



Gormley: Next time fly past us, David Suzuki



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Much is made of Dr. David Suzuki, the science broadcaster turned environmental activist, and his houses — their price, size, location and number. I couldn't care less.

The guy has made millions at taxpayer's expense through a lifetime on the CBC payroll where he is worshipped. Dozens of public appearances net him speaking fees in excess of \$25,000 a gig.

Suzuki is free to live where and how he pleases. But the reason his lifestyle gets such scrutiny is that he's got plenty of advice on how everyone else should live.

He jets in from B.C. to lecture us on carbon footprints, sustainability, the scourge of consumerism and depletion of the planet's resources. There isn't much Suzuki won't tell you not to do.

Predictably, when someone hectors others on how to live, people generally look back at the person doing the lecturing; hence the questions on houses, wealth, jet travel and lifestyle.

The latest leg on Suzuki's perennial Western Canadian insult tour came when he stopped this week in Saskatchewan for a book festival and then a couple of days of appearances.

Calling Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall a “climate denier,” Suzuki replayed his tired shtick that 80 per cent of all oil should be left in the ground and that the planet is heating to the point that human extinction looms.

Wall had best be careful, as Suzuki recently again demanded that public leaders who don’t agree with him on climate change should be “thrown into jail.”

A vocal and outspoken supporter of both the Occupy and Leap Manifesto movements, Suzuki often takes aim at so-called “extractive” industries — agriculture, mining, and oil — which deplete the earth’s resources and use energy that creates carbon dioxide “pollution” which fuels climate change and is heating the planet to unbearable levels.

How ironic that Suzuki was sitting beneath a sponsor’s banner from Potash Corp in Saskatoon.

While his recent *raison d’être* has been CO₂ and climate activism, Suzuki is also a vociferous and dogmatic critic of genetically modified crops, which have resulted in higher crop yields, better nutrient qualities of grain and more resistance to pests and weather, not to mention water and soil conservation.

Whether Suzuki is simply ignorant — after all, his PhD and research was over 50 years ago in genetics and fruit flies — or is wilfully blind no longer matters to the thousands of Saskatchewanians who are remarkable environmental stewards because they are leading edge farmers.

And, besides, if Suzuki math might include carbon sinks alongside CO₂ production he should be thanking Saskatchewan, not slagging us.

For many of us, two incidents, both in 2013, sealed Suzuki’s fate and credibility.

The first was a televised question and answer session in Australia where Suzuki disastrously tried ad libbing his way through a climate discussion.

Unaware of the meaning of certain acronyms in climate study and then defaulting to his usual techniques of deflecting and going on the attack, when asked outright about temperature monitoring he finally smiled, wanly, and said, “I’m not a climatologist. I wait for the climatologists to tell us what they’re thinking.”

The uncomfortable videos, available on YouTube, led the Toronto Sun to write, “It was embarrassing for Suzuki to be revealed as a know-nothing huckster.”

The second Suzuki moment came at a college in Montreal when leaked internal emails related that Suzuki preferred “a couple of ladies (females) that would act as bodyguards” and it was important that they be “nicely dressed.”

Increasingly abrasive and rude when challenged, Suzuki famously last year compared the oil industry to slavery in the 19th century American Deep South.

Saddest for Suzuki is how far he's fallen from what he used to present as: the earnest academic educating us on science, inquiry and the search for answers to complex problems, a guy showing us the "nature of things."

Now, his nature is more inclined to overwrought language, hurling insults, flying the world on carbon spewing jets and lecturing everyone else on how to live.