



# Probud Club of Halifax - *Newsletter*

Est. 2000

*"Be a friend – bring a friend"*

May 2010 Vol. 10 No. 9

## Dates to Remember

**June 15<sup>th</sup>.** – Citadel Hill tour and lunch

**June 17<sup>th</sup>.** – Next Probud meeting - *The History of Titanic* with Mr. Steve Blasco

**September 9<sup>th</sup>.** - President's Garden Party and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

## President's Message

You may recall from the last Newsletter that there was to be a re-instatement of the meeting fee for our upcoming 2010 – 2011 Probud year. At the May Management Committee meeting, a more thorough review with some budget planning necessitated a decision by the board to re-instate the previous meeting fee of \$2.00. It is expected that this amount will allow us to run our club effectively and deal with any anticipated increases in costs. This meeting fee will begin at our September meeting – September 16<sup>th</sup>. Treasurer Phil Carter will present the club's financial statement at the Annual General Meeting portion of our September meeting.

Special events Chair, Rodney Caley has done a great job of booking our events to the end of this year, including the Christmas Party in December. These events are always listed in the Newsletter. For the Probud year 2010 – 2011, we would like to have a full calendar of events. We need input from you, the general membership, on what you want in the way of Special Events.

The Editor of our newsletter, Bill McKenna, would also like to see more contributions from you. There are many ways you can contribute including personal travel experience, photos, and yes – even those old jokes you've been dying to tell us. Next time there is a special Probud event, take along your digital camera and Bill will post your pictures for everyone to admire.

Let us know your thoughts, suggestions and ideas. We are always happy to hear from you.

## David Lane



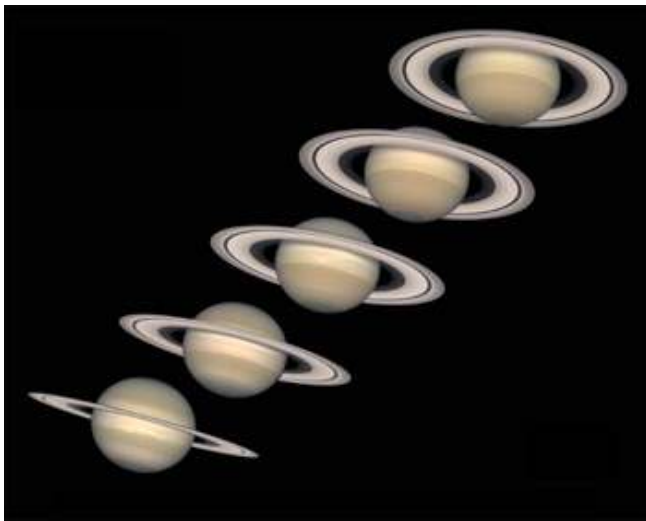
Our speaker this month was David Lane who is the national president of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. As his day job he runs the Burke-Gaffney Observatory at St. Mary's University. In his spare time he conducts astronomical research at his backyard observatory in Tantallon, and enjoys sailing around St. Margaret's Bay.

David gave us a lively, illustrated presentation on a variety of astronomical topics. His love of astronomy was obvious and infectious. His presentation was liberally illustrated with photographs he had taken at his backyard observatory, which, he informed us, is fully automated so he can program it to make observations unattended. We were introduced to our nearest astral neighbours, the Moon, Sun and the

planets of our solar system, before heading out further to the Milky Way and beyond. He demonstrated how we can infer much about a distant planet by carefully observing its surface.

David explained the life cycle of stars, how they are formed and how they eventually die. He showed us photographs of distant galaxies taken by huge telescopes such as Hubble orbiting in outer space. Despite the fact that devices such as these are unveiling more and more hitherto unknown data on the universe, David revealed that Astronomers now believe that the universe is finite and are close to defining its boundaries. The distances involved in astronomy are so immense that they are measured in terms of light years. Everything we observe in space has already happened in the past. Even observations on our own sun reflect its position some 8 Earth minutes or so previously.

David more frequently makes presentations to young children, rather than to mature audiences such as our Probus club, however it was obvious from comments of members over lunch that he had appealed to the wondering child that lives in all of us.



*(Editor's note: Dave left his website to explore: <http://www.davelane.ca/> and I urge you to do so. There are a number of other websites that provide numerous images captured by the Hubble telescope. Try Googling "Hubble Images" or use this popular site: <http://www.hubblesite.org>. John Williamson also has a great computer presentation on Hubble images, complete with weird music and animated philosophy – ask him for a copy!)*

## My Story



**Richard (Dick) Pentland**

Dick was born in Belfast, three months before D-day. His father was an architect, and his mother had been a fabric designer in the linen industry before transferring to the Air Ministry as a draftsman for the war effort. When he was still very young they moved to the fishing town of Donaghadee, County Down, where his sister was born, and where he developed an abiding love for the sea. His first school was four-room schoolhouse that was regularly battered by breaking waves during winter storms. After several years his family moved up the County Down coast to the town of Holywood, where he spent his grammar school years at Sullivan Upper School.

