



The Probe

Est. September 1999 Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

October 2005, No. 28

Speak Out!

If we look back over our first six years we can safely claim to have had some remarkable speakers. Our Program Committee members have served us well and are all to be congratulated.

We have an informal list of 'possibles' but now is a good time to expand it. If you have any suggestions for topics and/or speakers, please let one of our current Program Committee members (**Tony Goldsmith** or **George Toller**) know. Are there any topics of general interest that we have overlooked? How about vexillology? Do you know someone, or know of someone who would suit our audience? If so, please flag them to us.

Until the speaker walks into the room there is always a concern that she or he might not arrive at all. On the rare occasions when we have had a speaker cancel, we have (so far) always had sufficient notice to find a replacement. We did come close to a panic situation once when a speaker did not show up. Fortunately he lives reasonably close and once he was reminded managed to get here just a few minutes late. Do you have a topic that you could talk about at short notice if we did get caught out?

Write On!

We usually put a review of the two past speakers into *The Probe*. These serve two purposes - for members who missed a meeting they give an idea of what happened, and for members who attended, they give a reminder of the talk.

We are always looking for a new point of view so, if you would like to do one (or more) of the write-ups. Please talk to the Editor, John C. Wright.

Drive Off!

Do you want/need a drive to come to our meetings? Will you offer a drive to other members from your area? Talk to the membership desk (**Audrey, John** or **Paul**) and we try our hand at matchmaking. No guarantees, but maybe we can help you to work something out.

Sing Out!

Garth Hampson took us through growing up in Moose Jaw (listening to the 11 o'clock news with Earl Cameron), his early days as an RCMP constable, his time with the RCMP band, the recent years with Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson and ended with a concert.

When he first went to Yellowknife it was a town of only 2,800 people and all supplies had to be flown in. The shack where he lived in Sundrift is now the lock-up but at the time of Garth's tour there was no call for a lock-up. In Fort Resolution the only way to get around was by dog team. Garth had 42 dogs and did not trust any of them. Their standard diet was one third of a 20" trout per day (bones and all) with a weekly supplement. At this they were the best fed dog team for miles around and Garth had no hesitation in backing them by offering a 5lb Maple Leaf canned ham as a prize in a race, being quite sure that it would be returned to him. His team came in dead last.

His time with the RCMP Band was while it was under attack for budget reasons. In one case it was the CBC which needed more money for equipment, but one of its saviours was Jim Watson who recognized that if he was to 'sell' Canada as a tourist destination he needed a recognizable Canadian symbol. Another saviour was most unlikely - an Australian lady petitioned the Queen. The Queen asked the question and miraculously the next day Herb Gray called the Commissioner and said that they had found the money to continue.

He described his time with GG Adrienne Clarkson as "fabulous" - including learning the Swedish National Anthem.

(Continued on page 2, column 2)

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.

Penumbra Press

How many 7-year-olds decide what their career is going to be - and stick to it? John Flood was one. The trigger was a problem in the Stratford school system which meant his classes were at the public library for a year. He inhaled the atmosphere and decided to be a writer and publisher.

Along the way, John developed an interest in and a love for Northern Ontario. Everything came together in 1971 when he published a magazine "Boreal", in English, French and Cree. The second issue was in English and French - nobody read the Cree version, and after two or three issues he decided to focus on Northern Ontario. In his early days as a university professor, he was the entire English department, he tried to have a course on literature of the Canadian north put into the curriculum. It took him 3 years of argument but within 5 years, 3 other universities had followed suit.

John described his publishing philosophy, which could be paraphrased as, 'Produce books that will be read, kept and reread'. He uses high quality paper, and pays particular attention to graphics, whether as part of the text, for the cover, or selecting fonts which complement the work.

John was in our audience when Joan Finnigan talked to us about her book *Along the Opeongo Line* - published by Penumbra Press. Another recent book of particular local interest is *A Theatre Near You - 150 Years of Going to the Show in Ottawa-Gatineau*, by City of Ottawa planner Main Miguelez, a book which took 10 years from first draft to publication. *Out of Muskoka*, the memoirs of James Bartleman as an aboriginal who grew up in poverty in Port Carling and served as a diplomat for 35 years, was accepted for publication on the day that Mr. Bartleman was appointed Lt. Governor of Ontario. Penumbra Press has gone beyond publishing mainly Northern Ontario literature; it now publishes very high quality books of art history, regional history, memoirs and poetry, as well as some children's and young adults' fiction.

John told us that his books are available at most local booksellers such as Shirley Leishman. For ordering information, members can check Penumbra Press' website: www.penumbrapress.com or phone (in Manotick) 1-613-692-5590.

George Taylor introduced John and Morley Craig thanked him on our behalf, commenting that he has to admire someone who knew his vocation at age 7 because he, Morley, still does not know his.

Poetry Corner

OC Transpo have been complementing their 'in-bus' advertising for some years with short poems. Regular bus riders may have already seen this *Transpoem*, written by John Flood. It is a happy coincidence that the current poem is by someone we know.

