



The Probe

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Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

June 2012, #68

Spring Fling 2012

The Spring Fling in Perth was a success. The cozy room in Code's Inn was full, as indeed was the Inn parking and a lot of other nearby public parking as well. There was not much space in Perth for anyone else that day.

Once everyone was seated the skirl of the bagpipes began the event. We rose to respectfully await the arrival of the dignitaries. Turned out the piper was just warming up - not really playing. The dignitaries had not yet arrived. It has always been difficult for some to tell the difference between practicing and playing when bagpipes are concerned. But in due course, the President of Probus Perth (**Dan Murphy**), the mayor of Perth (**John Fenik**) and **Peter Doyle** of Probus Canada arrived and were brought in to fine rousing piping.

The Perth Town Crier, **Brent McLaren** acted as host and introduced us to a lot of information on Perth. Apparently Perth is proudly number 2. They claim the honour of being the second in Ontario for the introduction of such things as a curling rink, a newspaper and a private telephone. Dan Murphy noted as well the golf course, Links of Tay, which goes back to 1890.

We were reminded by Peter Doyle – Probus Canada– of the next Spring Fling to be hosted by Probus Western Ottawa, during Tulip Festival time at the Tudor Hall.

Lunch was served and enlivened with periodic awards of door prizes. There were lots of draws and the goodies seemed quite extravagant. Clearly the local merchants were fully behind Probus Perth. Perhaps small towns pull together better than the city with regard to these matters.

The entertainment was the high point of the affair. **Brent McLaren** and **Shelley McLaren** provided an ethnic



Brent McLaren in full cry

history of Perth in song. Discharged soldiers made up much of the early settlement hence we heard “The British Grenadier”. There was much subsequent Scottish settlement on the Scottish line so we were treated to “Loch Lomond”, “Annie Laurie” and the “Skye Boat Song”. There was of course English settlers so a bit of a risqué song about Yorkshire girls and ‘chickens in the garden’ was presented. And of course the Irish were represented in the town from the beginning so “Danny Boy” was necessary. There was then a brief digression

with “If I were a rich man from” from Fiddler on the Roof, apparently a special request, apparently from the accompanist. Perhaps it was a Scots fiddler. It all ended with Auld Lang Syne which inspired some action – swinging and swaying – perhaps not normally expected from our crowd. Perth provided a standard of entertainment which will be hard for other clubs to match.

A great time was had by all.

Derry Foreman

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).

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

Guests and potential new members are always welcome and we have a wide range of speakers and topics for your enjoyment and information.

“Ex-Mayor Can’t Swim”

In describing his relationship with the media during his term as Mayor of Ottawa, Larry O’Brien suggested that if he had walked across the surface of the Rideau Canal, the headline would have been ‘Mayor can’t swim’!

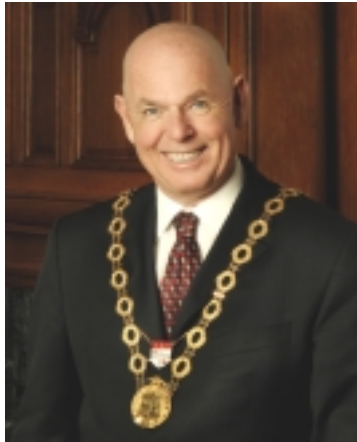
Before discussing his term as Mayor, Larry talked about the early days of Ottawa. **Col. John By** built the Rideau Canal over the period 1826 to 1832 and started by building housing for his workers - a settlement which was named Bytown. By died in disgrace due to accusations of over-spending. At one time Bytown had 1500 registered people and 30 pubs and was “about as crazy as you can get.” Larry contrasted this with Ottawa today which he described as ‘button-down city’.

He summarized his term as Mayor in the statement, “I believe my contribution may have been to get in and make major changes very quickly.” He talked about the LRT Project, which was one of the issues he campaigned on. He commented that, as he is by nature a builder, he had never had to stop a project before and found it difficult to do, even though convinced it was the right move.

