



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

We are blessed in this country to have a universal health care system, which is accessible to all Canadians. We know that it is not perfect and that there is a constant balancing act going on between affordability and access. One area that deserves much more scrutiny, however, is the question of accessibility to mental health services. A number of years ago, we closed most of our residential facilities in this province designed for special needs patients. The closure of the Rideau Regional Centre in 2009, which housed more than 2,000 patients in Smiths Falls is a prime local example. Leaving aside the question of whether these institutions were the best places for the residents they housed, the fact remains that we removed significant resources from the area of mental health care without an adequate replacement.

Today we are paying the price for not investing sufficient resources into mental health. It is now often extremely difficult for those with mental health issues to get adequate assistance through our universal health care system. Wait times are extremely long, which often exacerbates the patients' problems. It is next to impossible for those with alcohol or other substance abuse issues to get the treatment they so desperately need, unless they have the resources required to pay for it themselves. We see the cost of this inadequate resourcing daily in the crime stories that dominate the news. Far too often it seems that our police forces are called upon to deal with mental health and substance abuse issues under the guise of criminal activity and even terrorism. The cost is readily apparent in terms of the significant increase in the total prison population and the disproportionate number of people with mental health and substance abuse issues who are incarcerated in prisons at great public expense, without appropriate treatment for the issues that put them there. There is a less readily apparent, but very real, cost in terms of job loss, under-utilization and societal dislocation. Five years ago, the Mental Health Commission of Canada completed a detailed study that indicated that the economic cost to Canada from mental health problems is at least \$50 billion a year ([click here to see the report](#)). It concluded that there is strong evidence to support the argument that investing in effective programs can make a positive difference both to the economy and to the health of the population. Five years on, the question still remains: would it not be better to invest more adequately in appropriate universal mental health services at the front end, rather than paying the significantly higher cost at the back end?

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

Power Outage

The March Probus meeting had to be cancelled because of the Hydro One power failure that day. While we arrived with a battery pack to power the equipment and portable lighting, the Legion remained closed. Our speakers, Helga and David Zimmerly, will be re-scheduled. This was only the third meeting cancellation in our 19 years of existence. Nevertheless, there were a number of impromptu meetings in the parking lot and at Penny's Restaurant with interesting debates of substantive issues, such as where have all of the rafters of wild female turkeys gone, as well as their male counterparts, and what might they be doing? Imaginations were running wild.





The Crowleys hear the Zimmerly's story at Penny's



Jean and Dale get the "drive-by" story



Mary trying to sell theatre tickets to Bill in the parking lot

Quote for the Month

"Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shame us all."

~ Bill Clinton

Lunch After April Meeting

To be held at Fiddleheads Restaurant
53 Herriott Street, Perth

Management Team Notes



- Mike Selig has agreed to let his name stand for Vice-President next year.
- There will likely be a member's request for a vote at the April meeting to see whether other members might wish to have their email addresses circulated within the Club to enhance communication. If it were to proceed, it would be done on a voluntary opt-in basis and it would necessitate a change in our Privacy Policy.

Speakers' Corner



Our speakers on April 1st will be **Kate Johnson** who will give a talk entitled "Empathy and Hope". She will talk about who in the justice system deserves empathy and how her work training prisoners in victim empathy is bringing hope to prisoners, victims and staff alike. Kate has spent 20 years "in and out of jail" as a Social Worker, chaplain and advocate for victim's issues. She holds Bachelor's degrees in sociology and Social Work as well as a Master's of Divinity in Restorative Justice. Kate was appointed the Inter-faith chaplain to Queen's University in 2013 but continues to spend her free time advocating for humane responses to crime.

Special Events

- **April 9** – Dinner / Theatre event – [Salvage Shop](#) at the Studio Theatre. Dinner at 5:30pm at the Stone Cellar, menu to include Rack of Lamb, AAA Filet, Chicken Torpedo and Fresh Fish. The play starts at 8pm and tickets are \$18. Please reserve at April meeting. ([Details](#))
- **May 12** – Spring Fling 2015 - Grenville Municipal Centre in Kemptville – sponsored by the Probus Club of North Grenville – tickets \$38 and registration by April 3rd – [details](#).
- **May 27** – Gananoque Playhouse to see "[CLOSER THAN EVER](#)" which is an award-winning "how-to" manual for the middle aged – told entirely through song! Tickets are \$28 – more details to follow.
- **June 3** – Closing lunch at the Legion after the meeting