We asked John for permission to reproduce his work and he graciously replied, "I am delighted by your interest in the poem and grant you permission to use it. I also want to say again how thrilled I was to have been invited as a guest speaker to your Probus club."

Transpoems are another reason to take the bus - as if the price of gas is not reason enough.

NORTHERN SNOW

Cold snaps like a tool
carving spasms from my body these bones
hearing themselves as for the first time
hold forth their breath I remember
a man who was animal stalking --

tireless, patient, speechless.

This is not north	it is
my ears dropping off	
to be as footprints in the snow	frozen
and without direction.	

(*Sing Out*, continued from page 1)

Another of Garth's anecdotes was to do with John Diefenbaker's funeral. Moose Jaw native and pre-eminent Wagnerian tenor, Jon Vickers sang "Then Shall the Righteous Shine" from Elijah, completely overpowering the organ. The organist said afterwards that he never expected to hear Mendelssohn sung like Wagner again. When the Capital theatre on Main Street in Moose Jaw was restored, Garth and his accompanist, Luba Sluzar Pope, flew out there at their own expense and put on two concerts which raised \$10,000 to bring in other artists. While there they went up the highway to Sheho to give the first concert ever in that town.

Garth ended with a song selection including his signature I Love Life, The Little Pudden Basin that belonged to Auntie Flo and We'll Gather Lilacs.

Did he ever use his service revolver? Once - to start the dog race.

Joyce Wright made the introduction and John Wright thanked Garth and Luba.

Vimy, Dieppe, Juno

The D-Day landings were made at three-quarter tide. When we were at Juno Beach the tide was out so we were able to stand on the spot where the troops disembarked from their landing craft. We were facing the huge, concrete pill-box which the Royal Winnipeg Rifles faced and conquered.

From the beach, we went to the Canadian Juno Beach Centre. This small museum has been very well done, from the plinths outside, with the names of WW II veterans recognizing donations to the Centre, to the movie and displays. The small movie theatre is shaped like a landing craft and the film makes you feel that you are next in line to hit the beach.

The travel section of the Citizen on August 13th, had an article headed "Possibly the best B&B in the world". One month later we were there, in the medieval town of Bricquebec, about 20km south of Cherbourg being greeted by Ted and Linda Malindine. The next day, Ted was our guide for a tour of the Normandy Beaches. Our first stop was Arromanches where some of the segments of the Mulberry Harbour still lie off the coast. From the cliff top you can look east to Sword Beach and west towards Omaha Beach. There is a movie-in-the-round (like the Telephone pavilion at Expo 67) with footage of the landings melding into the same scenes today. Most of the audience at our showing were from a German tour group.

From Arromanches we went to Courseulles-sur-Mer, Juno Beach and the Canadian cemetery. The dates on the headstones are 6th June, 7th June, 8th June and some a few days later. They are arranged in groups of 8 rows of 16 graves and there are 8 groups. As was the case with every war cemetery we saw, they were beautifully kept. A flower bed runs along the foot of the headstones and the rest is perfect lawn.

We returned to our B&B, *La Lande*, via Ste. Mère Eglise where a parachute is snagged on a corner of the church tower and a khaki clad figure hangs from it. Our guide told us that John Steel of the U.S. 2nd Airborne, dangled there for a day, feigning death, while the fighting continued in the town. The next day, the fire brigade were able to reach him with their ladder.

From Bricquebec we headed for Paris, with a journey break at Thury-Harcourt. John Newton was at the liberation of Thury-Harcourt soon after D-Day. John had been back several times for ceremonies and reunions and as he can no longer visit, we went there for him.

In Paris we did the usual touristy things, Louvre, Versailles, Notre Dame, Champs Elysees, Montmartre,

etc. and then continued on to Vimy. We had two graves to find - Joyce's uncle and her aunt's father. The excellent information available from the web enabled us to pinpoint the cemeteries and the graves. Again, the cemeteries were immaculate. Both are quite small and situated in farmers' fields, surrounded by a one-metre-high brick wall. Each has an entrance arch with a weatherproof case holding a registry and a visitors' book. What becomes disturbing and brings home the magnitude of the fighting is the number of these cemeteries dotted around the countryside. The Vimy Memorial was a disappointment. We knew that it was being restored but we did not realize that it would be completely shrouded in plastic - it is expected to reopen in 2006.

Our last stop was Dieppe. Once again we were able to stand on the beach and look towards the town. Where the buildings were in the often replayed films of the landing there is now a broad expanse of grass and no sign of the ill-fated mission carried out by the Canadians.

A month later it is still difficult to come to terms with everything we saw. Anger at the stupidity, pride in the achievements, sorrow for the loss of life and talent are some of the emotional mix. We will never forget the French cemetery at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette with 20,000 crosses and 22,000 more in communal graves.

