



# The Probe

Est. September 1999

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

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## Kerry-Leigh Burchill Canada's Agriculture and Food Museum

*The Farm*, or more formally the 'Central Experimental Farm' is a landmark and institution familiar to all Ottawa residents. Kerry-Leigh Burchill took us behind the scenes for a look at its history, objectives and activities.



Founded in 1886 under an "Act respecting experimental stations", the farm added livestock in 1889 as well as starting the 'Dominion Arboretum'. The 'old hedge' collection in the ornamental garden includes plantings going back to 1891.

Nowadays the 180,000 plus visitors every year are mainly urbanites re-connecting with the agricultural world and, in many cases, their ancestors. Most visitors don't think of it as a museum but as a working farm - which it is. An ongoing objective is to find crops and animals which will thrive in the harsh Canadian climate and then to improve the stock to increase yields.

Agriculture is not just crops and animals but includes: cotton, linen, silk, cosmetics, lotions, bio-diesel, bio plastics as well as a range of breakfasts - toast with peanut butter, cereal with milk, yoghurt with fruit, porridge with nuts, eggs and bacon, coffee, tea, juice, etc.

There are two main categories of visitors, the working visitors who come to learn from the Farm and to share experience and knowledge, and the recreational visitors

who go for a day out. The Farm is a popular place for caregivers with young children (Editor's note - that's when we started going.). The children are fascinated by the real life versions of their picture books and the parents probably like the break from parenting.

The Farm wanted to find out who was not coming. The surface answers were often, "no children therefore no need to come." or "not a farmer therefore no interest". Digging deeper they found that food would be a draw and enhanced their food-themed presentations. Now they have agriculture and food-themed activities year round as well as providing digital and on-site resources to inspire food literacy and agricultural appreciation.

Food literacy includes nutrition, food preparation and food safety as well as cultural links to food, traditions and global influences.

While the Farm itself is a museum, it also has what is usually thought of as a museum, the national collection of artifacts and archives. The artifacts range from tractors to early implements when the only power was human or animal. Among the 'collection' are about 150 living artifacts (not counting the bees). These are the animals usually associated with farms and farming with one unexpected addition - alpacas - and one missing - geese. (Editor's note - if you drive along Baseline in the summer or fall you can see hundreds of reasons why they do not need to keep geese.)



Questions highlighted two problems. Bees are under threat - no pollination, no food. People graduate towards cities - no farmers, no food.

Food security is becoming a major issue.

### **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.**

## Mens Sana ... - Dr. Antoine Hakim



Dementia affects a million Canadians - and one more every 5 minutes. 15% of the victims are under 65. By 2040 the cost will be more than the current health budget. Women over 60 are twice as likely to be affected.

Dr. Hakim's opening salvo made everyone sit

up and take notice. He went on to cover the most frequent forms of dementia:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Brain vascular problems (stroke)
- Neurodegeneration:
  - Parkinson's
  - MS
  - Frontotemporal dementia
  - Normal pressure hydrocephalus

A collective sigh of relief greeted his characterization of 'going to the fridge and not remembering what you wanted' as 'normal'. The second level of forgetfulness is mild cognitive impairment (MCI) which causes lapses that are not sufficient to interfere with the ability to function. Beyond that is dementia.

Alzheimer's disease accounts for about two-thirds of cases. There is no cure and deterioration may occur over a decade.

Dr. Hakim reminded us of how many brain functions we have used to get to Probus. Getting up, ablutions, breakfast and the journey. That we made it means we are OK (so far).

He then went on to give advice on strokes. If it happens you have 3 hours to get to hospital where they have a drug treatment which can mitigate the effects. DO NOT decide to sleep on it to see if it is better in the morning. Symptoms are slurred speech, loss of movement in face, arm or leg on one side and difficulty understanding simple statements. An insidious problem is a series of covert strokes - they are small and often ignored but they accumulate. The biggest factor in covert strokes is blood pressure. Systolic should be no more than 120 when at rest.

The brain is an energy pit - it needs blood 100% of the time - and it needs exercise. Keep using it. Do crosswords or other puzzles. Stimulate it by learning something new.

