



PROBUS CLUB OF COLLINGWOOD

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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 2017

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY JANUARY 4, 2018 – BEAR ESTATE HALL – 9.45 A.M.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: RUBEN ROSEN

VICE PRESIDENT GREG GEEN

SOCIAL: SANDY WHITE

SECRETARY: AL WALLACE

TREASURER: MIKE MARTYNUK

SPEAKERS; PAUL TRANQUADA

MEMBERSHIP: JOHN MEGARRY

NEWSLETTER: ERIC SKEOCH

I.T. CHAIR HAL KEISER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembled Probi and their guests, all decked out in their finery, ambled to their tables in response to the call from President Ruben Rosen. He called upon resident music master Ian Godwin to lead us with his usual great gusto in the singing of our national anthem.

Ruben extended a warm welcome to the significant others joining us for our annual luncheon meeting and in particular welcomed the widows of past members who contributed so much to the club.

After a brief summary of our history as the 4th oldest Probus club in Canada, Ruben thanked Greg Geen and Hal Keiser for their work in organizing our luncheon. (There was of course thunderous applause.)

Ruben informed all present that a temporary change of venue *looms on the horizon*, as the Cranberry Estate embarks upon alterations upon a major construction project at the Bear Estate Conference Centre. During the construction we will meet across the road in the Watts Room of Cranberry. Various other venues were considered but it was felt that maintaining our connection with Cranberry would enable us to return to the Bear Estate once the construction is completed. The committee felt that the Bear Estate is a classy venue appropriate to our classy clientele.

We were reminded that our newly created SIGs (Special Interest Groups) have already started under the organizational leadership of Jim Worts. There are two presently being organized, Investment News and Computer Use.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Social Committee Chair Sandy White presented us with a brief summary of what his hard-working committee has lined up for us in 2018.

Jan. 18 - Snowshoeing at the Christensen farm.

Feb. 7 – Tour of MacLean Industries

Feb. 8 – Curling Bonspiel

April 18 – Blue Jays game

June 20 – Summer Solstice boat tour on Collingwood Harbour

Aug. 16 – Hair Spray at Kings Wharf

Oct (TBA) - Come From Away in Toronto

Thanks were extended to Bud and Sue Christensen for their work in organizing the stuffed toy collection. Jory Pritchard-Kerr of the G & M Hospital passed along her thanks to the club, adding that 300 toys are distributed each year. The impact is significant and greatly appreciated.

At this point in the proceedings, Ruben passed along an interesting story about communication between his dog Missy and her groomer. Though it sounds like false news, may be true...

MINISTER OF CULTURE

Minister of Culture Wayne Caswill, in collusion with the Russians and also with Hal Keiser presented us with some humorous videos from the past. This was followed by a couple of door prizes won by Scott Russell and Judy Ross.

SPEAKERS REPORT

Our January speaker will be Cecily Ross, author of *The Lost Diaries of Susanna Moodie*.

SPEAKER THANH CAMPBELL

In April of 1975, 57 orphans and their rescuers slowly made their way into the cargo bay of a Canadian Forces C-130 Hercules aircraft on the tarmac at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Saigon. It was the last flight out of Saigon as the North Vietnamese military advanced on the city. Among those 57 orphans being transported on this Flight 515 to Hong Kong was an emaciated two-year old who would come to be known as Thanh Campbell. He was *Orphan #32*.

Thanh and his two brothers had been temporarily left in the Go Vap Orphanage in Saigon by his parents for reasons of safety as the war waged on the outskirts of Saigon. But in the confusion of the war, Thanh was mistakenly included in the group of 57 orphans who had been selected for adoption through an American organization, Operation Babylift. He was erroneously taken out of the arms of a protesting nun by a soldier, and whisked off to the airport.

Crammed into makeshift beds of cardboard cartons or perched along the interior sides of C-130, the children and their rescuers were quickly airborne, and en route to Hong Kong. Spearheading the rescue operation were Victoria Leach, Head of the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the Province of Ontario and her co-leader Helen Allen author of the series *Today's Child*, in the *Toronto Star*.

In a long and no doubt exhausting series of flights, the group proceeded from Hong Kong to Vancouver via Canadian Pacific and then on to Toronto via Air Canada. (Coincidentally, it turns out that one of our Probus members recalls being on that flight from Vancouver!)

Thanh described in great detail his experiences over the years after his arrival in Canada. He was adopted into the family of Reverend William and Maureen Campbell, becoming the youngest of the six Campbell children, two of which were earlier adoptees. In the following years his life was happy and secure, though Thanh recounted that there

was always an awareness that *something was missing* in his life. As time passed he made a chance contact with Trent Kilner, another member of the original 57 orphans. Together they took steps to connect and bring together as many of the group as they could. A reunion was organized for April of 2006 and 42 of the 57 showed up! The media picked up on the story and there was a deluge of media events. As the story spread internationally it eventually was read by a Hanoi journalist who in turn was contacted by a man who turned out to be Thanh's biological father who was spurred into action by his sister who with the help of a Google photograph wrote a letter to her brother, stating *Brother, who is this Thanh Campbell that I read about in our newspaper...He has your nose!*

The family had been searching for their son for 31 years.

A reunion in Vietnam was soon arranged and Thanh, his wife Karina, their four children and adopted father William all made the trip. The description of the scene at the arrivals area at the airport in Saigon was needless to say an emotional one. I think it would be fair to say that quite a few of us felt more than a little emotional just hearing the story.

It was a moving and inspiring presentation- just perfect for the occasion.

Thanh was thanked by Ruben and presented with a Gerry DeLeskie pen and pencil set.

Our 50 50 winners were Jim Milner and Fred Holmes.

