



The Probe

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Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

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The Ottawa Hospital

Kay Stanley gave us a briefing on the Ottawa Hospital (TOH) and the general picture of health care in the area. She built on last May's presentation by Dr. Cushman on the Champlain LHIN (Local Health Integration Network). She described TOH as an



Academic Health Sciences Centre which means that apart from delivering tertiary and quaternary care it is involved in teaching and research. Tertiary and quaternary care includes specialized services, intensive care and resource intensive procedures. Research is about hope: new diagnoses, new procedures and cures.

Kay looked at 3 time periods; 1998-2002, the merger and the chaos it brought; 2003 to date, stabilization and new directions; 2010 on, "in search of excellence". She was quite candid about the period after the merger, a time of poor morale, financial strife and serious concern about the quality of patient care being delivered. Stabilization started by getting "the right people in the right seats" and focusing on the vital tasks, operational efficiency, financial health, morale and providing the right physical environment. The

objective at that time was to make TOH recognized nationally as the academic health sciences centre of choice with the core values – compassion, a commitment to quality and a respect for the individual.



One of the serious problems facing TOH is capacity, a point which was emphasized in the local papers a week later when they reported patient volumes of over 100%, leading to overcrowding in the emergency rooms and cancellation of some elective surgeries. One approach

has been to free up long term care beds by transferring patients to nursing homes – Valley Stream is the pilot. This releases beds in other departments which had been reassigned to long term care. Another way that capacity has been increased derives from the research which improves procedures and reduces 'in hospital' time. One example is cataract surgery which used to require days of remaining immobile and is now an out-patient procedure.

On a yearly basis the three units which make up TOH - Riverside, General and Civic - handle 7000 births, 125,000 ER visits, 50,000 admissions 60,000 surgical cases and over 800,000 out-patient visits. This takes over 14,000 staff, physicians and volunteers and a budget of 1.1 billion.

On the financial side, TOH has balanced its budget every year for the past 7 years while investing \$500 million in new equipment. The community has played its part meeting the goal of raising \$100 million, set in 2002, with \$108 million, and has responded to the 2008 "20/20" campaign to raise \$20 million in 20 months for the Cancer Centre.

Kay said that the new vision is, "To provide each patient with the world class care, exceptional service and compassion we would want for our loved ones." She described herself as a volunteer in a place that makes miracles happen every day!"

Spring Luncheon

Ottawa Alta Vista will be well represented at the Eastern Ontario Probus Spring Luncheon. Twenty-eight will make the outing to Cornwall.

The recommended route to the Best Western Parkway Inn is to take 417 to Casselman then south on 138. About 3 km south of 401 (138 is now Brookdale Avenue) turn right on 14th and the hotel is a block away at 1515 Vincent Massey Drive. Look for the white tower.

Entertainment will be by *The Brigadoons*. Formed in 1971 by Rob Taylor, *The Brigadoons* have consistently promoted the Celtic music so popular in Glengarry County. They have performed at the **National Arts Centre** and to packed houses at **Molly Maguire's** pub as well as at the Canadian Forces base in Alert.

“Long Distance, Please”

It's a long time since anyone in Ottawa had to say those words to a local operator to make a 'long distance' call, but that used to be the norm. **John Wright** took us even further back to primitive systems of telecommunications such as beacons, smoke signals, drums, runners (Marathon) and riders. Only one message can be conveyed by lighting a beacon – probably an alarm. Smoke signals may have one or two meanings but are error prone if anything more complicated is attempted. Messages or orders carried by a runner or rider may be more comprehensive but history is unsure whether the charge of the Light Brigade into the Valley of Death was wrongly precipitated by an ambiguous order and a headstrong messenger.

The first system capable of sending any messages and replies in close to real time was semaphore. Navies had used systems of flags for many years but the Chappé Brothers invention in 1799 was immediately used by the French Ministry of Marine to pass information between the Ministry and the Atlantic coast. A series of towers relayed the message and the transmission time was a few minutes. Compare this with a rider travelling the 70 miles from London to Portsmouth doing 10 miles an hour and changing horses every 10 miles. London to Plymouth at 200 miles would take two days. The enemies of any visual systems are night and fog.

Samuel Morse, who considered himself an artist, not an inventor, “visualized a system of dots and dashes” which became a standard for over 150 years.