Dick's grandfather, his father and one of his uncles had been architects, but when it came time to choose a career, he wanted to break the mould completely and commit the ultimate act of rebellion. So he opted for Civil Engineering, a radical choice, or so that seemed to be at the time. In 1962 he commenced his engineering studies at Queen's University, Belfast, where four (wild) years passed quickly until his graduation. During his University years, he followed

on with his love of music and took up jazz saxophone, but switched over to rock 'n' roll to pay the bills. During that period also Dick met his future wife, Paddy.

In the summer of 1965, he took advantage of a student organized charter flight to visit New York. He purchased an open ticket from Greyhound which allowed him to travel freely wherever the bus went. Arriving in Toronto his plans of accumulating some cash by working as a student engineer for a month were frustrated as there was a strike on in the construction industry. So he headed west with no luck finding work until he reached Vancouver where a newly formed company hired him on the spot, advanced him some cash and sent him off to do surveying at an Indian Reserve in BC Interior.

After a month in BC, Dick had accumulated enough cash to allow him to continue his North American travels and he headed for Los Angeles, where he arrived just in time for the Watts riot. He continued his journey through Grand Canyon then visiting friends in Kentucky before ending back in New York where he took the flight home to Belfast. It was the memory of that trip that would eventually influence him to emigrate to Canada.

Dick's career began as a design engineer at Belfast Water Works, later transferring from job to job over the next nine years, always in Belfast. He enjoyed the work enormously, and he had the satisfaction of seeing his career develop more or less according to plan. A son, Patrick, was born, and four years later a daughter, Danielle. He hadn't forgotten the music either. By this time he was playing up to six or seven engagements a week, and he began to be pressured by his fellow band members to become full-time. His cautious engineering instincts steered him away from that path, but he was able to scratch the itch by taking a job in a cabaret house band, and in the BBC Jazz Orchestra, which worked out of the corporation's Belfast studios.

By 1975 the troubles in Northern Ireland had been going on for about six years, although it didn't disturb Dick's home life all that much. Normally all they would see was what was on the television news in the evening. However Paddy and the kids did have one very narrow escape when a café to which they usually went on Saturday afternoons was bombed at just about the time that they would have been there. Apart from that incident, and the inconvenience of searches at roadblocks, etc., Dick and Paddy became, like most others, inured to these types of situations. It was more

the opportunities for a prosperous future than a desire to escape the troubles, that led to their decision to emigrate to Canada

Dick and family arrived in Halifax in the summer of 1975, where he took up a position with MacLaren Atlantic, consulting engineers. In 1982 the company was taken over, and he found employment with the Port of Halifax as Vice-president of Engineering. This was a new career for Dick, in that he was being exposed to a new industry altogether – and he loved it! Why hadn't he thought of this before? He spent ten very happy years at the port, during which time he was responsible for the expansion of both container terminals, as well as the development of the Richmond Terminals as an offshore base, and a lot of other smaller developments.

In 1993 he decided to get back into consulting, but this time concentrating in the port industry with which he had become so familiar. After trying this on his own for a few years, he joined a management consulting company based in Ottawa to provide operations and management consulting services to the international port industry. This proved to be very successful, and provided the opportunity to travel. To date he has worked in more than 30 countries, ranging from Lithuania to South Africa to Papua New Guinea to Saudi Arabia to Brazil, and many others in between. his main focus has been in enabling governments introduce the private sector into port operations so as to minimise opportunities for corruption and the maximise efficiencies.

Although Dick has now entered what might be termed "retirement", he has to admit it's a bit more like semi-retirement. He still gets calls offering him projects, and if they are interesting he doesn't turn them down – yet. This year alone he has been in Kenya twice; the last time he was lucky enough to have Paddy join him and they were able to go on a five-day safari. An experience of a lifetime.

Dick and Paddy are very glad they made the decision to come to Halifax 35 years ago. They have made great friends, and they have seen their family grow up to become truly Canadian. They have two grandchildren in Toronto that they don't get to see as often as they would like, but that only makes those occasions all the sweeter. In 1992 they built their current house in Bedford, ideally located within a ten-minute walk to the yacht club, where Dick might be found throughout the summer either setting sail or coming back to port.

Life is good says Dick.

*(Editor's note: Dick's presentation was a most welcome return of what was once a regular Probus meeting feature. Let's hope that his example encourages others to present their story. Don't be shy, you're with friends who are interested in hearing about you Book a presentation date with Andre Ducharme.)*

### **Halifax Probus Club News**

The **attendance** at the May Probus meeting was 70 members, from a total membership of 127.

Also present at the meeting were 3 **guests**. Ron Tobin brought along his wife Mauda. Charlie Fowler introduced Christine Hawkins, who has already applied for membership, well done Christine. Terry Simms was accompanied by Bill Day from Rotary, who was one of the original sponsors of the Halifax Probus Club.

**Happy Birthday** to Phil Carter, Rosemary Jost, Elbert Stevenson, Hans Vats, and John Williamson. We bet you were all delightful Spring babies and brought joy with your arrival.

**Congratulations** to Rosemary and Alan Jost, and Barbara and David MacKenzie who celebrate May wedding anniversaries.

We have a number of **Travellers** this month.

