



The Probian

Probus Club of Perth

June 2025

President's Message



Hello Probians,

This is my last message as your President. It has been a wonderful year, made easier with help from past-President, Gail McAdam. Our Management Team is the BEST! It has been a joy to work with them. Bill, our secretary, has been a wonderful support to me by previewing my agendas.

Our year ended with a very successful Finale in June at the River House. This would not have gone off without a hitch, if it had not been for Gail Read and her social team: Sue Brown, Maureen Newby and Laura Walker. Thank you, ladies!

We met at Mary Vandenhoff's place for our June Management meeting. Mary has a beautiful, hidden jewel of a home. It is so quiet you can hear the birds singing and the water lapping. Thank-you Mary for sharing your beautiful space with us.

We will meet again in August to set up for September, when we will make plans for our AGM and for a change in leadership. George Braithwaite will be your new President and Maggie Foot your vice-President.

Would *you* be interested in becoming our next Vice President? If you are asked to take a leadership role, please consider stepping forward.

It has been an honour to be your President and contribute to our Perth Probus Club. Each one of you plays a role in this strong, vivacious club, and I would like to thank you for being a member and for your contributions.

Mary Kilgour

September Meeting

Wednesday,
September 3rd
10:00 AM

Reminders

Bring your own **coffee mug**; help the environment.

Book Exchange:

Bring no more than FOUR books, take as many as you want.

This Month's Guest Speaker:

Dr. David Philipp will be speaking on the topic of 'How recreational angling is reshaping Ontario's bass population.'

Membership



We have closed out our 2024-25 season with a full membership and a waiting list. If you know of anyone interested in joining in September, please let them know that those who send in their applications over the summer will be offered membership for the 2025/26 season as space becomes available, in order of the date of their applications.

Given that there is already a waiting list, we would also appreciate being informed of any current member who will not be renewing so we can offer the spaces to others. I wish you all a super summer and see you in September!

It was a full house for our June meeting at the River House.



Our Speaker for September: Dr. David Philipp

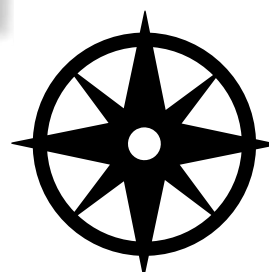


Dr. Philipp's topic will be:
'How recreational
angling is reshaping
Ontario's bass
population.'

Read more about Dr
Philipp in the next issue.

Perth Probus Management Team 2024-25

President: Mary Kilgour
Vice-President: George Braithwaite
Past President: Gail McAdam
Treasurer: Graeme Rutledge*
Secretary: Bill Michie
Speakers: John Byers
Membership: Mary Vandenhoff
Social Events: Gail Read
Probian Editor: Yvonne Powell
Webmaster: Colin Stephenson
Alt. Treasurer: Tony Thompson*
Member-at-Large: Maggie Foot



Nominations

Management Team
nominations are
currently open for the
2025-26 Probus year.
Members can be
nominated for positions
until August 23 (21 days
before our AGM.)

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Bernetta Starkey:
New Regional Director for our ON1 Region



I invite you to join me on Monday September 8th at Rockport Barn at 28 Old River Road in Mallorytown from 11am to 4pm. We will enjoy a wonderful lunch, all in, for \$20 per person.

Please e-transfer your \$20 to Erich Prohaska at rockportbarn@gmail.com. Please keep a copy of your email to prove you have paid for lunch.

We will play some games and simply enjoy each others' company.

Personal Profile: George Braithwaite

George will be the new President of Probus starting in September. He provided a self-introduction last September and re-introduced himself at this June's meeting. George grew up in Victoria, British Columbia and entered the Naval Officer Training program after high school. The program included training for the bridges of ships, off-shore navigation and marine systems engineering.



George met his wife when she was 13 years old and he was 16. While he was in the Navy George and his wife had the opportunity to travel. He recalled being sent to

England and living in a 17th century house that had 5 floors. The family also traveled to other countries including Germany, France and Spain. While in Europe his wife also had the opportunity to travel around Europe with the Wives Club.

After leaving the Navy George moved to Elphin. He has been involved in municipal politics, a conservation authority and in social services. He has three grown children, many grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Submitted by Marg Stephenson



Last Month's Speaker: Brett Martensen



Our presenter, Brett Martensen pursued Artificial Intelligence (AI) research as a hobby until 2001. In 2002 he founded Adaptron Inc. which researches Artificial General Intelligence. (AGI). Brett spoke briefly about the history of AI starting in 1956 with the game of checkers, and went on to mention the researchers, the companies using AI, and Canadian AI Research Institutes. He also talked briefly about the techniques used by AI. The main emphasis of Brett's presentation was "the good, the bad and the ugly" of Artificial Intelligence.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of machines to mimic human cognitive functions such as learning, problem-solving, perception, and decision-making. It's a rapidly evolving field that holds immense potential for transforming industries, improving lives, and solving complex global challenges. However, its progress also brings significant concerns, and some risks are still unknown. Brett explored some of AI's benefits, challenges, and potential downsides.