### ... in corpore sano.

Brain health also depends on physical health. Obesity is a negative factor. Check food labelling. Be aware that a burger with all the trimmings may be 7,500 calories - about what you would burn in an 12 km jog. In this regard, studies in the UK have shown that labelling a big pop as 600 calories had no effect but saying that you will have to walk 4 km to reduce the effect, got more attention.

Move. Pick the furthest space in a parking lot not the closest. Get out of breath at least once a day. Get more social interaction (social isolation leads to depression). Join a choir. Volunteer. Play bridge. Play music. Cooking is good. Watching TV is not. Hormones generated by activity go from the muscles to the brain. This is good for the brain and is the feeling of euphoria some runners experience.

In review:

- eat right
- sleep right (8 hours is not a luxury)
- have a social environment
- keep active

By the way, the 8 hours of sleep does not have to be consecutive - that's a different problem of aging.

Dr. Antoine Hakim, OC, MD, PhD, FRCPC is the Senior Scientist Emeritus, Neuroscience Program, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute.

He came to Ottawa in 1992 and was the Division Head of Neurology for The Ottawa Hospital from 1992 to 2000, Director of the Neuroscience Research Institute at the University of Ottawa between 1992 and 2001, Founding Scientific Director for the Heart & Stroke Foundation Centre for Stroke Recovery between 2001 and 2008 and Professor and Chair of Neurology for the University of Ottawa between 1992 and 2011.

(*Mens sana in corpore sano* is from the first line of *Satire X* by the Roman poet **Juvenal**.)

## Computer woes

Computers also suffer from dementia. Unfortunately in our case it happened in the middle of Dr Hakim's talk. The shop has now given it a clean bill of health, so we should be good to go for a while.

## Dues 2016

Please check the sign-in sheet and make sure it says "Paid 16" against your name. If not, **Wib** or **Bob** will be pleased to take your dues. (\$25 for singles, \$40 for family)

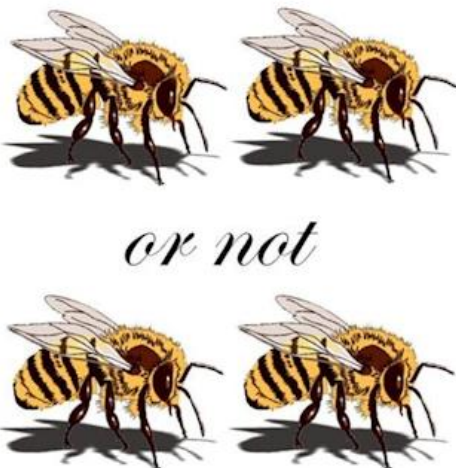
## William Shakespeare

April 23rd marked 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare, and it is on or about his 452nd birthday. This has been marked throughout the world by special events. In Ottawa, Ottawa U held a 3-month-long festival starting with an evening of words and music involving two of our recent speakers, **Alan Neal**, the MC, and **Irena Makaryk**, who was the driving force behind the festival. Alan chatted with **Paul Gross** and **Martha Burns** about their careers and Shakespeare.



Paul commented that there is an informal fraternity among actors who have played Hamlet. After one of Paul's performances, **Christopher Plummer** came back-stage. Paul saw a light in Plummer's eyes and said, "You'd like to do it again, wouldn't you? His reply, "I'd do it in a moment in the %\$#\*&! parking lot if they'd let me."

The By-town theatre showed all of Shakespeare's plays which have been made into films, and included *Ran*, **Akiro Kurosawa's** masterpiece which has a strange resemblance to *King Lear*. Strange because Kurosawa had not read Lear.



Editor's note: Shakespeare jokes seem to be few and far between. This one is for our favourite bee man, **Morley Craig**, and because **Kerry-Leigh** mentioned bees.

## Poetry Corner

The obvious choice of author this month is Shakespeare. He wrote 154 sonnets, 2 (possibly 3) narrative poems and other verses.

### Sonnet XCVIII

From you have I been absent in the spring,  
When proud pied April, dressed in all his trim,  
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,  
That heavy Saturn laughed and leapt with him.  
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell  
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,  
Could make me any summer's story tell,  
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:  
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,  
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;  
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,  
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.  
Yet seemed it winter still, and you away,  
As with your shadow I with these did play.

## The First Probe, April 2001

The first write-up was of a talk by **Susan Menzies** on the first 25 years of the Heart Institute. She told us about an early by-pass patient who woke up to find **Dr. Keon** looking down at him and telling him that he had to change his lifestyle. "No smoking or drinking or fatty foods." "Will I live longer?" "No, but it will seem longer."

