

PROBUS NEWSLETTER

Information in this
newsletter is for
Probus members only

From the Editor's Desk

The management committee met on Friday 23rd July and discussed a number of topics.

Regretfully, the General Meeting scheduled for August 6th at Villa Maria Hall is cancelled. We have received a fair amount of member feedback as to whether the meeting should go ahead or not. There is clear evidence that the Covid19 issue has not gone away, rather is increasing in certain areas. Naturally, there is concern among our members, including the committee, that now is probably not the best time to reconvene. Current regulations imposed by both the State Government and the Management of Villa Maria, restrict "mingling" meaning that at morning tea, we would need to collect our refreshments and remain seated until complete, no walking around is allowed. The furniture, bathrooms, kitchen, equipment, utensils and all touch points must be sanitised before and after use by the hall users, i.e. us. Our scheduled speaker indicated they would prefer not to present on the day.

Above all, there is enough of a risk to health of our members that the committee considers they would be negligent by continuing with the meeting.

We were due to have a "hardship" collection of goods for Community Services. It was suggested that anyone willing to contribute still does so but delivers the goods to Hunters Hill Community Services at: 46 Gladesville Rd, Hunters Hill NSW 2110 between 8:30 to 16:00, Monday to Friday.

The following activities have been changed as indicated:

September

Monday 7th Sausage Sizzle – postponed

Wednesday 16th Macarthur Region tour – cancelled

Wednesday 23rd RAN Museum – cancelled (by them, not us)

Other topics of discussion:

Member Contact Details. We have received a number of requests to publish contact details of all members to the membership in general. Historically, there has been a restricted list of such details, published only where a member has agreed to such publication. The more recent member application form highlights the fact that all details **may** be published internally to the total membership unless a member advises the Secretary in writing to the contrary.

We are aware that the current situation needs refreshing. In fairness to all current members we are advising that a list will be made available to all members that request such a list unless a member indicates in writing to the Secretary that they do not wish their details made available.

If you do not wish your details be made available to the general membership please advise Carolyn Jolly by mail or email (cjolly1@bigpond.com), by August 31st 2020.

Small Group Activities Proposal (Interest Groups). Dean Letcher tabled a proposal to the committee, an extracts from which follows:

"With a view to increasing the membership of the club, increasing the activities suitable for active, mobile and younger members but not greatly increasing the burden on Treasurer, Activities and other committee members I suggest that several new activities for self-selected small groups be approved to begin under the Probus direction and insurance cover.

- Dog Walking
- Scenic Walking
- Art Galleries
- International Eating
- Scenic lunching
- Gardens
- Active Technical

Each idea will not necessarily appeal to all Probus members. Most present Probus activities have fully organized transport and refreshments and cater to all members wanting little more than a comfortable social event. For these small group activities of about 10 to 12, generally but not always, members will arrange their own transport and pay directly at a venue".

The August issue will have more details including an explanation of each activity together with some suggestions for group leaders.

This good news for this issue is that the **Book Club** has resumed meetings and renowned book critic **Richard Jones** is back in action.

Mike

Garth's Travels - Antarctic Peninsula

We boarded a 16hour flight to Buenos Aires (fuel stopover in Auckland) to spend two days before flying south to the small township of Ushuaia on the Beagle Channel in Argentina. It was January 1996.



Later that day we boarded the Professor Khromov with 38 other passengers. The Khromov is an ice strengthened research vessel now used for Arctic and Antarctic voyages. The seas during the two day passage of Drake Passage were lumpy with little wind. We saw several soaring albatrosses – magnificent birds, black and white with their 3.5metre wingspan. Also saw several minke whales. All eyes searching the seas for our first glimpse of an iceberg.

The next morning the ship was surrounded by icebergs and we enjoyed our first landing at Penguin Island. The zodiac pushed through heavy pack ice and we were all enthralled with the wild life – elephant and fur seals. We walked along the shore amongst more seals, noisy birds and thousands of penguins. Returning to the Khromov we encountered two humpback whales.

Over the next few days we enjoyed magnificent sunny arctic days sailing through and around the ice. We visited Esperanza Station, an Argentinian base.

Some of our landings were distracted by groups of Adelie penguins gathering on floes, spearing out of the water like jet propelled missiles, then hastily re-entering the water. The crystal clear water allowed us to watch them even when they were below the surface.

