



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: Wednesday May 12, 2004

MAY 2004

Time: 9:30am

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

Speaker: Michael A. Goldberg

Minutes of Wednesday April 14, 2004

Attendance: Members 112 and Guests 4

Dr. Tom McCusker (finally showed up) chaired the meeting. Your minutes this issue will not be as flamboyant as our very distinguished Secretary - Denis Creighton - we wish him a speedy recovery. I have been given the task for this meeting - please bare with me.

Our guest speaker Ken Carty, of the Citizens Assembly - He is the Chief Research Officer.

Tom opened the meeting with reports from all committees. All guests were introduced and welcomed by us all.

Fred Cotton gave us an update of our future speakers. Fred has done an outstanding job in providing us with most topical and interesting speakers. Keep it up Fred!

Don Hudson introduced our speaker - Mr. Ken Carty the Chief Research Officer of the Citizen's

Assembly.

Mr. Carty outlined the duties and responsibilities of the Council:

1. Formed by the Provincial Government in the spring of 2003 with a clear mandate. It is to assess models for electing members of the Legislative Assembly and specifically the "manner in which votes are translated into seats in the Legislative Assembly."

If an Assembly concludes that an alternative model to the one now used ought to be adopted then they will make a recommendation which will be put to a referendum for the Province's voters on May 17, 2005.

Any change the commission recommends must be "consistent with both the constitution of Canada and the Westminster Parliamentary System."

The Citizens Assembly was established by an Order-In-Council.

It involves and is open to all British Columbians.

Jack Blaney was designated to chair the Assembly. The Assembly is carefully balanced by gender and age and includes individuals from all electoral districts. There are 160 individuals who were randomly selected from the Provincial voters list.

The Assembly's work is divided into three phases.

Stage 1 - The first, now completed, involved detail study of the range of electoral systems used in modern democracies.

Stage 2 - The second phase of the Assembly's work will involve listening carefully to the views of all British Columbians.

Stage 3 - Scheduled for the fall 2004, the Assembly will meet to hear formal presentations on the merits of alternative systems and then discuss and debate those issues.

The Assembly to-date has had six busy weekends from January to March. These were working sessions to become familiar with the various systems.

Some of the different systems studied:

1. Majority Systems - as in France or Australia.
2. Plurality System as in Canada or India.
3. Proportional Representation by list systems as in Finland or the Netherlands.
4. Proportional representation by transferral vote systems as in Ireland or Australia.
5. Mixed Systems as in Germany or Japan.

Each system has it's advantages and disadvantages.

Our present system:

STRENGTHS - Current system provides for individuals to be elected representing specific and identifiable areas. This allows politicians to speak authoritatively for their area.

WEAKNESS of present system - single member plurality system has no direct connection between the number of votes the party receives and the number of seats it wins in the L.A. What kind of voting system do you want in B.C.?

The Assembly is holding 49 public hearings in communities around the Province. It is also accepting written submissions.

This is our chance to get involved and voice your opinion!

Tom McCusker thanked the speaker after answering many questions.

A great meeting.

Pidge McBride

NOTICES

MAY GREETERS: John Beveridge, Cliff Wyatt, Leon Pond

MEMBER SERVICE DESK: Bill Weatherall

CASH DESK: Jack Croll, Jim McPherson

VISITS & ENTERTAINMENT

HARRISON HOT SPRINGS BOAT/COACH TOUR

We have now finalized arrangements for this tour which is being conducted by Starline Tours on Monday, May 31.

We will assemble at New Westminster Quay and board the boat at 7:00 am. We will cruise up the Fraser River, into Harrison Lake and disembark to the Harrison Hot Springs Hotel at about 2:00 pm. Lunch will be provided on board.

From Harrison, we travel by bus, stopping at Mission for a conducted tour of Westminster Abbey, and return to New Westminster Quay, arriving at about 5:30 pm. Probus Club has chartered the whole boat, the capacity of which is 40 persons. Spaces will be allocated in order of receipt of applications. Even if you did submit an earlier expression of interest, it is important that you submit the enclosed Application Form, together with your payment, as early as possible.

The cost of this trip will be \$115.00 per person or \$230.00 per couple.

TRIP TO DIAMOND MINE IN NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Considerable interest has been expressed in this trip to the Diavik Diamond Mine Inc. - one of the two diamond mines operating in the NWT, some 300 km. northeast of Yellowknife.

Participants will leave Vancouver by schedule airline early on Tuesday, July 13, arrive Yellowknife about noon and view one or two of the diamond cutting facilities in Yellowknife, "overnighting" there.

On the morning of July 14 we travel to the mine site by charter and view the pit operation and the process plant (unfortunately, the recovery area is off-limits) before flying back to Yellowknife and catching a flight back to Vancouver, via Edmonton, arriving during the evening of July 14.

The mine can handle a maximum of 25 people.

