



The Probe

Est. September 1999

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

October 2011, #62

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Probus Club of Ottawa/Alta Vista will be held on Wednesday, November 23rd, 2011 in the Church Hall of Gloucester Presbyterian Church after the regular club meeting.

The agenda will include:

- Minutes of the 2010 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 2012.
- Such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting.

Bruce Dodd - 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. Committee jobs we particularly need to fill are:

Vice-president (normally considered President-elect for the following year);

a second person on Special Events (July and December meetings);

a Program Committee member;

a Newsletter Editor and

a techie to look after the presentations.

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

Although most of our Telephone Callers like to continue talking to other members, we sometimes need a replacement. Please contact Kawsar Kruithof if you would be interested in making calls.

Allen & Ruth Taylor

60 years, 61 cruises

Congratulations to Allen and Ruth on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. They will celebrate by taking their 62nd cruise together.

Christchurch – Then and Now

We had originally asked the High Commissioner to talk about Proportional Representation but the success of the NDP in the May Federal Election somehow removed it from Canada's political agenda. Instead we asked him to talk about Christchurch and to spend just a few moments on PR and New Zealand-Canada relations.



Somewhat lost against our blackout system H.E. Andrew Needs talks about the Christchurch

Robin Rousham introduced **H. E. Andrew Needs** who has been High Commissioner for New Zealand since January 2010. This being his second tour (2004-2008 as Deputy H.C.), arriving from midsummer New Zealand in midwinter Canada was not as big a shock as it might have been. Mr. Needs joined Foreign Affairs in Wellington in 1988 and has alternated between headquarters and overseas assignments which took him to Australia (twice), Cook Islands, Fiji and Canada where he is also accredited to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Guyana.

Mr Needs started by congratulating the Taylors and noted that he married only last month, to Bronwen, his partner of 29 years, with his 13 year-old son as best man.

He commented that, like Canada, New Zealand has a leaf as its emblem; like Canada, New Zealand has had an intense debate over its flag, and, like Canada, there is some support for republicanism which surfaces sporadically.

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Christchurch, the largest city in the South Island, was hit by 2 major earthquakes. The first was in September 2010 and caused widespread damage but no fatalities. The second, in February this year, was smaller in magnitude but devastating in effect. There were 181 fatalities and many buildings, including Christ Church Cathedral, were destroyed. The damage and fatalities would have been much worse but for New Zealand's stringent building codes.

While showing a series of 'before and after' photographs, Mr. Needs talked about what happened and what will happen. The response from the international community was tremendous. Within 12 hours teams from Australia were on the ground, with the US only a few hours later. He emphasized that the situation is not like Haiti. New Zealand is wealthy enough to absorb the capital costs (\$15 to \$20 billion in a \$200 billion economy) but there is a problem for small businesses which have been affected. The central business district is classified as a 'Red Zone' and even businesses in buildings which survived cannot reopen due to the danger from surrounding buildings. One big hotel which remained intact is now like the leaning tower of Pisa and has to be demolished. Insurance companies will pay out but may not re-insure rebuilding in the affected area. The population has dropped from about 350,000 to 280,000. Some people have moved to Australia and will probably not return. Others have stayed in New Zealand and may or may not return. Of 700 historic buildings only about 50 are left.

On a positive note, overall tourism has not dropped nationally. New Zealand likes Canadian tourists – they spend money then go home.

Questions.

Timeline? 5 years for the city to become functional, 15 years to 'normality'.

Overall design – will there be a competition? Yes, but we are still not sure how to design wave-quake proof buildings.

World Cup venue? Christchurch was one of the planned venues but their games had to be re-assigned.

Risk assessment? New Zealand is an active earthquake zone. A 1931 quake destroyed Napier in the North Island. So some risk has to be accepted.

Proportional Representation? New Zealand went to PR in the mid 90's and it is successful. However, New Zealand is a unity not a federation and the same model may not be suitable for Canada.

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Will Christchurch be rebuilt? There was no question that Christchurch would be rebuilt. "We **WILL** rebuild downtown."

In thanking His Excellency and presenting him with the Probus pen, **Wib Neal** added the question, what is Old Zealand?

120 tea bricks for a camel?



Charles Paradis of the Bank of Canada Currency Museum, ably assisted by **Cassandra Fast**, gave us a potted history of currency and threw in a bunch of one-liners to make sure we were paying attention. An example: China and Siberia at one time used bricks of tea as currency – when it rained they became

Problems for New France

- 1) Colonial currency was not valid in France.
- 2) The British refused to take New France money (printed on playing cards) so it became valueless and was destroyed. No examples remain.

The Mad Hatter

Beaver pelts were a currency. They were used to make hats. The hatters used nitrite of mercury to soften them and inhaled enough fumes to soften their brains.

liquid assets.

