



# NEWSLETTER

## PROBUS CLUB VANCOUVER

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Clubs for retired and semi-retired professional and business persons, former executives and others

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**Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 9, 2003**

**Time: 9:30am**

**Location: H.R. MacMillan Planetarium and Space Centre, Lower Level**

**Speaker: Pat Jacobsen**

**Chief Executive Officer, Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority**

**DECEMBER 2003**

**Minutes of Wednesday, November 17, 2003**

**Attendance: 122 and 6 guests and a special guest Dr. Lima (a visiting member of Dr. Warnock's team) from Brazil.**

In the absence of the President our "backup quarterback," **Gordon Thom**, presided.

**John Hoyle** called eight new members (**George Toye, Hank Levelt, Gordon Armstrong, Frank Borkenhagen, Colin Dobell, John Banfield, Alan Newmarch, and Jerry Wenner**) to the stage where each introduced himself by way of a mini "bio". **George Adams** advised that the December speaker (originally scheduled for last June), **Pat Jacobsen**, CEO of Translink, would try again and **Art Jones** "retro'd" by reminding us that Red "Rock & Roll" Robinson would do the January lunch gig at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club on January 13th and **Fred Cotton** spoke of February and

Afghanistan when the speaker's topic will be the country not the month.

**Dr. Bill Ibbott** introduced our speakers (the Club's first "twofer") Drs. Keith Dawson and Garth Warnock with Dr. Dawson speaking first and giving the Club an overview and background on diabetes, (diabetes Mellitus - the sweet disease), and Dr. Warnock following with a description of his participation with a research team that led to a consecutive series of persons achieving insulin independence after islet cell transplantation.

Diabetes (Type I and Type II) is a disease of blood sugar i.e. blood sugar level is constantly higher. Type II now the major type of diabetes as a result, largely, of lifestyle, obesity and aging population. Type I generally affect those

under 35 with Type II generally affecting those over 35 (aboriginals of all ages are hard hit). Time and again, during the course of his remarks, Dr. Dawson would return to his main theme that heredity, environment, lack of exercise (obesity) were the causes of Type II with the cause of Type I not really known yet. The connection between diabetes and other major health problems e.g. blindness, kidney disease, heart, stroke, vascular disease is very high. Obesity in our young (junk food etc). The vast increase in obesity since 1990 in the U.S. The Word "crisis" was frequently used by Dr. Dawson and the necessity to rethink our nutritional and physical activity or (lack thereof) was of critical importance.

Type II diabetes is very time consuming (insulin etc.) and requires research, research and research with the B.C. government not approving drugs etc. because of their high cost but Dr. Dawson felt that within 5 to 8 years that solution would be found.

Dr. Warnock, then outlined the background to islet transplantation and Type I diabetes. Transplantation involves groups of cells (islets) in the pancreas that produce insulin. Various protocols (the first islet transplantation in the lower mainland was in March of 2003!) have resulted in improved islet isolation and in vitro culture (non immediate transplantations allowing doctor and patient to plan for operation) but with "challenges" such as the source of donor tissue (about 10 a year as source), survival of transplanted islets and the reduction or elimination of anti-rejection. In November of

this year some nine transplant procedures in five patients with Type I diabetes. The "players" on the Islet team are U.B.C. Ike Barber, Vancouver Hospital Research Foundation, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Canadian Foundation for Innovation, P.A. Woodward Foundation and B.C. Transplant Society.

Dr. Warnock then gave the Club "proof" of his remarks by introducing Ann Vaincourt an islet cell infusion patient, who movingly told us of growing up with Type I diabetes, of her 35 years with insulin (she is now 47), of her early feelings of loss of self esteem (I felt a "failure"), the glass hypo and how, after her transplant she didn't have to think about sitting down to eat a meal or any of the myriad "problems" she faced before her operation ("the spontaneity of my life was very limited" before and now "each day is a gift"). Ann Vaincourt is no longer a diabetic.

Questions covered renewable source for cells (some work has been done with pig pancreas), stem cells, transplantation (must be "live" i.e. cells from living person), family members donating (problems because donating involves certain loss of donator's pancreas), cost (islet transplant about \$30,000 a year), website (around December 15 - [www.Diabetes.ca](http://www.Diabetes.ca))

**Dr. Stan Stordy**  
thanked all our speakers.

**Denis Creighton, Secretary**



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I would like to thank Gord Thom for taking the November meeting.

I am sure that he did not forget anything as I did. If you have not paid your annual dues, please do so now.

We have lost a few members within the year, however, have gained quite a few. The Club has new names on the wait list again, so at the first of the year, we will have a Management meeting to sort out the membership list.

The Presidents Luncheon will be January 13th. Please phone the office to confirm your attendance. We have to have the correct numbers close to that date for catering purposes, as the Club must pay for the numbers committed.

Tom McCusker

## **VICE-PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

As back-up quarterback, I had to fill in for our traveling President at our last meeting. Regarding that meeting and on behalf of all members present, I wish to thank Bill Ibbott, Speakers Chair Fred Cotton and anyone else who had a hand in arranging the two world class speakers who informed us on Diabetes and the latest break through in the treatment of that disease. The presentation again showed that in BC we are on the leading edge of innovation and discovery. The topic seems to be of great interest to all attending. I am sure that those who were absent will be told by friends present that they missed another stimulating and informative Probus meeting.

Our thanks also to Chris Lee and others that led us through the West End and helped us discover that area's old and restored historic treasures. Outings like this are the real bonuses of

having Probus memberships. Thanks Chris! Next we hope to see many of you at the Orpheum tour organized by Art Jones on December 3.

As Chair for the October meeting I was pleased to welcome several new members into the Club including some long-term friends and classmates going back to my university days. Thanks to John Hoyle and the Membership Committee for introducing these new contributors to the Club.

Next month we will welcome back our President. We hope that he and his wife had a great cruise around the tip of South America.

## **NOTICES**

### **MEMBER SERVICES DESK:**

Bill Weatherall

**GREETERS:** Don Milliken, Tremayne Perry

**CASH DESK:** Frank Willis, Lorne Bohlman

*It is with regret we announce the passing of **Fred Joplin** and **Raul Ryan**. Our condolences to their families. A donation to the BC Heart and Stroke Foundation and St. Paul's Hospital, palliative care, will be made in their respective names by Probus.*

## **PRESIDENTS' LUNCHEON**

The Presidents' Luncheon will be held once again at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club following the regular meeting on 13th January. Attendees will be assured of an interesting and entertaining meeting amongst friends in a most spectacular setting.

For members, the cost of the lunch will be \$20.00, which is being subsidized by PROBUS CLUB. Guests will be charged the full amount. Please bring cash or your cheque to the YACHT CLUB. The guest fee will be announced at the December meeting.

