



# The Probe

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Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

October 2010, #56

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Probus Club of Ottawa/Alta Vista will be held on Wednesday, November 24th, 2010 in the Church Hall of Gloucester Presbyterian Church after the regular club meeting.

The agenda will include:

- Minutes of the 2009 AGM and matters arising from the minutes.
- Treasurer's Report and Financial Business.
- President's Report and Review.
- Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers and Management Committee members for 2011.
- Such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting.

*Bob Atchison - Secretary*

## Notes to the AGM Notice

Please stay on for the meeting - we need 20% of the membership to constitute a quorum.

The Nominating Committee is looking for candidates for the Management Committee\*. None of the jobs is very onerous and part of the Probus ethos is that there should be a regular turnover and that everyone should have the opportunity to take part in the management of the club. Two Committee jobs we particularly need to fill are someone to take over as Editor, and someone to serve as Secretary for the club.

\*Even if you do not wish to be on the Committee, please consider doing introductions, thanks or write-ups.

## Dues 2011

At our October meeting we open the books for the payment of membership fees for 2011, which are due by January 1st. Just as a reminder, the fees are \$20 (single) and \$30 (family).

### Fees for new members

Any new members joining after October 1st 2010, will have their membership extended to December 31, 2011.

## A Journey of Days



**Guy Thatcher** spoke at our August meeting on 'A Journey of Days: Relearning Life's Lessons on the Camino de Santiago' - his experience on a 34 day walk on the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain. This physical and mental challenge became a journey of discovery and self-discovery.

The Camino de Santiago is a pilgrimage route which begins in France at St. John Pied-de-Port and ends at Santiago de Compostela in Spain. In the past it was the third most popular Christian religious pilgrimage after Jerusalem and Rome. It is apparently based on ancient pre-Christian routes and indeed may have existed very long before the Christian era. There are indicators of its great age such as Celtic standing stones at one point on the route as well as the scallop shell symbol which is frequently found on the route and which has been found on relics dating back many thousands of years.

Guy had carefully gathered and stowed in a backpack all the essential, light weight and compact items that the trip required and then checked it with Air Canada for his flight to Europe. The backpack went on its own journey of discovery. After a 5 day wait for the backpack in Pamplona which is mid-way in the route, Guy reassessed and decided he would only be able to traverse the portion of the route between Pamplona to Santiago (from east to west). He acquired replacement equipment as far as

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possible and began. The resultant journey of some 701 kilometres still represents a considerable accomplishment.

Guy walked in April and May when there were not a lot of other pilgrims. Initially walking alone and often in unpopulated areas away from roads 90% of the time, he nevertheless felt quite safe. The walk offered the gift of silence and contemplation and a sense of being in the now where one could focus on the immediacy of the next step, kilometre or day.

The route was at times pavement or gravel or stone and easy to walk. At other times it was a rocky or potentially muddy challenge. The path was very well sign-posted, some official markings of course, but many unofficial yellow arrows, in a variety of formats on walls post, rocks and the path itself. Guy found this constant evidence of being on the right track reassuring. Northern Spain offers a varied environment. It is mountainous at times and Guy got to experience unexpected snow in May. Part was flat land reminiscent of Saskatchewan. Parts were like Scotland with heather and gorse. Parts (Galacia) were as green as Ireland as one might expect with 300 days a year when some rain falls.

Guy noted some specific point of interests. The size of the storks nesting on the tops of buildings was a revelation to Guy. The stained glass in the cathedral in Leon providing a complete pictorial of the Bible was especially impressive. The Irache winery where free wine was available from a tap for thirsty travellers seemed the most interesting point to some of us at the meeting though.

Despite intending a solo journey Guy made a number of friendships along the way. A fellow traveller offered him the use of her cell phone so that he might call his wife on the occasion of their 49<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Another traveller, realizing Guy was somewhat insufficiently clad due to the loss of his backpack and supplies loaned Guy a spare fleece which later appeared to be his only fleece. Marina from Hamburg, asked if she might walk with Guy. Karsten from Berlin and Paula from Bremen also joined for parts of the journey. On the last day though Guy chose to finish alone and ended with a feeling of let-down not wanting the experience to end.

