



The Probe

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10,000 Villages, 10,000 Items

The 10,000 Villages store in Westboro (a block west of Widdecombs) is a treasure trove of crafts from all over the world. Monica Scheifele, our February speaker brought just a few samples of their stock; a wooden tube with small pebbles which has the soothing sound of rainfall when upturned; a statue in white Kenya softstone (probably tooled similarly to the Inuit soapstone but quite different in style); mobiles, an onyx apple from a co-operative in Karachi which has several hundred artisans; an ocarina and a ukulele from Peru; and also coffee, tea and dried fruit. The common factor is that the organization pays a fair price for the work. For produce, such as coffee, this may mean an additional 25% to the producer but for craft work it can mean several hundred percent.

Monica has worked with 10,000 Villages, through the Mennonite Church, since 1991. Some of the time was "in the field" - mainly in Malaysia, but more recently she has been in Ottawa. The organization was founded in 1946 by Edna Ruth Byler in Pennsylvania after a trip to Puerto Rico where she saw beautiful needlework. She bought as much as possible, sold it at home and went back for more then later she went to several other places. The common factor was that the producers were paid a pittance and the middle-men and retailers made a handsome profit. Ms Byler decided to set up a fair trading organization to pay the artisan a reasonable price for the goods and to cut out the middle-men.

Monica told us about a basket maker in Malaysia who, before 10,000 Villages, had to sell to a middle-man. The middle-men did not pay up front so she had to borrow. Sometimes the middle-men would be late and would pay by cheque. As it was a day's journey to the bank and sometimes a hassle at the bank, a cheque casher who discounted the face value by 20% was the only choice. 10,000 Villages pays 50% up front and 50% on delivery - in cash.

(Cont. p.2)



Butterflies, elephants and other wild beasts

At the Executive Meeting

Your executive meets regularly, two weeks after a Club meeting. On the agenda this month was a decision on which of the 10 Ontario candidates we should support in the Probus Canada elections. Jim Coombs was a natural choice, being the only local candidate, but the voting was close among the rest. An indication that good people are putting their names into the hat.

Also on the agenda was the treasurer's report (we are solvent); a membership update (69 individual and 31 family = 131, not yet rejoined 8 of each); and a discussion of a summer event. One local club enjoyed a trip to the Diefenbunker, so that is on our list of possibilities.

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.

10,000 Villages (from p. 1)

Some of the artisans have no idea of the value of their work. Another of Monica's examples was a Batik maker. The company provided the silk, she had to provide the tools and dye. Of the \$4 she was paid for the item, \$2.50 went for materials. The item sold in North America for around \$75. 10,000 Villages has made a big difference by paying a fair price.

One of the side effects is the continuance of traditional crafts, such as mask making in Kenya and the Congo. Without 10,000 Villages there would be little or no time left from the struggle to survive to spend on craft work. A more direct benefit is the ability to invest in their children's education.

Lois Hope introduced Monica and Fran Meredith thanked her. The crafts on display received a lot of attention but they are only a small part of what is available in the store.

Guests In March

Or "Guests March In." Whichever way you put it, they were very welcome and we hope to see them again, soon.

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| Evelyn Clue | Loretta Craig Taylor |
| Jean Culham | Gloria Edwards |
| Mary Larkin | Mary Lefebvre |
| H. Mayer | Allan Porter |
| Gordon Taylor | |

Probus Magazine

The *Probus Magazine* is the journal of the Probus Clubs of Great Britain and Ireland. It is a glossy, colour magazine of 32 pages. Much of it is advertising aimed at our age group - tours (UK and abroad), insurance, hotels, health, etc. There are descriptions of Club trips, including; "Early on Sunday some 45 members - all of mature years - left the Red Lion in Midgleys coach bound for Paris." (Shadwell & District); "... a combined party of 49 members and guests visited Holland. The first experience was to cross the North Sea overnight ..." (Pontefract); "After returning to Tuscany for a further visit ..." (Cheltenham Regency); "... 35 members, wives and friends set off just after 5 am, bound for Boppard on the Rhine." (Wednesfield).