Narrow AI is very specific in its applications and is not able to transfer the skills to another area. The training

consists of providing large quantities of data appropriate to the skill and testing the skill repeatedly.

AGI, or Artificial General Intelligence, refers to a hypothetical stage in AI development where machines possess human-level intelligence across a wide range of cognitive tasks. It is a theoretical concept that goes beyond narrow AI. AGI systems are envisioned to be capable of learning, reasoning, understanding, and adapting in much the same way as humans. The following presentation is in reference to narrow AI.

Cont'd on page 7, THE GOOD...

THE GOOD:

Healthcare

AI is revolutionizing healthcare through better diagnostics, personalized treatment and drug discovery.

Education

Education and research benefit from AI through the acceleration of scientific research in fields such as genetics, materials science, and environmental studies. AI's ability to simulate complex systems and analyze data can speed up research. AI assists in video and image generation as well as text production.

Increased Efficiency & Automation

AI can enhance efficiency and Automation in industry by performing repetitive tasks and speed up production reducing human error and the risk of injury.

In offices, AI can automate data entry, scheduling and other mundane tasks.

Enhanced Decision-Making

AI can analyze vast amounts of data in real time, providing insights that would be impossible or time-consuming for humans to gather. This capability is invaluable in sectors such as finance, marketing, and healthcare.

Social Impact and Sustainability

AI can address global challenges, including climate change, energy conservation and resource management



THE BAD:

Generative AI Problems

AI is grounded on text, sound, and images, and is not in touch with reality. It is biased because it is based on the training data and does not understand what it is writing. AI can generate misinformation and does not fact-check what it is writing. Google Gemini is now starting to do fact-checking and internet searches.

Another problem with AI generation is the large amount of data and the enormous computer power required, making development of AI hugely expensive.

Cont'd on page 9...



An
Engaging
Speaker

*...THE BAD, cont'd:***Lack of Transparency**

Many AI models, especially deep learning algorithms, operate as “black boxes”, meaning that their decision-making processes are not easily understood by humans. This lack of transparency makes it hard to trust AI systems, especially in high-stakes situations like health care, finance and criminal justice.

Hallucination

AI can generate false statements and false images that sound authoritative but are not always true. This can be a serious problem for critical businesses. As AI becomes more integrated into everyday life there is a risk that humans may become over-dependent on it, risking the loss of critical thinking skills and judgment.

Job displacement

Automation driven by AI has the potential to displace jobs, particularly in fields involving routine or manual tasks. This could lead to widespread unemployment in certain sectors.

Retraining workers in more relevant jobs takes time and could exacerbate income inequality if not managed properly.

Bias and Fairness

AI systems are only as good as the data they are trained on. If the data is biased this could be a significant issue in areas like hiring, criminal justice, and lending, where AI algorithms can discriminate against marginalized groups.

THE UGLY**Deepfakes and Misinformation**

AI technologies that can generate hyper-realistic fake content (deepfakes) present a serious threat to public trust. These fake videos or audio recordings can be used to manipulate opinions, spread misinformation, or damage reputations, particularly in political contexts.

Surveillance and Totalitarianism

AI-powered surveillance systems are becoming increasingly sophisticated, enabling governments or corporations to track individuals every move. AI has the potential to enforce repressive regimes, limiting freedom of speech and targeting political dissenters.

Cont'd on page 12, WEAPONIZATION...

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...THE UGLY, cont'd:**Weaponization of AI**

AI's potential to be used in military applications raises significant ethical and safety concerns. Autonomous weapons, like drones, could be deployed to make decisions about life and death without human oversight.

Cybercrime

An increase in cybercrime using more sophisticated applications can put more people at risk of losing thousands of dollars.

Monopolization & Power Imbalance

The concentration of AI technology and expertise in the hands of a few companies could lead to monopolies and power imbalances.

These entities may dominate AI development, creating unequal access to technologies and resources which could exacerbate inequality.

Robots: the Good and the Bad

Brett touched on the benefits and downsides of robots as well. He mentioned a number of robots in use today including the Mars rover, vacuum cleaners, self-driving cars and industrial robots in factories. Robots are great specialists but poor generalists. They need to be trained for each task and are missing common sense, reasoning and understanding. Creating and maintaining robots are very costly investments for companies.

IN CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence promises transformational advancement across industries but the most troubling concerns are the potential misuse of AI. Ethical dilemmas and the weaponization of AI could lead to consequences that we are only beginning to understand. In order to maximize the benefits while mitigating the risks, AI development must be guided by ethical principles, transparency, and robust regulatory frameworks.

Brett Martensen's website can be found at <https://adaptroninc.com/>

****Parts of this summary were created by AI.**

Submitted by Marg Stevenson

A special thanks to John Byers for standing in as photographer at the June meeting, and to others who contributed photos.

See you in September!

The Perth Probus Club meets
at the Royal Canadian Legion,
26 Beckwith Street, Perth,
on the first Wednesday of the month,
September through May.
Our June meeting is at an alternate
location.

President - Mary Kilgour

Further information on the club,
and contact details
for other members of the Management
Team
can be found at:

www.probusperth.ca/board.htm