



**THE PROBUS CLUB
OF PERTH**
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Probus meets the first
Wednesday of each month,
Sept. to June.

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Apropos

The late Maya Angelou, whose quote is featured in the Quote of the Month on page 2, would have appreciated the address by Kate Johnson at Probus this month. Both understood the power of empathy and the way in which one person may make others feel. Researchers generally define empathy as the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. But it is often much more than that. Empathy often refers to the sensations we truly **feel** in response to others' emotions. It is this internalization of other's feelings that lingers long after the words have faded. It is a powerful form of communication and understanding. It is also, according to Ms. Johnson, a powerful tool to be used in the process of restorative justice.

(Apropos reflects the views of the Editors but not necessarily those of the Club.)

Kate Johnson on Empathy and Hope



Kate Johnson, BA, BSW, M.Div., RSW is a former prison chaplain and current chaplain at Queens University. After earning her BA and BSW with a focus on criminology, Kate practiced for several years as a social worker in adolescent correctional and mental health facilities. Seeing the link between childhood victimization and adolescent offending, Kate went on to pursue a Masters of Divinity in Restorative Justice at Queen's. A chaplain at Pittsburgh Institution for five years, she introduced a victim empathy program to the Correctional Service of Canada. In 2013 she was appointed chaplain to Queen's University.

Kate says she has spent 20 years "in and out of jail" as a Social Worker, chaplain and advocate for victim's issues. Her talk was entitled "Empathy and Hope" and encompassed her approach to restorative justice. She defined 'restorative justice' as an innovative approach towards the needs of all those touched by a crime. Ideally, this breeds empathy both from and towards the victims, the offenders, and as well, correctional staff and parole officer groups. She emphasized that there is considerably more involved here than a "hug-a-thug" mindset, and described how her work training prisoners in victim empathy is bringing hope to prisoners, victims and staff alike.

In first approaching empathy training, Kate was working for the rights and needs of the victims of crime. She soon realized that many criminals simply do not relate to the concept of 'victimhood'. When she first offered a course to help prison inmates understand the impact of crime on its victims, she was astounded to have 50 prisoners enroll and 48 complete the course. Within the next year, 225 men completed the course. A deeper understanding of the impact of their actions, and the origin of those actions, led to an inclination to make amends.

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Empathy.....continued

After the course, some prisoners met with their victims. Such meetings allow the participants to see each other's humanity. Prisoners say that it is harder on them than sitting in a cell, but still very satisfying. They begin to realize that they can integrate their experience into a better future life, not simply allow their whole life to be defined by their unlawful acts and incarceration.

Correctional staff are often highly trained professionals who find the present Canadian penal environment a difficult one in which to apply the principles they have been taught. That they face violent situations is a given, but recent changes in law enforcement and prison administration such as longer and mandatory sentences, budget cuts, prison overcrowding, and contracting out of jobs formerly carried out by the inmates themselves, have increased stress and tension inside prisons. Following Kate's empathy training classes at the Pittsburgh Institution, prison guards recognized a reduction in tension within the inmate population. Correctional Services Canada, however, has refused to fund either the training itself or research into empathy training outcomes which could validate this course of action.

"People ask," she (Kate) says, "why we should treat prisoners with any compassion at all? Research (North American and especially Scandinavian) tells us overwhelmingly that humane treatment of prisoners reduces crime. Lengthier sentences and harsher conditions have been shown time and time again to be costly ways to increase crime – which means more victims. Some say the government's motive is ideology, others say it's about profit and privatization. Whatever the reason, they are leading Canadians down a dangerous path." --from Lawrence Scanlan's interview with Kate published as "Hope in Hell" in [Kingston Life \(page 25\)](#).

[Read the related Perth Courier article](#)

[Trailer for "Until the Cows Come Home"](#)

~ movie recommended by Kate Johnson

Quote for the Month

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

~ Maya Angelou

Management Team Notes

- There will likely be a member's request for a vote at the May meeting to see whether other members might wish to have their email addresses circulated within the Club to enhance communication. If it were to proceed, it would be done on a voluntary opt-in basis and it would necessitate a change in our Privacy Policy.
- Members are encouraged to take home more books from the book exchange table as the stock is growing and becoming more difficult to manage.



Speakers' Corner



Our speaker on May 6th will be author Cheryl Cooper speaking about her "Seasons of War" saga, which is set against a backdrop of the naval War of 1812. Cheryl has a degree in English and Education from Queen's University. A former teacher of hearing-impaired children and a volunteer for

the Children's Foundation of Muskoka, she lives in Bracebridge, Ontario.

Special Events

- **May 12** – Spring Fling 2015 - Grenville Municipal Centre in Kemptville – sponsored by the Probus Club of North Grenville – tickets \$38 and registration must already have been made – [details](#).
- **May 27** – Our annual trip to the Thousand Island Playhouse, 185 South Street in Gananoque ([map](#)) to see "[CLOSER THAN EVER](#)" which is an award-winning "how-to" manual for the middle aged – told entirely through song! Tickets for the musical are \$28. Mary has made reservations for lunch at noon at [Musky Jake's](#) in the Gananoque Inn, 550 Stone Street South. Please sign up at the May meeting or contact Mary by May 13th at the latest.
- **June 3** – Closing lunch at the Legion after the meeting.



