



# THE PROBE

VOLUME 36 ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER 2023

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF ST. CATHARINES

*To stimulate interest and participation in activities at a time of life when one often welcomes new friendships and an atmosphere of sharing ideas and information.*

*The PROBUS Club of St. Catharines meets at 9:30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Grantham Lions Club, 732 Niagara St., St. Catharines, Ontario.*

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St. Catharines, ON  
L2N 3J1

Website: [www.probusstcatharines.com](http://www.probusstcatharines.com)

## 2023-2024

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President:	Ralph Steffen	289-929-9492
Vice President	Andy Redman	905-682-6029
Past President	Tim Kaye	289-362-2016
Secretary:	Herb Woods	905-401-9905
Treasurer:	Denis Woods	905-646-1285
Speakers:	Duncan McLaren	905-680-8115
Membership:	John Senn	905-329-5360
Spec.Evnt/Ed. Visits:	David Merritt	905-714-2120
Deputies:	Rick Kent/George Novis	
Probe Editor:	Hugh Learmonth	905-934-2268
Webmaster:	Russ Milland	289-362-3420
Probus Global	Peter Jennings	289-362-3159

## NEXT MEETING

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

**GRANTHAM LIONS HALL**

**732 NIAGARA ST., ST. CATHARINES  
(OR JOIN ONLINE AT 9 A.M.)**

**The club will mark its 35th anniversary and Remembrance Day with speaker John Bullen from the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum talking about RCAF pilot officer and VC winner Andrew Mynarski.**



## GENERAL MEETING

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023**

**Opening:** President **Ralph Steffen** opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. with greetings to members and guests.

**O Canada:** **Bob Henderson** led members in singing of Canada's national anthem.

**Moment of Silence:** Ralph asked members to observe a moment of silence in memory of former club member Ray Marsden who passed recently at the age of 99.

**Guests:** John Senn introduced four guests: **Fred Harland, Bill Holman, Joe Robbie, and Gabe Bianco**. Fred and Joe both completed membership applications.

**New Member:** John Senn introduced **Bob Latham** who was initiated into full membership in PROBUS. Bob gave a very entertaining personal profile.

**Birthdays:** **Frank Parkhouse, Robert Trinder, Joe Vanderkooi, Doug Wright** and **Fred Harland** have birthdays in October. Bob Henderson led an outstanding rendition of Happy Birthday.

**Other Items:** Ralph asked for a show of hands of how many people read the Probe Newsletter.

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(Continued from page 1)

Surprisingly, there were many members who do not. One person said they could not access the web site link.

Ralph thanked Life Member **Jim Cameron** for his generous donation to help purchase cookies and donuts for our meetings.

**Outreach:** **Tim Kaye** reported that **John Salman** has been in hospital but is now home, and **Ron Casselman** is home and doing better. Tim asked members to keep **Russ Milland** in our thoughts as he recovers from his recent surgery. Tim also reminded everyone of the Celebration of Life for **Wayne Tester** scheduled for 3 p.m. on October 14 at Trillium United Church, 415 Linwell Rd.

**Men's Breakfast:** Bryan Brodie was not present. Next breakfast is on Oct. 17 at Johnny Pastrami's.

**Romeo Lunch:** **Tom Van Loenen** reported that the Romeo Lunch is moving from the fourth Wednesday to the fourth Friday each month at Dalhousie Yacht Club (DYC). DYC requires 20 to 24 attendees to open early for lunch on Wednesdays so Emily at DYC suggested Friday. The next Romeo Lunch is at 12 noon on October 27.

Tom asked everyone interested in attending the Christmas Lunch on Wednesday, December 13 to sign the sheet on the registration desk. We need to know the number of attendees well in advance.

**Educational Visits:** **George Novis** reported that a club visit to Heddle Shipyards is being planned for November when a large ship will be in drydocks for service. Date and details to follow. George, Rick Kent and Dave Merritt are exploring additional events for the year.