There is also a full-page ad for Probus supplies which includes ties, badges, golf stuff, sweaters and some heavily marked down millennium items. Ties are about \$14 plus post and packing. We are going to place a small order to see what they can provide.



Herb Gray

The International Joint Commission

Probus members who heard the Rt.Hon. Herb Gray at our March meeting were reassured of the continuation of Canada-United States co-operation. Mr. Gray who is now the Chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission (IJC) gave a most interesting presentation on that bi-national organization's work on the water and air pollution problems shared by the two nations. The Commission conducts its business as a single unitary body and Commissioners serve, not as national representatives of their respective governments, but as a collegial body seeking common impartial solutions in the interest of both countries.

Mr. Gray, prior to his appointment to the IJC, had a distinguished political career as a member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister in a number of portfolios and as Deputy Prime Minister. His service generated 2 very impressive records. He was elected 13 consecutive times - a record - and set a record for continuous days of service in Parliament of 39 years, 6 months and 26 days. He received his appointment to the IJC in 2002, following his retirement from Parliament.

The IJC owes its origin to the Boundary Waters Treaty Act of 1909. The Commission consists of three Canadians and three American Commissioners. It is supported by a small staff in Washington and Ottawa plus a regional office in Windsor. The IJC is responsible for investigating and recommending to the two Governments those trans-boundary water applications and water and air pollution problems that are referred to it by the two Governments. Much of the Commission's work is carried out by Government and Academic experts who, when appointed by the Commission, also act independent of their employers.

The 1909 Treaty has resulted in a long-term degree of cooperation that remains unique among sovereign nations. The interest of Probus members was shown by the many questions to Mr. Gray.

Danford Kelley

May 28th Peter Conroy, "Our Canal: The Rideau Canal in Ottawa"

Did you know there used to be a causeway across Dow's Lake to the arboretum? What about a bridge at Cartier near the site of the (later) Pretoria Bridge, or a swing bridge at Bronson? Peter Conroy's love for the beauty of the canal blossomed during a period when he lived just off Echo Drive, and cycled, skated, walked his dog and photographed to his heart's content. Peter extended his hobby and his passion for the Rideau Canal, into research prompted by old photographs of the canal in the National Archives of Canada. The questions raised by these photographs form the basis of his book, "Our Canal: The Rideau Canal in Ottawa", and his talk.

June 25th Hon. Lloyd Francis - "Parliamentary Reform"

As a past-Director of the Rideau Canal Museum in Smith's Falls, Lloyd Francis would seem to be a natural follow-on to our May speaker. This was just one of his many post-retirement activities but it is his experience as a Member of Parliament which he will draw on for his talk on "Parliamentary Reform". Mr. Francis was first elected by the Carleton riding in 1963 after terms as an Alderman and Deputy Mayor of Ottawa. He was later elected three times by Ottawa-West and was appointed Speaker of the House of Commons in 1984. Being the Speaker provides a unique perspective on what is good and what is not quite so good about all aspects of our parliamentary system, in the House, in Committee and behind the scenes.

Boscombe & Southbourne

Once again, I had the opportunity to visit the Boscombe & Southbourne Probus Club during one of our regular visits to the UK. They made me very welcome and gave me the opportunity to talk about our club. There were two speakers, the Manager of the Bournemouth Society for the Visually Impaired (formed in 1911 in anticipation of war and casualties) and their receptionist. The main speaker was the receptionist who has been blind since her late teens. She is not only a champion water skier but a champion water ski jumper! She has parachuted from an aeroplane and next year will go on an 8 day white-water rafting trip through the Grand Canyon. If you think white-water rafting is for the young (I would not argue) telling you that her son has just finished university will put it in context.

The meeting, and the opportunity to talk to the two ladies over lunch made for a very pleasant break. *JCW*

President's Message

In this message, I'd like to comment on a seemingly minute aspect of benefits associated with being a member of Probus. That is the Certificate of Membership. The Membership Co-ordinator, and in our case the Treasurer, can justifiably pride themselves on producing very decorative certificates. Under the Probus Crest, we want it to be known that you are a member of the Probus Club of Ottawa – Alta Vista and thereby welcomed into the fellowship of Probus International. The club's embossed gold seal is accompanied with the distinguished signatures of the current President and Membership Co-ordinator. The certificate is dated, then delivered to the member. What could be simpler than that?



