



# NEWSLETTER

# PROBUS CLUB VANCOUVER

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

March 2009

...to find more about Probus go to [www.probus.org](http://www.probus.org)

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**Next Meeting:** March 10th 2009

**Time:** 9:30 AM

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

**Speaker:** Dr. Michael Byers

**Topic :** ARTIC SOVEREIGNTY AND THE FUTURE OF  
CANADA

## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 5th – Vancouver Olympic Centre

Tour of Facility plus World Junior Curling  
Championship Opening Ceremonies And First  
Draw

April 8th – Vancouver Convention Centre

Tour

## DR. MICHAEL BYERS



Michael Byers holds a  
Canada Research  
Chair in Global Politics  
and International Law  
at the University of  
British Columbia. In  
addition to being a

tenured professor in the political science  
department he has served as Academic  
Director of the Liu Institute for Global  
Issues. He spent seven years teaching at  
Oxford and Cambridge Universities and five  
years at Duke University in Durham, North  
Carolina, as professor of law and Director of  
Canadian Studies From 1996-1999, he  
was a Research Fellow at Jesus College,

Oxford University.

Dr. Byers' work focuses on the  
interaction of international law and politics,  
particularly with respect to human rights,  
international organizations, the use of  
military force, the Arctic, and  
Canada-United States relations. He has  
published six books, dozens of academic  
papers and more than 100 op-ed articles in  
international newspapers, the Globe and  
Mail, National Post, Toronto Star and  
Ottawa Citizen.

He is currently writing a book on  
Arctic Sovereignty and the Future of  
Canada.



**Fred Cotton**  
Our first and  
founding President  
in 1997 was  
beyond question a  
significant driving

force within the Probus Club Vancouver  
from day one up to the day he died. On  
January 15th 2002 Pidge McBride

presented a Honourary Life  
Membership to Fred for "his notable  
effort in the founding of, and his  
ongoing contribution to the Probus Club  
– Vancouver". Fred succeeded Brice  
Macdougall, our first Speakers Chair in  
2001 and held that position and

served on the Management Committee of the Club until the day he died, February 4th.

Fred who never seemed other than cheerful, willing, intellectually involved and in good health arrived home from Hawaii with his wife Bette late Monday, February 2nd. On Tuesday morning he was contributing, in his usual enthusiastic but irrepressible style, to our Management Committee Meeting. On Wednesday morning, February 4th, he was with the Probus Book Club which he recently helped start. He then had lunch with Jerry Wennes, a Probus member, and was expected, as my bridge partner, at our Probus / Rotary Group that evening. Past President Norm Weitzel, who was among the members who had a phone conversation with Fred that week mentioned the many little things that Fred did and specifically the Tim Bits which Fred, on his own initiative, started picking up and bringing to the Stanley Park Pavilion meeting to have with coffee. Next meeting think of Fred as you enjoy your Tim Bit! Fred and his red sweater will be greatly missed at our Club meetings and his immense contribution to Probus Club Vancouver will be difficult if not impossible to replace. He will be long remembered for: his mentoring and support of our members, especially new entrants; for his enthusiastic vision for the Club; for his tireless efforts on behalf of our members and for the ideals of Probus.

Gordon Thom, Historian and Archivist

#### **Report of the February 10 Meeting**

Attendance: 167 members and guests

**President George Adams** called the meeting to order at 10:0AM.

The Chairman advised the meeting of the sudden death of **Fred Cotton**, one of the founders of the Club in 1997, and the Chairman of the Speakers Committee. He spoke of Fred's dedication to the well being of our Club, saying that

there would never be another "Fred", and that the high caliber of his speakers was one of the reasons for the success of our Club.

The annual Valentine Luncheon was cancelled because Fred Cotton's service was to be on the day for which it was scheduled. The tour of the new Vancouver Convention Centre will be on Wednesday 8 April 2009. It was "sold out" at the meeting with 75 members signed up. The Chairman announced a meeting of the Executive Committee and Speakers Committee which was held on Thursday 12 February 2009 at 9:30AM to consider a replacement chairman for Fred Cotton, and other matters relating to the Speakers Committee. **Don Newman**, the Chairman of the Membership Committee introduced the five new members (see "Welcome to our New Members" inside).

**Dr. Alexander Moens**, a professor at Simon Fraser University and Senior Fellow at the Fraser Institute, was introduced by John Rawsthorne. Dr. Moens topic was Obama & Canada.

#### **President Obama's Political Personality:**

President Obama's personality is revealed in his first book "Dreams From My Father". He is intelligent and thoughtful. His father is from Kenya, his mother is from Texas and Kansas. He is a graduate of the University of Hawaii and Harvard University Law School. He is a great politician who, with his advisors, used masterful strategies and tactics to become the President of the United States.

His personality is further revealed in his second book, "The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream". He searches for compromise and pragmatic coalition, without rigidity. **US Troubles are Canadian Troubles:** Canada cannot escape US troubles. Like the US stockmarket, Canada's stock market dropped by about 40% in the past year; Canada's banking system is not as weak as the US, but there is trouble in both the US and the Canadian banking

systems. Both countries had a decline of approximately 4% in GDP in the 3rd quarter of 2008. Dr. Moens presented a chart showing that since 1980, the percentage change in real GDP in Canada mirrored that of the United States.

