



The Probe

Est. September 1999

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

February 2014, #78

Party Time

Garth Hampson made our Christmas party such a success last year that we just had to invite him back again. We were prepared to plead, possibly even grovel, but Garth, being Garth, said "Yes" immediately.

Tim Piper again provided an accompaniment which melded faultlessly with Garth's style and timing.

In what has become a 'tradition'. **Pastor Denise Allan-McCartney** set the tone for the celebration. Then followed carols and Christmas songs with a lapse into melodrama, where **Joan Evans** handled the cue cards.

Our thanks to the kitchen staff for displaying the 'goodies' in a most appealing manner.

The Shepherds of Good Hope benefitted from the contents of the Loonie Bin.

March is National Probus Month

Steven Campbell, President of Probus Canada, has announced that March will henceforth be 'National Probus Month' (NPM). March was chosen because the first club - Cambridge, Ontario - was certified in March 1987.

Steve recognized that this was short notice to do much to make NPM a significant event this year but encourages clubs to make plans for next year.

Nevertheless, your Management Committee, has found a way to mark the occasion.

Statistics

Steve's letter included a note: "Presently, there are over 4,000 clubs the world over, comprising more than 400,000 members. In Canada, we have 226 active clubs accounting for over 31,000 members."

Definition

Probus is a local, national and international association of retired people who come together in a non-political, non-sectarian, non-profit, non fund-raising autonomous clubs which provide regular opportunities for members to meet others in similar circumstances and similar levels of interest, make new friends, and maintain and expand their interests.

Helen Forsey on Eugene Forsey

The snow and cold of January was brightened by our January speaker, Helen Forsey, daughter of Senator Eugene Forsey who was considered one of Canada's foremost experts on our Constitution. Helen was introduced by our Past President, Joan Evans, a Newfoundlander who pointed to the Forsey family roots on that island. Eugene Forsey was born there and Helen spends her summers in her caboose at Pouch Cove. However, she does winter in Ontario, at Ompah west of Ottawa.



Yes! It really is a caboose. Inset is the cover of her book, "Eugene Forsey - Canada's Maverick Sage"

Helen's Book, "Eugene Forsey, Canada's Maverick Sage", was the central theme of her address to us. At a time when the Senate is under close scrutiny and many are questioning its very existence information regarding the Legislative and Constitutional realities surrounding this body proved very educational and enlightening.

Quoting from her father, "The Senate as now constituted does much good, and is politically too weak to do any

continued overleaf

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.

serious harm", Helen summed up the status quo. She went on to discuss the role of the Senate as the "House of sober second thought" and how Eugene Forsey had taken this as his guide to serving the country. Several anecdotes threw much light on his activities. At his appointment by Pierre Trudeau, Senator Forsey asked where he was to sit and was told by that Prime Minister "I don't give a damn where you sit", leaving the good man free to pursue his goals in an apolitical direction.

Helen provided a history of her father's background; born in Newfoundland in 190, raised a Conservative, converted to social democracy via the CCF and NDP and worked for decades for the Labour Movement. As a member of the Senate he took his natural role as a non-partisan critic and gadfly, provoking Canadians for 60 years.

Methods of reforming the Senate were suggested and explained to us. The advantages, weaknesses and pitfalls of a Triple E Senate made the issues much clearer. It was Helen's final topic that proved to be the most entertaining and thought provoking. She shared a few excerpts from her next book, with a working title "The People's Senate". Her ideal Senate was fictionally composed of the likes of Margaret Atwood, Wanda Nanibush, Severn Suzuki and Kevin Page to name a few. This body would be selected from lists compiled by a participatory process focused on merit, similar to the Order of Canada. The first step in this reform would require all Senators to cut all ties to political parties. This brought a round of applause and stimulated many questions.

Serendipity reigns! Within a few weeks of this address, Liberal leader, Justin Trudeau, relieved all the sitting Liberal Senators of their party status and thus created each as an Independent. If we only knew how prophetic our speaker had been!

Lynne Bond thanked Helen and presented her with our Probus pen and a year's membership, following a lively round of very interesting and insightful questions that clearly displayed the interest in this topic from our membership. We'll all be looking forward to the next book by Helen Forsey.

