



# The Probe

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## Deafening

If you had not read or even heard of the novel *Deafening*, you would be in the minority. It has been translated and sold in sixteen countries and has been of great interest locally for book club discussions.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup> at our Probus Alta Vista meeting, the author of *Deafening*, **Frances Itani**, gave us a most interesting and personal interpretation of creative writing and explained how her debut novel "Deafening" came into being.



Francis Itani in pensive mood while autographing copies of *Deafening* for our members.

Ms Itani described herself as a high-energy person, and indeed, energy and self-discipline would be requirements for the time-consuming and in-depth research which is shown in her writing (She said she sometimes spent 12-17 hours at a stretch working on her book but thoroughly enjoys her writing).

It was fascinating to have such an insight into the formation of the book. Ms Itani said she had no formal structure - that the story just evolved. Her novel, she said, is about sound and silence, hope and loss and love in its many guises: love between man and wife, mother and child and between war buddies.

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## Where does Truth Lie?

**Dr. John Sigler** held us enthralled with his insights and historical observations on the **Middle East**. He offered no facile solutions but provided a context for us to better judge the turmoil and to see it, not in black and white, but in shades of grey.

**Dan Kelley's** introduction set the stage with some of Dr. Sigler's background gleaned from a multitude of references on the Internet. The author of 10 books and hundreds of papers and articles, he is an Hon. Fellow of both the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution and the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. His PhD is from the University of Southern California where, after military service, he taught. Since 1971 he has been at Carleton.



Dr. Sigler taking a question from John Kruithof, while Dan Kelley and a guest listen in.

Calling the area from North Africa to Afghanistan the "Middle East" is a combination of British Imperial arrogance and an accident of history. The Far East was China, Japan, etc., the Middle East was the Indian sub-continent and the rest was the Near East. Everything was viewed from the British perspective. In WW II an operational decision moved the Middle East Command HQ to Cairo and so what was the Near East, became the Middle East. Along with the sweeping designations was a sense that the peoples were homogeneous in each of the three areas and could be treated alike.

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*Deafening* (from page 1)

The novel recounts the life of a young deaf woman named Crania O'Neill, her grandmother "Mamo" and her husband Jim who leaves for World War I, as a stretcher bearer, two weeks after their marriage. They are then separated for more than three years.

The idea for *Deafening* probably originated from her deaf grandmother, Ms Itani said. Her grandmother learned to speak at the Ontario School for the Deaf and Crania is sent to that same institution. (Part of the book's dedication reads: "for my remarkable grandmother").

Ms Itani is well qualified in her second profession (her first was as a nurse). She holds a BA in Psychology and English and an MA in English Literature. She learned sign language as part of her research and spent time in the archives of the School for the Deaf as well as World War I archives at the War Museum. At the School for the Deaf, as a first-time researcher there, Ms Itani was able to find a record of her grandmother's stay and so found family history as well.

**Ada McEwan** gave us a very warm and friendly introduction to Frances Itani as a writer, teacher and public speaker. She mentioned some of the many awards Ms Itani has received including the 2004 Commonwealth prize (Canada and the Caribbean) for *Deafening*. The author answered questions from the audience who mostly showed curiosity about the deaf. However, when asked if there would be a movie of the novel, Ms Itani revealed that she has indeed been negotiating with Hollywood regarding that possibility.

There was a book-signing interval after question period and after **Rod Macleod** had thanked the speaker. No doubt everyone will be following the career of this amazing woman and waiting for her new novel, working title *Celebration*. As Rod Macleod so aptly phrased it: we heard a marvellous presentation, entertaining and moving; approached with a sense of humour. In Frances Itani society has lost a good nurse but gained a first-class author. And we say: if *Celebration* is in any way as passionately and eloquently written as "Deafening" - "We'll buy that!"

*Mabel Goldsmith*

## New Members

We have five new members

Shirley Lahey  
Jean Aslin  
Charles & Mary Smith  
Justine Vorobej

Please seek them out and make them welcome.

## La ci darem la mano

Operaworld will be pleased to take you by the hand on their Spring Tour next April. It includes a Met performance of *Don Giovanni* with **Gerald Finley** in the title role, and a reception to meet Gerald and also **Pamela Wallin**, Canadian Consul General in New York.

