



The Probe

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Your Management Committee hard at work!

In its untiring efforts to maintain the level of excellence expected by our members, the Management Committee went on a one-day retreat to consider all aspects of the Club's operations.

Or ... the Management Committee held its July meeting as guests of Ed (centre) and Cathy Borza at their cottage. Joyce Wright joined committee members Bob Achison, Wib Neal and Ada McEwan for this photograph.



The other committee members were equally hard at work elsewhere around the property or on the boat.

Books - Ancient and Modern

"You're not really in the book business until you are buying back collections you sold."

Patrick McGahern owned and operated **McGahern Books** in the Glebe from 1959 to his recent retirement. 'Retirement' is a bit dubious as he is still very much involved while his son runs the business. 'Previously owned' books fall into three main categories - second hand, antiquarian and rare and value follows the same progression. Second hand books whether contemporary fiction or literature are worth only a few dollars. Antiquarian books may sell in the \$25 to \$400 or \$500 range but rare books can go up to about \$100,000 with (rare) exceptions up to a quarter million.

Like any small business, bookselling has to be adaptable to current conditions. In the 60's, 70's and 80's the changes were there although not obvious to the public. At the peak there were about 20 second hand book stores in Ottawa and now we are down to about five. The first big change came in 1990 with the introduction of the GST which had a major effect on retail. Soon afterwards big box stores started to appear and then the Internet. Each of the three changed book-buying habits. One web store

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Indoor Picnic

Members arriving at our July meeting were greeted with the sight of tables set up instead of just chairs. This means *Picnic Day*.

Morley Craig led the set-up team and Ada McEwan made all the arrangements for the refreshments as well as working with her team of volunteers to get everything ready and looking appetizing.

Mooney's Bay Bistro again provided the food - except for the *Probus* iced cake which was a Morley Craig special.

Everything worked out well and, judging by the leftovers, was enjoyed by all.

Our thanks to Ada and Morley and their crews for making it a successful and enjoyable affair.

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.

Books - continued from page 1

lists tens of millions of titles - all available for home delivery at the click of a mouse. On the other hand, the Internet has opened up what used to be a local market to an international reach.

After this brief introduction, Patrick opened up the meeting to questions.

Most expensive book handled? \$55,000. A first Edition of Newton's *Mathematica*, 1704.

How did you acquire it? A telephone call about disposal of an estate. The caller, who knew Patrick, was looking for advice on how to sell it. Her thoughts were to sell at auction or to send it to London. Patrick assured her that it could be handled in Ottawa.

How much of the business is rare books? About 50% of turnover. The store has about 12,000 antiquarian books on hand at any given time and they ship about five orders a day.

How have books changed? Up to about 1850 fine paper and strong bindings were used. In about 1880 colour printing started to be used. Good quality books now use acid free paper but cheap books today use the worst possible paper.

Generally how do you acquire books? England is the best place to buy. It is still possible to get good books at reasonable prices. On the other hand, dealers acquire from each other. One regular purchaser buys something from every single catalogue - he always recognizes something that Patrick had not.

To finish off the session, Patrick looked at some books bought by members. As a general comment he noted that Bibles are the most common things he sees. They usually have to be pre-1800 to be valuable. The most interesting book submitted was an atlas *Geographia Vetus* originally published in 1630 but since rebound. This would be classified as 'Rare'. At least two others were published in the nineteenth century.

"Books are just like us - their value increases with age."

Wib Neal introduced Patrick and Ed Borza thanked him and presented him with a Probus pen and a membership.

From the Internet

Accodrni to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in what oredr the ltteers in a word are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is that the first and last ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit a porbelm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the word as a wlohe. Amzanig!

**From South Africa to the Arctic ...
... by way of Panama and Estonia.**

Our quartet of 'In house' speakers took us from the bottom to the top of the world!

Mike Charrier started us on the journey with his talk on *South African War Graves*, with particular focus on **Pte. W.H.J Ross**, R.C.R, who died on 6th March, 1900. Will Ross has two gravestones let into opposite sides of the same memorial wall. The unofficial one, which was paid for by his comrades, says "Will G. Ross, Ottawa Coy., Royal Canadians - Loved and admired by all." A striking testimonial for a Military Policeman. Mike talked about the campaign, the graves of those who died - the majority from sickness rather than military action - and the upkeep of the graves. Unlike the WW I and WW II graves in France, these are in the 'enemy' country and of little interest to the population so they are not given the same loving care.

