



The Probe

Volume 3 Issue 1

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In the News

Our newsmaker this month is Eva Hammond who has been in Cameroon with Rotary. The trip was part of Rotary's "War on Polio" which aims to eradicate the disease. Here is a short extract from an email from Eva to her grandchildren, Valerie and Victoria.

"I went in many kindergarten classes to give the two drops of polio vaccine to each child. They came to the front of the class when their teacher called their name and trustingly swallowed the medicine that will keep them from being crippled by Polio. In the ten days that I was there, I saw three children whose arms and feet were paralyzed by Polio. These were kindergarten children like your class, Valerie, but I saw no books, no toys, no sports equipment. Each child had a piece of board painted black and a stick of chalk and wore a cotton uniform."

"Other days I walked in very dirty paths door to door in villages and through palm and rubber plantations to reach isolated groups. We had to search out the children as the Polio Virus can easily find them. One day I went out on the big river that flows into the Atlantic Ocean to vaccinate the children on the Islands in the fishing villages. There was a gray haired thin man on one of the islands whom they all called "the Teacher". He set us up in the church and the children came and lined up for vaccination. He then hopped into our boat and we rounded the island to the other side only to find the tide out a long way from the beach. I will never forget that man bringing a baby in each arm wading out to us followed by a tippy dugout canoe full of babies and toddlers pushed by children about your size, Victoria. They reached our boat and we leaned over the side and gave the two drops into each tiny mouth. I gave a lot of stickers to "the Teacher". We took many cards of stickers with us from home. Some of the little ones were very afraid and would cry. They soon stopped sobbing when we put a sticker on the back of their hand. At the end of the day we met a young Cameroon man who was a nurse, with almost no medical supplies, helping the sick of a fishing encampment of 22,000 Nigerians."

Congratulations, Eva, on a good job well done!

Christmas Party

Despite the unaccountable dearth of egg sandwiches, the Christmas Party was a great success. An international cast and a 60 voice choir provided the entertainment and the food. John E Wright



read from Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, Rod Macleod told a couple of Scottish stories, Dorothy MacIntosh reminisced about a child's Christmas in New Brunswick, Bob Haughton, as usual, had something up his sleeve for us, Lloyd Larson and Charles Purvis provided violin duets, and Bayne Pearen took us hi-tech with a piece on e-mails. Special guest Gretchen Visser sang to her own guitar accompaniment and included a beautiful rendition of *Silent Night* in Dutch (John Kruithof said afterwards that he felt she was singing just for him). Aggie Simpson held the whole thing together with her vivacious piano playing and John C Wright acted as MC and waved his arms about more or less in time with the piano.

The food was plentiful and excellent, from hot *hors d'oeuvres* and salads via sandwiches of nearly all kinds to some scrumptious desserts.

Our thanks go to the entertainers, the kitchen helpers, the furniture movers and the choir. Does that leave anyone out?



As a postscript on Lloyd Larson's violin, this was the one that had been in the house fire. It had been totally rebuilt and returned to him just a week before our party. The case saved the wood but the glue melted and the instrument was in pieces when it was salvaged. Looking at a photograph of the case, it is hard to believe that the violin could have survived.

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-centred.

President's Message



One of the dominant characteristics of Probus members may very well be curiosity. Curiosity of how invited speakers will contribute to our understanding of certain topics. Curiosity about what motivates other people. Our curiosity is coupled with open minds. Open to new ways of looking at things, new ways of doing things. Even though

we are no longer youngsters at the start of life's journey and our hair may be graying a bit (okay, a lot in my case), we keenly survey the world around us, forever trying to make sense of it. Wonders never cease.

Since we voluntarily select Probus as a vehicle for satisfying our curiosity, the challenge arises for one and all to make this Club most responsive to our needs. Members are therefore encouraged to offer recommendations as to which speakers they'd like to hear. All members of the executive, including Rochi Anderson, co-ordinator of the Program Committee, who lines up speakers, welcome your suggestions. As President, I gladly offer you my e-mail address (john.kruithof@sympatico.ca) to get the ball rolling.

In addition to the roster of speakers, members are interested in special events. Picnics at a particular place or park, tours of institutions and establishments, excursions to local sites, regional Club meetings, etc. The executive is in the process of drawing up a list of suitable events for consideration. This again provides a golden opportunity for members to make suggestions for augmenting our list of activities. You know what you want. Please do share it with us. Your input will be very much appreciated.

John Kruithof

Guests - December

Alice Haughton
Pat Richardson
Alex Bissett

and January

M. E. Corkery G. Taylor
Fran Meredith Jen Stanley
Jean Culham Claire Gladdie

We hope that they all enjoyed their Probus experience and that we will see them again, soon

Didn't you used to be Jim Watson?