Our first glimpse of Paulet Island is astonishing with its rookery containing over 1 million Adelie penguins. The din from the rookery floated across the water to the ship but the smell of the guano was overpowering. Paulet Island is arguably one of the largest Adelie rookeries to be found. Nothing could prepare us for such a sight.



We enjoyed a number of landings with visits to, Kjellman Cape (with a skeleton of a humpback whale on the beach), Cuverville Island (a rookery of Gentoo penguins, smaller than the Adelie), Peterman Island (an American base and were received with typical hospitality hot coffee and chocolate brownies). Deception Island is a volcanic island which allows the Khromov to sail right into the Caldera and has a thermal heated swimming area – who would have thought of swimming in Antarctica!

Experiencing 24hours of daylight was different. Because we were at the bottom of the earth, for those who rose before sunrise on a clear day were rewarded with 360degree views of mountain ridges silhouetted against a red and gold sea and sky. Breathtaking!



As well as the wildlife of seals – elephant, leopard, fur and weddell – penguins of all sizes, whales, birds, albatross, shearwater, petrel, skua etc. – there are the icebergs.

To be able to motor in a zodiac among a litter of iceberg is a rare experience. The magnificent colour of the water changing from grey to green, blue and white as the colour of the icebergs themselves change from clear ice to dark blue. Our zodiac dwarfed to a toy by the cluttered and jagged ice of all shapes and sizes.

The Antarctic is a visual feast. The glaciers, icebergs with their endless variety of shapes and sizes and colours and types and histories were a highlight. The penguins in the water on the ice floes in their massive rookeries which are an explosion of life and sometimes of death, the whales, the seabirds some of which I learned to recognise. The huge mountains occasionally glimpsed through cloud and mist.

The journey back across Drake Passage was scary. We encountered a storm as we approached and rounded Cape Horn. The waves were massive. To be on the bridge and watch the bow of the ship buried itself into the waves and then slowly raise up through the wave caused many shivers up and down one's spine!

Flying back to Sydney on a very clear day, the aircraft flies south to take advantage of the curvature of the earth. We were able to view the sea which looked like it had been covered with salt and pepper but was really covered with icebergs.

The Antarctic delivered to the end.

Garth Juster

Book Club



We welcome back the Book Club, hopefully setting a trend of reconvening in these difficult times.

Review of "Brooklyn" by Colm Toibin

Our dedicated book club team got stuck into "Brooklyn" with a diaspora of opinion second only to that of the Irish to England and America. This must have been grist for the mill, for the book and author were highly acclaimed and there resulted a successful movie which had been enjoyed by many in the club and so followed discussion about whether the finale differed from the book.

We all worked at social distancing and seeking out hidden meanings. A number of us read the book twice revealing some nuances not revealed in the first reading. Vince, Deirdre and Joan used words such as trite and pedestrian and Kay felt it was a simple enjoyable story. Dean summarised by opining that here was a naive girl from an isolated community in Ireland, thrust into the conflict of old and new.

And so we were led through poverty and grief; of an Irish family in a small town where the eldest daughter (Rose) will remain single and look after Mammy. The priest, a powerful force in the community, expedites the migration of the daughter Ailis to Brooklyn and finds her a job on the floor of a department store where antisemitism and racism are practised prodigiously and even a touch of sexual harassment occurs when Ailis is trying on swimsuits.

However, Ailis, who is delightful and innocent, works her way up in the store and studies law for her accountancy exam. She goes to the parish dance, but fearful of being a dowdy wallflower, leaves early having noted the couture of her compatriots. Next time at the dance she is attractive and ready, and Tony (the plumber) takes note and things progress to "love". Very unfortunately, Rose, her sister in Ireland expires and Ailis will need to return to Ireland. In the angst of grief and despair, Tony and Ailis consummate their relationship.

And so it's off to confession. Tony encourages her to marry him in a registry office.

Now the plot thickens, because Mammy is cunningly working on Ailis to care for her, little knowing that she is in fact married. In the meantime, one of the lads (Jim the publican) who Ailis didn't much like before her exodus from Ireland materialises out of the woodwork and a tryste develops, not unwillingly, with Ailis.

Now we have a dilemma, Ailis has a husband in Brooklyn, a suitor in Ireland and a scheming mother.

