



**THE PROBUS CLUB
OF PERTH**

P. O. Box 20131,
Perth, Ontario
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www.probusperth.ca

Probus meets the first
Wednesday of each month,
Sept. to June.

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Apropos

Innovation and politics generally mix about as well as oil and water. Treating symptoms rather than causes appears to have been the general political approach to social problem solving since the beginning of recorded history. It is now an accepted fact that poverty increases crime rates, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. It is also known that the number of Canadians living below the poverty line is increasing yet many of those are working, some are even working two jobs. Corporations have learned that full time employees are expensive and employee benefits are hard on the bottom line. So jobs increasingly become part time positions without benefits, while inflation roars on at an alarming though under-reported rate. Meanwhile, politicians get tough on crime, beef up the police forces, build new prisons and spend tax dollars keeping law breakers behind bars. The Edmonton Sun reported on March 8, 2015 that each prisoner in Canada's 54 federal penitentiaries costs taxpayers \$117,788 per year. In comparison, a single person receiving welfare in Ontario gets \$7,512 a year, and is still below the poverty line. Since we know that there is a correlation between poverty and crime, it must follow that reducing poverty will reduce poverty-related crime. But we also know that politicians are followers of public opinion, not creators of it. So unless we begin to talk about spending tax dollars on eliminating poverty we cannot expect any kind of a political move in that direction, can we?

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

James Leake, Toni Pickard & Bill Cooper on the "Basic Income Guarantee" Concept



We are all familiar with the expression "Go big or go home", but the message delivered to us at the June meeting was "Go BIG to save home". Though not expressed in those particular words, our three presenters, James Leake (Chair, Social Justice and Outreach Committee, Sydenham United Church); Toni Pickard (Co-founder, Kingston Action Group on BIG); and, Bill Cooper (Professor Queen's School of Business), eloquently argued that given our current socio-economic climate and the rapid evolution of business towards complete automation, a program like BIG must be instituted if we are to preserve our Canadian way of life.

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BIG....continued

They made the case that poverty and income inequality are on the rise, while our welfare system is outmoded, administratively bloated and unable to meet the needs of our evolving society because it mires recipients in an impoverished lifestyle stripped of all assets. Consequently, welfare recipients are virtually unable to better their situation, even if they have a genuine desire to do so.

What exactly is BIG? The goal of the basic income guarantee is to provide an income for the basic needs of food and housing sufficient to raise people out of poverty. That income would be provided on a continuing basis by the Government (Federal Government in most models) irrespective of personal circumstances or need, and eligibility for the income would not be subject to conditions such as work requirements or disposal of assets.

As seniors we already receive a form of BIG in the Old Age Security (OAS) system. Under OAS we receive a small stipend so long as our annual income remains below a certain maximum amount. One proposal is that BIG be administered in the same way as OAS, i.e. through the Federal income tax system, with claw-back of benefits from those earning more than a predetermined after-tax income.

Why should we support such a program? Ideally it would prove to be a fix to poverty, which has eluded society for millennia. It would provide more equality of opportunity for education and health, though all bias cannot be removed. It would improve the ability for all to participate in, and contribute to, society according to their potential. It would reduce the social discrimination of women. It would compensate our currently unpaid labour (housewives, househusbands, family members who care for the elderly or infirm, etc.). It would provide some recognition of the shared ownership of the products of our society. It would likely provide a more flexible labour market – with a basic income as a floor workers could choose to share jobs, start a business, or better their education, etc. It would perpetuate the money economy when industrial automation is pervasive and there are considerably fewer jobs than there are today. It would abolish the demeaning and bureaucratic welfare system, and it would be much less expensive to administer than current forms of social relief.

Further evidence of the benefits of BIG are presented by GiveDirectly, a US-based charity that gives cash without strings attached to selected poor in Africa. As reported in the Huffington Post, “One year after the transfer program, [GiveDirectly] cash recipients had increased their earnings by 34 percent and their assets by 52 percent compared to people who didn't receive transfers (the new assets were most often livestock, household upgrades, and savings). Among cash recipients, the number of people who reported going to bed hungry dropped by 36 percent, and the number of days children went without food fell by 42 percent. Cash recipients had spent more on education, health, food, and social goods and activities (though after a year, health and education outcomes had not changed substantially). There was no increase in alcohol and tobacco spending.” This corroborates a brief experiment conducted by the Federal and Manitoba Governments, which began a pilot study in the late 1970s in Dauphin, Manitoba to provide a basic income guarantee. The data that flowed from that experiment showed that in general only positive social effects resulted from the study.

