



The PROBIAN ~ December 2010 Edition

~ Contributing Editor: Don Sherwin ~



THE PROBUS CLUB OF PERTH

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Probus meets the first
Wednesday of each month,
Sept. to June.

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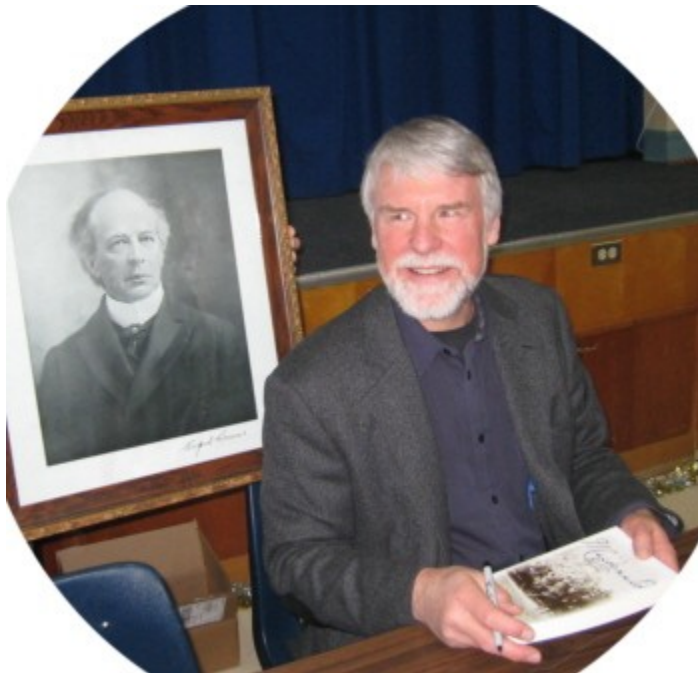
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Apropos..... by Don Sherwin

David Batchelor gave a moving tribute at the December meeting to one of our members, Bill Robertson, who died November 10 of prostate cancer. Bill was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland in 1922, and served on convoy duty during the Battle of the Atlantic, 1940-45, in which he was torpedoed. Bill became a mechanical engineer, and worked in England and Scotland before emigrating to Canada in the 1970's. Bill and his wife Grace retired to Perth in 1992, where he was a staunch Kiwanian and member of the Men of the Tay singing group. He will be missed.

Laurier in Love by Don Sherwin



Roy MacSkimming.....with Laurier looking on

Three years ago, we were fortunate in having as our speaker, local author Roy MacSkimming, who charmed us with his talk on his book "Macdonald". For the December meeting, Roy returned to review his latest novel, "Laurier in Love", a book which promises to be both titillating and historical, for it is the tale of the love triangle between Sir Wilfred Laurier, Canada's seventh Prime Minister (1896-1911), his wife Zoe, and his mistress, Emilie Lavergne.

Roy described Laurier as Trudeauesque in elegance and popularity, although he was tall in comparison to P.E.T. Both were silver-tongued and inspiring orators in both languages. Laurier brought Canada

into the 20th century, and onto the world stage. He was a brilliant conciliator, skillfully bridging conflicts between English and French, particularly during the Boer War. He strove to make Canada more independent within the bosom of the British Empire, to which he was fiercely loyal. But, Roy points out that the book is not really about Laurier, but about the two women who are battling for his affections. Emilie arrives in the town of Arthabaska in the 1870's, where Laurier has a law practice, and lives with his wife Zoe in a fine house. She immediately sets her sights on him, as the most attractive man in town, and to get closer to him, marries his junior law partner, the hapless Joseph Lavergne. An affair begins that is to last for 25 years. When Laurier and Zoe move to Ottawa in 1896 after he becomes Prime Minister (the book really begins here), Emilie and Joseph move too, after Joseph conveniently becomes an M.P., and later a district judge. The book is written through the eyes of the two women – Zoe, the faithful, shy, religious wife, and Emilie, Paris and London-bred, sophisticated, vivacious and fashionable. Zoe, who is determined to keep the marriage intact, becomes an important woman in her own right once they get to Ottawa, becoming friends with the Governor-General and his wife, and playing a pivotal role in the relief efforts following the Great Ottawa Fire of 1900. Laurier and Zoe had no children, but Emilie's son Armand Lavergne bore a striking resemblance to the great man. The novel also tells us how this battle for Laurier's affections plays out, but to learn this, we must read the book, which most of us will do after hearing Roy's fine talk. A book-signing followed.



Speakers' Corner

- **January 5** - Dennis Dwyer to speak about Family Businesses in a Time of Economic Recovery.
- **February 2** - Todd Stepaniuk to speak about the Perth & Smiths Falls Hospital.
- **March 2** - Simon Lunn with a presentation on nature photography.

Special Events

- **Feb. 3-6, 2011** ~ Trip to Quebec Winter Carnival delayed possibly to next season.
- **Winter 2011** ~ Local dinner theatre evening TBD
- **May 2011** ~ play TBD at Gananoque Playhouse.
- **May 17, 2011** ~ Spring Fling to be held at the Italian Club just north of the 401 in Kingston.



Probus Christmas Party

The Probus Christmas Party on December 9th was a great success, thanks to the organizational skills of Glen Pettinger and Mary Kilgour, Peter Craske's music, the willing Movember contestants and the good spirits of all of the participants.



Movember King Jim and his two Princesses, Mary and Nancy



Glen & the 4 Lads explain "what to do with the Christmas presents".

[More pictures available on our website.](#)

Self-introduction ~ David Alcock

by Don Sherwin



David was born in Plymouth, Devon, England in 1938. WWII was a traumatic experience for little David, as he was evacuated, and separated from his family for four years. His mother was bombed out and his father killed in the war. Plymouth being a seaport, Dave joined the Merchant Marine and trained as a

radio officer, satisfying a youthful fascination for electronic gadgetry. After serving for 13 months, he received college training in engineering, which landed him a job with Bristol Aerospace for five years designing missile systems. Having met the love of his life, Elizabeth, and not earning enough to get married, the young couple emigrated to Montreal, Canada, where David took a job with Canadian Marconi. He ultimately set up a lab in Ottawa, and the family settled in Carp, on the outskirts of that city. 25 years ago, he set up his own consulting firm, and has just recently fully retired. David is an intrepid biker, and when his children were only 12 and 14, he took the whole family to Europe on an eight-week cycling trip across England and France. About 12 years ago, Dave and Liz built a beautiful home on Otty Lake, which brought them to Perth. Even though their children are living in far-off B.C., Dave says "it would take a stick of dynamite" to get them to leave this area.



Management Team Notes

- The Management Team wishes all Probus Members and their families the very best for the holidays and the New Year. We hope that your lives are enriched by your holiday experiences and that you are able to share that enrichment with family, friends and fellow Probians.
- Thanks to Don Sherwin for his contributions to this edition. Bob Black is scheduled to be the contributing editor for the January Probian.



New members Marg Driscoll, Margot Stevens-Landry and Chris Landry being welcomed by Dave Crowley and Bruce Gourley