



The Probian

Probans Club of Perth

Our 30th Anniversary Year!

March 2026

President's Message



I think we can all agree that the first day of April and rendering unto Caesar our income tax by month's end are only loosely related to April Fool's day. We trust that our pennies will be wisely disbursed by a grateful government and that the Auditor General will be well pleased.

Now, to the real world of Probans, and its works. I trust that our revised web-based communications system meets everyone's needs. The slow drip of timely notifications related to the upcoming social events program seems efficient, and while I doubt that anyone is thrilled with the news of a members passing, we need to know. It seems clear that our website communication system has potential for growth.

All volunteer-based organizations have a continuing need to renew and recruit members of their management team. We are no exception. Probans must replace our membership coordinator (Mary Vandenhoff), the Vice President (Maggie), Treasurer (Graeme Rutledge), and the editor of our newsletter (The Probian - Yvonne Powell). The requirements for each job will be posted for your consideration.

George Braithwaite

April Meeting

Wednesday, April 1st
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

Roy MacSkimming
on the topic of

"Reconciling with
Sir John A. Macdonald"

This Month's Member Profile

Jackie Boyer



Bernetta Starkey, Probuc Canada Regional Director, congratulated our club on its 30th Anniversary, and presented our President, **George Braithwaite**, with a commemorative plaque for our club.

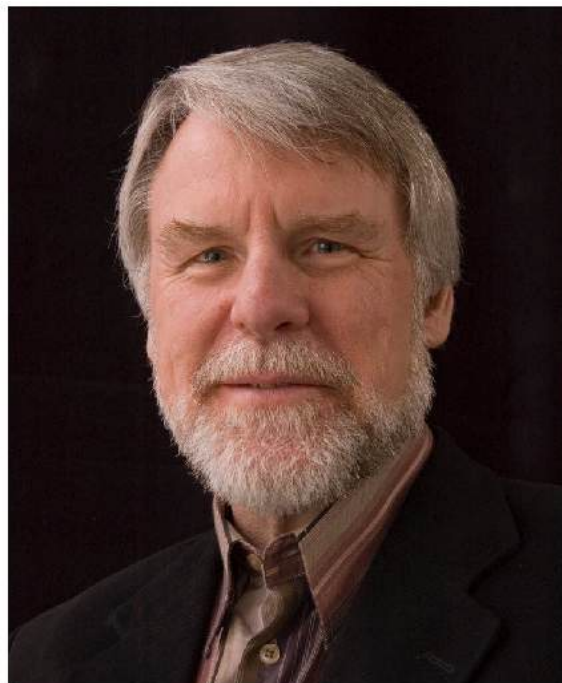
Speakers' Corner

STATUS	DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC
Completed	2025 Sept 3	Dr. David Philipp	How Angling Is Reshaping Ontario's Bass Population
Completed	2025 Oct 1	Pauline Witzke	Extraordinary Events Cause Global Warming
Completed	2025 Nov 5	Jeffrey Simpson	Globe & Mail Journalist - Donald Trump
Completed	2025 Dec 3	Allison Margot Smith	Two Rideau Canal-Related Documentary Films
Completed	2026 Jan 7	Victoria Gibb-Carsley	Perth & District Community Foundation
Completed	2026 Feb 4	Brandy Lockhart	Parks Canada Underwater Archeologist
Completed	2026 Mar 4	Noelle Reeve	Tay Valley Planner - Land Use Planning
Confirmed	2026 Apr 1	Roy MacSkimming	Roy's Research on Sir John A. MacDonald
Confirmed	2026 May 6	Gaston Barbon	What a Diplomat Really Does...
Confirmed	2026 Jun 3	Susan Code McDougall	History of the Perth Military System

Our Speaker for March: Roy MacSkimming

Roy MacSkimming has been writing all his life. He wrote poetry in his teens, some of it published in Canadian literary magazines and in a volume co-authored with poet-songwriter Bill Hawkins, titled *Shoot Low Sheriff, They're Riding Shetland Ponies*.

