



The Probe

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Pirates of the Caribbean

Robert Bériault met some real pirates while sailing the Caribbean. Fortunately, the crew had battened down the hatches 'just in case', and kept the intruders at bay.

On this trip they were on their way from Trinidad to Barbados and the best way is via 'Isla Margarita'. With only two avowed sailors in the audience this needed some explanation. The prevailing winds blow from Barbados towards Trinidad so a 'direct' route would involve constant tacking and end up being as long as going 'the long way round'.



A slight snag was the known presence of pirates off the Venezuelan coast so a northerly detour towards Grenada, was required. Once in the safety of *Margarita*, they could relax - or so they thought. Pirates boarded the boat that evening but could not get into the cabin.

Robert, now in his early 70's, has been sailing for about 13 years but has never owned a boat. He took lessons, got hooked, fell in love with sailing boats and found a whole new world open to him. He told us that there are web sites for boats and crew similar to the omni-present dating sites on TV and this is how he finds the boats to sail on. The terms and conditions vary - some are 'all found' some require part payment some are paid. If a boat owner wants to cruise a different area but does not want

to make the transit, he may hire a captain and crew. Robert's adventures and misadventures are captured in his book *Sailor without a Boat*.



While talking about sailing, Robert gave us a pictorial travelogue of the Caribbean. The views he showed us of the islands would often not be easily available to a land based tourist, and in some cases just not accessible.

One of the questions he was asked was had he ever left a boat part way through a cruise. The answer was , "Yes". There was one case of a captain that he did not trust to complete the voyage safely so he 'jumped ship'.

Robert's professional career culminated as a laboratory manager in biotechnology research labs at the Universities of Montreal and Guelph. He took early retirement and established an ecological, reusable nylon bag factory. He also founded the Val-des-Monts Recycling Association, one of the first small towns in Quebec to have a collection system for recycling.

Robert was accompanied by his wife, Micheline, and both joined us for lunch at the Sala Thai restaurant.

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.

Mounting Kilimanjaro

" ... there, ahead, all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going." Hemingway, 1938

The Uhuru peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro is 19,340 ft above sea level. For comparison, Rogers Pass at 4,360 ft is overlooked by Mount Macdonald at 9,459 ft. Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro is an expedition, not a stroll in the park.

Trudy Stephen, our March speaker, and 5 other Ottawa grandmothers, **Gisèle Lalonde Mansfield**, **Liza Badham**, **Barbara Carriere**, **Janet Carrière** and **Tina Cuerrier**,

took on the challenge to raise awareness of the plight of African grandmothers and as an inspiration to others.



Day 1, Lemosho, 7,362 ft. Registration (for identification in case of accident) and start walking through the rain forest carrying water, camera and raingear. The expedition included 2 guards and 25 porters. The porters moved ahead quickly and set up lunch. More walking after lunch to the camp which had been set up by the porters.

Day 2, 9,163 ft. A change of scenery - out of the forest into moorland. The guards are in case of encounters with buffalo or elephants.

Day 3, Shira Camp, 11,500 ft. onto the Shira Plateau. Much more difficult terrain with big rocks to negotiate. (Not feeling too good.)

Day 4, Moir Camp, 12,200 ft. Each day is harder. The porters boosted spirits by greeting the party with songs in Swahili when we trudged into camp. (Developing a cold.)

Day 5, Barranco Camp, 12,850 ft. The lack of oxygen depletes energy. Air contains the same percentage of oxygen as at lower levels but the air is less dense so each breath contains less oxygen. The drug Diamox can help. Many climbers have difficulty at this level and it is known locally as hitting the Barranco wall. Drizzle.

Day 6, Karanga Camp, to Barafu Camp, 14,940 ft. (Really unwell and worried about my cold going to my

lungs - almost ready to quit)

Day 7 Attempt on the summit. Walking on scree - difficult. Step - rest - step - rest. Takes one and a half hours to cover the same distance as a 10 minute stroll at home. Uhuru Peak. Made it! Euphoria! Relief! Disbelief!

Day 8 Crater Camp, 18,800 ft. Then 2 days to complete the downward journey to the Mweka Gate.