In looking towards the future, Larry took a more global view rather than staying with local issues. He compared business where you want to build an organization which will last forever with politics where you want to be re-elected. The natural approach in politics is to run deficits which is much easier to ‘sell’ than cutting back. This took him into the European financial crisis expressing his concern about a domino effect if one country fails.

Using his strong Catholic faith as his base, Larry talked about two groups which concern him most - Moslem extremists and the Black Panthers, two disparate groups with the same goal - to erode and, if possible, destroy our society. North America is a good place to be and it is so because it was built on faith and good. He warned that the current generation does not see that there is any danger to our enjoyment of democracy and freedom of religion.

Larry talked about the importance of the family - “the



Larry O'Brien - the official portrait on his letter of welcome to Probus Clubs attending our Spring Fling in 2009.

family is sacred - I don’t want the Government running my family.”

Glenn Beck, the U.S. TV, radio and press commentator is obviously someone Larry takes very seriously and recommended his commentary to everyone. (Note: Beck was extensively interviewed by Brian Lilley on Sun News Network last week). Larry had brought one of Beck’s books with him which he awarded to **John Kruithof**.

His final paragraph was a call to action. “We can make a difference. This country needs you to stand up. The world would be an infinitely better place if the politicians listened to the people. It is not un-Canadian to disagree with Government.”

Much food for thought.

John Wright

President’s Notes

I believe that all of us, as members of Probus (Ottawa, Alta Vista), should take great pride in the job which our committee is doing in bringing outstanding speakers to our meetings.

Matters of local interest and importance are well covered by people of insight and experience like **Grete Hale** (September) and ex-mayor **Larry O’Brien**. The arts are being explored from operetta to photography - all with a local “angle”.

Matters extending beyond the local, indeed transcending national boundaries, have been described in excellent detail by **Andrew Needs** (High Commissioner for New Zealand) discussing the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquake and by **Hally Siddons** and her impressive team on “Women in Afghanistan”. These were truly memorable presentations.

I doff my hat to **John Wright** and **Lynne Bond** who shoulder the main responsibility for attracting speakers of this calibre!

One effective way in which we individually can support John, Lynne and our whole organization is by inviting guests to our meetings and encouraging them to join us. I strongly encourage you to extend such an invitation to a neighbour, someone recently settled in Ottawa or a recent retiree. This will benefit them and our club.

Michael Davis

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.

Our Journey with the Women of Afghanistan



Hally Siddons (left) brought three other speakers with her, Sue Wilson, Joan Bell and Maryham Sahar

Our April meeting involved four speakers, slides and a movie. The lead-off speaker was **Hally Siddons** who set the background. The impetus was a speech by Rick Hillier at the 2010 National Conference of the Canadian Federation of University Women. Hally said that she was fascinated by the images he portrayed and this led to a group within CFUW to take a deeper look into the situation of Afghan women. The task they set themselves was to study the issues, raise community awareness and to act to support Afghan women.

Sue Wilson provided the demographics of the situation. 42% are under 15, 55% are 15 to 64 and only 2.4% are 65 and over. Life expectancy is 45 years - the same for men and women. The significance of the life statistic, apart from being shockingly low by our standards, is that there is a dearth of the maturity and experience needed to run a country, province or even a municipality.

When the Russians left (1989) the Taliban moved in and instigated a form of gender apartheid. Women were banished from the workforce, schools were closed and women were expelled from universities. The Taliban prohibited the treatment of women and girls by male doctors but would not allow women doctors to practice. Sue made the point that Taliban law is in opposition to Islam which allows women much more freedom.

Since 2002 there are 400 new schools, 7 times as many teachers – there are now about 140,000 of which nearly 40% are women. Many challenges remain – need more schools, security, economic development and infrastructure – roads, bridges, irrigation, sanitation and stable power.

