterton could have inspired **John's** odyssey with his poem, *The Rolling English Road*:

Before the Roman came to Rye or out to Severn strode,
The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English
road.

A reeling road, a rolling road, that rambles round the
shire,

And after him the parson ran, the sexton and the squire;
A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy
Head.

October 28th - Remembrance

As is our custom the October meeting will have a Remembrance theme. The speaker has been arranged and we are just awaiting final confirmation.

September Lunch

After the September meeting the plan is to have a lunch. Going full circle, we will be back at the Colonnade on Bank, in the Blue Heron Mall.

Membership Fees

Being a fairly relaxed organization, we can accommodate potential new members as guests for August and September and ask them to join in October when we open the books for 2016 memberships.

PROBUS' Vital Purpose ...

To stimulate thought, interest and participation in activities at a time in life when it is easy to become complacent and self-centered.