Alexander Graham Bell used his knowledge of the science of sound, developed from his, and his father's, work with the deaf, to make improvements to telegraphy which resulted in his 1876 patent for what is now called the telephone. Bell was fortunate in the insistence

of his father-in-law for the filing of his patent because another application was made later the same day. Elijah Grey had a better design than Bell but the patent goes to the first applicant.

Switchboards saved having to have a separate phone and line for every connection and cables reduced the festoons of overhead wires. Really long distance had to await the invention of the electron tube amplifier (1907).

Switchboard operators knew how to make connections using customer names but this failed when an epidemic of measles struck and untrained operators had to muddle their way through. The answer was to assign numbers.

Almond Strowger, a Kansas City undertaker, thought his business was dying because operators were connecting his calls to his rivals. He invented an automatic switch, versions of which were used around the world some of which were still in service in Canada until about 15 years ago.

John gave background anecdotes on subjects ranging from **Paul Revere's ride** and **Gilbert & Sullivan** to why some AT&T staffers combed their hair before answering the telephone. He also explained that we never see '55x-xxxx' numbers in telephone directories - they have been given to Hollywood for movies and TV. The other side of that coin is your home phone number will never accidentally appear in a TV show

John left us with this thought, “There is striking evidence that harmony between nations is likely to be obtained only by mutual understanding, and that international communication should form one of the principal ties upon which the future of civilization will depend.”

A 1946 quote by a namesake, **E.P.G. Wright**.

Safe E-mailing

The Probus Canada web site has an article on how to use e-mail safely and not expose yourself and your correspondents to spam.

- 1) Edit out unneeded addresses when forwarding.
- 2) Use the 'bcc' option for multiple addressees.
- 3) Don't add your name to petitions - send a message to the source if you want to support the cause.
- 4) Don't be a part of 'chain' mail.
- 5) Be sceptical of 'Amber Alert' or 'Virus Alert' messages. Check with www.snopes.com
- 6) Remove the clutter which accumulates at the end of forwarded messages.

The full text can be read at www.probus.org

President's Notes



It was a little unfair to ask Lenore to provide any deep thoughts for this issue. By the time you read this you will realize that her thoughts at press time were on - what was then - imminent ankle surgery.

We wish her well and a speedy recovery.

June 23rd - Claudette Cain

Of all the Mayors whose municipalities disappeared with amalgamation, the most appropriate one to talk at Gloucester Presbyterian is the last Mayor of Gloucester, Claudette Cain.

There may be a few words of nostalgia but the talk will be on her role as a Justice of the Peace. Knowing the general view of what a J.P. is and does she has suggested as her title, "A J.P. - Who's getting married?". That would be a light hearted lead-in to the more serious role in criminal and provincial offences courts.

At the foot of her emails it says, "Seriously believe that nothing should be taken too seriously!". It bodes well!

Newsletters

Probus Clubs in Eastern Ontario have set up a newsletter exchange, which means that we get up to 10 newsletters in a month. Some, like *The Probe*, are published bi-monthly, other clubs put out a monthly publication.

As you might expect, there are many similarities - meeting reports, upcoming speakers, advertising for the Spring Luncheon, etc. There are differences too. Some clubs organize trips, some have 'Special Interest Groups' for activities like bridge or hobbies, and some have a 'My life in 5 minutes' talk by a member at the start of each meeting. (Editor's note: The only one I ever heard ran 10 minutes over time.)

Speakers offer a wide range of subjects, for example:

- Wolf Island Wind Farm (Brockville)
- Communities in Bloom (Cornwall)
- 150 Years of Railroad (Leeds & Grenville)
- Scouts Canada (North Grenville)

If anyone wishes to be added to the circulation list (by e-mail only - no printed copies) please let John Wright know - jcwright@bell.net

English Oddities

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Why do people recite at a play and play at a recital?

When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out ...

May 26th -The Monarchy in Canada

With the Queen's visit to Canada this summer we can expect the usual questions of relevance which seem to surface whenever there is a Royal visit.

We have asked the Ottawa Branch of the Monarchist League of Canada to provide a speaker who can remind us of the long and strong relationship between Canada and the Crown, particularly with Queen Elizabeth who first visited Canada in 1951 as Princess Elizabeth.

July Presentations

We have already achieved our quota for the July meeting '10 minute - In House' presentations.