Roy published his first novel at twenty-eight and recently finished writing his fifth at eighty-two. To date he has published eight books and co-authored three others. His 2003 study of Canadian book publishing, *The Perilous Trade*, was termed “masterful...a brilliantly seductive cultural history of Canada” by *The Globe & Mail* and was a finalist for the National Business Book Award. Of his historical novel *Macdonald*, Nino Ricci said, “Roy MacSkimming not only brings John A. Macdonald to life, he brings him into our hearts.” Both books were named among the *Globe & Mail* best books of the year.



Roy had an active career in and around the publishing industry. He was an editor with Toronto publisher Clarke, Irwin, co-founder of New Press, books editor and columnist for *The Toronto Star*, an official with the Canada Council for the Arts, and government relations director of the Association of Canadian Publishers.

Born in Ottawa and educated at the University of Toronto, Roy met his wife Suzette while travelling in Spain. They have two sons and five grandchildren and recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They moved to Burgesswood on Otty Lake in 2002 and into Perth six years ago.

Roy will speak to us about his new novel *The Cure for Love*, a prequel to his 2007 book *Macdonald*. He has titled his talk, “Reconciling with Sir John A. Macdonald.”

Personal Profile: Joya Halpenny

Joya was born into a very traditional family in New Delhi, India. She was the only girl, having two older brothers and two younger brothers. Her father was an educator by profession, and an artist by vocation. He built the Delhi College of Art which is still there today. Joya's mother was a stay-at-home mother by choice but could have had a successful career as an Indian classical singer.



Joya vetoed every prospective bridegroom as to their worthiness and suitability. She could not see herself in such a traditional role. Her mother, meanwhile, was worried that she would have a wallflower daughter on her hands.

Instead of becoming a wallflower, Joya completed her undergraduate degree and then pursued her

Joya recalls that all her brothers were permitted to stay out until all hours of the night while she, "because she was a girl," had a curfew of either when the sun went down or the street lights came on - which ever came first. Despite this she had a happy childhood.

When Joya reached the age of thirteen, her family began to search for an appropriate bridegroom. At that age she was considered to be ready to marry, have babies and look after her own home. Once the word went out to her relatives, a parade of eligible doctors, lawyers and engineers arrived at her house. Because her father was an artist, he had a different mind-set from the traditional ideology of belonging to a Brahmin family. He asked Joya for her opinion of the various young suitors, something not done in her society.

Masters Degree in English literature. In her late twenties Joya decided to go to Germany and take language classes. It was at the University of Heidelberg that she met Drew. They met while she was in a four-year programme studying to be an interpreter in three languages - German, English and Spanish. They were married eight months later and celebrated their forty-fifth wedding anniversary last December.

Drew was in the forces and his career took them from Germany, to Montreal and other Canadian cities, ending in Ottawa.

Last May, Joya and her husband moved to our town from Orleans. They have three children and three granddaughters. Joya and Drew feel that one of the best decisions they ever made was moving to Perth.

Submitted by Marg Stephenson

Our February Speaker: Noelle Reeve

The Future of Land Relationship Planning in Ontario

Noelle provided our club with an informative and very timely presentation on her professional views of Land and Community Planning. Throughout the thirty-three years of her professional career, Noelle has had substantial experience as a long-range planner, and also has worked on various projects involving watershed planning and Smart Growth Planning, both in Canada and in The United States. She has been the Manager of the Tay Valley Township Planning and Building Department for the past seventeen years.

Noelle began her presentation by describing Ontario's Planning Framework. The Provincial Policy Statement was completed in 2014. In 2024 the Provincial Policy Statement was updated in a weaker form. The Planning Framework is complicated. She pointed out that the names of the bills pertaining to the Provincial Planning Framework did not describe the intention of the bill.



Wendy Kauffman thanks Noelle for her excellent presentation.

Basically, the new Framework gutted the Provincial Planning, removing third party appeals and weakening the environmental laws, in order to encourage more housing.