He said that the United States is troubled by triple deficits: government deficits, trade deficits, and social program deficits, all growing significantly in the past few years from approximately 3.6% under President Reagan, to 4.4% under President Clinton, to 6.1% under President George W. Bush. He stated that the unfunded indebtedness of the United States is about 8% of GDP, comprised of obligations for Medicare, Medicaid and social security, rising to a projected and unsustainable 30% of GDP in 2030.

**Foreign Policy:** Dr. Moens said that there were four main foreign policy problems that President Obama has to deal with: (a) The rising nuclear power of Iran, which is having and will have a major impact on diplomacy in the whole of the Mid-East; (b) Withdrawal from Iraq without leaving instability; (c) War in Afghanistan, and supplies to the Taliban through Pakistan; and (d) A rising cold war with Russia.

#### **Obama's Statements during the Election Campaign:**

Dr. Moens stated that during the presidential campaign Sen. Obama's comments did not bode well for Canada. Sen. Obama's trade policy statements were unfavourable for NAFTA, but he had others whisper to Canada that they were mainly to counter the campaign of Hillary Clinton, who was very close to organized labour. He also spoke about his concern for "bad oil" and for a "cap and trade" system for control of carbon emissions.

Sen. Obama also proposed that the U.S. spend approximately six times as much on border security. He proposed to promote

alternative forms of energy, particularly wind and solar energy to reduce the reliance on imported oil and gas from Canada and other countries.

He proposed to raise taxes on the wealthy, lower interest rates and spend to stimulate the economy.

**Early Presidential Activity:** Dr. Moens said that there was good news in the early statements and actions of President Obama, back-pedaling from some of the statements that he made during the presidential campaign.

He appointed special envoys / advisors including Paul Volker for the economy, Richard Holbrook for Pakistan and Afghanistan, and George Mitchell for the Middle East. He is engaging with the Republicans on the proposed stimulus bill in Congress and is closing the Guantanamo Bay prison. His first international visit is to Canada.

Dr. Moens said that one of the main threats to Canada by the US arises out its trade deficit with Canada. The manufacturing and energy sectors of the Canadian economy depend on the success of NAFTA. He says that NAFTA needs revising, that the goal should be to create a North American Standards and Regulatory Area (NASRA), that there should be an integrated manufacturing supply chain for all industry, as there is now for the automotive industry. He says that a security perimeter to control immigration, drugs, crime and guns would help avoid Canada - US cross border problems.

Dr. Moens says that Canada should harmonize a global warming cross-border strategy, with harmonized carbon tax and cap and trade system. **Questions:** After questions about the US deficit, the sources of US oil imports, Arctic sovereignty, and



China / US relations (China holds US\$681.1 billion in US treasury securities), Phillip Owen thanked the speaker for his excellent address.

The meeting then terminated.

Ted Horsey, Secretary

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Although our monthly meetings provide opportunities for fellowship amongst members, the foundation of the meetings is the speakers' programme.

The high quality of our guest speakers is testament to the efforts of the Committee and its leadership which, was provided by Brice McDougall until 2001 when he was succeeded by Fred Cotton.

As you will understand, the sudden death of Fred Cotton, whose enormous contribution to Probus is recalled elsewhere in this Newsletter, has left a vast hole in the Club and particularly in the Speakers' Committee. My first objective is to ensure there are no evident gaps in the programme, especially as it relates to speakers, my second objective is to appoint a Chairman of the Committee. Needless to say, this has a high priority.

Fred's sudden departure affirms the steps made last year to formalize the organization of the Probus Club of Vancouver, defining the functions of each Committee and executive member and ensuring succession. Although the efforts of Jack Farley and Ted Daem were not readily received by all, the validity and their foresight are very clear now.

*Skill comes so slow, and life so fast doth fly,  
We learn so little and forget so much.*

Sir John Davies, Nosce Teipsum, 1599

## NOTICES

**Member Services Desk:** Bill Sexsmith  
**Cash Desk:** Jim McWilliams Dick Beck  
**Greeters:** John Banfield, Hank Levelt

### Welcome New Members

Dr. Graham Clay – General Surgeon

Dr. Jack Harrigan - Physician

Roy Mitten – Electrical Engineer

Robert Ross – Professional Engineer

Robert Snowdon – Teacher/Developer

Hon. Allan Thackray – Lawyer/Judge

It is with regret we announce the passing of: Bill Domoulin on Feb. 11th, Fred Cotton Feb 4th and Ralph Conlin on Feb 8th. Our condolences to their families. Donations will be made by Probus to: BC Cancer Society, Rotary International Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation.

## New Convention Centre Tour Wednesday, April 8th – 10:00AM

### **SOLD OUT!**

Warren Buckley, President and CEO of BCPavcorp has been kind enough to offer Probus Club Vancouver a preview of the new facility. The tour will be one of the first prior to the official opening. The event was restricted to 75 members and "sold out" in 30 minutes at the February meeting. The lucky participants will be advised by e-mail or phone about parking, access and assembly area by John Cruickshank. (778)330-7617.