There was a brief mention of **Noreen Wolfe** who had talked to us about genealogy the month before Susan but at that time we did not know that there would be a newsletter, so no detailed notes were taken.

The President was **Jim Rader** and we were looking forward to hearing from **Cllr. Peter Hume** at our May meeting.

In April 2006 the reports were on **Graham Sibthorpe**, a canoe builder, and **Sue Raven** who told us to be SMART - Stretch, Move, Add it up (do an hour a day), Reduce strain, Trust your physiotherapist. **Allen Taylor** was the President and on his way to becoming our longest serving president. We changed from October through September to the calendar year so the transition gave him 15 months.

In April 2011, we reported on **Joy Fellows** who had written a book on one-room schoolhouses in Eastern Ontario, and **Superintendent Sylvain Berthiaume**, RCMP, an ex-Musical Rider and, in 2011, on international duty liaising with Interpol. **Bob Atchison** was the President.

## On April 27th

In 1737, **Edward Gibbon** was born. He wrote *'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'*. (Editor's note: I was given a copy at Christmas and I am already on page 9.)

1820 saw the birth of the philosopher, **Herbert Spencer**, who coined the phrase *'survival of the fittest'* and defined time as *'that which man is always trying to kill but in the end kills him.'*

**Ulysses Simpson Grant** came on the scene in 1822. The conquering Union general in the American Civil War became the 18th President. He presided over one of the most corrupt administrations in the country's history.

In 1521, **Ferdinand Magellan** was killed in the Philippines. He had started out with five ships and 278 men. Only one ship and 17 men completed the circumnavigation.

All in all, not an auspicious day.

Have ideas or contacts for  
enriching workshops?

I would love to hear from you!



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The final slide in Kerry-Leigh  
Burchill's presentation.

## Web site visits

We put counters on some of the web site pages to see how often they are being viewed. In one month, from March 24th to April 23rd, there were 1,064 visits. To get to that total, either every member checked the site every three days or we are getting a lot of interest from outside.

The most popular individual page, after the home page, was the list of speakers (93). Twenty-three people looked at the "Joining" page - hopefully that means we will see an increase in membership.

One factor to take into account is interest from the listing we had in the Ottawa Citizen 'About Town' just before our March meeting.

The site is - [www.probusaltavista.ca](http://www.probusaltavista.ca)

## May 25th - The Hon. Marjory LeBreton The Senate

**Senator LeBreton** retired from the Senate last year after 22 years in the 'Red Chamber'. From 2006 to 2013 she held the position of Leader of the Government in the Senate and, in the Cabinet, also served as Secretary of State for Seniors. During her time in the Senate she sat on over a dozen Standing Committees including Human Rights and Foreign Affairs.

Before being called to the Senate, Ms LeBreton worked closely with three Prime Ministers - **John Diefenbaker**, **Joe Clark** and **Brian Mulroney**.

Marjory will talk about the institution and its importance to Canada.

## June 22nd - Prof. Ian Lee Economic Issues

**Ian Lee**, Ph.D, is an Assistant Professor at the Sprott School of Business, Carleton University. He is a regular panellist on CBC and a member of the 'Lunch Bunch' on CFRA.

An engaging speaker, he can bring economic issues to life. Using public data, much of it from Statistics Canada, he can shine a spotlight on some of the dubious economics that are presented to us as facts.

His focus for our talk will be on an issue of the day.

## August Triple Header

Ignore the February issue of *The Probe* where it talks about a July triple-header. The events have been moved to August.

They are

In-house speakers (your turn)

Vernissage - 2016

Indoor Picnic

'Vernissage' is just a word for 'Arts & Crafts Show' - a chance to show off your handiwork to everyone else. Painting, needlework, macramé, woodwork, metalwork, electronic gizmos. If you've scored a hole in one, bring the video. If you've recorded a song, bring the CD. Anything goes - anything less than 2 m and 100 kg, that is. If you have an elephant in your room, bring a photo. Let **Joyce** or **John Wright** know at or before the July meeting so we can arrange display space.

## Stop Press!

**Jamie Doolittle**, Northumberland Probus, is our new representative on the Probus Canada Board.