Furthermore, our speakers reported that some suggest a BIG implemented through the Federal income tax system would actually cost taxpayers considerably less than our current administratively top-heavy welfare system, while providing beneficiaries with the means and mobility to better their lot. That alone makes a very convincing argument for the benefits of the basic income guarantee.

In closing, our speakers requested that someone take up the baton in Perth and form a Perth Action Group on BIG to help ensure that BIG rises to the forefront of our political spectrum. If you are looking for a way to make a contribution to our future, forming that action group would certainly be worthy of consideration. After all, we must think BIG to save home.

Speakers' Corner



Our presenter for the Sept. 2nd meeting will be Dwayne Price, Manager, Field Operations, Information Management, NavCan. He will be assisted by Greg Holbrook, a pilot and former Inspector, Transport Canada. The illustrated talk will be an overview of controlled airspace in Canada called "From Hand Signals to Satellites".

Personal Profile ~ Tom Barton



Tom Barton recounted a bit about his interesting life with wit and humility that made it difficult to believe that he had trained and worked as a lawyer. Tom was born and raised in the small Ontario town of Orillia, where he spent a “normal” childhood with two brothers and a sister. At school, sports were the only thing that could hold his attention and he had difficulty finishing grade 13 with a passing grade. Nonetheless, after completing high school he went on to earn a degree in Honours Business Administration at Western. After obtaining that degree he was hired in a management training program for a Toronto trust company, but he soon discovered that management did not appeal to him any more than high school. Fortunately for Tom, a lawyer for the trust company, who happened to be a pitcher for the company ball team, convinced Tom that he should go to law school. It must have been a hard sale considering Tom’s disdain for formal education. Despite that, Tom was convinced to give it a try and enrolled at Osgoode Hall in Toronto before it became a part of York University. At that time law at Osgoode Hall was taught by practicing lawyers rather than academics, and Tom really enjoyed school for the first time in his life because he was “learning from real people who were dealing with real life situations”.

1969 was an important year for Tom. He was called to the Ontario bar, married his wife Jeannie and joined forces with a fellow classmate to set up a general law practice in Barrie. As a general practice lawyer he gained experience in criminal and civil trials, real estate, divorce, and anything else that demanded legal attention.

One of his clients developed a lease/leaseback real estate arrangement that proved to be attractive to the Federal Government, and that took Tom to Ottawa where he discussed that arrangement with Federal officials. As a result, Tom was offered a position with the Federal Department of Justice and he moved his family, which now included a son and a daughter, to Ottawa. He served in a number of positions with DOJ before he was appointed as senior vice-president and general counsel for Farm Credit Canada. He served in that position until the head office was moved to Regina, where Tom and his family were unwilling to relocate. So he started his own niche law firm in Ottawa and acted for various Federal crown corporations, including the Canadian Dairy Commission, Farm Products Marketing Board and Standards Council of Canada.

Tom spent the last 11 years of his career as chairman of a federal tribunal that heard cases across Canada related to violations of federal agricultural and health laws. His wife Jeannie owned and managed a bookstore in Ottawa for 18 years before she retired. That bookstore remains one of the few independent bookstores in Ottawa.

Back in 1990 Tom and Jeannie bought 27 acres of the Canadian Shield in Bennett Lake Estates and had a winterized home built there. Prior to retirement they spent most weekends and holidays there and are now fulltime residents. They love nature and the peace and tranquility of their rural property.

Tom told us several of lawyer jokes in his diffident style. Here is one he did not tell. “Q: What’s the difference between a lawyer and a boxing referee? A: A boxing referee doesn’t get paid more for a longer fight.” No reflection on you Tom. You are beyond reproach, and we thank you very much for your interesting recollections.

