



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

It is remarkable and disturbing how the more things change, the more they stay the same. Two hundred years ago the industrial revolution forced the emigration of thousands from industrializing Europe to the New World. Today the Information Age is fomenting dissatisfaction in emerging economies, computer automation is usurping jobs around the world at an alarming rate, and climate change is arguably responsible for long term drought across larges areas of the globe. Consequently, once more millions of displaced persons are searching for a home.

Two hundred years ago the Algonquins responded to the influx of emigrants into their territory by lending a guiding hand and providing education vital to the survival of those settlers. There are many in our community who view the current refugee situation as an opportunity to demonstrate the same magnanimity now as the Algonquins did then. You may find out how you can assist by contacting the Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement (www.TheCARR.ca).

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

Jennifer Dickson on the 200th Anniversary Project



Clive Addy thanks Jennifer Dickson for her presentation.

Jennifer Dickson, Councillor Bathurst Ward, member of the Tay Valley Township 200th Anniversary Working Group and Joint 200th Anniversary Committee, presented us with more interesting history of the settlement of this area, as well as a glimpse of highlights of the celebrations to be initiated by the launch of the Historical Mapping Project (see November Probian [here](#)) on January 8, 2016.



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200th Anniversary.....continued

As Jennifer recounted, by 1815 the industrial revolution that commenced around 1760 was continuing to displace tradesmen and craftsmen throughout the British Isles. Coupled with the end of the War of 1812 and the resulting unemployed military men, there were more seeking employment and requiring assistance than the British Government could accommodate. To alleviate some of the social stress, the Bathurst Proclamation was made official in February of 2015, guaranteeing land, transportation and a modicum of support to any man or family willing to brave the “wilderness” and attempt to scratch out a living in this area.

The initial target was the emigration of 2000 adults and their children from Scotland. This target was never achieved, but according to ship list records 690 finally made the voyage in 1815. However, the crossing took on average 62 days to reach Quebec City and the emigrants still had to proceed upriver to Kingston before they could begin the arduous overland trek north to the newly surveyed townships. By the time they got as far as Cornwall winter was setting in, so they had to be housed for the winter. Some were put up in “poor conditions” in Cornwall, some overwintered in a warehouse on Buckley’s Wharf at Fort Wellington in Prescott, some got as far as Brockville and were accommodated in barracks or rented huts or were taken in by farm families who offered them employment. As well, some of the unmarried men went to Kingston where they were employed by the Engineer’s Department on the King’s Works. The following March they began the trek north to take up their properties.

As fate would have it, 1816 was known as the “year without a summer”. The 1815-16 eruption of Mount Tambora on the island of Sumbawa in Indonesia, one of the most powerful volcanic eruptions in recorded history, resulted in a period of significant climate change that led to snow here in June. Crops failed and had it not been for assistance from the native Algonquins and the promised government support, it is doubtful that any of the new settlers would have survived. The spring of 1816 also marked the settlement of Perth by discharged soldiers from the Glengarry Light Infantry in Kingston, who also settled in Drummond and Bathurst Townships.

Within a few years the British Government brought in thousands more emigrant families from Scotland and Ireland, and even the United States, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany and Poland.

In 2016, the Historical Mapping Project launch will be followed by four main events, one from each municipality.

[Blast from the Past Homecoming Weekend, July 22-24 in Perth](#) featuring a three-day BBQ Block Party; fireworks on the 22nd; a night-shirt parade; and old-fashioned parade through town on the 23rd featuring bands, military groups, vintage cars and business floats; and, a Military Tattoo in Stewart Park followed by an ecumenical service at the Stewart Park stage on Sunday afternoon.

[Settler Heritage Day and Lanark County Plowing Match, August 20 in Tay Valley Township](#) featuring activities for the entire family.

Heritage Day in Drummond/North Elmsley on May 28; and

A main event yet to be decided by Beckwith Township.

Aside from the four main events, more than 200 events created especially for or adapted to the 200th anniversary celebration are in the works. A complete list is on the Perth Military Settlement 200th Anniversary Calendar available from municipal offices and many locations around town for \$10. You can also see a complete electronic listing [here](#).

Thank you, Jennifer, for your review of the history of the settlement of this area by emigrants from the British Isles and your interesting introduction of the festivities to come next year.

Lunch After January Meeting

To be held at the Legion Perth



Quote for the Month

“The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don’t wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope.” – **Barack Obama**



Personal Profile ~Lee & Lois-Ann Brebner

Lee and Lois-Anne Brebner respectively lead such full lives that even a brief summary of either one cannot be meaningfully condensed into the space we have available here.

Lee was born in Toronto in 1946. A few years later his family relocated to Arnprior following the purchase there of the Chronicle, a local newspaper, but soon relocated to Pointe Claire, Quebec where they stayed until Lee finished his junior year of high school. His parents then relocated to Meaford where they returned to journalism and Lee finished high school. In 1964 he went to University of Western Ontario and earned a degree in history and political science, followed by a teaching certificate from the College of Education of the University of Toronto.

He accepted a teaching position at the Eastview Secondary School in Barrie where he taught history and coached a variety of sports. After four years in Barrie his father passed away unexpectedly and he decided to take a year off and return to Meaford to help out with the family newspaper. By the end of the year he knew that the newspaper business was not his calling and he headed to the University of Guelph for graduate studies in Urban History. While working on his doctorate, he discovered there were no opportunities for graduate appointments at that time.