**Cameo:** **Andy Redman** gave a very entertaining presentation on his skydiving experience on Cana-



da Day in 2008 when he was 71. He was inspired by George Bush Sr. who did the same at age 80. Andy's group boarded the plane at Skydive Burnaby in Wainfleet, flew to 14,000 feet and Andy jumped from the plane with an instructor har-

nessed to his back. The first minute was freefall with four-to-five minutes under parachute when Andy had the controls ending in a perfect gentle landing. Andy showed a video that another "diver" took from when he boarded the plane to his landing. Some interesting facial expressions as Andy left the plane and descended helped capture the excitement and thrill of the skydive. Andy emphasized that "age is no barrier" and said "don't be afraid your life will end, be afraid it will never begin!" He also mentioned the Chicago woman, Dorothy Hoffner, who set a world record recently with a skydive at the age of 104.

**Attendance:** **John Senn** reported 38 members were present and online from our membership total of 77. Online we also had Leo Kirk from South Africa, and Barrie Morgan from Guildwood, ON.

**Video:** Life Member **Art Currie** wrapped up the meeting by showing a hilarious video, "The Irish Wedding".



**New member Bob Latham, centre, with President Ralph Steffen and John Senn.**

## Membership dues

Membership dues for 2023-2024 are now payable and you have options for making your payment if you have not already done so.

Cheques for \$65, payable to the Probus Club of St. Catharines, can be submitted at the November 14 meeting or can be mailed to Membership chair John Senn at:

John Senn  
13-30 Power Glen  
St. Catharines, L2R 6P7

Payment will also be accepted by e-transfer to John Senn at [jsenn8@cogeco.ca](mailto:jsenn8@cogeco.ca)

*Reminder: According to Bylaw #12, any member whose dues remain unpaid by December 15, 2023 shall be deemed to have resigned from the club.*



## Speaker warns of scams, threats directed at seniors

Duncan McLaren introduced speaker Ernie Sibbett, chair of the board of Crimestoppers Niagara, who was accompanied by Dorothy Nugent and Carolyn Robinson from Crimestoppers.

Ernie talked about the Niagara Elder Abuse Prevention Network and its safety guide called "*Be Aware...Take Care.*" Ernie said that Crime Stoppers, which receives a yearly grant of \$50,000 from Niagara Region, fields 60 to 70 calls per day related to elder abuse.

The program's aim is to provide information on fraud, scams, and threats to elders and to assist them if they are victims. He reviewed some of the scams directed at seniors such as telemarketing, mail or newspaper marketing, cyber scams, thefts by deception or distraction, bank related scams and identity theft.



**Ernie Sibbett**

Ernie offered examples of scams such as someone calling claiming to be from your bank or from the CRA demanding immediate payment; someone calling to warn that your computer has been infected with a virus but they can fix it if you give them access to your computer. A common one is someone calling pretending to be a friend or relative in an emergency and in need of money.

He warned of two red flags related to such calls: an immediate request for money or a request for personal information. He advised that in such cases, you should hang up immediately. He noted that many people fail to do so but recommended that if potential victims have concerns, they should notify the police.

Ernie also warned about door-to-door sales. Provincial laws ban door-to-door sales for certain household appliances, but he said you shouldn't feel pressured and should never allow strangers into your home. As a rule, don't enter into any contract with someone that you didn't initiate contact with.

Ernie recommended signing up with the National Do Not Call List. Although this won't eliminate all unsolicited calls, it can reduce the number and type of calls you receive.

Ernie also spoke about the Niagara Community Information Database which can be reached by calling 211 to receive information about a wide variety of government and other service providers. Ernie mentioned the importance of having a legal Power of Attorney for both personal care and for property to designate someone to make important decisions if you become incapable.

Further information is available at [www.crimestoppersniagara.com](http://www.crimestoppersniagara.com) and a complete list of contact information for Niagara community resources is available in the safety guide booklet.

Duncan thanked Ernie for his important and informative presentation and presented him with a gift certificate.



## CHRISTMAS ROMEO LUNCH



PROBUS Club members and spouses (or significant others) are invited to attend the Christmas Romeo Luncheon at the Dalhousie Yacht Club on Wednesday, December 13. Refreshments available at 12 noon with lunch served at 12:30 p.m.

The menu includes oven roasted turkey with gravy, stuffing, mashed potatoes, maple ginger carrots and cranberry sauce with warm apple crumble for dessert. All meals will be individually plated, and tea or coffee will be served at the table.

