



NEWSLETTER

PROBUS CLUB VANCOUVER

#252-2025 West 42nd Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 2B5 Phone and Fax (604)261-6818
Clubs for retired and semi-retired professional and business persons, former executives and others

...to find more about Probud go to www.probus.org

July 2008

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Next Meeting: Tuesday July 8th, 2008

Time: 9:30 AM

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

Speaker: Ian F. Thomas

Topic : Retail: The New Gathering Place

UPCOMING EVENTS

**August 21st - Capilano Historic Watershed
Bus Tour**

Ian F. Thomas

*Chairman, Thomas
Consultants Inc.*



Ian F. Thomas is
Chairman of Thomas
Consultants Inc., a firm
which specializes in the
planning and
development of large

scale retail projects.

Formed in 1979, Thomas
Consultants operates two offices in
Vancouver, Canada (head office) and
Brisbane, Australia.

The firm has undertaken major
projects in over 50 countries where it acts
for some of the largest developers and
retailers in the world. As development
strategists, the firm prides itself on the
'bricks and mortar' that result from its
planning programs. Thomas Consultants'
success is based on its mandate of
"making projects work".

Mr. Thomas is sought around the
world for speaking engagements together
with interviews by all aspects of the media

– Television, radio, newspaper, and
magazines on retail/shopping center
issues.

A graduate of York University
(Toronto, Canada) and a Certified Public
Accountant, Mr. Thomas has authored
award winning articles for organizations
such as Urban Land Institute in
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Thomas sits on the Board of
Trustees of the International Council of
Shopping Centers (ICSC) in New York.
He also sits on their Foundation Board. In
addition, he is the Chairman of ICSC's
International Design & Development
Awards program. In 1989 he started the
"Whistler Winter Conference", which
today attracts over 3,000 delegates. In
2002, he also initiated "The Leading
Edge" Conference in Vail, Colorado now
called REvent.

In terms of other board positions,
Mr. Thomas has served as Director of
Coast Appliances Ltd; Downtown Parking
Corporation; CityXpress.com; Urban
Development Institute; Vancouver Opera
and Future Shop.

Minutes of the June 10th Meeting

Attendance: 160 members and guests

President **Ted Daem** greeted members at 10.00 a.m., cheerfully opening the meeting. He announced first that the work of developing job descriptions for each management position had been completed. A formal deputy for each position will also be appointed. Secondly, management was exploring the use of paid help. **Bill Manson**, Treasurer, announced there was nothing to report. **Bill Weatherall** is editing the next Newsletter in **Roy Williams'** absence. The Capilano Watershed tour scheduled for August 21, 2008, is detailed in the Newsletter.

David Rolfe introduced the speaker, Marc Edge, Professor of Journalism at Sam Houston State University, Texas, who spoke on "Vancouver News Media: Remote Controlled from Winnipeg". Highlighting material from his book, *Asper Nation: Canada's Most Dangerous Media Company* (Vancouver 2007), Professor Edge presented an expectedly trenchant and lucid expose of how newspaper and media ownership in Canada -- especially the West-- has increasingly been consolidated and come to rest in the hands of Can-West Global Communications, a media network owned by the Asper family of Winnipeg. Partly because of the politically activist and interventionist character of the owners and consequent selective reporting, partly from the simple mechanism of consolidation and concentration, diversity of perspectives on events has been dangerously suppressed in the media. The resulting restriction of the free marketplace of ideas poses a clear threat to democracy.

For his entertaining and brief but densely supported and far-reaching presentation Professor Edge began with the historical background of Vancouver's press. At one time it

consisted of three newspapers, one left, one centrist, one right, but now it consists of two newspapers, one right and one far right. Although the merger of *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* in 1957 (together with the closure of the *News Herald*) was subsequently investigated by the Restrictive Trades Practices Commission and declared illegal in 1960, it was allowed to stand as an "economic necessity". This history of ownership and subsequent consolidation of ownership, first to Thompson and then to Southam in 1980, is the subject of Professor Edge's first book, *Pacific Press: The Unauthorized Story of Vancouver's Newspaper Monopoly*.

While the issue of consolidation of ownership of media has been the subject of Royal Commissions and public debate, which recognize that some diversity of media ownership is necessary for the public good, nevertheless consolidation of ownership has continued, along with evident instances of politically motivated intervention. Examples are first Conrad Black and then, after Black was obliged by foreign ownership restrictions to sell, "Izzy" Asper notoriously firing the publisher of the *Ottawa Citizen* for calling on Jean Chretien to resign in 2002. Professor Edge documented a long list of obvious political interventions by Can West, including lawsuits against Rafe Mair and *The Tyee* and Mordecai Briemberg, a retired college professor activist for the Palestinians. *AdBusters* magazine has called Can West a "media bully". For example, Can West and the Aspers have consistently demonstrated support for a single political perspective in partisan politics, defended support for Israel, and extended their influence

over university journalism schools. One consequence of tightening ownership, and the political agenda of the ownership, has been that Freedom House has ranked Canada progressively lower in its global ranking of press independence. Canada now ranks twenty-fifth, behind Estonia, Monaco, and St. Vincent & The Grenadines. Not even Marc Edge can now get a job in a Canadian university journalism department.