Allen Taylor then took us through the North-West passage with a discussion on the *Law of the Sea* and how it applies both to ships traversing the passage - on the surface or underwater - and to Canada's claims to sovereignty in the area. The questions had remained almost purely academic until the U.S. tanker *Manhattan* forced the passage in an attempt to have it declared an international waterway. The U.S. reinforced its argument by sailing submarines under the ice cap.

More recently the question of Canada's claim of 'territorial waters' has been challenged.

While most members were somewhat aware of the issues, Allen was able to clarify some of the complexities for us.

The third speaker was our resident historian, **Paul Stumes**. Paul took us to the *Panama Canal* and surprised everybody by telling us about an extremely important, even essential, Canadian contribution to the building and re-building of this masterpiece of engineering.

Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal, tried to build the Panama Canal in the mid 1800's but gave up when the money ran out. An American army engineer G. W. Goethals completed the project despite the difficulties including many deaths among his workforce. He is generally recognized as the builder of the canal. One of the key, but little known factors was the contribution of Canadian Donald MacDonald who handled the logistics side of the operation.

Joyce Wright was the fourth speaker with a travelogue *April in Tallinn*, recalling some of the highlights of a

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From South Africa .. - continued from page 2

trip she and John had made earlier this year to take part in the celebration of the founding of an *English-Speaking Union* branch in Estonia. Her talk was illustrated with slides of the walled city of Tallinn as well of some of the surrounding countryside.

The 20 delegates from 7 countries were treated to receptions at the British Ambassador's residence and by the Chairman of the City Council - the latter in the 15th century Town Hall where they were greeted by a trio of medieval musicians. Other events were *My Fair Lady* in Estonian and a performance by Tallinn Philharmonic.

As it happened, a film on Estonian independence, *The Singing Revolution*, had been playing at the Bytowne (and was due to be shown at the Mayfair). Mike Charrier one of our members who had seen it recommended it to everyone - with the caution that there were some harrowing scenes from WW II.

John Wright was our MC and timekeeper - except that he asked to be excused timekeeping duty for the final speaker. All the speakers kept to their pre-arranged time limit (more or less) and left the audience wanting more.

Treasurer

The Management Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Allan Porter as Treasurer. The appointment will be effective in September. Allan replaces Ed Borza who has been carrying the triple load of Treasurer, Vice-president and Chairman of the *Probus Ottawa Spring Fling '09* Committee.

Allan is new to Probus but has held a similar position in other organizations, bringing some experience to the task.

A Little Probus History

The Clubs spring from two main roots: the "Campus Club" founded by the Rotary Club of Welwyn Garden City and the "Probus Club" founded by the Rotary Club of Caterham in England in 1965 and 1966 respectively. Since then they have spread worldwide and continue to be established at a rapidly increasing rate as former professional and business persons and executives, invited to join, recognize the value of participation and observe the enthusiasm of existing members and the way in which **PROBUS** enriches their lives. **PROBUS** opened in New Zealand in 1974 and in Australia in 1976. There are now over 1800 Clubs and over 150,000 members in the Pacific Region. The U.K. has similar numbers and Canada has chartered 198 Clubs with over 26,000 members.

September 24th - Bruce Montone

Bruce Montone is the Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention, Training, Special Operations, Safety, Maintenance & Communications Divisions and is responsible for fire prevention, public fire safety education, for all training and the recruitment of new firefighters; Incident Safety Officer program, communications and radio programs, and the operations of all specialty teams.

Chief Montone has been in the Fire Service for 32 years and was appointed Deputy Chief in Ottawa in 2002. He is usually the officer whose name appears in the media any time there is a major fire in Ottawa.

October 22nd - LCol R. Chamberlain

A former commanding officer of a field artillery regiment, instructor on strategic and operational issues at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto, and staff officer to the current Chief of the Defence staff on strategy management, Lieutenant-Colonel Bob Chamberlain deployed to Afghanistan in January 2007, where he served as the Commanding Officer of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT) from January 2007 to February 2008, a period of tremendous activity and sacrifice amidst an ongoing insurgency.

