



The Probe

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Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

April 2011, #61

Joy in the Schoolhouse

For some members, one-room schoolhouses are the stuff of pioneer stories, for others they are memories. For all, they were a source of interest and enjoyment when presented by **Joy Forbes** - as much a story-teller as a speaker.

Joy took us through the names, the environment for teaching and learning, some of the personalities and some of the things they got up to!

A **School Section** was a named 3 to 5-mile square area. In the Fitzroy section, for example, the schools were named SS No. 1 Fitzroy to SS No. 12 Fitzroy. Some schools had names as well as the official designation, SS No. 11 North Gower, on Phelan Road, was called the Phelan School.

The schools were very basic, some little more than shacks with an outhouse, others more solidly build structures - with an outhouse. Many of the brick structures remain today as houses, shops, mini-museums and, in one case, a pub. The teachers had to be dedicated to work in conditions where their first task of the day was to get the stove going and then to work with children of all ages, keeping the young ones occupied while teaching more advanced subjects to one or two older ones, then leaving the older ones with work to do while teaching the young ones, and, if that was not enough, preparing lunches at the same time. Multi-tasking is not a new skill born in the computer age.

Inevitably, where there are groups of young people, there is mischief. Some of the pranks in Joy's book, *Perseverance, Pranks and Pride*, used the outhouses as their setting. Others were based on the stove - blocking the smokestack or putting ink bottles on top until they exploded. Moving the clock hands forward was a



favourite. The threat of punishment was the strap although one enterprising young lad gained a respite for everyone by cutting it into small pieces.

One of our members, Morley Craig, contributed to the book and our April speaker, Brian Hull, is mentioned as the owner of a home built on SS No. 1 Goulbourn.

From the many questions, it was clear that Joy's talk had evoked some happy memories

Spring Luncheon

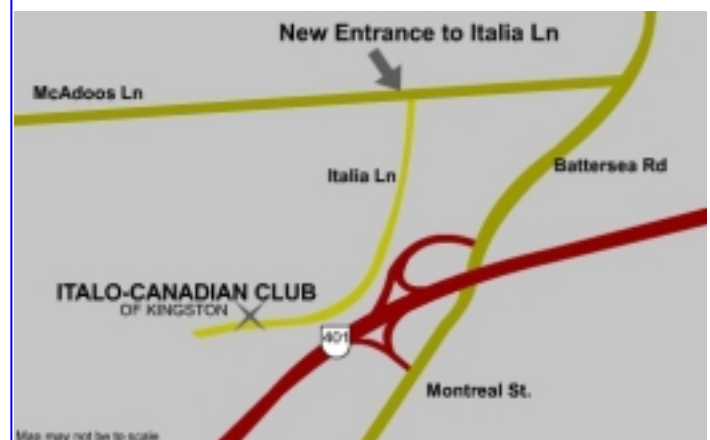
Several Ottawa Alta Vista members will be at the Eastern Ontario Probus Spring Luncheon arranged by the Gananoque Club.

The lunch will be at the **Italo-Canadian Club**, 1174 Italia Lane, Kingston, Phone # 613-542-9323.

Take exit 619 North from the 401 (Battersea Road/Montreal Street). Turn north on Battersea Road, County Road 11. Take first left onto McAdoo Lane - about 0.5 km. Then take first left onto Italia Lane - also about 0.5km. Stay on this road and it will take you to the gate.

Lots of parking beyond building entrance.

The **Kingston Town Crier**, **Chris Whyman** will welcome everyone and entertainment will be by the **Cranberry Dixieland Band** which includes several Probus members.



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.

RCMP International

Superintendent Sylvain Berthiaume's résumé reads like a promo for a TV show – bikers, drugs, commercial crime, terrorism, undercover activities, etc. but he regards the 3 years he spent with the Musical Ride as a highlight of his career.

His talk centered on the international aspects of the RCMP's mandate. The media have covered their presence in Haiti and Afghanistan, helping and training front line police officers, but there is an RCMP presence in 21 other countries. In the Turks & Caicos, two serving RCMP officers are the Police Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner.

