



# The Probe

Volume 5 Issue 1

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

February 2005

## Oh, What a Party!

"Oh, the weather outside is frightful  
But the Brunch is so delightful  
And we're still planning to go,  
So let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!"

While I apologize to the writer of the popular song for borrowing (some of) the lyrics, the sentiments would certainly apply to our members' Christmas spirit when they turn out in miserable weather for the Probus Annual Christmas party.

In contrast to the wintry coldness outdoors, the hall was warm and welcoming, with tables colourfully decorated for the season, and with the mellow tones of a trombone as Ed Borza played some Christmas favourites for us during coffee time, setting the mood for the program to follow.

Our Master of Ceremonies, Allen Taylor - resplendent in a festive red blazer - introduced the entertainment. Included were: readings by John E. Wright from "A Child's Christmas in Wales", and by George Toller from "The Pickwick Papers"; a musical presentation by violinist Lloyd Larson; enthusiastic carol singing, as always, by our members, accompanied this year by Ruth Toller and led by John Lupton. In addition, Bob Houghton demonstrated his magic mathematical expertise and, to conclude the program, Bayne Pearen brought us some humour - leaving us all laughing and ready to enjoy a delicious brunch, thanks to members' generous contributions of Christmas fare.

As co-ordinator of the Christmas party, I would like to thank Bayne and Jeanne Pearen for their assistance in putting together the entertainment and for helping with the table decorations; our program participants for bringing us their Christmas cheer; Kawsar Kruithof and Dorothy MacIntosh for their help in the kitchen; John Kruithof for keeping the coffee and tea flowing; everyone who helped in setting up for the party and those who lent a hand in clearing up after the event, and all our members and guests who braved the icy conditions to come and join in a joyful Probus celebration of the Christmas season.

*Jean Lupton*

## Muskoka Update

Unless you've been sailing the seven seas of late, you'll be aware of the upcoming Probus 'Rendez-vous 2005' get-together in Huntsville, Ontario, September 27-29. Hundreds of Probus members from across Canada, and elsewhere, will congregate in scenic Muskoka in order to celebrate the fellowship that Probus provides. The theme of the event is 'Experience Muskoka's Magic'. In addition to the Gourmet Grill, dinner at a Member's home, and Farewell Banquet, participants may register for a Lake Muskoka Boat Cruise, Best of Broadway Musical, Artists' Studio Tour, Algonquin Park Tour, Cranberry Marsh Tour and two Golf events. Enough variety to meet your interests.

Now is the time to arrange your registration for the event, as **forms must be received by the organizers by May 1**. Full details are available at <http://probus.org/canada.htm> or by contacting our Club liaison John Kruithof, 739-1335, [john.kruithof@sympatico.ca](mailto:john.kruithof@sympatico.ca).

## Three Months Free!

We are so used to spin-doctors in Ottawa that a simple change of accounting has to be portrayed as an act of munificence. In reality, the decision was to change the financial year to match the Probus Canada year.

The secondary effects are to extend 2004/5 memberships to December, instead of September; to delay the AGM until the November meeting and to have the new Executive up and running on January 1st, 2006. The Board meeting in December will probably be a joint session of the 'old' and 'new', with the main agenda item being the Christmas Party on December 8th.

Spin or not, the extra months are free.

### **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.**

## Kanata Visit

Allen & Ruth Taylor and Joyce & John Wright took advantage of an invitation to visit the Kanata Probus Club at their February meeting. The speaker was Sheryl Kennedy, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada, whose subject was household debt and its place in Canada's economy.



Some of the numbers Sheryl presented were quite alarming - household debt has risen from \$24 billion in 1969 to \$855 billion today, however she quickly followed with a prognosis that the debt is "manageable". About 70% is in mortgages, 15% in lines of credit, 6% each in personal loans and credit card debt, leaving about 3% as 'other loans'. The counterbalances are that 78% of the outstanding debt is secured by real estate and debt is less than 20% of the market value of assets. The debt to asset ratio peaked in 1990 at 18.4% and is now 17.3%.

One of her interesting explanations was how the Bank of Canada manages inflation. If inflation falls below the 2% target, the Bank lowers interest rates, borrowing becomes more attractive which gives a boost to consumer spending and this increase causes inflation. On the other hand, if inflation rises, the Bank raises interest rates, borrowing is less attractive, consumer spending drops and so does inflation. As long as the Bank can stop the swings from becoming too wide, inflation will remain under control. Ms Kennedy has every confidence in their ability to keep on target.

