



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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I increasingly find myself explaining or even defending the time and energy I invest in IIBEC to some of my more cynical peers. Over the course of the past few years, two searches for a new IIBEC Executive VP/CEO have required significant chunks of time and brain bandwidth, in addition to the “normal” activities of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. When faced with questions about my involvement, I normally try to present what I believe to be a credible explanation for my apparent loss of sanity. Please consider the following examples of my experience.

Before I took on a “sho’ nuff” leadership role in IIBEC, I enjoyed presenting industry education at a variety of locations around the country. At one event many years ago in British Columbia, Canada, I shared presentation duties with IIBEC Education Advisor Jerry Teitsma. The place we chose for supper one evening happened to have poutine on the menu, and, while I am a fan of this typically eastern Canadian dish, Jerry had never experienced it. One sample convinced him that he had not been missing anything, and we agreed that the poutine was best left to the Ontarians and me.

Another education event in San Francisco with Jerry and Pat Downey, during the great December storm of ’10, was complicated by loss of electrical power at the hotel (as well as much of the city). We taught by a succession of dying laptop computer batteries in a naturally lit small room off the lobby. No one there will forget the unique bonds formed during that wacky

couple of days.

I have been a guest in the homes of many IIBEC members, enjoying great meals and fellowship, and carry with me sweet memories and enduring friendships that no amount of revenue could ever replace.

Now if you happen to be an introverted sort of person, or a non-foodie, maybe none of this resonates with you (I am related to people from both these groups and try to understand their perspectives). Still, I believe there is great value in the opportunity to work with other industry professionals from around the continent, learning from people who may take a different approach, and creating relationships that can help enrich all our lives.

I regularly participate in an e-mail exchange with a group calling ourselves “The Brain Trust,” made up of about a dozen or so members from all over the place who initially worked together several years ago as part of an IIBEC exam development task group. We pose questions to each other regarding project conundrums that we may not have seen before; nearly always, at least one person has some helpful insight or actual experience that can be applied, and we learn something almost every time.

These examples represent a small slice of my overall IIBEC volunteer experience, illustrating some of the ways in which I have been enriched by my time and efforts. I encourage you to give it a try; you may be surprised at how it turns out. And if you know of a good pouterie, please let me know.

Cheers!