One of the major activities is working with Interpol. There are 185 countries in the Interpol organization which is mainly concerned with checking fugitives and on aspects of day-to-day policing. There are about 7,500 files opened in Canada every year which involve nearly 80,000 messages back and forth at a cost of about \$2 million a year. New to most of us was Europol, with which we have a liaison, and Ameripol, an important weapon in the war on drugs. In 2007, the Prime Minister directed that we re-engage in the Americas which had been sidelined to some extent by a concentration on Europe and the Asia/Pacific region.

There are 220 officers working on 'peace' missions such as Afghanistan and Haiti but also with significant efforts in Kosovo, East Timor and the Congo. Many officers from other Canadian police forces work overseas with the RCMP including some from Ottawa. These officers regard an overseas posting as an opportunity, a challenge and a way of getting valuable experience.

9/11 brought about many changes. One of the lesser but valuable ones was a decision to have a central reporting system for officers travelling on or off duty. At the time of the London terror attacks, the RCMP was able to quickly contact three officers in their hotels to get them involved immediately. An officer on vacation in Japan was contacted as soon as news of the tsunami came in and he was able to report to our embassy for duty.

Superintendent Berthiaume raised two areas of major concern, Mexico and Asia/Pacific. The latter is currently dominated by Sri Lanka. Many Sri Lankans are willing to spend a small fortune and risk their lives in a 'rust bucket' for the opportunity to come to Canada. The RCMP is working with several countries to try to interdict the ships at their point of sale and with Sri Lanka to stop Tamil Tigers from joining groups of refugees. On the Caribbean he talked about Jamaica –



where the Generals took over and demanded that any police who wanted to remain on the force take a polygraph test (80% of senior officers declined) – and the Dominican Republic which provides a 'safe haven' for the Hells Angels. They meet and plan there without any interference.

There were more questions than the time available.

Afghanistan's poppy crop? Difficult to deal with – there are no alternative cash crops.

Drug consumption? No-one has an answer. Education is the only way but people ignore what they are told. Unfortunately Canada has become a major producer of synthetic 'designer' drugs.

US 'No Fly' list? Compiled by several agencies without central coordination therefore no one agency will take the risk of removing a name. The RCMP has said that we will vet Canadians on the list.

Mexican violence? Mostly near the border. Travel there would be 'imprudent'.

Superintendent Berthiaume was introduced by John Wright and thanked, on our behalf, by Wib Neal who presented a Probus pen and a year long honorary membership.

May 25th - Paul Henry, Archivist

Building on Brian Hull's talk on Nicholas Sparks, Paul Henry, the City of Ottawa Archivist, can bring us up-to-date through records, photographs and paintings.

The Archives are in the process of moving from their leased location at 111 Sussex Drive to new, purpose-built premises at Woodroffe and Tallwood, due to open in April.

The holdings include: original by-laws, original minutes of Council and Committees of Council, assessment rolls, historical maps, historical photographs of major civic events and historical plans of major structures, as well as community records, including the Billings, Lett and Ogilvy family papers

www.probusaltavista.ca

Our web site has a map, bus timetables, notice of the next speakers and events. It also lists every speaker we have had over the past 10+ years and has copies of *The Probe* from the first issue.

John "Jack" Harvey

Jack passed away last Wednesday after a heart attack. He joined Probus in 2000 but his health had kept him from recent meetings. Our condolences to Eileen and his family. The funeral service was private.

ONLY 7 New Clubs

Gordon Springate, President of Probus Canada, notes that there were only 7 new clubs chartered in 2010, a drop in our previous rate. A call to action!!

There's a Raccoon in My Fireplace

Henrietta joined our family overnight on April 3rd/4th. A movement behind the glass doors caught my eye on the Monday morning. The Humane Society, when they stopped laughing, suggested lowering a rope down the chimney in case the chimney was too wide at the bottom for her to manage. So, onto the roof and lower a rope. She did not take the hint.

Tuesday morning we learnt that it was Henrietta, not Henry, when she produced two kits. Before giving birth she had cleaned the fire grate as well as I could have done with a vacuum. We were told it would be three weeks before the kits would be able to see and hear. She would have enough nourishment in her body to sustain them, so do not feed her. As she might not be able to climb the rope with the two kits, they suggested we make a tunnel from the fireplace to the door, putting little treats at intervals to entice her.