John & Joyce Wright

November 23rd - Ellen Mcleod Group of Seven

Ellen recently delivered the Sir Evelyn Wrench Lectures to seven branches of the English-Speaking Union in the southern United States. After seven lectures in 14 days, (and an ante-deluvian vacation in New Orleans), Ellen is more than comfortable with her topic. The National Gallery will loan the same slides that were made available for her tour so we can look forward to a fascinating and well illustrated talk. delivered by an

December 7th - Christmas Party

December is the one month of the year when we deviate from our 4th Wednesday schedule. It is also the month of our Christmas Party. As usual, there will be no speaker but instead we will have entertainment from our multi-talented membership and our choir. Jean Lupton is in charge of refreshments and will be asking for contributions of Christmas goodies.

Full details in the November Flyer.

Muskoka Rendezvous 2005

More than 300 Probus members, including the **Hannas**, the **Kruithofs**, the **Kingstons** and **Dorothy Macintosh** from Clubs across Canada, along with 23 Australians, recently celebrated an outstanding event: Canada's first national reunion—Muskoka Rendezvous 2005. The three-day get-together, held on September 27-29, took place in central Ontario's "Cottage Country". The Delta Grandview Resort and Mark O'Meara Club House, Huntsville, served as elegant venues for the occasion. Four Probus Clubs in Muskoka combined their talents in organizing Rendezvous 2005. Registration kits for the event were mailed out to Probus Clubs a full two years ago. Throughout, the program stayed intact.

Day 1 Financial Problems (not really)

On the first day, Tuesday, an afternoon session was held for Presidents and Past Presidents to meet Probus Centre Canada executives. Many Clubs indicated having problems with their finances - not unhappy financial problems, but rather what to do with surplus funds, initiation fees, contributions by commercial interests, etc., etc. The evening's buffet-style dinner featured songs, skits and humour, including a contest for most creative hats, for which prizes were awarded. Another prize-winning opportunity was easily won by the **Kingstons**, for being the longest-married couple at table 25.

Day 2 Cruising

Wednesday offered a choice of attending the Gravenhurst Opera House production of "The Best of Broadway" or a boat cruise on Lake Muskoka. We opted for the latter. The cruise, on the *Wenonah II*, a replica of the historic *Segwun*, took us on a lovely day by many historic sites. There were two sittings for an excellent, leisurely lunch in the ship's attractive dining room. The next scheduled event, an evening Dinner with a Probus Member, was a memorable success. Members of local Muskoka Probus Clubs invited six to ten visiting Probeans to their homes for relaxed, fine dining in a congenial atmosphere: truly an example of Muskoka hospitality.

Day 3 Cranberries and more cranberries

Thursday, day three, had a list of activities to choose from: an Algonquin Park Tour, Artists' Studio Tour, Bala Cranberry Marsh Tour, and Golf Tournament. As luck would have it, inclement weather wreaked havoc on golf. The park tour, in addition to fall colours, provided an insight into the history and role of Ontario's first provincial park. Members who opted for the Artists' Studio Tour visited eight different establishments,

ranging from artists working in stained glass, oils, photography, egg tempera painting, bronze and pottery. The Bala Cranberry Marsh Tour started with a delightful side-trip to the Bala Museum with Memories of Lucy Maud Montgomery. While we all think of her as the author of "Anne of Green Gables", one of her books, "The Blue Castle", was based on her vacation to Bala in 1922. While the mistress of the museum showed Lucy Maud artifacts upstairs, her husband captivated the crowd downstairs with boisterous honky-tonk piano music. Bala is fortunate in having a place like that. Before heading to Johnston's Cranberry Marsh, we dropped by the Delta Sherwood Inn for a delectable lunch. Once at Johnston's, we were, not surprisingly, educated to the many uses of cranberries, from jams, jellies, honey, syrup, wines and what not. If you didn't have cranberries on your mind before the visit, you certainly had after.

Closing Banquet

All this led up to the final, much anticipated, event – the evening's semi-formal Farewell Banquet. And what an event it was. The vast dining room was colourfully decorated, tables and chairs equally adorned, the menu brilliantly executed by the establishment's team of chefs. The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, **James K. Bartleman**, addressed our gathering. The evening's entertainment featured a vintage **Don Harron** (aka **Charlie Farquharson**) performance. Unfortunately, Probus members from Australia may not have understood a lot of his Canadian humour, as Charlie's accent is considerably different from theirs (or ours, for that matter).

No event is complete without a post evaluation—a form was provided for that purpose. Organizers no doubt will receive many well-deserved kudos. One question was whether we received good value for our money. Another one was would we attend another Rendezvous. Both justified a resounding "YES!" The question of whether we were happy with our accommodation at Delta Grandview Resort will likely be met with less enthusiasm. The resort's accommodation is replete with steps and stairs, not conducive to seniors. Something to keep in mind for future events.

Muskoka Rendezvous 2005 was a huge success. It was based on similar such gatherings held in Australia since 1991. The Muskoka Team issued a challenge to other Canadian Clubs to sponsor a second Rendezvous in the not-too-distant future. Ottawa-area Clubs may well consider rising to the occasion.

Jim Kingston & John Kruithof