Trudy concluded by expressing her thanks to the friends, supporters and sponsors who made the expedition possible and, graciously, to us for allowing her the opportunity to share her experiences with us.

Question: Danger?

Answer: Yes. 20 to 50 deaths a year - mostly porters.

Q: Toilets?

A: A toilet tent at the over-night camps, otherwise

Q: Did porters carry extra oxygen.

A: Yes. Two members of the party needed it.

Q. Health check?

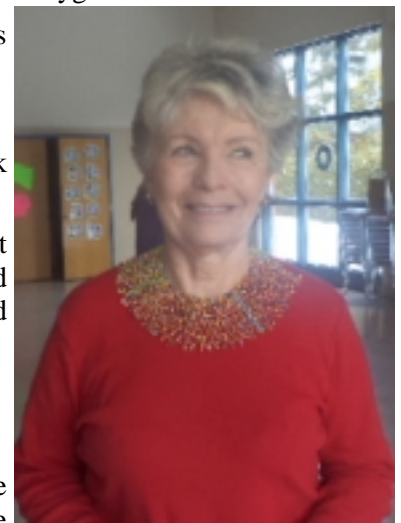
A: A medical check every morning.

Q. With the group at close quarters why did your cold not get passed on?

A: It just didn't happen.

Q. Food?

A: Breakfast would be eggs, toast, fruit, coffee or tea. Lunch might be soup or a snack. Supper, varied, even had spaghetti on the menu. Fruit at every meal.



Trudy - wearing a very special necklace

Proceeds from the sale of *Kilimanjaro: A Purposeful Journey*, go to support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's *Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign* and the *Snowy Owl AIDS Foundation*.

When we talked to Trudy about visiting our club, we suggested February.

"No, I will be in Peru."

"Climbing Machu Picchu?"

"No. I've already done that."

Maybe there's another story there.

Paul Stumes 1924 - 2013

On Monday morning, Kawsar Kruithof wrote, "It is with great sadness I report Eva Stumes telephoned me this morning that her husband Paul Stumes died on Sunday, April 21st, in his 89th year. We lost a dear friend. Paul contributed greatly to the Probus Club of Ottawa Alta Vista."

Paul was a very early member of our Club and was a speaker on three occasions. In May, 2000, he spoke on *Historical Sites of Ottawa* - this was pre-*Probe* and there is no record of his talk. In August 2001, his topic was *The Yukon Gold Rush* - the story of the discovery of gold at Bonanza Creek in 1896 and the rise and fall and eventual restoration of Dawson City; and in July, 2008, he was one of our 'in-house' speakers talking about the building of the Panama Canal and a significant but little known Canadian contribution to that enterprise. At that time Paul was described as our resident historian.

Paul was a Management Committee member and Membership Secretary for many years until ill health forced him into 'retirement'.

We expect that a formal obituary will appear in today's *Citizen*, giving more information on his professional life in Parks Canada and his activities as a member of Heritage Ottawa.

Paper Trail

April means a new tax return and also means that you can get rid of an old one, but how? It's a little too personal to consign to the Black Box with comfort, and burning is not always an available option.

The Loeb Centre offers shredding service. It is a non-profit business providing work for persons with developmental disabilities. Their operation is at 161 Donald Street, just east of the Vanier Parkway. As you drive in, their building is to the left and material for shredding is accepted at the far door. Hours of operation are 9 to 12 and 1 to 3:30, Monday through Friday.

The cost is 30¢ per pound (minimum \$5). A bit steep for a single tax return but if you have accumulated a pile of bills, personal papers, correspondence and 'stuff' then it may be worth the trip.

Even if you don't have \$5 worth, it is a good cause and shredded material is recycled.

218 Clubs in Canada

The newest Probus Club is **Huntsville Lakes**. There is some irony here as Huntsville has been in the news this week due to flooding.

Sound Principal

We need a second person to become familiar with the sound system. This involves some power and cable connections, setting up the podium and podium mike, helping the speaker with the wireless mike and twiddling the knobs inside the podium to set the sound levels. It takes just a few minutes before and after each meeting.

Good Looking

To make sure we always have a good looking video display for our speakers we need a second person to become familiar with the set-up.

The first requirement is a lap-top computer with PowerPoint - we try to get the speakers to email their presentations ahead of time to make sure there will be no glitches.