Gerald, a graduate of the Lisgar French immersion program., received his first introduction to choral music from Brian Law. He sang in the Ontario Youth Choir, the Ottawa Music Festival, the Ottawa Cantata Singers and had his first taste of opera with the NAC Opera Chorus. After completing his final year of music school at Ottawa U, he studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in England (1979). This led to choral work at Glyndebourne, then understudy roles and bit parts, and then solo roles. He has sung in many European opera houses including a tour (1995) with The Magic Flute. This tour led to his Met debut after the Metropolitan Opera artistic administrator heard him in Amsterdam. He has sung in French, Italian, German and English. "The English language is not easy to sing. You have to overcome many habits of spoken English - stress, vocal production, and vowel formation. You have to get the unique flavour of our diphthong-rich language, the "ings", the deep "I"s, "d" and "g" and so on, without corrupting the voice."

As well as opera he has sung and recorded lieder including Vaughn Williams *Songs of Travel* on a CBC disc. The Mozart baritone roles are his speciality, Guglielmo, Papageno, Masetto and, more recently Don Giovanni.

For more information, call Operaworld at 234-3360 or talk to **Probus member Rae Finley** about her son's operatic career.

## Long life to you

Jim Kingston provided a copy of the **Probus Club of Halifax** newsletter which recorded the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of club member **Wilf Creighton**. Wilf entertained the club with some reminiscences which included the Duke of Connaught laying a cornerstone at Dalhousie University in 1912 and a visit by Edward, Prince of Wales in 1919.

Wilf worked for a while in the Ottawa area and then on the North Shore of the St Lawrence. In 1931 he enrolled at the Munich Faculty of Forestry and his hockey-playing skills made him a star in Germany. He also played in France, Switzerland and Austria. He returned to Nova Scotia and eventually ended his public service career as Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests.

We add our congratulations to those of the Halifax Club.

(**Truth Lies** - continued from page 1)

One of the points he made was that co-operation among nations seems to have to result from being weary of conflict. In the 16th century Switzerland was the most violent place in Europe. The united Europe faced two major internal wars in the 20th century before there was any real attempt at peace and co-operation. He left unsaid the possibility of extended and bloody conflict spreading from the Middle East before peace can be achieved.

Some of the examples Dr. Sigler gave were started by people trying to move countries around like chessmen and being surprised when the circumstances they created changed the rules of the "game".

Iran was a case of an advance culture searching for a new identity. This led to a series of coups and counter-coups which threatened the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Their influence put the Shah on the throne from the mid-50's to the Khomeini coup in 1979. This latter change of regime cost the NATO powers their listening posts on the Soviet Union and increased Soviet pressure on oil. According to ex-CIA Director Robert Gates, the US arranged for angry young Afghans to train in Pakistan and draw the Russians into a war in Afghanistan. Gates claims that the eventual consequence was the collapse of the Russian war machine and that this was worth the price. The price was paid by Afghans and the "game" is not yet played out.

Recent revelations indicate that the intelligence, on which the invasion of Iraq was based, was deeply flawed. It may well be a case of Iran taking a leaf from the CIA's book and manufacturing the "evidence" so that the US would destroy Iran's old enemy.

Dr. Sigler believes that the #1 problem is the Arab/Israeli conflict and only when that is solved can the #2 problem - Terrorism - be dealt with.

**Jack Harvey** thanked Dr. Sigler on our behalf and we left with more to think about than when we arrived.

## October 27th - Major David Ross

Major David Ross has just returned from a 13 month assignment in Afghanistan where he was a military advisor to the United Nations. Most of that time he worked in the city of Kunduz which is located in the northern part of the country.

David's talk will recount his experiences working with warlords on the disarmament program. He will offer an insight into some of the problems facing the population today.

## Hello, Nova Scotia!

**Allan Mac Lellan** has returned to his roots in Cape Breton. Throughout his 6 years in Ottawa he has been closely involved with our Probus Club. Russ and Eva Hammond came to Pleasant Park Baptist Church for Allan's installation as Pastor and recognized it as a suitable site. Allan was very supportive of the effort to establish the club, became a founding member and served on the Executive for several years.