LCol Chamberlain will give us a briefing on Canadian efforts in Afghanistan from the point of view of a commander in the field.

Probus Ottawa Spring Fling '09

Ottawa Alta Vista will be hosting the next Spring Fling. May 26th, 2009 may seem to be a long way away but it will start to creep up on us very quickly.

Ed Borza is the chairman of our organizing committee and he has already outlined his approach to the Management Committee. The major divisions of responsibility will be:

- 1) receipts and disbursements
- 2) communications
- 3) Hellenic Centre liaison
- 4) table host coordinator
- 5) entertainment and door prizes
- 6) other (including decorations and displays)

Some of these jobs will be taken on by members of the Management Committee but there is plenty of work for anyone willing to take part. Just let Ed know that you want to take part.

#4 may be a puzzle. The job is to arrange for one or two of our members to be seated at each table to welcome the guests and to be ambassadors for the City.

Last Chance - Rendezvous 2008



This really is your last chance to plan a getaway to Saint John, New Brunswick. Rendezvous 2008 is less than a month away.

Arthur Buck, Probus Canada President, had this to say in the latest Probus Centre Newsletter:

“Having just returned from a ‘site visit’ for Rendezvous 2008, I really must urge those of you who have yet to register, OR, had second thoughts... you should really get at it. It is a gorgeous site... all accessible without going outdoors from the two major hotels.... a ‘ton’ of great eating spots (particularly sea food) and exciting shopping in Canada’s oldest incorporated CityAND ... right on the water. By the way.... we plan to have the ‘workshops’ take the format of not just a question and answer session but an exchange of ideas and programs. So... come prepared to share your thoughts and ideas, constructive and otherwise, with your colleagues. Finally, how about paying a visit to your local tourist authority, or City Hall, or your favourite politician, for some lapel pins or other souvenirs that you can bring along for ‘trading’ as a keep-sake of your Eastern experience.”

It sounds like a great way to enjoy some Maritime hospitality and make some new friends.

New Clubs

New clubs seem to be added continuously. The three most recent are:

#196 The PROBUS Club of Lakefield and Area, Ontario

#197 The PROBUS Club of Vernon, B.C.

#198 The PROBUS Club of Salt Spring, B.C.

All three new clubs are “Combined” that is to say, “open to women and men”.

Perhaps we should be looking at claiming #200 for Ottawa. How about New Edinburgh/Rockcliffe/Manor Park or Orleans - or both?

Dues Increase

Due to global warming, the price of gas and the state of the Canadian dollar as well as an expected increase in some of our costs, the Management Committee has recommended a fee increase. This will be \$5 on each type, raising the cost for singles to \$20 and for couples to \$30.

The fees are set in the By-laws which means that a change requires a corresponding change to the By-laws. Changes to the By-laws require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a general meeting. The next general meeting will be in November and members will be asked to approve the fee increase at that time.

Dues ‘09

At our October meeting we will open the books for the payment of dues for 2009, which are due by January 1st. Although the new dues structure will not be official at that time we will be using the new amounts (\$20 & \$30). In the event that the new levels are not approved, refunds will be made.

Fees for new members

Any new members joining after October 1st 2008, will have their membership extended to December 31, 2009.

New Members

So far this year we have gained 17 new members.

John & Leona Beadle	Phyllis & Patt MacPherson
Mike Charrier	Walter & Gwen Terentiuk
Allan & Lenore Porter	Roger & Irene McCullough
Robert Gayner	Robin & Solange Rousham
Lorraine Balderson	Walter & Viki Prystawski

Let’s make sure that they feel welcome.

E-Mail

Thanks to the members who responded to our request for an updated email address. If you have not yet responded, please send an e-mail to jcwright@sympatico.ca with the word ‘Probus’ in the subject.

How to find us

We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month except December (2nd Wednesday) in the Hall of Pleasant Park Baptist Church, 414 Pleasant Park Road in Alta Vista.

Our meetings begin at 10 but members start arriving soon after 9:30 for coffee and chat. Try it - you’ll like it!