... was one of the questions asked of our January speaker soon after he left the very public life of the last elected Mayor of the real city of Ottawa and became the youngest ever head of a Crown Corporation as President and CEO of the Canadian Tourism Commission.

Jim talked at first about tourism - 11th largest industry in Canada, \$54 billion a year, over half-a-million jobs - and about the Commission - 100 staff in Ottawa, 75 others around the world who try to persuade travel agents to persuade their clients to visit Canada, and a budget of \$84 million. In Ottawa, it is a \$1 billion business and, with 20,000 employees, the 3rd largest industry in the city. He then moved on to the Congress Centre and what he described as 2½ years of frustration through not being able to comment on municipal affairs, started to bubble up.

In terms of convention space, Ottawa ranks on a par with Red Deer and Moncton. In practical terms, this means we could not even host the annual meeting of Tim Horton franchisees. In terms of lost business, it amounts to about \$120 million a year - which would provide over 4,000 jobs.

Jim said that he would give city council an A+ for Social Engineering considering all the regulations they have spent their time on trying to turn the city into a "Nanny State", but only a B- on Fiscal Management, particularly on the poor fiscal legacy this council will leave for the next. He cited the additional 47 employees on the books where the Transition Board's plan was for 984 less. He then touched on the increasing deficits and the raiding of the reserves but reserved his most pointed criticism for the OWE Train, the mess made of Kent Street for \$700,000 and the sale of Ottawa City Hall. City Hall housed 900 employees who had to move into rented space and now council is looking at buying a new building.

What sounds like a dull recitation of facts and figures became, when delivered in the Watson style, an entertaining talk as well as providing much to mull over.

Jim can be seen on the New RO@Noon every weekday and is also a regular columnist in the Ottawa Citizen. Right after talking to us he mentioned on the air that he had been speaking to the Alta Vista Probus Club and said what a great event it had been.

John (C) Wright did the introduction and Joyce Wright thanked him as he disappeared up the stairs.

Contradicting his opening remark, anyone who says, "Your Worship, you're washed-up!" is way off the mark.

An Unforgettable Experience - Our Trip to China - Part 2

As promised in our December 2002 issue, here is the second part of the Macleod's China adventure.

We were impressed with the immensity of the Three Gorges Dam Project. This is a mammoth undertaking with multiple objectives including flood control, power generation, improved river navigation, environmental protection, tourism and aquaculture. Estimated power generation is roughly the equivalent to 1/3 of that now generated by coal. Construction of the dam (some 600 feet high and more than a mile in length) and generating stations are well advanced.

Flooding of the reservoir above the dam will begin next year and completed in 2009. The rise in water levels (600 - 700 feet) means that vast stretches of the Yangtze will be inundated, cities and towns obliterated, farms abandoned, and thousands of people displaced (1.5 million is the most recent estimate). Many have already been re-located to new towns and settlements elsewhere along the river.

We left the cruise at Chongjing, the wartime capital of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek until his defeat by the Mao Zedong and the Communists and his removal to Taiwan. Before flying to Guilin, we made visits to the well-known Painter's Village and the local zoo to see the pandas. Guilin and surrounding countryside was another delight "an artist's paradise with its limestone pinnacles and mountains" to quote the travel literature.

Guilin offered many attractions including scenic pathways along the river punctuated by swimming pools and shady places to rest. The countryside was even more inviting as we discovered on the Li River boat cruise "30 miles of breathtaking scenery, traditional farm settings, and mist shrouded mountains". Other side trips before leaving for Hong Kong included visits to the Reed Flute Caverns and the Crystal Grotto, beautiful underground caverns carved out of the limestone over thousands of years, their beauty enhanced by sophisticated floodlighting. The Grotto, which can accommodate 1,000, was used by the locals as an air raid shelter during WW2.

Hong Kong captured the imagination, a bustling port full of ships and a dynamic banking and commercial centre. More European or American in character than Chinese, the transfer of authority to the Beijing Government seems to have made little outward difference. The city continues to thrive, its free enterprise spirit in no way diminished by integration with the Chinese mainland. Interestingly, recent economic reforms in China appear

to be more supportive of the Island's entrepreneurial character than in the past.

We did the usual things - visits to Victoria Peak with its magnificent view of HK harbour, Aberdeen where we cruised the inner harbour and jostled with the sampans, and Stanley Market where we did some bargain hunting. Unfortunately, time did not permit a visit to the Canadian Memorial honoring our soldiers killed during the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong in WW2.