After a week the kits had grown fur with 'burglar mask' black markings around the eyes.

So, how to construct a tunnel across a hardwood floor? First a layer of plastic with newspaper on top. Even with that base, plan A (simple plan) was unworkable. Plan B (more complex) was to use 4x6 timbers in pairs to hold quarter-sheets of plywood as walls with a plastic mesh over the top.

But what if:

-she likes her accommodation and decides to leave the kits while she forages and returns to a 'permanent' nest?
-she pushes out the tunnel walls and has access to the house?

We will never know. Henrietta managed to climb the rope with her two kits sometime during the night of the 14th.

Henrietta has left the building!

We now have a wire mesh over the chimney.

John Wright

Rendezvous 2011

September is a glorious month to be in Vancouver*, and Rendezvous 2011 looks like being a good reason to visit. The dates are September 13th (Tuesday) to 15th (Thursday). The registration fee of \$185 covers: **Welcome Reception, All Sessions and Speaker Sessions, Coffee Breaks and Wednesday Dinner Banquet.**

Both **Air Canada** and **WestJet** have agreed to offer a **10% discount** on flights to Vancouver.

WestJet - Call WestJet's Convention line at **1-877-952-4696** and provide the booking code **CC6945**. Bookings must be for travel to Vancouver up to 3 days before and 3 days after the conference. (September 10th to September 18th)

Air Canada - Book your flight on-line at <http://www.aircanada.com> using the promotion code **X4TNKBJ** for travel to Vancouver during the period of September 6th to September 22nd. You may also book by calling 1-888-247-2262.

Pre-and post-conference tours

Some of the Tours available include:

Pre-conference Alaska Cruise - Hubbard Glacier from September 4th to 11th

Post-conference 7 day Alaska Cruise – Inside Passage from September 18th to the 25th

Granville Island and Harbour Dinner Cruise

Grouse Mountain

Vancouver Island

Vancouver City and Museum of Anthropology

Vancouver Art Gallery

Two Day Rail/Coach to Whistler

Two Day Motor Coach to Whistler

All information is on the web site:

www.probusrendezvous.com

If you do not have web access and want more information, please contact one of the Management Committee members.

* a glorious month, unless it's raining

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.

10-Minute Talks - July

Our ten-minute talks this July will be ten mini-travelogues. We have several of our inveterate travellers lined up but there is space for a couple more.

Have you been somewhere interesting recently (or somewhere you can make sound interesting)? Our tech-team will help you organize your pictures into a slide show so all you have to do is stand there and relive your memories out loud.

A trip to Toronto would be a last resort!

From the Newsletters

We exchange newsletters with the other 10 clubs in Eastern Ontario. Some are monthly and some, like *The Probe* come out every second month.

Leeds & Grenville

“Our membership currently stands at 175, and we have 5 people on the waiting list.”

Special events include a two night trip to Finger lakes and a theatre outing to Belleville.

Cornwall & Area

“News Flash - The food at our Probus Luncheons is greatly improved. Linda is now back in the kitchen “

“Tour the The Apiary - (BEE-lieve it or not).”

They seem to have an inexhaustible supply of ‘one-liners’:- “When someone asks you ‘a penny for your thoughts’ and you put your two cents in what happens to the other penny?”

Brockville

The Club is planning a theatre trip to Stratford in the fall.

They assure us that these ‘Classifieds’ really appeared in a UK newspaper:

Free Yorkshire Terrier

8 years old. Hateful little bastard. Bites

Free puppies

Half Cocker spaniel, half sneaky neighbour’s dog.

Wedding dress for sale

Worn once by mistake.

North Grenville

North Grenville start their meetings with ‘Club Business’ including reports from the Secretary, Treasurer and Membership - they have 91 members. Like ours, their newsletter has reports on the past two speakers but they also feature a profile of a member.

Carpe Diem

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 North-western 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

Travel Insurance

Probus Centre Canada has made an arrangement with Johnson Inc. for travel insurance - available to Probus Clubs and members. For more information, call one of the special representatives at Johnson Inc, Lisa -1-888 412-8822 or Gary - 1-800 661-1973, or visit the www.johnson.ca/probus website and obtain a quote on-line for Medoc travel insurance.