Joan Bell took up the story and introduced 18-year-old **Maryham Sahar**, who, Joan said, left Afghanistan when 1 year old and returned as a 9-year-old in Kandahar Province. At 15 she worked for the UN High

Commission for Refugees, then as an interpreter, then with the Canadian Military and then with CIDA.

Maryham, with a rapid fire delivery, told us. “Your support will help Afghan women and make them more powerful”. She praised Canadians in Afghanistan for helping both men and women and commented that education is the key to change.

Maryham has been, more or less, adopted by a Canadian family and is in the school system. Her ambition is to be a diplomat and she is looking forward to working in Afghanistan. “We are responsible for our own country.”

Hally rounded out the session with a movie clip by Trevor Bormann, an Australian reporter. The full video can be seen at : <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2012/s3436198.htm>

In her closing remarks, Hally registered two specific concerns, “We know that the situation is fragile and we know that we need to be there for the long term.”



As the meeting broke-up several people tried on Maryham's burqa and saw the world through a narrow strip of veil.

Dorothy Hubbard

Dorothy passed away in hospital on June 3rd. As with many of our members we really know very little beyond what we see at Probus. We know that Dorothy worked at Grand & Toy and was a member of Pleasant Park Baptist Church - our home for the first 10 years. Dorothy's first Probus meeting was in January 2000 when the speaker was the Rev. Stirling Irving - the Pastor at Pleasant Park. Dorothy was one of our telephone callers. Jack Harvey (decd.) came in one Wednesday and said, "I have to meet this lady. She is so pleasant on the phone."

Dorothy will be missed.

Peter Doyle - Probus President

Congratulations to **Peter Doyle**, for several years our (Ontario District #1) representative at Probus Center Canada. In May, Peter was elected President of Probus Canada.

Peter's home club is Western Ottawa (formerly Kanata).

The officers are:

Vice-president - **Steven Campbell** (N.B.)

Treasurer - **Maureen Irving** (Kitchener)

Secretary - **Muriel Dodge** (B.C.)

Kenneth Trail (B.C.) becomes Past-president and **John Morris** (Alliston) retains his position as President Emeritus.

July 25th - Five In-House Speakers and Picnic

As is our wont, the July meeting will feature 5 in-house speakers:

John Kruithof - Growing up in Wartime Holland

Allen Taylor - Why the Titanic Sank

Lynne Bond - Travails of a Travel Agent

Ken Dye - The Pearly-Rideau Building Program

Michael Davis - Australian Journey

Following the talks there will be a catered 'picnic' so come prepared to stay a little longer and enjoy lunch.

Spring Fling 2013

Make a note of **May 7th, 2013** as the date of the next Spring Fling.

The Probus Club of Western Ottawa will host the festivities at Tudor Hall, North Bowesville Road - handier for us than for the hosts!

August 22 - Willie McElligott

Willie McElligott is an Architectural Photographer. His work has won numerous awards and has been an integral part of several architectural bids including the World Exchange Plaza, the new Ottawa Convention Centre and the Lansdowne Park Revitalization Initiative.

On his recently published book, 'Ottawa, Canada', *Ottawa at Home* magazine says, "What you will find is a showcase of some of the most striking photographs of the nation's capital and its surrounding environs."

If you purchase a copy you will be at least 99 behind **Jim Watson** who keeps it on the coffee table in his chambers and gives copies to visiting dignitaries.

Telephone Callers



Please contact **Kawsar** at kawsarkruithof@gmail.com or at 613-739-1335.

You think Enbridge's charges are high?

Commenting on a complaint from a Mr. Arthur Purdey about a large gas bill, a spokesman for North West Gas said, "We agree it was rather high for the time of year. It's possible Mr. Purdey has been charged for the gas used up during the explosion that destroyed his house."

(from the London Daily Telegraph)

www.probusaltavista.ca