



PROBUS CLUB OF COLLINGWOOD

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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 2016

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY JAN. 5, 2017 – BEAR ESTATE HALL - 10 A.M. - 12 NOON

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: BOB MACNAIR

VICE PRESIDENT RUBEN ROSEN

SOCIAL: GREG GEEN

SECRETARY: AL WALLACE

TREASURER: MIKE MARTYNUK

SPEAKERS; RUBEN ROSEN

MEMBERSHIP AND PAST PRESIDENT: JOHN MEGARRY

NEWSLETTER:

ERIC SKEOCH

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President MacNair began the meeting with the customary bell ringing, and then everybody just stopped talking and looked at him. This is in stark contrast to what usually happens when the chairman tries to start the meeting.

Encouraged by this apparent atmosphere of civility, Bob leapt right in. He welcomed everybody and commented on the fact that our club, having begun in 1997 was entering its 30th anniversary year. He directed a particular welcome to a number of spouses of former members of the club and also recognized by name of a number of our past presidents of who were in attendance.

All who had who had worked hard at organizing and carrying out the December luncheon meeting were also thanked.

Bud Christensen thanked those who had brought along a stuffed toy for the hospital. He read a very warm letter of appreciation from Jory Pritchard-Kerr, Executive Director of the Foundation of the Hospital.

SPEAKERS REPORT

Ruben Rosen reported that our January speaker will be Peter Jennings and Nicole Moore of Shark Attack.

And in February we will hear from Dr. Bob Galway who will speak on early Toronto airfields.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Social Committee Chairman Greg Geen was just barely into his report when he was criticized from the floor for misspelling the word “sneak” on his

overhead projection. Hoping to divert the crowd from issues of grammatical correctness, Greg informed us that the plural of sneakers is *sneak*. The logical connection of this gem of wisdom with the aforementioned error in spelling is remote, but nevertheless a number of people were seen to be making a note on their table napkin.

Greg went on to inform us of what the future hold for the members.

Future events include:

Jan.17 – Tour of Blue Mt. snowmaking plant

Jan 24 – Snow shoeing at Bud and Sue’s place

Feb. 9 –Curling Bonspiel

Feb. 14 – Valentine’s Day dinner at Santini’s restaurant.

In June, a boat cruise in being planned, followed by a return trip to Georgian Downs Raceway in July and then our yearly trip to King’s Wharf theatre on August 17.

MINISTER OF CULTURE

Wayne Caswill was of course in fine form with a few stories from his funny fund of frivolity which kept all of us chuckling.

Thanks to the electronic wizardry of Hal Keiser and his band of I.T. elves, we were treated to a toe-tapping romp with Rita Hayworth and friends to the tune of Stayin Alive.

This was followed by *Tape Man*. If I tried to explain to those of you who weren’t at the Christmas Luncheon who Tape Man is and what he does in his act you probably wouldn’t see the humour. It was very funny, but you had to be there.

SPEAKER JOHN CARSWELL

Our speaker was introduced by George Christie who began by proudly stating that John was born in Collingwood, but heart is clearly in the High Arctic. He has been there 12 times and counting.

John began by commenting that most of us think of Canada in an east-west sort of way perhaps forgetting that Canada stretches almost as far north as it does east or west. The distance from Collingwood to Ellesmere Island is 4000 miles, and the High Arctic constitutes 40 % of our country. Supported by an excellent series of photographs, John proceeded to lead us into a landscape which though usually described as `desolate, wind-swept and barren`, to John is spectacular and fascinating.

Here are some reflections on the High Arctic.

-The glacial ice fields of the north consist of "10,000 years of ice" across which glaciers flow like water. "Ice transforms the landscape". It is always moving, creating `a symphony of sounds.

-Much of the land is mountainous with spectacular views in every direction you look in a climate in which weather which is constantly changing.

- The clear dry air plays tricks on you, with long distances appearing frighteningly near and focused.

- The shadows are long; the light shows amazing; the fogs and clouds spectacular.

-At 79 degrees north, there are hundreds of mummified tree stumps, the remains of a forest which covered the area 40 million years ago.

-And, there are no bugs in the high arctic!

John showed a number of excellent photos which captured the personal side of life along what he referred to as the *flow edge* of habitation. Drinking water is always a concern, and the Inuit simply get their fresh water from icebergs. We were shown John's group kayaking through pack ice and camping on the `ice foot` where the tide leaves a frozen sidewalk at the edge of the shore.

Tents are tied down with heavy rocks to withstand the high winds. With constant sunlight in the summer, it appeared that daybreak (?) could best be welcomed with a bracing shower under a stream of ice water pouring over the edge of cliff.

River crossing is via a `train` of waders to minimize the power of the water flow.

We were also shown fields of colour where flowers burst through during the short summer growth period.

Archaeology is different in the north because the vestiges of ancient civilizations are not below ground. Sleeping platforms and fire hearths used 4500 years ago are easy to spot. Bones of the Bow Head whale were used where more southerly dwellers would use wood.

John described the wild life of the north at some length, once again with some excellent photographs of musk ox, arctic foxes, caribou, arctic char, wolves, hares, seals of various type, narwhales, millions of birds, big ugly stinky walrus, and some polar bear stories that would keep you awake most of the night.

John also commented that resources and sovereignty are going to be major issues confronting us in the very near future. Although we tend to make the assumption that sovereignty is defined in terms of internal water, the rest of the world doesn't agree. As global warming descends upon us the accessibility of a deep water passage through the north will become contentious.

John's comments on the life in the north was not optimistic, as the traditional ways of the Inuit continue to be impacted by the culture of the south. Land ownership is a foreign idea to the Inuit and the towns that exist are usually `manufactured towns`. The shameful impact of the residential school issue persists. The influx of a southern diet substance abuse, suicide, the influx of a southern diet, and the need for internal leadership are ever-present issues not only facing the people of the north and facing all of us.

John's love of the High Arctic was clear and persistent throughout his excellent presentation.

John was thanked by Bob and presented with a Gerry DeLeskie pen set.

The 50/50 winners were Al Wallace and a woman from a table in the back of the hall. She is not likely to join Al at the table next month, but I guess them's the breaks.