Ann and Jim Drysdale are visiting family in Quebec and Ontario. Rodney and Margaret Caley are visiting the U.K. Ben and Jane Weeks are visiting Finland and Rome. Rachelle and George Richard are visiting family in U.S. Everyone hopes to return in time for the June meeting, so be sure to ask them how the trip went.

In June, Jos and Petra Hoeven are off on a bus tour of Germany, with highlights to Oberammergau for the Passion Play. We're not sure if Jos will be at the June meeting as those German buses are notoriously unreliable crossing the Atlantic.

Elbert Stevenson will miss the June meeting as he is off to Scotland for a visit and then flies to Copenhagen to join a cruise visiting various ports on the Baltic including a visit to St. Petersburg. Elbert hope to return July 1<sup>st</sup>, volcanic ash permitting.

Charles Yeates missed the May meeting and will also miss the June meeting as he and Kris will be trailing a 2-seater glider from it's storage place in State College,PA to a buyer in Minden NV. They intend to

extend their trip 6 weeks or so to visit family and friends in Minden NV, Dallas TX, Kentucky, Invermere and Christina Lake in BC, Regina SK , Toronto and Ottawa ON. Yes they do intend to return and they promise to see us all in September.

The lucky winner of the **50/50 draw** was Bill Peters who pocketed \$77.00. Congratulations Bill.

The **Walking** group had a very nice outing on May 17<sup>th</sup> when Carolyn Mont led a group from Probus on an historic tour of Halifax. We started off in the Public Gardens where Carolyn explained how this wonderful Victorian garden came to be, and drew our attention to the many classic features to be found there. Then it was off to the Citadel where Carolyn gave us a brief history and we observed the Changing of the Guard. Next we toddled down the hill to view some of the beautiful Halifax buildings and learn their history. The tour finished with a visit to The Historic Properties then it was off to lunch at The Ould Triangle. If you wish to see pictures of the outing, point your browser here:

<http://picasaweb.google.ca/probusclubhlfx/HalifaxWalk?authkey=Gv1sRgCN3ygJrarb3urgE&feat=email#>

Thanks Carolyn for a very entertaining and informative morning.

Carolyn Mont is also leading a group from her church, St. Paul's United, on a hike on McNabs Island. She has extended an invitation to the Probus Walking group to join them.

**Date:** Saturday, June 5, 2010

**Cost:** \$12.50 for the ferry

**Departure:** 10:00 AM, departing by ferry from Alderney Landing

**Return:** 3:00 PM

**Bring a Lunch and water!**

Some of you may remember that Carolyn gave the Probus Club of Halifax a presentation on McNabs Island. Her knowledge of the island is extensive.

The **Dining** group have decided not to have any May events as we can't seem to find any spare time in our busy Spring calendars. So the message from this group is – See you in September.

### **Special Events**

Rodney Caley says don't forget:

**Tuesday 15 June** - Citadel Hill Tour and Lunch.

Assemble @ 10:45 am Tickets cost \$25.00.

Tickets are limited to 36, and are still available through [doug.chaytor@dal.ca](mailto:doug.chaytor@dal.ca)

**Thursday 9 September** - President's Garden Party and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at St. Mary's Boat Club, 2:30pm to 4:30pm

**Wednesday 1 December** - Christmas Party at the Compass Room, Casino Halifax, 12:00pm to 3:00pm

**Speakers Corner.**

Andre Ducharme wants you to mark your calendars for:

**June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010 : The History of Titanic** is number 10 on our short list of topics. Mr. Steve Blasco of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography is reputed for being an excellent speaker and of course an expert on Titanic History.

**September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010.** : For our first speaker of next fiscal year we have tentatively booked Mr. Bob

Fournier of the Dalhousie Oceanography Department. You may recall Mr. Fournier appearances on the CBC program called "Every Day Science". His topic for the presentation is still undecided.

**And Finally.....**

This gem was found in the newsletter of the South West (Scotland) Fishermans' Association in which the secretary tells members of a meeting on January 6. As the secretary states: "Due to a touch of the technicals, I didn't get these details until January 4 so this is very short notice. So I prepared this note on Sunday and posted it yesterday. If you get it today then the meeting is tonight, but if it doesn't arrive until tomorrow then the meeting was yesterday and you've missed it."

*Exactly.*

-----  
*This Newsletter is a publication of the Probus Club of Halifax and its contents are intended solely for the perusal of the members of that association. The Probus Club of Halifax was officially inaugurated in November 2000 as a branch of the Probus Clubs of Canada [www.probus.org](http://www.probus.org)*

*The President of the Probus Club of Halifax is Jim Drysdale who can be reached at [jimdrysdale@hfx.eastlink.ca](mailto:jimdrysdale@hfx.eastlink.ca) . The club currently has 127 members and meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, from September to June, at the Fairview Legion (corner of Main & Hillcrest) starting at 9:30 am. New members are always welcome.*

*General inquiries about this publication and its contents may be directed to Bill McKenna, Newsletter Editor, [probusclubhfx@gmail.com](mailto:probusclubhfx@gmail.com) .*