



# The Probe

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## Bookmobile

The Library of Parliament moved so often in its early years that it could have been the model for the modern bookmobile! Erik Spicer gave us some of the history of the library in his talk in August. In the late 1700's the shift was from Upper Canada to Lower Canada and in the 1840's it moved between Kingston, Montreal, Quebec City and Toronto. The current building was designed in 1859, building started 9 years later and finished another 9 years after that - two years after everything was moved to Ottawa.

Erik served as the Parliamentary Librarian for 34 years, a record which still stands. The position has the status of Deputy Minister and is a prime ministerial appointment - in Erik's case, by John Diefenbaker. The library has two distinct departments and two heads. There is the Parliamentary Library itself, traditionally headed by an anglophone, and the General Library, traditionally headed by a francophone.

The library is open to the public and at one stage the need for the City of Ottawa to open its own Public Library was questioned, as, "there is already a public library in Ottawa". Although it is open, there is very little use made by members of the public today. It has become something of a private club for parliamentarians.

The staff are there to help M.P.'s and their staff with research projects, a task which requires a high degree of confidentiality. Members of the same party can be extremely competitive so that what one member is working on can not be revealed to another, nor can the books taken out be revealed as this would be a strong clue.

One of the questions was on John Diefenbaker. Clearly Erik has a very favourable impression of "The Chief", who called just after their interview to say that he had never had such caucus support for any appointment.

George Toller introduced his 'old friend' - they went to school together, and while thanking him, Claude Hamm took the opportunity to check that the library is still open to visitors. "Yes - and it is well worth a visit".

## Riverkeeper

Meredith Brown is Ottawa's Riverkeeper. For most members the existence of a Riverkeeper and a world-wide organization, were revelations, only about a third



*Meredith Brown on guard for the river.*

indicated that they knew something about them. By the end of the longest question and answer session we have ever had, the picture had changed!

The Riverkeeper's job is to look after the river. This has to be accomplished without any official support and by existing on contributions from the general public. The job is partly physical monitoring and partly lobbying various levels of government to get changes made. Meredith described the laws as 'fairly good' but there is much non-compliance because there is no enforcement. Although there is a tendency to make new laws to cover emerging situations, it would be better to enforce the existing ones.

Two 'hot' items this summer were beach closures at

### **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.**

Petrie Island and the dead catfish. Petrie Island beach was closed more often than any other local beach due to the levels of e-coli bacteria. This is directly linked to rainfall and the resulting dumping of untreated storm-sewer water into the river. The Riverkeepers had about 60 calls reporting dead catfish. One caller said, "I've lived on the river for 50 years and never seen anything like it". The cause was stress. Analysis showed a high level of bacteria in the fish - probably not enough to kill the fish, but coupled with warm water for a week, the fish just could not cope. Once again rainfall - a heavy storm - was a contributor as more raw sewage was washed into the river. There were no *reported* spills which would have accounted for it. The phenomenon is not unique. By tapping into the resources of the Riverkeeper network Meredith found similar cases in the US. The technology exists to treat all run-off, but it is not being applied.

Meredith sits on an advisory committee which is helping the City put together a pollution management strategy. But Ottawa alone can not do much. It needs a concerted effort by the two provincial governments and all the municipalities on both sides of the river to do an effective job. Besides non-compliance, the other large problem is that no one has considered the cumulative effect of licences and permitted exceptions when the provinces delegate to municipalities.

The Ottawa River is part of the Great Lakes watershed, the largest in the world. While considerable work has been done on the lakes and the St Lawrence, there is little scientific background for the Ottawa.

Q. Acid rain?

Dropped out of sight recently but it is still a problem (mainly for lakes) as is mercury. An alliance is trying to put together a law suit against polluters.

Q. Are problems also from Quebec?

Quebec has initiated some good programs but as recently as 8 years ago some municipalities were dumping raw sewage.

Q. Pulp and paper industry?

Responsible for huge degradation, particularly in the 1970's. They claimed that compliance would have a devastating impact on costs. The situation is somewhat better today. What drives companies to comply is their reputation. When non-compliance reports are not published, compliance goes down.

Q. Effect of road salt?

The nostrum "dilution is the solution to pollution" is just not true. One improvement would be to have snow

dumps away from the river.

Q. What should we do?

Remember that waste water goes down the drain taking everything with it - lawn chemicals, animal waste, etc. etc. Get you car washed at a car wash - they recycle the water. Return pharmaceuticals to a pharmacist for disposal - trace amounts are appearing in the river. Keep batteries out of the household garbage. Get involved.