Guy noted some lessons he learned from the experience. These included: Planning is good, flexibility is essential. It is the journey, not the destination. You can travel lighter than you think. You don't have to walk fast, take it step by step at your own speed. Mother Nature is neither benign nor malignant – just indifferent. There is no such thing as too much reassurance. You have to walk

your own Camino. Your body is resilient but listen to it and look after it. Life is about relationships. Security is important, but absolute security is a myth. Obstacles are about as big as you let them be. And most importantly : If you have a dream, make it happen. You can touch the stars only if you reach for them.

Guy plans to return next year and complete the portion of the walk which he missed. **Allen Taylor** presented our thanks and the traditional Probus pen perhaps for Guy to record this next trip in his journal. We will look forward to his presentation, 'A Journey: Part 2' when he returns.

*Derry Foreman*

## Graham Gibb

We are saddened to note the passing of Graham Gibb. A long-time member, Graham served as Club Treasurer for several years. Our sympathies go to Jessie and the family.

## November 24 - Dave Brown

If you read his *Citizen* column on Sunday about Kent Wilkinson of G.L.Myers men's wear you could be forgiven for not knowing that Dave retired in 2003. His 38 years in the business brought him a National Newspaper Award in 1992 but more important for many of us was that he was an important part of the Ottawa scene.

We hope that Dave will reminisce about some of his notable columns.

## December 8th - Christmas Party

As usual we have brought our December meeting forward by two weeks and, also as usual, it will be our Christmas Party day.

Not quite as usual, we are going to have only "In-house" entertainment. It's not going to be *Alta Vista Probus Idol* (or is that "idle"?) but please dust off your party pieces and let Lenore or one of the Committee members know that you have something to perform.

The Alta Vista Probus Club Choir will take a major role (make sure that you are in good voice!).

We ask that you provide the Christmas fare. If your last name starts with:

- A to G, please bring sandwiches
- H to M, please bring Christmas goodies, cake and squares (i.e. finger food - no pies).
- N to Z, please bring appetizers, cheese, crackers, dips, veggie bites.

More details in the November *Flyer*.

## President's Notes



A while ago I met a woman in her late 70's who had just returned, along with her husband, from spending 2 months at their cottage on a cold lake in Northwestern Ontario—no indoor plumbing, no hot water. She loved the drive along Lake Superior and she loved the primitive lifestyle. “Crazy”, I thought to myself. What if they got sick? How do they shower? What do they do for entertainment? The cry of the loon is highly overrated. What do they do for coffee, pizza, or fresh baguette? What kind of life is that with no Internet and no cell phone reception?

After calming down I realized what a joy and privilege it is to be able to live like this and not be afraid -- to experience adventure and not always be entertained by someone else. Now that is the good life. The other day I dutifully listened to the travel agent as she talked about our upcoming trip to Spain. The only thing was that it wasn't the trip itself she was pedalling but the travel insurance and it came with a big price tag. “You will have a private duty nurse with this plan, the best of medical care if you get sick,” she said. I was tempted to see what would happen if I confronted a bull in Pamplona armed with this amazing coverage. This is a ten-day trip and we already had adequate but not over-the-top insurance.

Prudence is one thing but fear is another. So many of us are fearful and we worry about our safety. But how many 60 plus women drown while swimming in a chilly lake? How many old guys are pushing up daisies because they dug the garden? A year ago I looked out my son's window in Canmore, Alberta to see a woman my age walking on the roof of her bungalow. She was wearing bunny slippers. She's still around although not the local Ms Popularity, because she also feeds rabbits in this bunny-infested town.

My advice to myself is to seek adventure whenever possible, be it making bread, going for a walk alone at night or learning to play poker. But no, you will not see me on the roof in my slippers.