However, luckily for Lee, the Region of Peel was looking for someone to establish an archive to preserve a history of its constituent municipalities, where Lee started from scratch and developed one of the country's best municipal collections. Over the next 20 years Lee's career evolved with the municipality and he held a number of management positions in administration, social services and public health. In the meantime in 1980 on a vacation in Jamaica (of all places), he met Lois-Anne who was working for Bell Canada in Ottawa. It was love at first sight and after a year of long distance longing, Lois-Anne transferred to Bell Ontario and they were married.

Following retirement from the Peel Regional Government, Lee pursued his interest in photography and earned a photography diploma from Sheridan College. He now concentrates on street photography to document society and has exhibited his work locally. He also enjoys skiing and golf, and for more than 25 years has been an avid wine aficionado as a member of the Opimian Society Wine Club where he served as regional representative and hosted wine tasting and dinners, and generally assisted Opimian members throughout the Niagara Peninsula.



Lois-Anne was born in Perth at the Great War Memorial Hospital and lived here until her parents moved to Ottawa when she was a teenager. She completed her education in Ottawa and accepted a position in administration at the Northern Electric Research and Development labs where she advocated with limited success for pay equity and women's rights. She eventually transferred from Northern



Electric to Bell Canada and became a business development manager, which launched her professional career in telecom. She was seconded to Telecom Canada, which gave her an opportunity to liaise with the nine member telcos in Canada and AT&T Long Lines in New York.

Having married Lee in 1981, Lois-Anne transferred to Bell Ontario in Toronto and moved to Brampton, and in 1982 their daughter, Alison Emilee Brebner, was born. Four years later the family relocated to Oakville.

The move to Bell Ontario shifted Lois-Anne into a totally new position as Manager of Provincial Government Relations, which intimidated her at first, but she soon learned the ropes and appreciated the opportunity to liaise with premiers of all three political parties, their key ministers and senior public servants. Lois-Anne quickly rose through the ranks of her department and eventually became Assistant Vice-President responsible for government and community relations, strategic planning and corporate social responsibility.

Meanwhile, she was appointed by the Minister of Education to the Ontario Parent Council; served as a Director of the Agricultural Leadership Trust, a collaboration between the University of Guelph and the Ontario Government; was Founding Director of the Public Affairs Association of Canada; and a Governor of Saint Mildred's Lightbourn School, an independent girls' school.

After she retired from Bell Ontario, Lois-Anne started her own management consulting business specializing in government relations, strategic planning, corporate communications and governance for not-for-profit organizations. She also joined the boards of the RBC Festival of Classics, Athena Oakville, and the Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar.

Lois-Anne acknowledges that this illustrious career would not have been possible without the generous support of Lee, who successfully balanced work and home, always being there for Alison while Lois-Anne traveled North America and Europe and attended her obligatory evening functions.

After moving, Lois-Anne joined the Board of the Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital and served as Chair for two years. She was also asked to join the board of Opimian Society and is currently serving as the Society's first woman president.

The Brebners.....continued

Now Lee gets to travel around the world with Lois-Anne, meeting vintners and tasting wine. It is a hard life, but someone has to do it!

We thank you and raise our glasses in awe to the two of you!

Management Team Notes

- With Mike Selig having to step down as Vice-President for health reasons, the nominating committee has been searching for a replacement. Richard Thomson has graciously offered to fill in as VP until June. Richard held the position of President in 2012 -2013.
- Please let us know if you will be 90 or over on December 31st and would like to be added to our distinguished group of life members at the January meeting.
- We are searching for someone who would be willing to coordinate transportation for those members who would appreciate a ride to Probus meetings. Please contact any Management Team member if you are willing to take on this role.



New Members Welcomed



Rae and Brian Woods and Peter Bennett welcomed by President Bill Kennedy (L) and Don McDiarmid (R)



A toast to Good Cheer

Speakers' Corner

Our speaker on January 6th will be **Kevin Gray** who will talk about "The French and Indian War and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham". The main focus of the talk will be the Battle of the Plains, but he also discuss the French and Indian War in order to provide context. He will include some images from the many re-enactments of the period that he has participated in. Ken spent 7 years researching and writing a novel about the subject entitled "Where the River Narrows" (copies will be available for purchase). A lifelong resident of southern Ontario, the author obtained a science degree at the University of Toronto before embarking on a career as a police officer.



Special Events

- **January 6** – Lunch at the Legion after the meeting to start 2016 off right. Lunch will be Lasagna and Caesar salad OR Wraps and veggies, dessert tea & coffee. Cost is \$10 per person. Please contact Mary before December 30, 2015.
- **January 23** - Robbie Burns Dinner & Dance, Perth Legion. All tickets have been sold, but Mary may be able to get more if you order now and pay in January.
- **March** – A possible dinner – theatre event
- **May 25** – Save the date for "[A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline](#)" at the 1000 Island Playhouse".
- **June 1** – Help celebrate our 20th Anniversary at a special meeting and luncheon at Timber Run. Stay tuned for details.



Dancing the night away at the annual Christmas Party

Season's Greetings to All