



# The Probe

Est. September 1999

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

August 2006 #33

## Summer Triple-Header

A fascinating speaker, an Art Show and a Picnic! What better way to spend a mid-Summer morning? Ada McEwan was in charge of the picnic, John E. Wright set up the Arts and Crafts Show and George Toller arranged for a speaker to complement the others. Jean Lupton did what Presidents do best - she coordinated everything and helped out with the hands-on work when needed. Our thanks are due to all four and their helpers.

## A Dynamite Talk!

Ross Wilson, our July speaker, is a regular on Canadian Antiques Roadshow. He is the first to admit that he is not the star of the show because the 'Stars' are the stories behind the artifacts. His talk was an anecdotal look into the antiques business starting with his schoolteacher who went on 'digs' and found shards of pottery 2000 years old. This made a big impression on a young schoolboy and launched his current career.

He spoke more about artifacts than antiques. What are artifacts today, a coffee cup, a brooch, a tool case, etc. will, in 150 years, become antiques. He summed up his three years on the Roadshow with the words "All those wonderful artifacts."

Ross gave a little insight into the production of the show. The first evaluation made is not for value in dollars but for entertainment value. A show hopeful may stand in line for 2 hours clutching an artifact (or a photograph of one) before one of the experts can take a look at it. The show arranges for the transportation of larger items such as furniture - after an initial evaluation by photograph. Often the first question asked by the owner is, "What is it?"

The value of items varies hugely. A Victoria Cross won by a British soldier who came to Canada before WW I, went back to Britain to join up and fight and then came back to Canada, was valued at \$100,000. On the other hand an item may be priceless but with no real value. As an example, in Dartmouth he was shown a 'ratty little blue rag'. The first part of the story was that it was a naval puttee, one of 500 pairs issued to the army in WW I before khaki puttees became available. The second part

was that the grandfather of the owner was a 'runner' - his job was to run through the trenches with messages. One of his messages was the fateful order to go 'over the top' at the Somme on July 1st, 1916. That action resulted in almost 100% casualties, one third being killed. Clearly it is not the artifact, it is the story behind it that gives value.



*What is it?*

## The Dynamite

One of his most alarming stories was about a find he made when checking through a bungalow after the death of the owner. In a corner of the basement he found what looked like a candle but which he recognized as dynamite. The police evacuated everyone and carefully removed it. Later Ross called the son and told him. "But it's just play stuff." "No, it's real." "But we used to play with it when we were kids!"

Bearing in mind last month's talk by Len Vaz, Ross was asked about the danger of theft after an item had been on the show. One thing they are careful (*continued over*)

## **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.**

## Triple Header *(continued)*

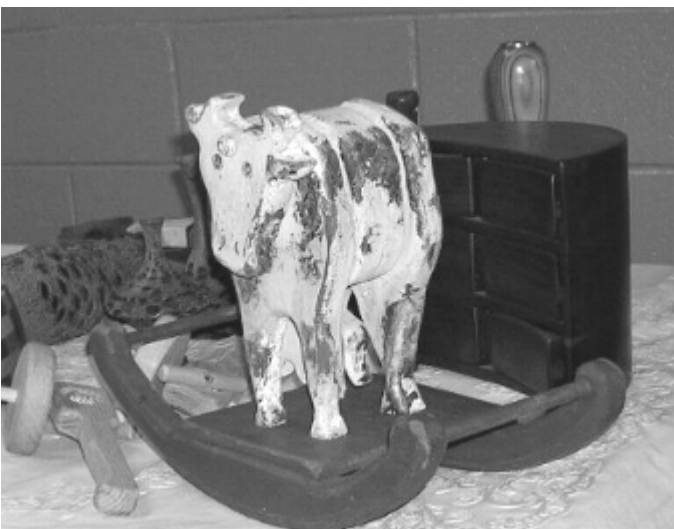
not to do is give the name of the owner. The experts have to sign an agreement not to enter a buyer/seller arrangement with the owner so that there can be no accusations of under valuing to get an item cheaply.

## Arts & Crafts

Another successful Arts & Crafts Show! Its success could be measured in either the quality of the work or the interest shown by the rest of us. Officially there were 7 entries but one or two more were slipped in on the day. Painting was the most popular pastime with displays by **Charles Cavanaugh**, **Phyllis Kingston**, **Dorothy Valiant** and **John E. Wright**. Dorothy's choice of medium differed from the others - her paintings are on ceramics. **Jim Maffre** showed off an eye-catching



display of stained glass and **Alan Joyce**' all-action cow was the most amusing exhibit. Alan also showed some of his more intricate pieces. To round out the show, **Frank Fesco** had some 13th to 20th century Siamese coins on display.