The cost is \$32.50 per person including HST and gratuity. Cheques or cash accepted.

Tom van Loenen will be taking signups at the November meeting, or he can be contacted at [tcvanloenen@icloud.com](mailto:tcvanloenen@icloud.com) or by phoning 905-937-0430. Cheques should be made out to the Probus Club of St. Catharines. Payment should be received no later than December 4.

## Date set for shipyard tour

A date has been announced for the PROBUS Club tour of the Heddle Shipyards at Port Weller. George Novis has confirmed the tour for Wednesday, November 22 at 2 p.m. The tour should take about one hour.

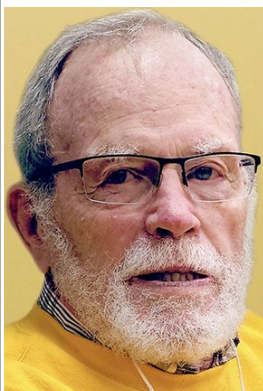
Further details and signup sheet will be available for those interested at the November 14 meeting.

## Introduction to Bob Latham

*(Bob Latham, who joined the PROBUS Club in October, submitted the following summary of his very active life.)*

I grew up in Beamsville, Ontario where my dad was the local doctor for some 30+ years.

I graduated from Queen's University with an MA in Geography; had the privilege of playing Gael's football for five years (2-time MVP, Captain, and Hall of Fame). Challenge: what else can a geography grad do other than teach?? Went to work for Bell Canada in 1967; had the privilege to have five very separate



**Bob Latham**

careers: (Forecasting, Regulatory, Operations (Eastern and Northern Ontario, and Saudi Arabia), Bell Cellular for five years (first president) grew from 100 to 1,000 employees; resource person for the Canadian Armed Forces National Defense College (travelled and studied around the world for a year), National Account Sales; retired after 28 years in December 1995.

Started work in a telecom company in London, England in February 1996 and then a satellite company in Reston, Virginia followed by a return to a startup telecom company in Toronto ... Unfortunately, it fell to its demise as did many other companies when the "dot com" bubble imploded.

In 2006, after looking around the world, Nicaragua found me; bought a property and over the next 10 years built and operated a boutique hotel on the Pacific Coast with my partner Joanne <https://www.youtube.com/embed/r3tixvEIXUM>. I had to leave because of health issues (a rare heart disease). Fortunately, in March 2018, we completed the sale three weeks before the country broke down in civil unrest.

I currently live in St. Catharines. I have two wonderful boys I am very proud of, who live in Oakville; four grandchildren who are at or recently completed university; a wonderful experience has been getting to participate in the growth of a "granddaughter" who was born in Nicaragua to my partner Joanne's daughter. (Girls grow up different than boys).

Much of my career I have tried to make a difference in the lives of others; as such, I have been very involved in a number of charitable organizations; YMCA, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), Oakville Community Foundation (coach and judge for Tech Under-20 program), Junior Achievement (Chair, Halton-Niagara). In Nicaragua we were able to fix up schools and medical stations, organize back packs, shoes and food drives while assisting craftspeople in building their businesses.

In the last few years, I have organized a 60<sup>th</sup> reunion of Beamsville High School Grads (through the COVID challenges) and the 60<sup>th</sup> reunion of the early sixties (1960-64) Golden Gaels football teams as well as initiating and successfully driving a \$125K athletic scholarship fund.

## BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

The following members celebrate birthdays in November. If you are not on the PROBUS birthday list, please contact membership chair John Senn.

Gerry Cunningham

Bruce Knicley

David Merritt

George Novis

John Senn

Ralph Steffen



**T**he PROBUS Club of St. Catharines, now celebrating 35 years, is one of the oldest in Canada and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of St. Catharines South. The first organizational meetings were held in the former Domenic's Yorkshire House on Academy Street.

One of the founding members, Stuart Glass, who went on to become president and later, a life member, compiled a detailed history of the early years of the club listing the names of members, officers and even speakers during those first years.

The club operated in the first year with the financial backing of the Rotary Club but became self-supporting in May of 1989 and elected its first management committee with Ross Lawless becoming the first president.