Bon voyage, Allan!

In an interview (*The Probe*, December 2001) we asked *What does the future hold for Allan and Nancy Mac Lellan?* Allan replied, "We want to see the kids settled in careers and family. Eventually we will retire 'back home', maybe a place on the water. I would like to write a book about growing up in Cape Breton. But first I'm looking forward to several more years as a minister, here at Pleasant Park and maybe another move." He has now been called to a church in Sydney where he will be able to do what he most likes doing: "Service to parishioners, visiting people in their homes, being able to show care." We hope that the move will give him the best of both worlds – the opportunity to continue as a minister and to be "back home".

The Mac Lellans have bought a home in Mira, a small, coastal town about 25 km southeast of Sydney.

His last day in Ottawa was Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup> – we could suggest it was unlucky for Ottawa/Alta Vista Probus Club and the Pleasant Park Baptist congregation, but it was clearly the start of something that Allan regards as very fortunate!

The Executive had the opportunity to wish him well from all of us when we interrupted his packing and asked him to pop in to our meeting two days before he left.

## September 22nd - Barry Moss - Air Traffic Control

Every time we fly from our new airport, we put our safety into the highly competent hands of well-trained air traffic controllers. But what happens in less developed countries? Do they have the technology? - the training? - the management?

**Barry Moss** started his aviation career with the Royal Air Force as a pilot and then in traffic control. By the time of his recent retirement from ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization, a United Nations agency), he had over 40 years of experience in aviation. Latterly he has been teaching air traffic management for airports and countries and just prior to his retirement he visited several "third world" countries to assist in the development of up-to-date control systems.

## Rotary Annual Auction, Dinner & Golf

Ottawa Rotary Club has arranged a golf day on Friday, 17th September, at Emerald Links (turn west off Bank Street or east off River Road onto Mitch Owens Drive). A foursome plays and dines for \$400 or just go for the social hour, dinner and the auction for \$40 each. Proceeds to the Rotary Home Foundation.

Please contact **Eva Hammond** at 826-2743 or eandrhammond@aol.com for more information or to make a booking.

## Guests

In June we welcomed:

Charles and Mary Smith  
Dorothy Barrier  
Jenny Doyle  
Diane Anderson  
Francis Dye

.. and among the guests at the July meeting were:

Wilf Conner  
Justine Vorobej  
Pau Kanagaretnami  
Alice Houghton  
Al Saldanha

## **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 Notes



Has it really been a year? I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President. It has been a pleasure to meet with members and work with the Board which has produced another successful year. I'm sure that you will agree that we enjoyed some excellent speakers, thanks to our program committee of Rod Macleod and Tony Goldsmith. Add to that the admirable work of our Board members: Allen Taylor (V.P. and Secretary); Graham Gibb (Treasurer); Paul Stumes (Membership); Dorothy MacIntosh (Telephone); John C. Wright (Editor); John Kruithof (Hospitality); Jean Lupton and John E. Wright (Special Events); and Jeanne and Bayne Pearen (Sunshine co-ordinators). Others have contributed by telephoning, greeting guests, and helping with refreshments. Thanks to everyone for your interest and support of this very special club.

I will have fond memories of my year as president. My very best wishes to the new executive and to the continuing success of Probus-Alta Vista. *Joyce Wright*

## Fall Luncheon

In 2002 the Club started a tradition of thanking our outgoing president at a dinner. Never ones to confuse tradition with inflexibility, the Executive has decided to change both venue and time. This year it will be a lunch on Wednesday, October 23rd.

Mark your calendar now - more details later

## Executive 2004/5

The nominations for positions on the Club Executive for the coming year are:

President	Allen Taylor
Vice-president	Jean Lupton
Treasurer	Graham Gibb
Board members	

Bayne Pearen  
John Kruithof  
Ada McEwan  
Dorothy MacIntosh  
Paul Stumes  
George Toller  
John C Wright

In addition there are some non-elected positions:

Past-president	Joyce Wright
President Emeritus	Russ Hammond
Rotary Liaison	Eva Hammond Dan Kelley

The elections will take place at our meeting on September 22nd.