## Picnic

For a few years now we have had our Summer Picnic catered. This avoids any possibility of refrigeration problems on a hot day. Members wishing to show off their tasty treats will have to wait until Christmas. Loblaws did the job for us with a wide variety of shapes and fillings (the smoked salmon was delicious!).

Congratulations to everyone involved in the 3 events!

## The Vaz Line

Len Vaz covered a lot of ground in his June talk on protection for seniors. Const. Vaz is the 'Community Policeman' for Ottawa South, working out of a building on Heatherington. He can be seen around the neighbourhood in his police van but much more often on his bicycle. His message was a serious and, sometimes, sobering one delivered in an easy manner which probably serves him well 'on the beat'.

One of his responsibilities is towards seniors with a program called Elder Abuse Assessment and Intervention developed by the OPP. Abuse can take many forms beyond physical abuse. Even physically abused seniors may be reluctant to report it, especially if there are no obvious symptoms. Officers would look for indications such as redness on the arms. Psychological abuse may be harder to recognize. Neglect - leaving someone alone for a long time - is a form of abuse and Len can be the first point of contact for a person in that situation. Just a phone call is enough to start the process, whether it is just talking over the situation, arranging for a nurse to visit or making contact with social services. Then there is financial abuse. For many of the elderly a Power of Attorney is needed to ensure that bills are paid and finances generally looked after. A P of A does not mean freedom to spend. It must be handled responsibly but even when the senior suspects something is wrong, there is often fear of involving the police and taking the risk of alienating a family member. All the examples Len gave showed the vulnerability of the elderly to abuse by people in positions of trust.

Len described the *Bottle for Life* program - put all essential information, especially medications, in a bottle so it can be easily seen if anything happens.

Len answered a number of questions ranging from helmets for bike riders to the dangers of relying on cross-walks and left with the advice, "Don't be gullible. Question everything."

Jim Kingston made the introduction and George Toller thanked Const. Vaz

## Tips on Safety

Constable Vaz offered several tips to enhance safety and security.

- Carry a purse like a running back carries a football - tuck it under your arm and change sides if someone you don't like the look of is approaching on your carrying side.
- Don't carry all your worldly goods - just what you need for the day - I.D., a credit card (if necessary), enough money only for what you expect to buy.
- Make a photocopy of all cards and I.D. on one or two sheets.
- Know (or keep handy) the number to call to cancel a credit card, and call quickly. Stores and restaurants rarely bother to check the signature. As an example of how thieves can operate, Len was in a PetroCan store, in civvies, when a youth paid for 5 cartons of cigarettes with a PetroCan Points card. What he had done was transfer information from a stolen credit card so that when it was swiped through the machine, it was authorized!
- Keep PIN's secret and change them every two months.
- Use a shredder.
- Check your credit report at least once per year - including a check on who else has looked at it.
- Watch out for 'fly-by-night' operators (anyone who comes to the door is suspect).. If they agree to do some work against a down payment it may be difficult to prove fraud (a criminal offence) as distinct from failure to complete the contract. In the latter case it would take a civil actions to obtain redress.
- If someone comes to the door and asks to use the bathroom say NO!
- A utility man wanting to read the meter should have ID. If you have any suspicions, call the utility using the number in the phone book - a number on fake ID may be answered by an accomplice.

## Oops! - 2008 Probus Rendez-vous, Saint John, NB

The second Probus *Rendez-vous* will be from September 25th to 27th, **2008** (in the July Flyer it said 2007) The organizers have asked any members interested in going to Saint John, to complete a survey. Copies will be available at our next few meetings. Everyone who went to the Muskoka *Rendez-vous* came back with glowing reports!

## A Note from the President



One of the most important objectives included in the Constitution of our Probus Club states that "... the activities of the Club shall be directed solely towards acquaintance and fellowship". There are, of course, other important formal objectives but this is the one which probably touches most of us at our monthly meetings. I feel sure that most of our members look forward to our meetings, partly because of the varied range of speakers who address us but perhaps equally because of the very pleasant time we spend mingling and talking with other members, some of whom are our friends and neighbors. This is why time at our meetings is specially set aside before and after the formal segment to allow this to happen.

Last month's meeting on July 26, when we had a knowledgeable, engaging speaker, followed by the opportunity to view the displays of artwork and handicrafts of some of our members and ending with our annual indoor summer picnic, was a particularly good example of a successful social event. This was made possible because of the active participation by a small number of our members working hard "behind the scenes". Again, our sincere thanks to all of them.