Lunch After May Meeting

To be held at "East Meets West" Restaurant (formerly Around the Corner), 40 Foster Street, Perth

Personal Profile ~ Walter Baker



Walter came to Canada as a landed immigrant from northern Britain at age 20. He knew no one, but as a qualified Physical Education teacher he secured positions working with troubled youth at Shawbridge Boys Farm, and as a welfare teacher with Ojibwa children in Northern Ontario.

Walter broadened his education and world view at Queen's University, achieving an Honours BA in Psychology, an MA in Political Studies and a PhD in Public Policy and Management. It was also at Queen's that he met Barbara Moore from Smiths Falls. They married less than a year later in Smiths Falls United Church. He and Barbara produced five children, and now have thirteen grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Sadly, Barbara died of cancer eight years ago, before the birth of the latest four little members of the family.

Walter has had a rich and varied career, often overlapping many of his interests and talents. He has been an elementary and secondary school teacher, a social worker with the Children's Aid Society, a university professor and the founder and director of a School of Public Policy and Management (20 years in Public Policy and Management at the University of Ottawa), a federal Assistant Deputy Minister, and a management consultant to federal, provincial, municipal and voluntary agencies. He considers himself both an **entrepreneur**, having built six small business organizations, and an **intrepreneur**, having led the reorganization and revitalization of organizations from within.

Perhaps the best locally-known of the Baker businesses, *Strathmere* was purchased by Walter and Barbara in 1978. With their family, they developed the property just south of Ottawa into a special learning facility and a beautiful setting for weddings and other celebrations.

Many Probians will remember the excellent presentation Walter gave us (October 2010) on his special interest in long-distance walking. Two months before his 80th birthday, he walked from Land's End to John O'Groats – that is, from the very bottom of England to the very top of Scotland – a distance of 1100 miles, at 18 miles a day. Last year, at the age of 84, he walked the Rideau Trail from Kingston to Ottawa and back, covering just over 400 miles. Today, he continues as *Strathmere's* Chairman, while leading a very active and healthy lifestyle.

Our newest Life Member ~ Peter Craske



Peter receiving his certificate from President Jean Crowley

Peter Craske was welcomed as a Probus Club of Perth Life Member by David Crowley at our April meeting and Jean Crowley presented him with a Life Membership certificate.

Peter was born and educated in England, and served in the Royal Air Force for five and a half years during World War II as a Navigator. During that time he flew across the Atlantic more than thirty times from Montreal with the RAF Ferry Command - so it was not surprising that he decided to make Canada his home when he was demobilized in 1946. Until a few years ago, he was an active private pilot, and especially enjoyed flying floatplanes into northern lakes for fishing trips.

He made his career in advertising and marketing with major corporations such as Kraft Foods and international advertising agencies. In 1982 he retired from the Federal Government where he was the International Advertising Director responsible for advertising in countries around the world to bring tourists to Canada.

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Peter Craske.....continued

Following his retirement, for many years Peter lived in Hopetown, north of Lanark, and then finally just couldn't resist the attractions of a home in Perth. He and his wife, Jeanne, were active Probus members for many years, always enjoying our annual golf challenge. In 2010 after Jeanne's death, Peter moved to Nepean where he built an independent apartment adjoining his son's home. Peter still spends his winters in Florida, but now that he is a Life Member, we hope we will see Peter back at many future spring and fall Probus Perth meetings.



Bushels of books in the book exchange
Members would help reduce Bill Kennedy's load by taking away even more books.

Anniversaries & Commemorations

Perth will be celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2016. As luck would have it, the PROBUS Club of Perth will be celebrating a 20th anniversary in 2016.

President Jean has put together a small working group composed of Helen Black, Shelia Hurren, Dan Murphy and Carol Trischuk to develop some ideas for Perth PROBUS 2016.

Two ideas have emerged.

The first idea would be to hold a luncheon in May or June 2016 similar to our recent Spring Fling but exclusively for our club members and significant others. The intention is to keep the cost reasonable.

The second thought is to purchase a commemorative bench complete with a small plaque, said bench to be located in a public area of Perth selected in consultation with the Town of Perth. The erection and maintenance of the bench would be the responsibility of the Town. The bench will have to meet the standards set by the Town for such items. The purchase of the bench will entail a one-time commemorative funding effort. The cost would be approximately \$1,500

Please consider these two options and provide comments, both pro and con, or alternative ideas, to members of the Executive or the Working Group.

Submitted by Dan Murphy



New members (L-R) Susan Bowen, Lee Brebner & Lois-Anne Brebner welcomed by Jean Crowley (L) & Don McDiarmid (R)