Q. Pig farms?

Any intensive agriculture is a concern. A pig farm can produce as much sewage as a major city.

Allan Taylor introduced Meredith, telling us that she is an environmental engineer by training, with a BSc from Guelph and an MSc from UBC. She has lived in Ottawa for about 3 years. Dan Kelley proffered our thanks.

All the copies of *The River Report #1 - Ecology and Impacts* which Meredith brought with her were quickly snapped up. Copies are available at The Mountain Equipment Co-op (366 Richmond Road, K2A 0E8) at \$15 or by mail at \$18 (including p & p) from her office at the same address, or by downloading from the web site ([www.ottawariverkeeper.ca](http://www.ottawariverkeeper.ca)).

## World Views – Fall 2006 Program

John Kruithof reminds us that this series of free monthly photo evenings continues at Bethany Baptist Church, Centrepointe Drive West at Baseline Road.

Saturday, October 28 – Northern India. History, people, gods and gurus. By Colin and Ian McGregor.

Saturday, November 25 – In the Footsteps of the Gods. A photographer's journey through Crete and mainland Greece . By Pat Martinson.

Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.

For more information, please call: Colin McGregor, 613- 820-0598

## Speakers' Corner

We were particularly pleased to welcome two of our speakers among our guests at Meredith Brown's talk in September.

**Graham Sibthorpe**, who spoke to us in March 2006, on canoe building and;

**Bill Cosway**, today's speaker, taking up our customary pre-Remembrance Day military theme with his talk on *The Forgotten War*.

## A little history

**John Reynolds Morris** is recognized as the 'father' of Probus in Canada.

A Rotarian since 1946 and Past District Governor of Rotary International 1976-1977 in an area of Southwest Ontario and New York State, he is a retired insurance broker.



John became interested in Probus on a trip to Australia and New Zealand in 1981. He set his sights on beginning and developing Probus Clubs in Canada. After several speaking engagements to Rotary Clubs, success came in March 1987 with formation by the Rotary Club of Galt by the Probus Club of Cambridge, Ontario, the first club in Canada.

John is a Past President and the originator of Probus Centre-Canada, Inc.

## Blazer Badge

Probus Centre is offering blazer badges at \$15. The badge is about 2.5 inches (6-and-a-bit cm) across.

We have a few on order which we expect to have on sale at our November meeting.



## Elections & AGM

Just when you thought elections were over (don't forget to vote for Mayor and Councillors on November 13th, advanced polling on October 26th, 10am to 8pm and November 4th, 10am to 5pm), it will be time for our Club elections. With the Club year now firmly established as the calendar year, the AGM will be a feature of our November meetings. The elections give us the side benefit of having two sets of Management Committee members available to help out at the Christmas Party.

All positions are open. The Club depends on a continual cycling of members through the Management Committee to ensure that we have leaders for the next years.

The satisfaction far outweighs the effort needed - mainly a 90 minute meeting at 10:00 on the 2nd Wednesday.

## Guests - August

We were pleased to welcome **Betty and John Frail**, founding members of our club who now live in B.C. John served as our treasurer.

**John Tuffley**, a U.K. Probus member was in Ottawa to visit his daughter, Janet, who came to Canada in the 70's. John was en route to Calgary and Banff to see the Rockies. He wrote to us about his visit.

## The Editor, Newsletter Probus Club of Alta Vista, Ottawa

It was a privilege for me to meet members of your Probus Club on August 23rd, 2006. As ex-Chairman and Life Member of Bishopsteignton Probus Club, Devon, England, I send you our felicitations and sincerest good wishes.

Our Club was founded in 1971 and has 65 members, with attendance of approximately 40 to 50 at twice monthly meetings. We are a "men only" Club, but welcome lady speakers. We invite ladies to outings, functions, lunches, and we also invite widows of late members.

Our meetings follow a similar pattern to yours - introduction, notices, business, then a speaker. In our case we meet in a hotel and adjourn in groups for drinks or - in some cases - lunch.

In visiting your Club, I was delighted by the welcome given by your President, to me and my daughter Janet, who lives in Ottawa. The friendliness of your members was overwhelming. I was impressed by the relaxed atmosphere in your Club; ours tends to be rather more formal. We close our meetings at noon - perhaps the opening of the bar helps! I was pleasantly surprised at the number of your members who have lived in the U.K., or who have detailed knowledge thereof.