LB

New Constitution

Probus Centre Canada, after consultation with the Clubs, have provided us with a new constitution.

It will not have any effect on our day to day operations, so we can safely wait until the AGM to adopt it.

Probus Finances in 2013

The Probus Club of Ottawa – Alta Vista continued in good shape financially. At the end of 2013 the club's financial assets were \$2,094 compared with \$3,115 for 2012 indicating a decrease of about \$1,000. The speaker gifts and pins, which cost about \$500, will cover most or all of 2014. We may have to look carefully at the costs of our July and December meetings. A shortfall can be solved by an increase in membership.

The Probus Club of Ottawa - Alta Vista can look forward to another stable year as it will be financially capable offering a full program with interesting speakers and activities.

	2013	2012
Opening Balance	3,115	2,754
Receipts		
Memberships		
-Current Year	810	970
-Following Year	1010	1230
Loonie Bin	469	550
Spring Fling	840	600
Other	13	0
Total Receipts	3,142	3,350
Expenditures		
Probus Centre Fees	283	283
Pins and Name Badges	324	---
G'ster Presbyterian Church	1000	500
Communications	59	56
Office Supplies + Eqpt.	---	573
Meeting Refreshments	279	149
Bank Charges	56	56
Speaker Gifts	190	---
Sunshine Committee	---	---
Membership Committee	---	25
Indoor Picnic	636	486
Christmas Entertainment	338	250
Christmas Donation	100	---
Other	61	11
Spring Fling 2011	840	600
Total Expenditures	4,163	2,989
Closing Balance	2,094	3,115

Allan Porter

Treasurer

Probe Us – Robin Rousham



Not without difficulty, we caught up with our newly elected, 14th President, Robin Rousham, to find out a little more about him.

Probe: Congratulations on your election. Tell us a little about yourself, early life, schooling, etc.

RR: I was born in Staines, Middlesex and

lived mostly in south-east England until National Service and emigration to Canada in 1956. There was a one year break in 1948 when my father took us to Perth, Western Australia. My schools were in Petersfield, Hampshire and my first job was at the Bank of England.

Probe: That seems a fair exchange - you came to Canada and Mark Carney went to the Bank. What next?

RR: National Service. I joined the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy, crash landed while night flying during pilot training - they failed me - and continued in air traffic control. Strangely enough, the controller for that flight and I met years later in Portage-la-Prairie. My crash must have left a lasting impression because he recognized me immediately.

Probe: That places you in Canada. What were the steps in between?

RR: One step, but to me a big one. After National Service, at the age of 20, I decided to emigrate to Canada. My first job was with Eatons in Toronto for just a few months, then, in September 1956, I joined the RCAF in London, ON.

Probe: Most military careers are a kaleidoscope of bases and moves. Does that describe yours?

RR: Absolutely! Bagotville, Marville (France), Goose Bay, CFB Borden, HQ, Staff College, CFB Ottawa, Mobile Command (Army), CFB St Jean and finally as Canadian Forces Attaché in Rome. The two most significant ones were Bagotville and St Jean.

Probe: OK. We'll bite. What happened?

RR: In Bagotville I met and married a nurse who had moved to Toronto to learn English and returned to Chicoutimi. Solange and I recently celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary.

Probe: Congratulations! An English Protestant and a

French-Canadian Roman Catholic in an area and at a time when the church wielded great influence. That must have been a challenge for both of you.

RR: But well worthwhile!

Probe: And CFB St Jean?

RR: I was the Base Commander - the first Air Traffic Control Officer to be given command of a Base - and a French-speaking Base at that. A double achievement!

Probe: Let's pick up on family matters.

RR: Solange and I have three sons, Gordon and Jonathan born in Chicoutimi and the youngest, Andrew, in France. Gordon and Andrew have followed in their grandfather's (somewhat tentative) footsteps, bolstered by my enthusiastic descriptions, and live in Australia. For Andrew, this is his fourth nationality. French by birth, British from me, Canadian through the citizenship process (but not through his mother as he was born in France) and Australian.

Probe: If I have followed this we have an Englishman married to a Canadian with - is it one or two Australian sons?

RR: Two, but there is more. We have a Kiwi and an Aussie daughter-in-law, two Aussie grandsons and a granddaughter, two Canadian granddaughters, and by the end of April there will be with two great-granddaughters.