Noelle sees a need for much more local community involvement in the process. All municipalities have three years to adapt to, and update, zoning by-laws; thus, making it even more important to engage our counsellors in planning changes. We must protect our wetlands that store carbon, as well as the watersheds of rivers and streams that provide drinking water.

Cont'd on next page...

Noelle Reeve, cont'd...

Noelle spoke as well about community building and participation in the preservation of the natural heritage of our area. Groups such as Lanark County Climate Change and Friends of the Tay Watershed provide us with opportunities for us to get involved.

Noelle discussed the affordable housing crisis and the impact it may have on our community and the environment. Both Tay Valley Township and Perth have a higher than Provincial average of their population over the age of fifty-five, with forty-three percent of the houses in Perth having only one occupant. She proposed that those living alone could benefit from having another person living in the house and helping with household chores.

Noelle described Land Relationship Planning as the Indigenous Two-eyed Seeing. It is a reciprocity and kinship with the land with the added insight created by having one eye from each culture represented.

She went on to explain what planners **actually** do, including reviewing applications for subdivisions and

severances; as opposed to what planners **wish** they could do. Their wish list would include long-range planning that includes community conversations, as well as climate mitigation and adaptation.

Noelle also talked about Donut Economics, biocapacity balance, and the climate emergency which all have an effect on our well being, both physically and mentally.

In Noelle's professional view, we need measures to adapt to the current climate emergency, as well as measures to prevent further climate change. These include better transportation and better infrastructure. Perth is projected to have a sixty-two percent increase in growth in the next twenty-five years. Conversations are needed to facilitate long-range planning. This is an excellent opportunity for community connections and in-put.

Noelle's talk was well received and there were many questions and comments at the end of her presentation.

Submitted by Marg Stephenson

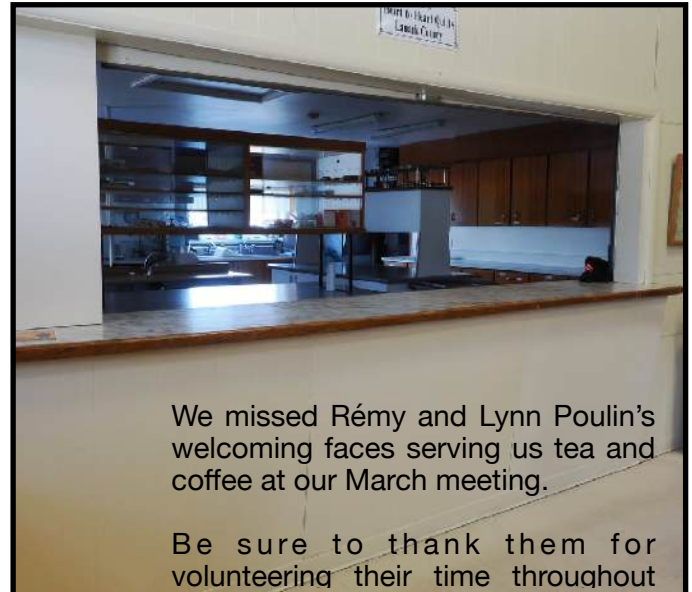
Our Condolences

The members of Probus Perth wish to extend our condolences to the families and friends of two of our members each of whom passed away this month.

Keith Pollard
and
Ted Russell



Gail Reid and her Social/Special Events team keep our Club active year round. Check out the activities on our website at probusperth.ca. (Just click the link!)



We missed Rémy and Lynn Poulin's welcoming faces serving us tea and coffee at our March meeting.

Be sure to thank them for volunteering their time throughout

Parting Shots



**Perth Probus
Management Team
2025 - 2026**



President: George Braithwaite

Vice President: Maggie Foot

Past President: To be Announced

Treasurer: Graeme Rutledge

Alt. Treasurer: Tony Thompson

Secretary: Mark Kennedy

Speakers' Committee: John Byers

Membership Coordinator: Mary Vandenhoff

Social/Special Events Chair: Gail Read

Webmaster:

Probian Editor: Yvonne Powell

Photographer: Tony Thompson

Member at Large: Drew Halpenny

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 - George Braithwaite

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