



The Probe

Est. September 1999

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

June 2009, #50



Peter Doyle, Probus Director for Ontario District #1, welcomes 230 Probus members from 12 Clubs to the Eastern Ontario 2009 Spring Luncheon.

Probus Spring Luncheon

CONGRATULATIONS to the Planning Committee of the Ottawa-Alta Vista Club for a job well done!

The spring luncheon held in Ottawa May 26th at the Hellenic Banquet Centre was blessed with beautiful weather, good food, great entertainment, and meticulous organization. Our guests from all over eastern Ontario arrived early to renew friendships and enjoy meeting new friends – especially at lunch – and learn a bit more about Ottawa and its many attractions. Special thanks are due to our club members who made our guests feel so much at home.

Our District 1 director, Peter Doyle, brought greetings and spoke a bit about the clubs making up the eastern area of District #1. Robin Rousham, our liaison with Rotary Ottawa, described the completion of the major undertaking to build a new, larger \$6 million Rotary Home in Leitrim to provide respite care for parents and guardians of severely disabled children.

The high-light of course was a choral and instrumental presentation by the World Voices Choir of Brookfield High School led by Jeannie Hunter (see page 4). All they asked of us was an opportunity to sell their CDs in support of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and Microcredit loan programs. Many Probus members showed their appreciation by purchasing the choir's CDs.

The afternoon was rounded out with the awarding of door prizes donated by 15 organizations: museums, theatres, music festivals, Canada Post, City of Ottawa, and Paul's Boat Lines. Special thanks are due President Ed for chairing the event and ensuring that all the details were looked after from beginning to end.

Our Organizing Committee

Many people are involved in putting together an event like this. Our thanks to committee members:

Bob Atchison Cathy Borza Ed Borza
Elizabeth Bowen Ada McEwan Wib Neal
Bayne Pearen Jeanne Pearen Allan Porter
Lenore Porter Audrey Reekie Pat Richardson
John Wright Joyce Wright

... and the many others who have helped out on registration, set-up and a hundred-and-one other little tasks which are needed to make sure things go well for you, our visitors, not forgetting the work of the management and staff of the Hellenic Centre, and Mayor Larry O'Brien who sent a letter of welcome.

Surprise Party!!!

Well, the surprise is not in the party, we have had a Picnic at our July meeting for a few years. The surprise is the date! The Church has asked us to release July 22nd and hold our picnic on -

**July 29th
(5th Wednesday)**

James Kingston & Robert Bailey

We have recently lost two long term members.

Jim Kingston was at the Club's initial meeting in September 1999 and a regular attendee since then until his recent illness. Our profile of Jim (October 2001) says that he was a Maritimer, his studies at UNB were interrupted by war service, he married Phyllis the day after he graduated (1948), took a Masters in Forestry at Yale and had a career as a 'Resource Economist'. After 5 years with the BC Government and 5 years with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN in Geneva, Jim joined the Federal Government, retiring from External Affairs in 1988.

Bob Bailey was a member almost as long. He was introduced to the club by Jim Rader in November 1999. Bob graduated from the University of Alberta as a Civil Engineer. He worked with the city of Calgary and with city and regional governments in Hamilton before coming to Ottawa in 1976 as Commissioner of Community Development, retiring in 1987. The notice in the Citizen mentions Bob's considerable talents as a handyman, confirmed by Jim Rader as the two of them worked together on several bathroom renovation projects for themselves and others.

Our condolences go to Phyllis and Marilyn and their respective families.

Probe #50

As you can see on our masthead this is the 50th edition of *The Probe*. The first issue was in April 2001. We had 92 members, Jim Rader was President and the first write-ups of speakers were for Noreen Wolfe on *Geneology* and Susan Menzies who spoke to us on *Affairs of the Heart*, the first 25 years of the Ottawa Heart Institute.

Special Edition

Every place setting at the Spring Luncheon had a special edition of *The Probe*. This was mainly for visitors but there are a few copies left over. Please see John Wright if you would like one.

As there was no Club meeting in May, there was no *Flyer* printed.

Future Lunches

At a meeting of the Club Presidents just ahead of the Spring Luncheon, they arranged the schedule of future lunches out to 2016 (Cornwall in 2010).

This is a great improvement over the old approach of asking a Club to work with only one year's notice.

Next Meetings

July 29th * New Date *** July 29th**

Our **July** meeting will continue the approach of the last two years by having 'in-house' speakers followed by a catered 'indoor picnic'.

Mike Charrier will lead off with a talk on Canadians who were awarded the US Medal of Honor (the highest American award for gallantry) in the Spanish-American war. **Ed Borza** will talk about his work with *Habitat for Humanity*. **Ken Dye**, Sheila Fraser's predecessor as Auditor General will talk about the Office and how the imminence of an Auditor General's Report has caused severe nail-biting in Government Departments. **Ute Davis** has not yet confirmed her subject and to round out the slate we will have a mystery speaker! It should not be a mystery speaker but your Program Committee had a 'senior moment' and lost the piece of paper with his name.

Remember the date - July 29th.

August 26th

Jim Watson was the head of Tourism Canada when we first invited him. By January 2003, when he arrived, he was a broadcaster on the A-Channel. That day, he went straight from our meeting to his on-air assignment and made some flattering comments about **Probus**. Since then he has been elected and re-elected to the Ontario Parliament where he has held two Ministerial portfolios.