Bob Haughton, who spoke to us in 2001 on Science and Spirituality, takes as his theme "Where is God". Lenore Porter will talk about aboriginal health issues. Joan Evans will share some of the excitement of being part of the Vancouver Olympics as a volunteer. Allen Taylor will give us insights into the Somali pirate situation from the perspective of his naval career. Robin Rousham will talk about Rotary's "Adventures in Citizenship".

Travel Insurance

We have recently learnt that Probus Centre Canada has arranged for travel insurance to be available to members through Johnson Inc., a national insurance provider. Coverage can be obtained for:

- Emergency Out-of-Country Travel Insurance,
- Health & Wellness Benefits
- Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance.

Quotes can be obtained from:

Lisa Hansen - 1-888-412-8822

email - lhansen@johnson.ca

Gary Sawatzky - 1 800 661-1973

email - g-sawatzky@johnson.ca

We would be interested to hear from anyone who gets competitive quotes and/or who has claims experience.

More information at www.probus.org

How to find us

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

Our meetings begin at 10 but members start arriving soon after 9:30 for coffee and chat. Guests are welcomed.

Constitution & Bylaw Amendments - May 26, 2010

Our CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS document needs updating to correct the meeting location and membership fee structure. Accordingly, the Management Committee is convening a special general meeting on May 26, 2010, to propose that wherever it appears, "Pleasant Park Baptist Church," be changed to "Gloucester Presbyterian Church;" and "414 Pleasant Park Road, Ottawa ON K1H 5N1" be changed to "91 Pike Street, Ottawa ON K1T 3J6," and that in addition, on the cover page, that "The Probus Club of Ottawa - Alta Vista meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month in the Church Hall at Pleasant Park Baptist Church, 414 Pleasant Park Road in the Alta Vista area of Ottawa." be changed to "The Probus Club of Ottawa - Alta Vista meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month in the Church Hall at Gloucester Presbyterian Church, 91 Pike Street, Ottawa."

In Bylaw No. 2 – MEMBERSHIP, paragraph 1, it is proposed that "An application for membership shall be accompanied by an annual membership fee of \$15.00 for an individual or \$25.00 for a couple," be changed to "An application for membership shall be accompanied by an annual membership fee of \$20.00 for an individual or \$30.00 for a couple."

Robert Atchison
Secretary

Put on an Act

It is a while since we had 'In-House' entertainment at our Christmas Party so your Management Committee have been looking at going back to it.

So - if you have a party piece - the spoken word (poetry, prose or play), music or song or ... let Lenore, Ada or any member of the Committee know about it. There is one member who was to give a trombone solo last time but claimed that he had 'lost' his music. He has had three years to find it so we will bring his name forward.

Of course, the Alta Vista Probus Club massed choir will be part of the show with a selection of Christmas songs and carols.

You have nearly 8 months to rehearse.

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.

Poetry Corner - More on Telephones

As well as its appearance (or to be more precise, its absence) in **Gilbert & Sullivan's** H.M.S. Pinafore:

He'll hear no tone
Of the maiden he loves so well!
No telephone
Communicates with his cell!

the telephone often turns up in poetry.

W.H. Auden wrote a rather bleak poem, starting:

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Complaining about charges is nothing new. *Madam and the Phone Bill* by **Langston Hughes** sets off unhappily -

You say I O.K.ed
LONG DISTANCE?
O.K.ed it when?
My goodness, Central
That was then!

- and gets worse.

The worry of a middle-of-the-night call is expressed by **Kit McCallum** in *The Phone Call*.

The call that comes in darkest sleep,
Awakens with a fright;
For 2 am, the silence breaks
The peaceful calm of night.

When only moments earlier,
I dreamt of visions fair;
Of light and love and happiness;
... Till ringing filled the air

Robert Frost offered a rather enigmatic verse:

"When I was just as far as I could walk
From here today,
There was an hour
All still

When leaning with my head against a
flower

I heard you talk.
Don't say I didn't, for I heard you say--
You spoke from that flower on the
windowsill--

Do you remember what it was you
said?"

"First tell me what it was you thought you heard."

And in 1927, Walter Melrose and 'King' Oliver wrote the 'Dixieland' song, "Hello, Central, give me Dr. Jazz".



A 'daffodil' phone