



**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's easy to be bored, anybody can do that. It's also easy to forget. Most of us do that all the time. We get bored and we forget about the people we love. We forget about how precious every moment is. We forget that everyone's clock is ticking and cannot be rewind. The Ambassador of Iceland showed us how, when faced with a diminishing resource his people did more with what they had and used what they had once thrown away. Most of us are retired now. We no longer run companies or businesses, but we still have things that matter more than any of that. We have family, we have friends. We can do more with what we have and we can remember not to waste any of it. Not one kiss. Not one precious moment.

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

Mutual Interests in the North: Iceland and Canada in the 21st Century



On the icy (Icelandic!) morning of February 3, following a night of freezing rain, the Icelandic Ambassador to Canada, Sturla Sigurjónsson, proved that the Icelanders are at least as undaunted by inclement weather as we are by driving from Ottawa to deliver an engaging presentation to a very good turnout in spite of the weather.

As related by the Ambassador, the evolution of Icelandic-Canadian relations commenced some 1,000 years ago when Viking explorers first visited the eastern shores of Canada and established a colony on the northern tip of Newfoundland (nearly 500 years before Columbus sailed the ocean blue). However, the commencement of the Small Ice age in the 15th Century restricted northern ocean travel and obscured knowledge of the vast North American continent. It was not until

well into the 19th Century that bonds between Canada and Iceland were re-forged by the emigration of Icelanders to Canada, which started in 1875 and continued for about 30 years. In the last half of the 19th Century Iceland was one of the poorest countries in Europe and it was very difficult for young people to acquire arable land or higher education. To make matters worse, there was another cold period from 1870-1890 and a large volcano eruption in 1875, further worsening conditions. So when Canadian authorities offered Icelanders cheap passage and free land about 20% of the population immigrated to Canada where most of them settled in Manitoba. It is estimated that there are now 200,000 Canadians are of Icelandic descent.

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Iceland and Canada.....continued

The Ambassador reminded us that since the end of the Second World War, Iceland and Canada have been members of many multilateral organizations and institutions as well as many regional fora. These include the UN, NATO and the Arctic Council. Iceland and Canada share common values and interests and, therefore, in most cases have similar policies. Human rights is, for example, one area in which Iceland and Canada are very likeminded.

The Ambassador believes that there were three reasons for a strengthening of ties between Iceland and Canada over the past few years: “First of all, Iceland overcame the worst effects of the crisis [financial crisis of 2008] by searching for and entering new markets for exports in goods and services. The Canadian market was ‘rediscovered’ both for seafood and tourism. Secondly, the recently concluded Canadian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council raised awareness in both countries about mutual interests in the region and possible mutual benefits of closer consultations and cooperation. We both want to maintain an Arctic, which is peaceful and protected by strict environmental safeguards, while the rights of the people who live in the region are recognized, including the sustainable use of natural resources. The High North and the Arctic are not theme parks but a sizable part of the globe, which includes the homelands of a great number of people. Thirdly, the simmering conflict in the Ukraine and a more unpredictable Russia can have wider security implications for NATO, including Northern Allies. We have been particularly pleased that Canada has participated in NATO air policing in Iceland, by deploying F-18s. As was the case during the Second World War and the Cold War, the situation in the High North in general and in the North-Atlantic in particular, will always be directly relevant to the security of Iceland and Canada. All of these reasons for closer bilateral ties will remain valid and perhaps increasingly pertinent in the foreseeable future.”

In the 80’s, Iceland was faced with a substantial reduction of the cod-stocks due to overfishing, albeit not as disastrous as the collapse of the stock in the waters off the Eastern coast of Canada. They addressed this threat to their most valuable fish-stock by the introduction of a system of individually transferable quotas for the catch of almost all species in Iceland’s 200-mile economic zone. The harvesting of fish stocks is now sustainable and the Icelandic fishing industry has been consolidated

and has become much more efficient and profitable. This turnaround is also a result of Icelandic advances in labour-saving technology and a new approach to the processing and marketing of the catch. The industry compensated for the sharp reduction in gross tonnage by using simple methods to increase the value of each kilo of exported seafood. More recently they are also using previously discarded fish parts to produce health products, cosmetics and fashion items such as fish skin boots and fish skin purses. In many parts of the world optimal prices are paid for certified, fresh seafood. Consequently, the importance of careful handling of the catch and swift transport to the market cannot be overemphasized.

Canada can benefit from the experience and expertise that Iceland has acquired to revive the Canadian Atlantic-fisheries and many of our other resource-based industries. Iceland’s experience is also relevant to Canada because it partly explains why Icelandic aviation and shipping now sees opportunities for growth since Icelandic products require distribution, and that opens new out-haul and return-haul opportunities.

Tourism is also playing an increasingly important role in the Icelandic economy, with an average annual growth rate of about 20%. The total number of tourists in 2016 is estimated to be about 1.5 million. Quite amazing for a country of 330,000 residents on the total land area of 104,000 km², as that is almost 5 tourists per resident and certainly attests to the industrious nature of the Nordic temperament!

As the Ambassador explained during question period, Iceland is blessed and benefits from abundant geothermal power which comes with the attendant danger of living in close proximity of many active volcanoes that literally provide the very ground beneath their feet. Due to their geothermal resources, Iceland is able to limit carbon fuel use to transportation and air travel. Their abundantly available geothermal energy is distributed by pipelines to heat their homes and business premises and to drive turbines that generate all of their electrical energy, making both heat and electricity very affordable and giving them a competitive edge.

The Ambassador sees the beginning of a “beautiful relationship” between Iceland and Canada. This is a good thing and provides a valuable opportunity for us to learn from the little country that has proved that not only can it overcome setbacks and hard times, it can prosper in this increasingly competitive world.