*Lenore Porter*

## 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.

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

## Immigration



Against a backdrop of headlines - *Canada Population to reach 100 million - 70% of Refugees Return Home for Visits - More Tamil Boats Expected, etc, etc, etc*, it seemed a good time to have a revisit by **James**

**Bissett**. He spoke to us in May 2004 on *Is Canada's Immigration Policy Working?* and convinced us that it was not.

James started with the premise that our immigration policy is wrong-headed and quickly showed us why. For the past 10 years we have accepted 250,000 immigrants per year, 60 to 70% of whom go to the big cities. The population of Toronto is about 50% foreign born and Vancouver nearly 40% - by 2050 Vancouver will be an Asian city. In 1981 there were 6 ethnic enclaves (greater than 30% of one group) and by 2004 this had risen to over 250. The net cost to the taxpayer of the 2.5 million immigrants between 1992 and 2000 was \$18.2 billion.

Mass immigration is failing to serve the purpose for which it was intended. It was supposed to counterbalance the aging population by bringing in younger people but of the quarter-million immigrants last year, only 17% met the criteria and the rest were relatives and refugees. In 2001 there was a shift from bringing in skilled people to bringing in educated people. When it turns out that the educational qualifications are below Canadian standards or, even worse, forged, you have an immigrant with neither education nor skills.

Jason Kenny, Minister of Immigration, is attempting to get to grips with the problems inherent in the policies of his department but if his success is measured by the reduction in immigration he is a failure. The political problem is that neither of the two main parties can afford to be considered anti-immigrant as that would drive immigrant voters to its rival - a move which would translate into seats.

Can it be solved? Possibly not, thinks James, given the politics of the question and the failure of the Canadian population to make it an election issue.

The situation in Europe deserves a closer look. The British Government has apologized for telling its people immigration is necessary when it isn't. A British study has shown that immigration is hurting (as it is in Canada). There is an anti-immigration movement in

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several countries which has been characterized as “far right” when in reality it is not a question of *right* or *left* politics but a concern for the future.

As for the question of an ageing population, academicians have calculated that raising the retirement age would solve any problems associated with a shortage of workers, professional or skilled. (Note. The decision in France to add 2 years may help solve their financial crisis but will also allow them to realize that they can reduce immigration.)

Questions included the requirement for language skills (only 1 of 9 factors) and human trafficking. James made a distinction between smuggling and trafficking. Trafficking is the import and continued exploitation of girls in the sex trade. Smuggling leaves the smuggled persons to fend for themselves and can be beaten by returning the people smuggled in.

In introducing Mr. Bissett, **Ed Borza** reminded us that he is a former Executive Director of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Ambassador.

## Centre for Immigration Policy Reform

**James Bissett** is one of the founders of the *Centre for Immigration Policy Reform* (CIPR).

CIPR’s objective is to advocate for changes to Canada’s immigration policies. Its approach is to expose myths and reveal facts about Canadian immigration and refugee policies and provide authoritative research and data from Canada and around the world about immigration issues; and to seek the support of all political parties in reforming Canada’s immigration and refugee determination laws.

[www.immigrationreform.ca](http://www.immigrationreform.ca)

### **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-centered.**



### **Welcome to Probus-Canada Rendezvous 2011**

The Vancouver organizing committee invites all PROBUS members worldwide to attend the 2011 National Conference and to holiday in Vancouver, the “World in a City”.

The Conference program will feature presenters of international renown. The Conference hotel is the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre located in the midst of Vancouver’s cosmopolitan downtown and entertainment and shopping mecca.

Enjoy the fellowship of Probians from across Canada and abroad during three days of rewarding presentations, fine food, and premium accommodation at reasonable cost.

Put PROBUS RENDEZVOUS 2011 on your calendar and return to our website regularly for the latest program and entertainment information.

Web site - [www.probusrendezvous.com](http://www.probusrendezvous.com)

**Esio Marzotto**  
Chair, Conference Organizing Committee  
Past-President, PROBUS Club of North Shore Vancouver