We have been trying to arrange a return visit for over a year but Premier McGuinty holds his Cabinet meetings on Wednesdays which has made it difficult. August will be 'Summer Break' time for MPP's and we have a date! Jim has agreed to help us with *Plan B* in the event Dalton calls a special cabinet meeting. If *Plan B* is not needed we will have another speaker lined up for later in the

Send us an Email (please).

We are upgrading our membership list to serve you better.

Don't you get suspicious when you see a notice which starts like that? The last time we tried to contact members with email addresses on file we discovered, the hard way, that about 30% of the addresses had changed. The change of date for the July meeting is the kind of information that we would send out by email to supplement the usual phone call.

Please send an email to jcwright@bell.net with **Probus** as the subject so that we can get our list up-to-date.

An Infrastructure Program For Canada

Gerry Maffre, Director General - Communications, Infrastructure Canada, gave us a review of the government's infrastructure plan - a topic which was timely

in April and is still a hot item of political discussion as Canada fights its way out of the financial crisis. One of the important things he cleared up was the difference between the "Building Canada" program and "Canada's Economic Action Plan".

"Building Canada" is a multi-year program initiated in 2007 with the national priorities of improving highways, drinking water, wastewater, public transit and providing green energy. Eligible investments are in three areas, 'Growing Economy' (including transportation and communications), 'Cleaner Environment' (including public transit and waste management), and 'Strong Communities' (including water, culture, sport and local roads). The funding is \$33 billion over 7 years.

"Canada's Economic Action Plan", worth \$12 billion over 2 years plus a 'green fund' of \$1 billion and other components, was presented in the 2009 budget. It was developed as an immediate way of stimulating the economy. The emphasis is on 'shovel ready' projects.

In Ottawa, a highly visible project is the construction of the new Congress Centre although as of our June meeting what we have seen so far is the destruction of



The Ottawa Congress Centre - a "Build Canada" Project

the old one. This is one of about 300 projects in Ontario, an important one being the development of a new Windsor/Detroit border crossing.

Gerry set the stage by reviewing some of the infrastructure problems facing Canada. 60% of buried infrastructure (water, sewers, hydro, communications) is 50 years old and 28% is more than 80 years old, which accounts for the burst water mains which often disrupt traffic and the bad news stories of sewage overflows. A major part of the problem is the 'out of sight, out of mind' approach which has seen a decline in infrastructure spending from 2.5% of GDP in the 1960's to 1% in the late 1990's. An instantaneous fix - if that were possible - is estimated to cost somewhere in the range of \$50 to \$125 billion.

Canada is not alone in having these problems. The US estimates are that \$US1.6 trillion is needed over the next 5 years. Australia has launched a "Build Australia" program of about \$A20 billion (\$C18 billion). The U.K. State of the Nation Report (2006) says that the overall state of most infrastructure is rated 'low average'.

Perhaps the silver lining to the financial crisis is that everyone - individuals, municipalities, provinces and the feds are using stimulus money to modernize and improve homes and infrastructure which will bring benefits and reduced maintenance costs in the future.

Gerry was introduced by his father, Jim, a club member, who talked to us at our July 2005 meeting, making this our first father/son pairing of speakers.



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.

World Voices Choir



The **Spring Fling** audience was entertained by the World Voices Choir made up of 50 students from Brookfield High School. Full of happy energy, this unusual choir performed for over 40 minutes with songs in English as well as several African tongues. Led by their bubbly Musical Director, Jeannie Hunter, they quickly developed an easy rapport with us as they rearranged their positions on stage and introduced drums and other percussion instruments into the songs as they went through their performance play list. Ms Hunter collected many of the songs on trips to Africa she has made in recent years.

At our last Management Committee meeting, it was decided to show our appreciation for the choir's contribution to our luncheon enjoyment (they had agreed to perform without charge) by sending them an honorarium of \$300. They have since let us know how much they were surprised by this gift and how much they appreciated it. It was added to this month's donation they made to KIVA, the organization that provides micro-loans to small entrepreneurs, most often women, in Africa.

Poetry Corner - D'Arcy McGee

A Sonnet

I have a sea-going spirit haunts my sleep,
 Not a sad spirit wearisome to follow;
 Less like a tenant of the mystic deep
 Than the good fairy of the hazel hollow;
 And often at the midwatch of the night
 I see departing in his silver barque
 This spirit, steering toward an eastern light,
 Calling me to him from the western dark.
 "Spirit!" I ask, "say whither bound away?"
 "Unto the old Hesperides!" he cries;
 "Oh, Spirit, take me in thy barque, I pray;"
 "For thee I came," he joyfully replies -
 Exile! no longer shalt thou absent mourn,
 For I the Spirit am, men call—RETURN."

*Am I remembered in Erin?
 I charge you, speak me true!
 Has my name a sound – a meaning,
 In the scenes my boyhood knew?*

This verse, by McGee, was read by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at US President Ronald Reagan's funeral.

How to find us

We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month except July 2009 (5th Wednesday) and every December (2nd Wednesday) in the Hall of Gloucester Presbyterian Church, 91 Pike Street (corner of Lorry Greenberg).

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