The cost of this trip will depend on the number of participants but is expected to be in the order of \$1,300 per head, including an allowance for accommodation costs in Yellowknife



If you require more information, please contact Don Codville (604 929 3650) or Doug Lambert.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To Most Of The Members:

Seeing as golf is one of our most important occupations, I thought you might be interested in this book.

A friend just told me about a new instructional Golf Book by Bobby Rusher. I haven't seen a copy yet, however I did see a flyer, and from the list of chapters, it looks like it might be one in which you might have some interest. The title is "How to Line Up Your 4th Putt" by BOBBY RUSHER.

Here are some of the more notable chapters:

- A. How to hit a Top Flite from the rough when you hit a Titleist from the tee.
- B. How to avoid the water when you lie 8 in the bunker.
- C. How to get more distance out of a shank.
- D. Using your shadow on the greens to maximize earnings.
- E. Proper etiquette when you are playing with a complete jerk.
- F. Crying and how to handle it.
- G. How to rationalize a 7 hour round.
- H. How to find the ball that everyone else saw go in the water.
- I. Why your wife no longer cares that you birdied the 4th.
- J. How to let a foursome play through your twosome without getting embarrassed.
- K. How to relax when you've hitting five off the tee.
- L. When to suggest swing corrections to your opponent.
- M. God and the meaning of the double bogey.

Bobby is now working on the book's sequel, "When to Re-grip Your Ball Retriever."

Tom McCusker

HIGHER AND TO THE RIGHT

PROBE #17 MARCH 2004

In June 1997 the first of 16 so-called "Probes" appeared in the Newsletter. These were full-page opinion pieces vented monthly more or less anonymously as mild entertainments (since earnest pontifications they would not have been of the least interest to aged and jaded Probusites).

Topics ranged from unintentionally funny signs on our streets (such as the "Minimum Height" warning over the entrance to the Pacific Center) to the anally retentive Politically Correct who could not bring themselves to honour our heritage even to the extent of allowing gifts to be distributed at needy schools because (it being Christmas) they were labeled with the C-word. Hilarious sex education for the very young, on the one hand, and, on the other, the strains put on paralytically bored families by genealogists in their midst-these were page fillers, as were Vancouver's cheerless casinos, accountants (also cheerless, as distinct from jolly accountants), lawyers, judges and other quaint things around town, including, for instance, academics in over their heads.

This time 'round, things will be more sporadic and coughed up only when the spirit moves and space permits, as now, with this repeat protest against experts sounding off outside their area of expertise. It is offered out of a sense of outrage. Well, maybe more as a flatulent fume. A stale Alka-Seltzer actually. Anyway, for what it's worth...

In my sights this time are two Cambridge gene mechanics with Dickensian names, Crick and Watson, who

recently made a break-through in SARS research and just finished celebrating the 50th anniversary of their brilliant discovery of the structure of DNA. These two, both life-long atheists, are quoted as saying that a couple of the principal beliefs of religion (set up by them as straw men) have now been rendered invalid by their discoveries, namely, "the difference between living and non-living things (now replaced by continuity), and the phenomenon of consciousness", as if these were the be-all and end-all of religion - and as if the finding of Crick and Watson will remain the unchanging and absolute truth forever. Then comes a surprising juvenile crusher from Crick: "It's astonishing to me that people continue to accept religious claims. People like myself get along perfectly well with no religious views." This statement of course invites the obvious question of how he can possibly know he is (or for that matter, is not) getting along "perfectly well" this is supremely well, when he has never tried it. As for old-hat attempts to disprove the existence of God by citing evolution, scientist Francis Collins recently turned a nice phrase when he remarked, only half jokingly, that evolution was in fact a rather elegant way for God to create a species with whom he could have fellowship!

Peeve for the day by GB. Please note and file as convenient. Don't be rude.

MICHAEL A. GOLDBERG

Michael A. Goldberg is the Associate Vice President International at the University of British Columbia. He is also the H.R. Fullerton Professor of Urban Land Policy in the Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration at U.B.C. He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. and graduated from Brooklyn College with a BA (Cum Laude) in Economics and did his MA and Phd in Economics at the University of California at Berkeley. He came to UBC Commerce 1968 and was Dean of the Faculty from 1991 to 1997.

From August 1988 to June 1991 he was on leave from UBC to serve as Executive Director, IFC Vancouver, a provincially sponsored body promoting Vancouver as an international financial centre.

He has strong links to Asia arising from his research two decades ago on Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese and their real estate investment behavior and culture.

His research interest have been broad over the past three decades exploring: International financial, investment and business issues.

He also did extensive research for the BC government to build Vancouver as an international financial centre

His diverse work in housing, property markets and policy has resulted in his advising businesses, trade associations and governments at all levels globally. He has wholly or partly authored 9 books and more than 200 academic and professional articles.