Probe: You talked to us in 2010 about Rotary's *Adventures in Citizenship* and you were our Rotary liaison for several years. Was Rotary a post-retirement activity?

RR: Yes. I did some work in the aviation industry after leaving the Canadian Forces. I joined the Ottawa Rotary Club in 1993 and held several positions, including President, 2006-2007. The two main Rotary projects I have been involved in are *Adventures in Citizenship* and the Rotary Home. From 2005 to 2012. I served on two Boards, first of the Home and then the Foundation.

Probe: And your introduction to Probus?

RR: Through Rotary and in particular Eva Hammond. I remain grateful to Eva for introducing me to one of the most enjoyable retirement activities.

Probe: Thank you Robin. We wish you well in your year as our controller..

Dues 2014

Please check the sign-in sheet and make sure it says "Paid 14" against your name.

Spring Fling - May 27th

The Spring Fling is being hosted by the Ottawa Rideau Valley Club to celebrate their 20th Anniversary. The Fling will be flung at the Orchard View Conference Centre (near Greely). The cost will be \$35 and the choices will be Salmon, or Chicken in White Wine Sauce, or Top Sirloin of Beef, rounded out by salads, a selection of desserts, tea and coffee.

Their deadline means that you must **sign up no later than at our March meeting.**

The web site for Ottawa Rideau Valley is: **probutorv.org**

July 23rd - In-house

Since 2007 we have had 34 in house talks by two dozen speakers. Subjects ranged all over time and place, travelogues being the most frequent. We have had history, ancient and modern, housing, and 'one offs' on aboriginal schools, the Auditor General, beekeeping, cheese making, Olympics, language, etc. etc.

What can **YOU** tell us about?

World Views - Winter 2014 Program Free Monthly Photo Evenings

Bethany Baptist Church

382 Centrepointe Drive West at Baseline Road

Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. - All welcome
Saturday, Feb. 22 – “The Way of St. James – Walking the El Camino”; Dave Sangster
Saturday, Mar. 29 – “Tenderness & Power – Tanzania & the Victoria Falls”; Presented by Mollie MacCormac
Saturday, Apr. 26 – “Imperial Waterways of Russia & Tuscan Countryside”; Barbara Adams

For more information call Sholto Cole at 613-721-3367.

On the Web

When we have to make late adjustments to the speaker roster, the web site is the first source of information. Our invaluable Telephone Tree always follows up with the latest news.

If you have missed a couple of meetings or recycled your copy of *The Probe*, the web is the place to check out the next speakers.

www.probusaltavista.ca

Probus Centre Canada is at:

www.probus.org

Jim Rader

Jim died of a heart attack last Friday (February 21st). He was our second President, deeply involved in the formation of our Club and a consistent presence ever since

I knew Jim from our careers at Bell, well before we met at Probus. Although in different departments (Business Development, Engineering) our careers touched often enough to get to know each other a little.

Jim was born on a farm in south-west Ontario, which he and his brother managed after the early death of their father. He played football and rugby at college and more recently was a regular on the volleyball court. He loved teaching and has continued to teach, lately at Kemptonville.

There will be a memorial service at Rideau Park United at 1:30 pm on Saturday (March 1st). Our condolences go to Maggie and Jim's family.

John Wright



March 26th, George Laidlaw The Joys of Canadian History

George comes to us well recommended by the North Grenville Probus Club where he gave this talk last fall. He is the author of 91 (yes 91!) books, mostly on history, and has spoken at nearly 400 retirement homes and 180 schools throughout Ontario. Many of his books are available at the Ottawa Library.

When we looked at the wide range George has covered we were at a loss to suggest which aspects he should focus on. After some consultation we decided on Canadian History as the opening theme followed by some excursions into matters older and further afield.

April 23rd, Guy Thatcher The Pilgrim's Way

It's nearly 4 years since Guy Thatcher talked to us about his 'Journey of Days' from missing baggage (including his boots) to the final steps into Santiago de Compostella. He told us about the people, the route, the places and the weather in his 34 day journey along the Camino de Santiago.

At the end of his talk he said that he would return to the Camino to cover the part that had missed. We asked if he would come back and tell us about it.