

Report of the Speakers and Events Committee

Members: James Corbett, Mike Healey, Harvey Quamme, Jim Beattie

In the Spring of 2017 First Things First Okanagan held a its second alternate energy symposium, “**Energy: Our Past, Our Future**” at Penticton High School. Twenty-two speakers from across British Columbia spoke on diverse subjects related to the climate crisis and ten alternate energy businesses presented to about 300 people over the day long event.

In 2018/2019 the Committee embarked on a bold and new approach, to present six focussed events over a nine-month period under the unifying title “**Looking the Dragon of Climate Change in the Eye**”. The concept was intended to attract a wider audience by providing a varied program which did not rely just on the scientific but reached into the arts, culture and technology.

The six events, in order of presentation, were:

1. Dr. Kirsten Zickfeld, Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) “The Benefits of Limiting Global Warming to 1.5 or 2 degree Celsius and What It Takes to Get There”
2. Robert Gray of R.W. Gray consulting Ltd., Wildfire Ecologist, “Climate Change and Wildfires in BC: A Constantly Shifting “New Normal”.
3. Indigenous Art Display and Discussion at the En’Owken Centre entitled “Land Memory and the Loss Faced by Climate Change - 12,000 Years”.
4. “The Power of Song and Play”, a weekend of music and improvisation featuring Maiya Robbie, Tavis Weir and Hip Bang.
5. “EV/Solar/Conservation Show” at Burrowing Owl Winery in Oliver
6. “Students Paint Climate Change” at the Penticton Art Gallery.

The program was a success on many fronts. The turn-out ranged from 75 to 400 for each event, more than 1000 – 1200 in total. New relationships

were forged with groups, students, business and a wider audience. Young musical, dramatic and visual artists had a forum for their thoughts on the changing world of climate. Electric bikes, cars and boats were examined, admired and we know some were purchased as a result of the show and the alternative energy sector, specifically solar, got a local boost. “The Dragon” series kept FTFO in view of the South Okanagan communities over a nine-month period, strengthening our place as a non-profit speaking out on the climate crisis. Two Penticton City Councillors recognized the value of our EV/Solar and Conservation event and urged us to hold the event in Penticton next year, at a civic building. We were some small part in building the coalition that want to address climate change.

On the other hand, it was a challenging series to execute. Each event took a considerable amount of preparation time. Although there were weeks, even up to a month and a half, between events, there were no breaks for our four-person committee in the organizational effort. Other Board members, specifically our communications team, were also heavily relied upon.

The program could not have been presented without the support of numerous individuals and organizations. We are grateful to Prema Harris of the Tumbleweed Gallery, Jim and Midge Wyze of Burrowing Owl Winery, Fortis BC, The Enow’ken Centre, Senior Students at Pen-Hi and Princess Margaret, Shauna Reed and Shawne Gowe of Penticton High School and Brad Gibson of Princess Margaret, The Shatford Centre, Glenn Clark and Paul Crawford at the Penticton Art Gallery and the many FTFO volunteers.

Respectfully Submitted