As the club grew, its meeting site moved to the Royal Canadian Legion, then to Club Roma and later to Black Sea Hall and finally to the Grantham Lions Hall. This club has also sponsored three other active PROBUS Clubs in Niagara.

Membership numbers have varied over the years and after a slump influenced by COVID, hopes are high that we are in the early stages of a resurgence.

# How Britain came to honour the Unknown Warrior

On November 7th, 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme.

None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why.

The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-Ter Noise. Once there, the bodies were draped with the union flag.

Sentries were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and a Colonel Gell selected one body at random. The other three were reburied.

A French Honour Guard was selected and stood by the coffin overnight of the chosen soldier.

On the morning of the 8th November, a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court arrived and the Unknown Warrior was placed inside.

On top was placed a crusaders sword and a shield on which was inscribed:

"A British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for King and Country".

On the 9th of November, the Unknown Warrior was taken by horse-drawn carriage through Guards of Honour and the sound of tolling bells and bugle calls to the quayside.

There, he was saluted by Marshall Ferdinand Foch and loaded onto HMS Vernon bound for Dover. The coffin stood on the deck covered in

wreaths, surrounded by the French Honour Guard.

Upon arrival at Dover, the Unknown Warrior was met with a nineteen-gun salute — something that was normally only reserved for Field Marshals.

A special train had been arranged and he was then conveyed to Victoria Station, London.

He remained there overnight, and, on the morning of the 11th of November, he was finally taken to Westminster Abbey.

The idea of the unknown warrior was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served on the front line during the Great War. The Union flag he had used as an altar cloth whilst at the front, was the one that had been draped over the coffin.

It was his intention that all of the relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the Unknown Warrior could very well be their lost husband, father, brother or son...

THIS is the reason we wear poppies.

We do not glorify war.

We remember — with humility — the great and the ultimate sacrifices that were made, not just in this war, but in every war and conflict where our service personnel have fought — to ensure the liberty and freedoms that we now take for granted.

Every year, on the 11th of November, we remember the Unknown Warrior.

— article submitted by Andy Redman



## DIRECTORY CHANGES

Changes/additions to members mail and/or e-mail address will be published monthly in the Probe. Please inform any member of the Management Committee of your changes.

**Bob Latham:** (new member)  
1209-7 Gale Crescent  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7M8  
Phone: 416-571-0370  
Email: [rfconsulting@sympatico.ca](mailto:rfconsulting@sympatico.ca)

**Michael Farah:** (new address)  
161-540 Ontario St.  
St. Catharines, ON L2N 7S2  
Phone: 905-685-3928  
Email: [mike.farah87@gmail.com](mailto:mike.farah87@gmail.com)

**Andy Redman:** (new email address)  
Email: [andara.redman1958@gmail.com](mailto:andara.redman1958@gmail.com)

## SUB COMMITTEES AND SOCIAL EVENT CONVENORS

The following activities are approved and sponsored by the PROBUS Club of St. Catharines.

Romeo Lunch:	Tom van Loenen	905-937-0430
Men's Breakfast:	Bryan Brodie	905-932-4502
Golf	Ralph Steffen	289-929-9492
Poker:	Denis Woods	905-646-1285
Theatre Visits:	TBD	
Outreach:	Tim Kaye	289-362-2016
Couples Bridge:	TBD	
Dancing:	Andy Reyes	905-937-2982

If you know of any member who is sick, injured or in hospital, will you please let me know. Contact me by email [timpkaye1@gmail.com](mailto:timpkaye1@gmail.com) or phone me at 289-362-2016. —Tim Kaye Outreach Chair



# November 2023



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5  Daylight Saving Time Ends	6	7	8	9	10	11  REMEMBRANCE DAY Lest We Forget
12	13	14  GENERAL MEETING	15	16	17  POKER	18
19	20	21  Men's Breakfast	22	23	24  ROMEO LUNCH	25
26	27	28	29	30		

**FUTURE EVENTS: Christmas Romeo Lunch — December 13**



**Invite a friend.** If you enjoy taking part in PROBUS activities, don't forget that in addition to the regular meetings the monthly Romeo Lunches at the Dalhousie Yacht Club or the men's breakfast gathering at Johnny Pastrami's are excellent opportunities to introduce a friend to the club.