Lunch After September Meeting

To be held at O’Reilly’s Ale House
43 Gore Street, Perth



Quote for the Month

An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics. – Plutarch



At the June Closing Luncheon

Management Team Notes

- Our club membership has been steadily increasing over the past year and currently stands at 146. A notice to amend the Club by-laws in order to increase the membership cap to 175 from its current level of 150 will be presented at the September general meeting ~ see [club bylaws](#).
- Treasurer Don Sherwin predicts that the club will basically break even for the year and that there will be no need to increase fees for 2015-16. The financial statements for the year ending July 31, 2015 will be posted on the website in August at www.probusperth.ca/financials.htm.
- In light of the popularity of the June closing luncheon at the Legion, it was decided to try adding a similar luncheon after the January 2016 meeting.
- Since Personal Profiles are such a popular part of the monthly meeting, the Management Committee would like to encourage members who have not yet presented to volunteer to do so in the new year by contacting Mike Selig at 613-264-0945.
- There will be an informal poll of members at the September meeting to see if members would be interested in having meetings in July and August starting in 2016.



Special Events

- **September 29** - Our Fall trip will start out by going to [Lavender Ridge Winery and Vineyards](#) which is located along the picturesque highway 148 in Luskville and situated along the ridge between the Ottawa River and the Gatineau hills. We will lunch at [Norway Bay Golf Course](#) and then enjoy apple desserts as we visit [Coronation Hall Cider Mills](#). Owner Norma Graham says “there’s lots of pie and tasting of our alcoholic ciders and sweet cider”. The last stop is at [Log’s End](#) where owner Gordie Black will share with us how he gets the rare river-reclaimed wood that make exquisite flooring. Check out all of these places on their websites. We will travel back to Ontario on the new [Quyong Ferry](#). The Echo Tour bus holds 55 people. The price for this event including transportation, admission and lunch will be \$50 / person (desserts and wine tastings extra), with payment payable to Probus Perth made at the June meeting if possible, as a deposit has to be made on the trip. At present 43 have signed up with 11 names on an interested list. Interested Probus members and partners should let Mary know your intentions for the Fall trip ASAP. Seats on the bus are now being offered to other interested people.
- **Fall** – A dinner – theatre evening will be planned.
- **December 4** – Mark your calendars now for our Christmas party at the Lion’s Hall.



Slate of Directors Proposed for 2015-2016

(To be proposed and subject to membership vote at the September meeting.)

President – Bill Kennedy
Vice President - Mike Selig
Past president – Jean Crowley
Secretary - David Allcock
Treasurer – Don Sherwin
Membership – Don McDiarmid
Special Events – Mary Kilgour (Gail Read*)
Program – David Farquharson (Gardner Church*,
Brian O’Connor*, Derek Cooke* and Valerie
Stephenson-Gray*)
Newsletter & Webmaster – Colin Stephenson
(Max Wood*)
Facilities Manager – Jean Crowley*

*Note: * indicates non-voting support people who are not members of the Management Team.*



COMMEMORATIVE BENCH

The Management Team and the 20th Anniversary Working Group wish to thank the membership present at the June Monthly Meeting for their enthusiastic endorsement for the notion of buying a “commemorative” park bench. The idea is to donate said bench to the Town of Perth to recognize both the 20th anniversary of the Perth Probus Club and the 200th anniversary of the Town of Perth.

The bench is expected to cost \$1,600, including a plaque indicating that it has been donated by the members of the Probus Club of Perth. A short period of fund raising by way of voluntary contributions will commence at the September 2015 monthly meeting. So, bring your cheque book!! While the amount of your contribution will be left entirely up to you, if most of our 146 members were to contribute in the \$10 to \$15 range, it should cover the costs. Any additional funds will be applied to our 20th Anniversary Dinner Party fund. Should the funding effort fail, contributions will be refunded.

Just to satisfy our collective curiosity and to keep interest high, the image below shows the style of bench that the Town of Perth will be purchasing. The bench is Canadian made in Ontario out of cast aluminum in black and will have recycled plastic seat slats in cedar colour.

The Town of Perth has been advised that we wish to have the bench located in the “downtown” core adjacent to the river, Stewart Park etc. where proud Probians can view and enjoy it.