Confidence was one of the sub-themes of the talk. Confidence in the strength of the Canadian economy and in the contribution of consumer spending. Some of us 'old fashioned' listeners were a little taken aback by her assertion that the ability to borrow and to go into debt is a good thing for the individual and for the economy. Her example was a mortgage. It is better all around to take out a mortgage and buy a house than to save and save until the money is accumulated for a cash deal. I suppose we know it intellectually but if you are brought up on a pay-your-way philosophy, taking a mortgage is more a necessity than a desirable undertaking.

The Kanata Club has activities outside the regular meetings. They have a Euchre night and they arrange



## Spring Fling

Eastern Ontario Probus Club members have all been invited to a 'Spring Fling' on Wednesday May 18th. The Probus Club of North Grenville (Kemptonville) is hosting the event at the Kemptonville College of Agriculture in the W.B. George Centre.

11:15 Social Time

12:30 Luncheon (Chicken or Salmon)

Cost: \$25.00

Registration forms and a map will be shown in our March Flyer. The cut-off date for registration is April 18th.

For more information, contact

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- or await for the March Flyer

The event in Cornwall last year, Kingston in 2003 and here in Ottawa in 2002 were all great experiences and would be thoroughly recommended by the attendees.

Plan on joining us in Kemptonville in May for the chance to meet fellow Probeans in a social context - and enjoy a good lunch while doing so.

## Beware!

We have recently heard about two schemes for car theft. The first involves a piece of paper on your rear window. You get out to look at it, leaving the car open and the engine running. The thief leaps in and drives away. If you have your house keys on the same key-ring and your address information is anywhere in the car, your home is vulnerable, too.

The other scheme involves a thief reading your vehicle number (usually visible through the windshield) and getting a dealer (who should know better) to give the thief the keys corresponding to the number. A piece of tape over the number should help.

*(Kanata Visit - continued)*

trips for their members. Coming up, soon after it opens, is a trip to the new war museum, but before that, in April, is a visit to the new CBC building between Sparks and Albert. Their next speakers are Philippa Lawson of the University of Ottawa on Canadian Internet Policy and, in April, author Dianna Beresford-Kroeger.

Allen Taylor was asked to say a few words about our club and, of course, described it in glowing terms.

## Masts & Spars

1805, remembered for the Battle of Trafalgar, was also the year that George Toller's great-grandfather came to Canada. The two events had a connection. In the middle of the Napoleonic Wars, England was cut off from European sources of good timber for its ships. The need for a new source of masts and spars was met by the Ottawa Valley.

After a spell in Aylmer, the Tollers settled in Fort Coulonge and started to organize the shipping of timber. The Ottawa River was the 'highway', 700 miles from Lake Temiscouming to Montreal and the shantymen, lumbermen and raftsmen moved the logs to satisfy the huge demand. The Chaudière Falls was a major obstacle and the great rafts, complete with their on-board living quarters, had to be dismantled, floated through the falls and reassembled.



Some of that era is captured by the dialect poems of William Henry Drummond:

Ah, dere's no place, my fren', like de shantee,  
Wid dat smell, pork and beans, so lovely,  
Du bon pain, soup aux pois an' de bouillon,  
"Dat's de stuff fer fella what's hungree.

So whenever de fall she be comin',  
An' de cole win' was make bare de tree,  
My heart she's commence fer get lonesome,  
For de bush smell, dem beans and shantee.

(From *Songs of a Shantyman*)

All the towns in the area, Pembroke, Renfrew, etc., were founded during the lumber boom, which, for Eastern Canada, was like an industrial revolution. The preponderance of Scots among the 13,000 men who toiled in the lumber trade, accounts for the high numbers of Scottish names in the Valley today.

Although the last great log drive was in 1882, the names of the lumber Barons are still celebrated in some of Ottawa's street names - Booth, Billings, Eddy and others.

One of the effects the prosperity brought to the region was the founding of the Bank of Ottawa. At its peak it had branches as far flung as Vancouver. In the first world war, when the founders were getting old, it was taken over by the Bank of Nova Scotia, but some of the original "Bank of Ottawa" cornerstones still exist. One of its 'products' was a \$4 bill.



Above - Photo of a photocopy of a \$4 bill

Left - A team of loggers at work - with the horses doing most of the work in this scene.

George answered several questions, including one on the horses used for dragging the heavy loads. The best answer can probably be obtained from the picture.

Ed Borza noted that some of the one-foot square timbers have recently been found near Shawville. Their long submersion and the chemical content of the water has given them a deep colour and made them very desirable for furniture.