But let us ponder its significance for a moment. First and foremost, the certificate affirms our genuine delight in your having joined the association dedicated to stimulating thought, interest and participation in activities at a time of life when it is easy to become complacent and self-centred. We enjoy being with each other. Our monthly meetings featuring excellent speakers are vital to our activities. Special times of year are observed. We celebrate outings when the mood moves us (or a Special Events Co-ordinator steps forward). If the club lives up to your expectations, it is because you are making it so. That achievement carries with it a sense of satisfaction. In a way, it is all about you. But in a self-centred way? Absolutely not!

The Probus Crest symbolizes an organization of some 300,000 members in over 4,000 clubs in 20 countries worldwide. And what a list of countries: Australia, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, United States and Zimbabwe. No matter what time of day, there is the likelihood of a Probus meeting taking place somewhere. Because we are interested, I hope an improvement will occur in the dissemination of respective newsletters and magazines. The Probus website, www.probus.org, is greatly increasing its coverage, and I encourage members to visit it.

You may have other reasons for finding Probus interesting. Please let me know what they are. In the meantime, when you look at your Certificate of Membership, think of what it represents. Treasure it.

John Kruthof

The Minehead Survey

In an article in the U.K. PROBUS Magazine the Minehead Probus Club reports the results of a survey of their members. "Our average age is 74 (one member said he was 86 and 'just reaching the age of discretion'). We rise between 7:15 am and 7:45 am and take our main meal in the evening. We watch television 18 hours per week (lowest 3 hours, highest 50 hours), and one member recommended it as the finest 'sleep-inducing' drug on the market. Favoured authors are John Grisham, Dick Francis and Ken Follett. Computer ownership has jumped to over 50% (five years ago there was only 1)."

We wrote to Minehead and asked if we could have their questionnaire. Wilf Smith, Past Chairman, replied, telling us a little about Minehead (a seaside town on the Bristol Channel, 30 miles across from the southern tip of Wales) and their membership (most earned their living in cities and retired to Minehead) and enclosing a copy of the questionnaire.

How do we compare?

Let's try it and find out! Just write the question number and your answers on a spare sheet of paper and hand them in or mail them to us by the end of May. Two separate responses from family members will be welcomed. There is no need to identify yourself on your answers. If you prefer not to answer some of the questions just leave a blank.

Question 26 had to be added. Minehead Probus Club is a "men only" club.

Mark Your Calendar

July 23 **Dr Toffy Mussivand**
"Emerging Treatments for Heart Failure"
August 27 **Hon. Mitchell Sharp**
"The Life of a Senior Politician"
September 24 **Deborah Scott**
"City of Ottawa Museums"

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.

Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. At what time do you normally get up in the morning?
3. At what time of day do you usually have your principal meal?
4. How many hours each week do you watch T.V.?
5. Do you have a car? If so, what make?
6. What is your pet hate?
7. Who is your favourite author?
8. Which daily newspaper do you take?
9. Which magazines do you take?
10. Do you believe children should be slapped to induce discipline?
11. Do you believe that drugs should be made freely available to users?
12. Does our system of punishment treat criminals too softly?
13. Do you have a computer or word processor?
14. Do you have a regular dental check-up? If so, how frequently?
15. Are you a regular churchgoer?
16. Do you have faith in Parliament? Give a grading A-E (C would be "reasonably satisfied").
17. Is the maintenance of the Monarchy still justified?
18. Which news story of the last year has stuck most firmly in your mind?
19. Do you feel less safe and secure now than you did five years ago?
20. Do you feel our transport system is adequate?
21. What local organizations, other than Probus, do you support?
22. What are your main social activities?
23. Do you have a pet animal? What sort?
24. Which three Probus events in recent years have you most enjoyed?
25. Are there any things you think our Probus Club should be doing? (In answering, remember we are not a charity organization).
26. Are you male or female?

Jot the numbers and your answers on a plain piece of paper (or use this page) and let us have it!