Decisions must be made——

Richard Jones

The next meeting is on Friday, August 21st, Hunters Hill Museum, 14:00. The Book of the month is "*The Fry Chronicles*" by Stephen Fry. Deirdre Walker will be providing afternoon tea.

Welfare Report

Well, back again with my report but still waiting for us all to get back together once more.

We had a committee meeting on Friday and wisely decided to cancel our August meeting. Needless to say it is uppermost in our thoughts that all our Probus family are kept as safe as possible and to that end we have cancelled our August meeting. So roll on September when we can try again.

There are a few people I would like to mention this month that are in my thoughts and I know you would like to hear about them.

Firstly, Vincie Wahlquist has had a successful hip replacement. She is in fantastic spirits, her op was very successful and she is in no pain. Vincie is being transferred to Hunters Hill hospital for rehab. Please feel free to call her.

Nancy has had a setback and has been re-admitted to RNS hospital. She is being very well cared for and I wish her a speedy recovery on behalf of all our members. Bruce is in Ashburn House Aged Care in Gladesville. I think of him often and have heard he is doing OK in this care home.

I spoke to Margaret Bowman yesterday, who, at the time was having lunch with David at the Opal Nursing Home in Chiswick. Thankfully he is doing well.

I keep in touch with Lew Grace and he tells me Bev is doing well. I spoke with her a week ago and she sounds very positive and is looking forward to a full recovery in time.

Carol Pelham, our Speaker Convenor, has not been that well for a while now but after speaking to her on Saturday she also sounds very positive and will be having ongoing treatment. It will take time and we wish her well.

To any other of our Probus friends who are not too well, all my very best wishes on behalf of all our members. I know of others who are having health difficulties at present but respect their wishes for privacy at these times.

Keep well, keep safe look after one another and be **HAPPY**.

Ashlyn

Isolation Humour

It is sad that the current situation has had a devastating effect on local shops and businesses but here is the story so far;

- The ladies underwear shop has gone bust
- The submersible manufacturer has gone under
- The food blender manufacturers have gone into liquidation
- The local dog kennels have called in the retrievers.
- The local paper company has folded
- The tarmac company has reached the end of the road
- The bread suppliers have run out of dough
- The clockmakers have had to wind down and this has sent them cuckoo
- The local Chinese has been taken away
- The shoe shop proprietor has put his foot down and given his staff the boot
- The laundrette has been taken to the cleaners

Immutable Laws

Throughout time, human experience with the elements of our society have provided a history of repeatable occurrences. These occurrences then become accepted as Laws that govern our life. Here is a digest of the most obvious (and important) of those Laws:

- **Law of Mechanical Repair** - After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch and you'll have to pee.
- **Law of Gravity** - Any tool, nut, bolt, screw, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible place in the universe.
- **Law of Probability** - The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.
- **Law of Random Numbers** - If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal - and someone always answers.
- **Law of Variation** - If you change lines (or traffic lanes), the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now (works every time).
- **Law of the Bath** - When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone rings.
- **Law of Close Encounters** - The probability of meeting someone you know INCREASES dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.
- **Law of the Result** - When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, IT WILL!!!
- **Law of Biomechanics** - The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.
- **Law of the Theatre & Hockey Arena** - At any event, the people whose seats are furthest from the aisle, always arrive last. They are the ones who will leave their seats several times to go for food, beer, or the toilet and who leave early before the end of the performance or the game is over. The folks in the aisle seats come early, never move once, have long gangly legs or big bellies and stay to the bitter end of the performance. The aisle people also are very surly folk.
- **The Law of Coffee** - As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.
- **Murphy's Law of Lockers** - If there are only 2 people in a locker room, they will have adjacent lockers.
- **Law of Physical Surfaces** - The chances of an open-faced jelly sandwich landing face down on a floor, are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet or rug.
- **Law of Logical Argument** - Anything is possible IF you don't know what you are talking about.
- **Law of Physical Appearance** - If the clothes fit, they're ugly.
- **Law of Public Speaking** - A close mouth gathers no foot.
- **Law of Commercial Marketing Strategy** - As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it, OR the store will stop selling it.
- **Law of Doctors'** - If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor, by the time you get there you'll feel better.. But don't make an appointment, and you'll stay sick

And as we pointed out in the last issue

- **O'Shaughnessy's Law** - Murphy was an optimist