Apart from that it is just a question of setting-up the projector and connecting to the lap-top.

A Touch of Colour

Our web site has copies of *The Probe* from the first issue in April 2001. Many issues have the photographs in colour.

There is also a map, bus timetables, notice of the next speakers and events. and it lists every speaker we have had from Frank Fesco in September 1999 to date.

It provides links to other Probus web sites, including Probus Centre Canada and Probus (Probi?) in other countries.

Travel Insurance

Probus Centre Canada has made an arrangement with Johnson Inc. for travel/health insurance which is available to Probus Clubs and members.

For more information, call the special representative at Johnson Inc, Lisa Hansen, 1-888 412-8822 or visit the www.johnson.ca/probus website and obtain a quote on-line for Medoc travel insurance.

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.

May 22nd - Claude Bennett

Claude Bennett served as an Ottawa alderman from 1960 to 1969 and was the city's acting mayor in the period from 1970 to 1972. **Charlotte Whitton** was mayor from 1951 to 1956 and again from 1960 to 1964 so there was an overlap on council of 4 years.

We have asked Claude to reminisce about that period so that we could gain some insights into the character of Canada's first, female, 'big city' mayor. He will also talk about city and provincial politics - he was "our" MPP from 1971 to 1987 - and about some of his post-political activities which include Chairman of the Board of CMHC, President of the Canadian Commonwealth Games Association, Chair of the Ottawa Transition Board, Chair of the Ottawa Airport Authority and a member of the Board of the Royal Canadian Mint.

June 26th - Robert Kaszanits

Robert is the President of the Hermitage Society and a frequent visitor to one of the world's great museums and art collections.

Robert was originally scheduled to talk to us in February but had to postpone. March? No - visiting *l'Hermitage*. April? No - visiting *l'Hermitage*. So, when he talks to us in June everything will be fresh in his mind. It was founded in 1764 by **Catherine the Great** and has been open to the public since 1852. Its collections, of which only a small part is on permanent display, comprise over three million items including the largest collection of paintings in the world. The collections occupy a large complex of six historic buildings along Palace Embankment, including the Winter Palace, a former residence of the Tsars.

Plan on a longer meeting than usual. After the talk we will take a short break then Robert will give us a guided tour via a 54 minute video.

Perspicacity

The home page of the Probus Canada web site (www.probus.org/canada.htm) has a section, "Interesting Web Sites".

It's blank.

Are you surprised?

Poetry Corner

Robert Bériault's description of going from Trinidad to Barbados via Isla Margarita reminded me of this poem by G. K. Chesterton.

The Rolling English Road

Before the Roman came to Rye or out to Severn strode,
The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road.
A reeling road, a rolling road, that rambles round the shire,
And after him the parson ran, the sexton and the squire;
A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head.

I knew no harm of Bonaparte and plenty of the Squire,
And for to fight the Frenchman I did not much desire;
But I did bash their baggonets because they came arrayed
To straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made,
Where you and I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our hands,
The night we went to Glastonbury by way of Goodwin Sands.

His sins they were forgiven him; or why do flowers run
Behind him; and the hedges all strengthening in the sun?
The wild thing went from left to right and knew not which was
which,

But the wild rose was above him when they found him in the ditch.
God pardon us, nor harden us; we did not see so clear
The night we went to Bannockburn by way of Brighton Pier.

My friends, we will not go again or ape an ancient rage,
Or stretch the folly of our youth to be the shame of age,
But walk with clearer eyes and ears this path that wandereth,
And see undrugged in evening light the decent inn of death;
For there is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,
Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.

The poem is something of a geography challenge but to understand the last line you have to know that Kensal Green is a cemetery in central London.

Chesterton wrote mystery novels with *Father Brown* as the main protagonist. There was a TV series some years ago with Kenneth More in the title role.

Father Brown
Won great renown
Not for prayer books or hyminals
But for collaring criminals

10-Minute Talks - July

The roster is filling for our 10-minute talks but we are still looking for more speakers. The range of topics is wide and the audience is friendly.

Please let Lynne Bond or John Wright know if you would like to give a talk.

We can help to arrange your pictures from prints or from a computer into a presentation.