Step 1 was to make us think of the basic requirements of currency. We came up with: valuable; acceptable; convenient; rare (but not too rare); durable; not easily

counterfeited. Cowry shells fitted the bill and while they were in use there were no known instances of counterfeiting! Cocoa beans were not as good as they could be debased by extracting the cocoa and replacing it with mud. Iron bracelets were used in Africa – their test for authenticity was to hit them like a tuning fork. An iron cowbell was the equivalent of a wedding ring.

Wampum

Beads were made by hand and therefore had value. Traders invented a machine which would produce 24 feet a day and destroyed the economy.

The Latin 'salaris' gave us salt

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and salary. Roman soldiers were paid partly in salt blocks (about 2"x3"x1.5") – but only if they were worth their salt. They used it to preserve food and to treat wounds.

Coinage started as tiny implements, knives, shovels, etc, with a loop to keep them on a bracelet or necklace. Eventually the implements were dropped from the design and the loop retained. This is a long lasting design and some countries today have holes in their coinage. With coinage came counterfeiting and many countries adopted a "hands off" policy to discourage it. Another way of cheating was to clip bits of metal from valuable coins which meant that coins had to be weighed to assure their value.

Paper money was introduced in the 14th century but there was an historic resistance to using it until stable governments took it over. Each bank could print its own money and in the mid-1800's an 'Encyclopaedia of Money' was published so out-of-town money could be checked. One family of counterfeiters was caught because their printing was of much higher quality than that of the bank they were copying.

Charles brought us up-to-date with some thoughts on our currency. A paper dollar bill lasted 6 to 8 months which led to the introduction of the dollar coin. The original design of the coin had a canoe on the reverse but the dies were "lost" (???) and a loon was used instead. This is just as well, "canoeey" just does not have the same ring as "looney". The new polymer \$100 bills (no samples given away) are expected to last several years and they have the most advanced anti-counterfeiting features available.

There was so much covered in a short time that we were left breathless even if Charles and Cassandra were not.

Fast Fall

We drove home from Philadelphia earlier this month and watched the season advance as we came further north. In Philly, the leaves were green. By Scranton there were yellows among the green. When we reached Syracuse, yellows and browns predominated with some hints of red. We turned into our street anticipating the view of our superb red maple, and arrived home just in time to rake the leaves.

John & Joyce Wright

Giraffiti Vandalism painted very, very high

President's Notes



At this time of Thanksgiving one's thoughts often turn to thinking about the blessings we have for living in Ottawa. Since coming to this beautiful city in 1974 our four children have really known no other home. We started late with our family, but enrolling them in team sports – soccer, hockey, baseball – volunteering with the cubs, scouts, and girl guides, camping in Algonquin Park, and canoeing and kayaking on the Ottawa River, has kept Marie-Neige and me young and active during our professional years. And now, in retirement, we are thankful that a friend introduced us to this Probus club several years ago, giving us the opportunity to meet you all, hear very interesting guest speakers and enjoy seasonal parties and luncheon outings. I urge all of you to introduce your friends to the club and encourage them to join. They will thank you! And, I commend each of you who volunteers to serve on the management committee and to perform the other necessary duties in the operations of the club

Bob Atchison.



December 14th Christmas Party



If you come to Probus on the 4th Wednesday in December you will be two weeks late for our Annual Christmas Party.

The details are not yet settled but we do know that the massed voices of the Alta Vista Probus Club Choir will be heard across the land.

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

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



More details in the November *Flyer*.



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!

November 23rd - John Howard

When the Children's Playground was being planned by the local community for the unused city property on Billings Avenue near Lynda Lane, John Howard offered to plant a row of oak trees on Billings, opposite the new playground. Ten years later, they are flourishing and a feature of the streetscape.

The connection to the oak trees is that John Howard is one of the founders of the **Royal Oak** chain of pubs in Ottawa.

John will touch on the history behind the name and give us some insights into the entrepreneurial spirit needed to found a business and the ups and downs of the hospitality industry.

Dues 2012

At our October meeting, we open the books for the payment of membership fees for 2012, which are due by January 1st. Just as a reminder, the fees are \$20 (single) and \$30 (family).

Any new members joining after October 1st 2011, will have their membership extended to December 31, 2012.

Dues 2011

Please check to see if you have "Pd 11" next to your name on the check-in sheet. If it's not there, it means that you still owe for this year.

The money is secondary but we need to have an accurate number for our *insurance*.

Please make sure that you are paid up.

A Happy Man

Andrew Needs said that if we wanted to see him on Saturday night he would be in a Pub in the Market, wearing a black shirt and cheering for New Zealand against Canada.

New Zealand won the game (with his support) and went on to beat Argentina and Australia before meeting France in the final of Rugby World Cup 2011.

New Zealand won the final 8 to 7 in a real nail-biter.

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.



Christ Church Cathedral, before and after. The foundation stone was laid in 1864. The nave was consecrated on All Saints Day, 1881 and the transept and chancel were consecrated on All Saints Day 1904. Forty years to build, a few minutes to destroy.