As we enjoy the last few weeks of summer it's time to begin thinking about the year ahead for Probus Alta Vista. Our Club has experienced steady growth since its establishment in September 1999. To ensure the ongoing success of the Club, we encourage you to extend your participation beyond the social times and the presentations of the speakers. To sustain the continued growth and vitality of our Club, we need members to participate in and bring fresh, new ideas to the committee and behind the scenes work. There is personal enjoyment in such involvement and a vibrant Club benefits all its members.

*Jean Lupton*

## The News

At our June meeting we were visited by **Spencer Callaghan**, a reporter from *The News EMC*. His article, 12 column-inches, appeared in the July 6th edition under the headline *Ottawa Police Services target seniors' safety*. He covers much of same ground as our report of the meeting.

The article concludes with a quote from **Jean Lupton**, "It was a very useful presentation for seniors. I would think, from all the questions that were asked, that a lot of people learned something."

## New Probus President

Beth Hickerson is the newly elected President of Probus Canada, taking over from Margaret Huismans. Beth, now living in Ancaster, Ontario, joined Probus in Kitchener in 1994 after retiring from Bell Canada Yellow Pages. She held several positions in the Kitchener-Westmount Club before being elected President and, therefore, eligible for the Probus Canada Board. Beth is now in her second 3-year term on the Board.



“As your President, my goal for Probus Canada is to grow and, with your support and enthusiasm, foster the growth of fun and fellowship for Probians across Canada. I look forward to working with all of you to make it happen!”

With a record of assisting in the formation of seven new clubs, Beth Hickerson is obviously living her goal.

## Probus Centre Canada

Probus Clubs operate almost autonomously but there is a directing body in each country. The officers of Probus Canada are:

Beth Hickerson - President (Ancaster)  
 Arthur Buck - Vice-president (Moncton)  
 Allan H. Lee - Treasurer (Edmonton)  
 Nancy Troyak - Secretary (Kitchener)

Ottawa-Alta Vista is in District #1 (of 6) in Ontario and our representative is Stone Avery who many members will remember from his visit in August 2004.

We make an annual contribution of \$2.50 per member to cover insurance, the Probus web-site ([www.probus.org/canada.htm](http://www.probus.org/canada.htm)) and administration costs. This year, the directors have decided to forego a face-to-face meeting so as not to deplete the Centre's bank account. Good management!

A Probus pocket crest is available for \$15, including shipping and taxes. The circle is about two and a half inches across. Check the web-site for a colour picture, [www.probus.org/canada.htm](http://www.probus.org/canada.htm), look down the left side for 'Probus Merchandise', and click 'Pocket Crest'.



## September 27 - Riverkeeper

“The Ottawa River has been the lifeblood of this area for a long time, and it still is, even if people don't recognize it. The health of our communities is tied to the river, but it takes a little bit of prodding to remind people.” This quote is at the top of page B5 in the Sunday, June 11, Ottawa Citizen. **Meredith Brown**, an environmental engineer by training, is a Riverkeeper. She is the Executive Director of *Ottawa Riverkeeper*, a registered charity that has acted as the voice for the river since 2003. At the end of May the organization issued its first *State of the River* report. The bad news is that permits to dump waste are issued at municipal, provincial and federal levels and no one is doing the math to add up the cumulative impact. The good news is that people can still swim in the river right downtown.

## October 27 - The Forgotten War

**Bill Cosway** joined the RCAF in 1942 on his 18th birthday and trained as a navigator. He flew 38 missions ('maximum' 30) from India over Malaya and Burma. Attached to the RAF, he joined 159 Squadron and flew in B24's to bomb and strafe the notorious Burma-Siam Railway. As a pathfinder, his navigation skills were used to locate and illuminate targets to direct other bombers onto them.

The fierce and intense campaign in South-east Asia gets little attention beyond the movie *The Bridge on the River Kwai* which is why Bill, and many others, refer to it as 'The Forgotten War'.

## More than a Word

Summer is more than just a word — it is  
 A young man's freedom to explore the green  
 Part of his world: all hills and trees are his  
 To climb; the scent of pine is sharp and clean  
 To nostrils long confined to dusty book;  
 And eyes can roam the far horizon's rim  
 Or follow the silver threading of a brook...  
 Summer is more than just a word to him!

It is a song, a slow, daylong adventure  
 Of browsing through a meadow deep with hay,  
 Or suddenly running barefoot without censure,  
 To paddle in a stream along the way.

Summer is more than words — it's food and drink  
 To those who need to dream awhile...and think.

*Lydia B. Atkinson*

A poem for Summer - suggested by George Toller.