My regards to you all, and thanks again for your welcome.

*John Tuffley*

Editor's note: We also received a letter from Janet, saying how much her father had enjoyed his visit and his trip to the Rockies.

## Parliamentary Protocol

In an aside during his talk, Erik Spicer mentioned that when the Parliament Buildings caught fire, the house quickly accepted and passed a motion to adjourn.

Would anybody suggest that it is time someone lit a fire under them again?

## Lois Johnston

We are saddened to report the passing of Lois Johnston who joined the Club in February 2003. Lois had a career in External Affairs with several overseas postings. In recent years she was a member of a number of local clubs (Probus, Canadian Club, E-SU, MacDonald Club and others) and traveled widely with the 'Lois' group - all members are called Lois. Her name has a prominent position on the *Wall of Benefactors* at the National Arts Centre.

## November 22 - Dr. Ruth McPherson

If you've ever wondered what goes on at the Heart institute in the way of research, you won't want to miss November's meeting. Dr. Ruth McPherson, MD, PhD, FRCPC, will be with us to describe some of the leading edge research now being carried out in Ottawa at the Heart Institute including her own "National Study to Identify Genetic Causes of Heart Disease". Dr. McPherson will also give Probus members an opportunity to participate in her study.

Be sure to come out and get up to date on the important work being carried out right here in Ottawa.

## Yes, Virginia ...

We are bringing our December meeting forward to the second **Wednesday, December 13th**. The Management Committee is lining up a festive program to compliment the Christmas fare - which members are asked to bring.

We have again rotated the alphabet and ask you for items corresponding to your initials:

A to G, please bring Christmas goodies, cake and pies.

H to M, please bring appetizers, dips, veggie bites, cheese, crackers.

N to Z, please bring sandwiches.

More in the November *Flyer*.

## Membership Fees

Our annual bargain period has started! Any new members joining after October 1st will be asked to pay the regular annual rate (\$15 single, \$25 couple) but it will cover membership through 2007.

**Paul Stumes**, Membership Secretary, reports that most of our active members have renewed for 2006, but there remain one or two who have forgotten. Please check with Paul if you think it possible that you may have had a Senior Moment over this.

Paul will be happy to receive 2007 memberships at any time from now on.

## Acadian Winterfest, 1606-7

We are approaching two quadricentennials - the first theater production and the founding of the first social club in the New World. **Allen Taylor** has put together their stories. The second part will be published in the December *Probe*.

Part I: The Story of *Neptune's Theatre In New France*. North America's first theatrical performance was presented at the Acadian settlement of Port-Royal on November 14, 1606. Written and performed by a Paris lawyer, Marc Lescarbot, it was entitled *Neptune's Theatre in New France*.

In March 1604, Pierre de Gua, sieur de Monts, and Jean de Biencourt, sieur de Poutrincourt et Saint-Juste, with a company of 79 men, guided by a professional navigator, Samuel de Champlain, had sailed from Le Havre de Grace in Normandy to the Bay of Fundy area. They erected their *Habitation* in the summer of 1605 at Port-Royal, near the present town of Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia.

During the first winter in Acadia, spent at Dochet Island in the St. Croix River between Maine and New Brunswick, 35 of the 79 men died of scurvy and hypothermia. The second winter, 1605-6, at Port-Royal, was quite mild, and yet 12 of the 45 men died.

Poutrincourt and Champlain, sailed on August 28, 1606, to explore and chart the coast and harbours of Norumbega - present-day New England - as far south as Nantucket Island. At Port-Royal meanwhile, in preparation for Poutrincourt's return, Marc Lescarbot, Poutrincourt's lawyer who had traveled to New France 'for the adventure', wrote a welcoming presentation - *une reception* - in the form of a masque (or, in French, ballet de cour, court ballet), which he entitled *Neptune's Theatre in New France*. He would play the part of Neptune, the Roman god of the sea; other gentlemen of the settlement played Neptune's sons, the Tritons. There were no French women in the company, so Neptune's wife, Amphitrite, was not portrayed. Some friendly Mi'kmaq of the area also had small parts in Lescarbot's play.

On a Sunday morning, November 14, 1606, as soon as Poutrincourt's ship was sighted at the entrance to the Annapolis Basin, the "company" got into their costumes and went down to the shore. They then pushed off in some Mi'kmaq boats and Neptune escorted Poutrincourt into Port-Royal. The doorways of the *Habitation* had been decorated with evergreen boughs, ready to celebrate the return with the New World's first theatrical presentation.