



PROBUS CLUB OF COLLINGWOOD

Contact: collingwoodprobus@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2017

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY MARCH 2, 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 Bob MacNair hobbled to the front of the hall and apologized for showing up when he had announced previously that he would be too sick to attend due to his recent knee surgery. He explained that “attending the Probus meeting is the only exciting thing he does.” Hence his walker assisted attendance. Vice President Ruben Rosen was expecting to preside and was rumoured to be planning a palace revolution in the President’s absence. He was understandably thwarted and miffed. Ian Godwin fortunately short-circuited the planned putsch by chiming in with the National Anthem. The crisis was averted.

Not counting our speaker Dr. Bob Galway, there was only one guest – Bob Reid, who was welcomed just prior to the investiture of two new members Bob Phillips and Graham Duncan.

Bob MacNair urged the members to “find a friend[s]” and bring him (or them) along to one of our meetings, particularly since the numerical health of our membership depends on new recruits.

At this point in the meeting, Jack Marley was asked to reflect on the recent death of Jack Merwin, mentioning the contributions Jack made to our club, to the Collingwood community and in particular to Breaking Down Barriers.

Bob reminded the club again of the new Archives initiative. Richard Rood was asked to stand up and be recognized as the contact person.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Social Committee Chairman Greg Geen began his report by informing the membership that he has

recently been reprimanded by persons unknown for talking too much., Greg, clearly impervious to criticism from “so-called constitutional critics”, waxed eloquent on the immensely successful snow-shoeing outing in the Christensen’s forest, and thanked Bob, Mike and in particular Bud and Sue for making the event so successful.

He droned on to outline the future events.

Feb. 7 – Tour of Snowmaking facility at Blue Mountain (Sandy White is the contact.)

Feb. 9 –Curling Bonspiel

Feb. 14 – Valentine’s Day dinner at Santini’s restaurant. (Jim Worts is the contact person)

Feb. 22 – Legend’s Après Ski Lunch (Al Peters.)

March 8.-Tour of Agnora glass plant

May 16 – Blue Jay game against Atlanta

August 17 – Annual King’s Wharf outing and picnic lunch

Greg mentioned that one of our members, Tom Bell, will be biking the length of South America in the near future. Hopefully we will hear some stories about this in a future Probus meeting.

MINISTER OF CULTURE

Bob almost forgot to call the Minister of Culture up at this point, an omission which if not caught at the last minute would have constituted grounds for impeachment. Wayne, however, defused things by commenting that he had “been snubbed by better people”.

The Minister then went on to regale us as per usual with some selections from his fund of funnyisms. And if that wasn’t enough we were then shown a hilarious video featuring Foster Brooks.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Steve Hawker saw an article in National Geographic when he was a teen ager and it clearly changed his life. The article featured the salvage of a Swedish warship, the Vasa. Four years later, at age 16, Steve got a diving license and soon afterwards became certified with three diving agencies with a rating of Master Diver.

Since that early beginning, Steve has pursued this hobby in many North America waterways and beyond. In Ontario alone, there are 25000 shipwrecks!

Steve went on to give us a brief history of the development of locks and canals on the St. Lawrence and the resulting opening up of the Great Lakes to shipping and sinking. Aided by some excellent underwater photos we were given a detailed account of the 50 km. stretch between Cornwall and Prescott where 6500 people lost their homes and their communities when 35000 acres were flooded to facilitate the expansion of the St. Lawrence seaway.

Steve had a series of photos of various wrecks in the Great Lakes and each photo was accompanied by a brief history of the ship.

Probus members are encouraged to share stories or particular experiences from their lives. Steve's presentation was the first and it set a high standard. Thanks Steve.

SPEAKER Dr. BOB GALWAY

EARLY TORONTO AIRFIELDS

Bob was introduced by Sandy White, who informed us of Bob's work as an orthopedic surgeon at St. Joseph's hospital in Toronto. He mentioned also that as our speaker spends about 75% of his time in the Georgian Triangle area, he estimates that he has lost about 5000 golf balls in various spots in the region.

As the presentation proceeded it was amazing to hear that there were so many airfields in the Toronto area and even more amazing that our speaker had such a detailed knowledge not only of the history of each airfield but also of the pilots who left their marks on the history of those airfields. He clearly has a fund of colourful

anecdotes for each site! I was hard pressed to record even a few of his stories.

The Scarborough Beach Park airfield witnessed a demonstration flight in 1909 with Charles Willard at the controls. It crashed just beyond the break wall, and Willard, a non swimmer, called for help. A passing boater suggested that he just stand up since the water was only two feet deep.

The Trethewey Model Farm airfield, the original home of 400 Squadron, featured pilot Jacques de Lesseps in 1910, who later went on to establish a company in the Gaspé. He crashed into the St. Lawrence and his body washed up 300 miles downriver.

The Todmorden Mills airfield was noteworthy because in 1911, it featured a Hamilton to Toronto race. Pilot McCurdy didn't quite make it to his destination, landing instead on an island somewhere along the way. The lone inhabitants welcomed him and took his picture.

The Hanlan's Point airfield was the home of the Curtis Aviation School of Flying. Apparently when you bought one of their planes, you were entitled to a free flying lesson just before you took off. [No doubt there a few novice pilots resting just off shore near the Toronto Island nude beach. Some of our members may know the area.]

The Armour Heights airfield at the top of Yonge Blvd. was notable because one of the early pilots tried a little stunt fling. He was not successful the first time, so he tried again. He failed again. He didn't try a third time because he was dead.

The Leaside airfield was famous in later years because Amelia Earhart was around at that time. The first air ambulance had its debut and featured an aircraft into which a coffin fit perfectly- a flying hearse!

Bob seemed to have an inexhaustible fund of colourful stories and some excellent photos of those early aircraft and airports. The stories just kept coming at us non- stop.

Bob was thanked for his presentation by Ruben and presented with a Gerry DeLeskie pen set.

Our 50-50 winners were Bud Christensen, and Gerald Blundel and they will man the table in March.