In response to questions Professor Edge clarified that the problem is not that media have a bias. Part of the problem is the false advertising of claiming, for example, that Fox News is "fair and balanced". Every-one has some bias. The problem is excessive control, the lack of diversity of perspectives. Media function to sway public opinion, as in Black's *National Post* campaign to "unite the right". The absence of diversity weakens the democratic process. The *National Post* was an excellent newspaper but under Asper's cost cutting is a mere shell of what it was. Professor Edge judged that Canadian media have migrated towards

the right. Thus a conservative paper like the *Globe and Mail* which has not changed now looks centrist. A related problem is foreign ownership of media, which the Aspers promote against clear concerns over national autonomy. In response to a suggestion from the audience, Professor Edge conducted a straw poll as to whether the audience thought our Vancouver papers now are politically right or left. The great majority of the audience perceived our papers as left of centre, leading Professor Edge to comment amusingly on the demographics of the group. The poll of course demonstrated his central point that everyone has a bias and therefore diversity of perspectives is essential to maintain an independent and informed citizenry.

Jim Helmcken thanked the speaker for a lucid, detailed, amusingly provocative and controversial presentation. With a reminder again of the Watershed tour and lunch with our speaker at Malone's immediately following, President Ted Daem adjourned the meeting.

Lindsay Mann,
Secretary

Table 25 Market Share and Cross-Ownership in Nine Local Markets, 2002			
Market	Ownership Group	Market share (%)	
		Newscasts	Dailies
Quebec	Quebecor	47.1	56.2
Toronto	Bell Globemedia	43.8	18.3
Toronto	CanWest Global	33.0	11.5
Anglophone Montreal	CanWest Global	5.0	100.0
Francophone Montreal	Quebecor	37.1	60.4
Regina	CanWest Global	28.3	100.0
Saskatoon	CanWest Global	15.3	100.0
Calgary	CanWest Global	32.2	57.8
Edmonton	CanWest Global	39.7	60.0
Vancouver	CanWest Global	70.6	100.0
Source: Centre d'études sur les médias, "Media Ownership in Canada," Report prepared for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 5 February 2003.			

PRESIDENTIAL FORUM



We are now officially in the summer season. Whether you are at home, attending monthly PROBUS meetings, at the cottage or vacationing at some exotic spot, enjoy your summer.

PROBUS membership is the best ticket in town, Where can you get a cup of coffee, a donut, hear a truly world class speaker and enjoy fellowship all for five dollars. You have no responsibility, no attendance is taken, and you don't have to sell apples on the street corner to raise money. Just come and have a great morning with your pals. For those that want a little more, there is always an open invitation to join other PROBUS members for lunch immediately following each meeting. Lunch is at MALONE'S located at Cornwall and Yew St. The fare served is good and prices are reasonable. Often the guest speaker will join us.

If you are thinking of nominating someone from the floor for a position on our executive I will announce deadlines for applications at the July meeting.

For those that have not seen the historic Capilano watershed I recommend you take advantage of this tour on AUGUST 21st 2008 It is amazing, beautiful and vast. This is the only way that one can view and understand the area and it is FREE

Good health, see you at the July meeting.

Ted

NOTICES

Member Services Desk: Tremayne Perry

Cash Desk: Duthie Welsford, Grover Sinclair

Greeters: Lloyd Doidge, Bob Cowan, Stan Clarke

REMINDER CAPLANO HISTORIC WATERSHED BUS TOUR THURSDAY AUGUST 21, 2008

ASSEMBLE: prior to 12:15pm at the Upper Grouse Mountain Parking Lot.

BUS LEAVES at 12:30pm sharp.

- Wear comfortable, durable and waterproof clothing and sturdy footwear. (the watershed is often cooler and wetter than anywhere else in the region)
- There are no food and drink facilities in the watershed, so you may want to bring a snack and water.
- Outdoor toilets are provided at most tour spots.

Because of the popularity of this tour we have to limit it to members only. 31 members have registered for the tour leaving room for an additional 11 members. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SIGN UP FOR THE TOUR, CONTACT JACK FARLEY TELEPHONE: 604-922-1530 or by email, jack.farley@shaw.ca

House Keeping

The Space Centre has mentioned something which seems to bother them and that is: When our members park they seem to overlap the marked parking spots and this decreases the number of parking spots.

Also, diplomatically, some of our our members miss out paying the \$5.00 fee at meetings. It is easy to do if they come in and there is a line to pay, so they hang up their coats first and then get caught up in conversation and don't pay. it's not a big problem but it seems to be growing.