



The PROBIAN ~ December 2013 Edition

~ Editors: Dennis Dwyer & Colin Stephenson ~



**THE PROBUS CLUB
OF PERTH**
P. O. Box 20131,
Perth, Ontario
K7H 3M6
www.probusperth.ca
Probans meets the first
Wednesday of each month,
Sept. to June.

President
Jim Gilmour
613-259-2592
jamesgilmour@gmail.com

Past President
Richard Thomson
613-466-0557

Vice President
Jean Crowley
613-267-3306

Secretary
David Allcock
613-264-9075

Treasurer
Don Sherwin
613-264-0759

Program
David Farquharson
613-267-2231
Gardner Church
613-267-1842
Fran MacNaughton
613-264-1974

Special Events
Mary Kilgour
613-264-0024
Ted Glugosh
613-267-1698

Membership
Don McDiarmid
613-264-8590

Newsletter Editors
Colin Stephenson
613-264-2609
Dennis Dwyer
613-264-5536

Webmaster
Colin Stephenson
613-264-2609
info@probusperth.ca

Facilities
Geoffrey Newman
613-264-1290

Apropos

Many Canadians believe that we have gone from a society that was seen as moving towards a meritocracy to one that has fallen into a place where entitlement is the name of the game. Media and social media catalogue one corruption scandal after another. Among nations Canada has historically had a high rating as a relatively corruption-free country. Yet, today humourist chant “it’s who you know in the PMO” — or maybe now in Ontario it should be “don’t worry about me, I’m an executive in the OPG!” It is a short step from entitlement to corruption. As seniors in Probans, we might well ask where did it begin? Did the words “public service” ever have real meaning? Oh, and as we explain all this to our grandchildren, let’s be careful that we don’t guild the past as a perfect time, these changes have happened on our watch! As we look forward to 2014 what can you and I do about abuses of power close to home and away?

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

Craig Greenwood: “The Fantastic White Bears of the Ice”



A round peg in a round hole, a person perfectly suited to his vocation. Craig’s passion for the polar bears of Southern Hudson’s Bay quickly connected to all of us. His presentation sparkled with a bevy of facts that fascinated us while his pictures wowed our senses. His stories of researching Ontario’s polar bears in the mid 80’s and tagging along with the current researchers in 2007 more than held our attention.

First, we learned a lot about these amazing animals. As a biologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Craig had the privilege of being involved with researching polar bears, an animal about which little was known in Ontario, and yes we have them. There are approximately 25,000 polar bears in the world of which 2/3 (15,000) are in Canada and around 1,000 of these are in the Ontario part of Southern Hudson’s Bay. We learned how these large animals are particularly suited to their environment by maintaining their body temperatures, because of an outer layer of hollow “tube” hair over a thick underfur that keeps them warm and dry. They are true carnivores who can swim at up to 6 miles per hour for up to 60 miles non-stop and have been seen swimming 200 miles from land. Their main source of nutrition is seals and one seal can provide enough energy for about 8 days. Polar bears are slow reproducing and females normally have about 5 litters during an average lifetime. Polar bears must hunt to survive and should the ecology of the North change dramatically, their species will be at considerable risk. It turns out that about 6 out of 10 cubs will die during their first year (many starve), with the average lifespan in the wild of 15 to 18 years some reaching 30+ years. All this information as well as stories about their personalities were highlighted by wonderful pictures.

Craig also told us how research had changed from the 80’s when he was one of the principal researchers to when he returned 20 years later in 2007 as a guest. From single engine Otters, to twin Otters that flew them in, to the Jet Ranger helicopters needed to chase the bears to tranquilize them (by shooting with darts), to the handling of the drugs necessary for this activity, to the actual living accommodation for the scientists and crews, all have much improved.

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White Bears.....continued

Craig took us along on an average one day trip to tranquilize a bear and then get right up to it to take all sorts of measurements, samples, tag it and radio collar the bear. Probian's who had been in the military recognized "hero" picture genre.

Most of us will never see a polar bear in the flesh, but thanks to Craig we now all know a fair amount about them, and more importantly, have a sense of how beautiful these iconic animals are.

Special Future Events



- **January 18** – Ottawa Senators vs. New York Rangers ~ 2:00 pm at Canadian Tire Place ~ \$45 including tickets in [Section 303](#), transportation by bus and a Subway gift card redeemable for on 6 inch sub. The bus will leave the LCBO back door (south side of the Perth Mews Shopping Centre) at 12:30. **Please reserve now at mkilgour@superaje.com or 613-264-0024. Mary Kilgour must know by Dec 31st if you would like tickets**, with payment mailed now to Mary Kilgour 121 Juniper Dr. RR # 5 Perth K7H 3C7 or no later than the January 8th Probus meeting. Mary needs to let the SENS organization know on Jan 2nd how many seats are SOLD.
- **January 25** - Robbie Burns Dinner & Dance, at the Perth Legion. Cocktails 6pm, dinner 7pm, music by The Champagnes, all for \$22. Reservations can be made at the Jan 8th meeting, with payment by cheque or correct change please.
- **February 21** – Dinner / Theatre Event ~ Dinner 5:30pm at the Stone Cellar followed at 8:00pm by the Studio Theatre presentation "Leaving Home" by David French, directed by Jeremy Dutton. "Leaving Home" is a tale of a Newfoundland Family far from home and out of their depth. Dinner will be a choice of four entrées, yet to be chosen. Further details and sign up at the February 5th meeting.

Management Team Notes

- **The next meeting will be held on January 8th, one week later than normal.**
- We would like to express our sincere condolences to Carol Brandon on the death of her husband Nelson, on December 4th.



Personal Profile ~ Derek Cooke



It's not often that a personal profile is interwoven with four good, short, and really funny stories. This was the case with Derek Cooke's life story. As with many Probian's, it began overseas in the UK.....sorry, Wales. Growing up in the North Country right after the War for him meant boarding school which he hated — but then moving on

to Cambridge was "freedom". He loved it all: rugby, soccer, rowing and girls. What followed included an exchange to Canada, securing jobs where he could, getting married, going into medicine, ending up as an orthopaedic surgeon instead of an obstetrician and incidentally having 5 children. All this on various fellowships and teaching at Queens. In all the various opportunities he pursued, he repeatedly lived out that saying: "a door opened and I walked through it". He finally got "a real job" in Saudi Arabia in the 70's and stayed for 11 years. When he came back to Canada, he started an imaging company, which became a leader in that technology, and built their retirement home on Bob's Lake as well. He has now been married for 54 years and has 5 children and 14 grandchildren.

Derek wove his wide range of experiences and many accomplishments into a very laid-back and humorous presentation. Like so many of our members his coming to Perth was a deliberate choice that he and his family made. We are glad he did and **we are looking forward to January 8th when, as our guest speaker, he will tell us about his eleven years working in Saudi Arabia.**

Quote for the Month

" THE HIGHEST PROOF OF VIRTUE IS TO POSSESS BOUNDLESS POWER WITHOUT ABUSING IT."

Thomas Macaulay, British historian & politician
(1800 – 1859)

Lunch After January 8th Meeting

@ Maximillian's – 99 Gore Street East

Wishes for You



A joy-filled holiday season and best possible wishes for 2014.