This is a rather sketchy summary of a most exciting 18 days in China. No mention has been made of visits to temples, pagodas, museums, theatres, street vendors, and the like. There were many and they were all enjoyed. Impressions? The people were wonderful; friendly, helpful, and industrious. We were also impressed with China's recent economic progress - new construction particularly in Beijing was quite mind-boggling -as we were also impressed with improvements in Chinese living standards. Julie, our Chinese guide, captured the essence of these improvements "from bicycles and sewing machines in the 70's to motor cars, apartments, and money in the bank in 2002." In terms of material comforts at least, progress has been quite remarkable.

Rod Macleod

Postscript

We learned from Hal Roberts, who spoke to us in October about the Merchant Navy, that the War Amps have produced a 57½-minute, closed-captioned, documentary video, *'Sail or Jail': Merchant Seamen's Claim for Benefits* in its *NEVER AGAIN!* series of Military Heritage Documentaries:

"The Canadian government declared the Merchant Marine an essential arm of our fighting service [sic] during the Second World War. Yet, after the war, the government did not recognize merchant seamen as veterans and withheld from them many veterans' benefits. This documentary provides compelling reasons for the government to 'make it up' to these men. The *ex gratia* Merchant Navy Special Benefit announced on February 1, 2000, and concluded on May 4, 2001, removes the 'black mark' that hung over Canadian veterans' programs."

This War Amps *NEVER AGAIN!* video is available on loan, free-of-charge, or may be purchased at a cost-recovery price including taxes and shipping of \$12, from The War Amps Video Distribution Department, 1 Maybrook Drive, Scarborough, Ontario M1V 5K9.

Calendar

Program Committee Co-ordinator Rochi Anderson has developed the speaker schedule for the next 7 meetings:

March 26 Rt. Hon. Herb Gray



Herb Gray now holds the position of Chair of the Canadian section of the International Joint Commission which handles bilateral air and water quality issues. He is Canada's third longest serving politician and served as deputy prime minister, leader of the opposition, and a cabinet minister in a variety of portfolios, including National Revenue, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Industry, Trade and Commerce and Treasury Board.

April 23 Kathy Greiner

"Hydro - The Real Story"

Kathy Greiner stepped down from her position as chair of the Nepean Hydro Commission to devote her full attention to the Ottawa Transition process. She provided a variety of consulting services including management program evaluation, organizational issues, and policy development and implementation. One of her Transition projects was to oversee the amalgamation of five local electric utilities into one and make preparations for commercialization. She was a member of the Customer Relations and Marketing Committee of the Municipal Electric Association. Ms. Greiner is also active in the community. She has been president of the Kiwanis Club of Carleton, and she is a member of the University Women's Clubs of Ottawa and of Nepean.

May 28 Leonard Lee

Lee Valley Tools

June 25 Hon. Lloyd Francis

"Parliamentary Reform"

(Followed by our **Annual Picnic**)

July 21 Dr. Toffy Mussivand, FRSC

"Emerging methods and technologies for the treatment of heart failure."

August 27 Hon. Mitchell Sharp

"Life of a Senior Politician"

September 24 Deborah Scott

"The City of Ottawa Museums"

If you have any comments or suggestions for speakers please contact Rochi or John Kruithof.

Jim Coombs

We are delighted that Jim Coombs will seek re-election to the Executive of Probus Canada. Jim is currently the Secretary as well as being one of the Ontario representatives.



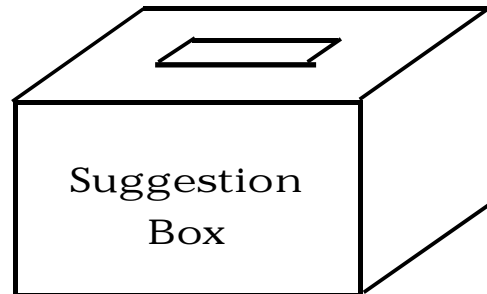
There are 12 representative members in Probus Centre - Canada, Inc., who see that Probus Clubs are well served and enjoy standards of conformity, and who promote the expansion of Probus clubs through Rotary in Canada. This year there are three positions open to Ontario members.

We wish him well in his campaign.

New members

Audrey Phillips' name should have appeared in our December issue, and did, in fact, appear in the electronic version on the Probus Canada web site (www.probus.org). We welcome Audrey and our other even newer members:

Claude and Ann Hannan Pat Richardson
Bill and Audrey Crawford Joan Jackson



We are looking for views on the Picnic (June 25th).
Barbecue? Indoor picnic? Billings Estate? PPBC? ???
Other events - Cruise? Night at the Races (with dinner)?
Bus trip?

Finding Us

Our meetings are held at :
Pleasant Park Baptist Church
414 Pleasant Park Road
Ottawa ON K1H 5N1

The church is a long block and a few metres east of Alta Vista. We meet on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 10 am. Come a little earlier for coffee, timbits and chat. Allan Mac Lellan, the Pastor, is a Probus member and will be pleased to tell you about the church and its services.