Personal Profile ~ Rick Stojak

Rick Stojak was born in Winnipeg, son of Ukrainian parents also born in Winnipeg. When he was five, his parents moved to a small farm on the outskirts of St. Boniface, a Winnipeg suburb. On the farm they drew



water from a well using a hand pump that had to be primed with hot water in the winter, and the only bathroom was an outdoor “two-seater”. Rick’s chores were making kindling, stacking wood, bringing wood in for the wood stove and gathering eggs from the family chickens. In spite of

having a natural aptitude for math and science, Rick was not a motivated student and did a bare minimum to pass all the way through school. In fact, in grades 10 and 11 he took the “non-academic” stream and could not wait leave school and get a job.

His first job was as a warehouseman for United Fruit, where he unloaded freight cars and loaded delivery trucks. He loved the income but unfortunately an economic slowdown struck Winnipeg and Rick was laid off. Faced with no employment and remembering his uncles’ involvement in WWII, Rick decided to apply for a position in the Royal Canadian Air Force in October of 1957. As luck would have it, he was invited for selection in December of 1957 and a year and a half later he had his wings as an RCAF LR Navigator with a commission as Flying Officer. In the summer of 1959 he joined the 404 Squadron in Greenwood, NS. After three years in that squadron he was transferred to Summerside, PEI, where he flew marine patrol over the Atlantic. The flights were a grueling 18-21 hours at very low altitude, 500’-1000’, in air made turbulent by the Gulf Stream clashing with the North Atlantic current. After 7 years in the RCAF, Rick was offered a three year extension, but very few permanent commissions were being awarded. He found that he was competing with officers who had university degrees, so he began to appreciate the value of higher education.

Thus, at twenty-four, Rick was back sitting in a grade 11 class in summer school, which got him into grade 12 at United College. From there he earned an undergraduate degree from University of Winnipeg. During his first year of university he did some volunteer work at the Children’s

Hospital in Winnipeg where he was responsible for care of an autistic child. That experience set him on a career path that eventually saw him earn a Ph. D. in Cognitive Behavioral Psychology from the University of Manitoba.

After being awarded his doctorate, Rick accepted a job as an Educational Psychologist at John Abbot College in the West Island of Montreal. While working at John Abbot he also worked part time for the Lakeshore School Board to educate the faculty about autism in children. During this time he met his second wife Lynne who was the Director of Secondary Schools, managing 13 High Schools and 3 special programs. They each had a practice marriage before they finally got it right. Rick also transferred to full time work for the Lake Shore School Board, so he had the “same boss at work as he had at home”.

Lynne’s family acquired a cottage on Otty Lake in the 1960s, which Rick and Lynne took over in 1998 and turned it into a permanent residence in 2005. They now live there full time. Rick says that he is back to making kindling, carrying wood and drinking water from a well, but he no longer has to prime the pump or run out to that old two-seater!

Thank you, Rick and welcome to Probus.

Lunch After March Meeting

To be held at Michael’s Table, 110 Gore Street, East, Perth



Quote for the Month

“You’ve gotta dance like there’s nobody watching, love like you’ll never be hurt, sing like there’s nobody listening, and live like it’s heaven on earth.” ~ William W. Purkey

Management Team Notes

- We are still 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.
- We are also still searching for someone who would be willing to act as co-editor of the Probian and audio-visual resource for the monthly meetings to replace Colin Stephenson who has been involved for many years and who needs to take a break. Please contact Colin if you are interested.



Speakers' Corner

The presentation on March 2nd will be on the Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement or The CARR for short. There will be several presenters from the CARR Team who will talk about how this project sprang to life in our community, the route it has taken and its success to date. You may want to check out their website www.TheCARR.ca to get a glimpse of the heartwarming local response to the worst refugee crisis since the end of the Second World War, in advance of the meeting.



Special Events

- **March 31** – Dinner at [Maximillian's](#), 99 Gore St. E, Perth, followed by “[Self Help](#)” at the Studio Theatre. Self Help is described as a “sensational rollicking farce” by Norm Foster and directed by David Parry. Theatre tickets are \$17 each. Please sign up at the March meeting.
- **April** – A tour of the Perth Campus of Algonquin College is being organized. Details to follow.
- **May 25** – Save the date for “[A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline](#)” at the 1000 Island Playhouse”. Gail Read has advised that she has made lunch arrangements at the [Riva Italian Restaurant](#), 45 King Street West Gananoque, at 12 noon. [Map](#). Participants will be able to order any item from the menu if our group is under 30ish in number. They do have a set gratuity of 18% which will be added to each bill and individual/couple bills are fine. She stresses that a 12 noon arrival time is important if we are to be at the theatre at 2 p.m. Further details to come, but you may sign up at the March meeting.
- **June 1** – Help celebrate our 20th Anniversary at a special meeting and luncheon at Timber Run. As Dan Murphy mentioned at the February meeting, there will be a speaker, entertainment, a great lunch and a round of golf is possible for those interested, in the afternoon. Stay tuned for further details.
- **Fall** – A fall coach trip is being organized. Ideas are welcome.
- **December 2** – The annual Christmas Party to be held at Lion's Hall.



New Members Welcomed



Jeep Fortier (C) being welcomed by President Bill Kennedy (L) and Don McDiarmid (R)

Mid-Year Financials



Treasurer Don Sherwin with his “State of the Union” address in so far as the mid-year financials are concerned. Who knew that treasurers could have such a keen sense of humour? Online readers may view the statement [by clicking here](#). Paper viewers should find the statement enclosed.

When Insults Had Class

- "He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary." - William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway).
- "Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it." - Moses Hadas