## Gordon Taylor

Apologies to Gordon who was omitted from the list of the 2004/05 Executive in the December Probe. Actually, apologies are due to the whole Executive for listing them as 2003/04!

## Horace' Advice to Probeans

*Carpe diem*: according to the Canadian Oxford dictionary, "seize the day; enjoy the present and give little thought to the future". Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 65 - 8 BC) is translated as "Take full advantage of today." or "Make the most of your day", or even, "Have a good day".

Horace is recognized as one of the greatest lyric poets and his four volumes of odes as a major influence on English poetry.

Somehow the thought of the young lady at Loblaws checkout giving me a sweet smile and saying, "Carpe diem", is out of step with the reality of grocery shopping.

## March 23rd, Grete Hale

"The Morrison Girls", Grete, and her sisters Jean Piggott and Gay Cook, represent a large swatch of the fabric of Ottawa life. As Executive Vice-president ('72 to '78), President ('78 to '89), Chairman of the Board ('89 -'04) and now Chairman Emeritus of the family business, Morrison-Lamothe Inc., Grete is well respected by the business community. She has freely given her time to an alphabet of causes and institutions from Beechwood Cemetery to the YM-YWCA.

Her home, the Bayne House, restored by her mother in the '30s, is the oldest home in the old City of Ottawa and the house and garden have been thrown open to many community organizations for events and fund-raisers.

Grete has a fund of Ottawa history and anecdotes and may include "The Knife and the Hat."

## April 27th, Joan Finnigan

Life Along the Opeongo Line is Joan Finnigan's story of a Canadian colonization road. The road runs from Farrell's Landing, below Renfrew on the Ottawa River, to Bark Lake, near Barry's Bay, and was the route taken by many settlers enticed by the Canadian government's promises of resource-rich land for farming. While the early settlers may not have found great wealth in farming on the rocky Canadian Shield, they faced the challenges of pioneer life with wit and wisdom, leaving behind a legacy of wonderful stories, told in the distinctive Ottawa Valley style.

It is this legacy on which Joan Finnigan will draw for her talk of those early days. Joan has published 30 books, half of them inspired by the Ottawa Valley. She also won a Genie Award for her screenplay *The Best damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar*.

## New Members

The October issue should have welcomed Wilf Conner, who joined in September.

We welcome him now along with more recent additions to our rolls:

Hugh Tolan  
Cheryl Laflamme  
Duncan and Joyce duFresne  
Judy and Derry Foreman  
Pamela and Dalton Cross  
Connie McCann-Wilkes and Keith Wilkes

Please look out for them and make them welcome.

## Origins of Probus

The Rideau Valley Probus Club has put together a booklet *Rewarding Retirement* which includes some notes on the origins of Probus.

In 1965, Rotarian Fred Carnhill, of Welwyn Garden City, England, established the first club for retired professional and business persons. The following year another similar club was formed under the sponsorship of the Caterham Rotary Club. They adopted the name *Probus*, an amalgam of the words *professional* and *business*, as it reflected the nature of the retirees' membership. Also it was noted at the time of its selection that *probus* was a Latin word meaning 'honest and virtuous' - from which the English word 'probity' is derived.

## Growth of Probus

Today, Probus is a world-wide movement of 4,500 clubs with membership of about 325,000. There are clubs in the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, U.S.A., Germany, Belgium, Holland, India, South Africa, Japan and many other countries as well as, of course, Canada. Originally the movement spread through the support of local Rotary Clubs and, later, by the efforts of existing Probus Clubs.

During the '80s and '90s, under the leadership of John Morris in Ontario, over 90 clubs were formed across Canada from Saint John, New Brunswick, to Victoria, B.C., with an average membership of over 200. Since then, the number of Probus Clubs has almost doubled.

Ontario has over 90 clubs, four of them being in the Ottawa region - Alta-Vista, Rideau Valley, Kanata and North Grenville.

(Adapted from the Probus Club of Ottawa - Rideau valley's publication *Rewarding Retirement*. Used with permission.)

## Gourmet Corner

Robert L. Wolke writes a food column and offered some important kitchen definitions:

Arugula -- The sound of a Model T's horn.  
Baked Alaska -- The end result of global warming.  
Microwave -- All the Queen can do after a long day.  
Yeast -- One of ye four ancient points of ye compass.

## Meetings

We meet in the Pleasant Park Baptist Church hall on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Come just before 10 am for coffee, cookies and Tim-bits. Meetings start at 10.