



NEWSLETTER

PROBUS CLUB OF VANCOUVER

PO Box 74539, KITSILANO, Vancouver, BC, V6K 4P4

Enriching members with topical, entertaining speakers and social activities

www.probusvancouver.com

December, 2015

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Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 8th
Time: 9:30 am
Location: H.R. MacMillan Planetarium and Space Centre, Lower Level
Speaker: Duncan Davies, CEO of Interfor
Topic: Challenges and Opportunities facing the BC Lumber Industry

DUNCAN DAVIES, CEO OF INTERFOR



Mr. Davies has been the President of Interfor since 1998 and Chief Executive Officer since 2000. Prior to joining the Company in 1998, Mr. Davies was a Vice President of an investment

banking firm specializing in forest products transactions and activities, a principal in an independent forest products company and held senior positions in two other large forest products companies. He is the Chair of the B.C. Lumber Trade Council and First Vice-Chair of the Softwood Lumber Board. He is also a director of the Binational Softwood Lumber Council and the Canadian Lumber Trade Alliance. He holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Victoria and a M.Sc. in Forestry Economics from the University of British Columbia.



**Please remember
to pay your \$5
parking fee!**

FUTURE SPEAKERS

January 12: Norm Leach, our Speakers Committee chair, is working on confirming our January Speaker.

February 9: Indira Samarasekera, Retired President of the University of Alberta.

ROTARIANS' INVESTMENT CLUB

The Club enjoyed a larger than usual turnout for the October Meeting with 25 attending including five guests. The Executive realized that we are reaching a maximum comfortable size.

Our November 26th Meeting at RVYC will now start at **5.30 pm for a no-host bar and the meeting at 6.00 pm sharp; which is 30 minutes earlier** so that the meeting can finish about 9.30 pm. (instead of 10.15 pm in October !)

This month we will have a discussion about the Club's Investment Policy guidelines and our Round Table format as reviewed by the Executive in November. Plus the usual regular items.

This meeting will be our last formal meeting until January 28th as we will have our Christmas Party at RVYC on Sunday December 13th with partners.

Please advise President Phil Webber (Tel: 604-263-9247)(Email: philweber@shaw.ca) by Wednesday noon if you would like to attend the November Meeting as we have to provide numbers to RVYC.

John Sullivan - Membership Chair -
jsullivan@shaw.ca

Thanks to our November Member Services Team

Cashiers—Ian Reid & John Dawson
Greeters—Bob Ross & Mark Rebagliati

Welcome New Members

Richard Nicholls—Steel Fabrication
Rhys Eyton—Airlines Executive
Gary Duke—Communications

Report of the November 10th Meeting

Attendance: 201 Members and Guests

In the absence of President Jack Zaleski, the meeting was chaired by Doug Jones. John Gunn acted as Secretary of the meeting.

Three new members were inducted into Probus (see "Welcome New Members" for details)

Brian Maunder introduced our speaker, Dr André Gerolymatos of Simon Fraser University, who was to speak on the effects of the treaty recently signed with Iran regarding nuclear matters. How lucky we were that Dr. Gerolymatos' talk ranged far beyond that subject to cover the whole Middle East - that area of the world which so confuses most of us who happen to live here in the well-ordered "western democracies." Here if you stop anyone on the street in Vancouver, Toronto or even Yellowknife and ask "What are you?" and unless the person is a visitor, the answer will probably be "I'm a Canadian". Pose the same question on a street in Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad or Medina and the answer will likely be "I am a..." Sunni, Alawite, Kurdish, Coptic, Shia or whatever. That is their identity and their loyalty, not the physical piece of land on which they live such as Egypt, Syria etc. It is a very different mindset than ours.

The current configuration of what we call the "Middle East" exists because, during the First World War, the huge long-standing Ottoman Empire which controlled these mainly Sunni populations from their headquarters in Turkey, crumbled and ceased to exist, and at the Treaty of Versailles in Paris 1919, Great Britain, France and USA re-invented the area - in some degree to suit their own global preferences rather than for the good of the local populace. Thus new boundaries were drawn for countries such as Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon - placing, in many cases, a confluence of Sunni, Shia, Christians, Alawites, Kurds, all within one entity which they euphemistically labelled "countries" - hoping that these entities would morph into modern peaceful democracies like us! On top of this dreadful exercise they inserted Israel - the outcome of a complicated agreement made during the first war and codified in the famous Balfour Declaration promising a homeland for the Jew-

ish diaspora, especially those in Europe. This new country was arbitrarily inserted into Palestine. Not surprisingly, this was not received well in the region. This is the one country that did indeed morph into a democracy.

Since colonialism was now "out of fashion" the victors at Versailles created "mandates", with Britain having a mandate over Palestine, Jordan and a "sort of mandate" over Saudi Arabia and Egypt. France had a mandate over Syria and Lebanon, and Italy over Tunisia.

During and after the Second World War the west became more apprehensive about nascent "Arab Nationalism" than about Islamism, and so the Islamic Brotherhood, which had come into existence around 1925 to foster Sunni Islam, found it expedient to cooperate with the western powers in holding down this nationalist fervour which was now threatening to flourish under the new idol, Gamal Abdel Nasser, an Egyptian general with great charisma. He seized the Suez Canal and threatened the entire status quo enjoyed by the Western powers. He was loved not just by Egyptians but by most of the Sunni Arabs in the Middle East. Nasser's biggest problem was the prowess which Israel exhibited in various conflicts, especially the huge Israeli victory in 1967 which was utterly humiliating to all their neighbours, including Egypt and General Nasser. Meanwhile USA was placed in an invidious position - support Israel or support Nasser? They danced around this and ended supporting both sides to some extent, providing huge monetary gifts to Egypt while pouring modern arms into Israel. Meanwhile this same war generated a flood of Palestinian Arab refugees who moved into the neighbouring countries, especially into Jordan, where they remained for decades in UN refugee camps rather than melding into the local population even though they spoke Arabic and are Sunni Muslims like their "hosts". These festering camps spawned terrorists who are socialists or communists. Many went to Libya to be trained in terrorism by Gaddafi. Presently, came the Arab spring, which was really inspired not by idealism as broadcast but quite

simply by hunger.

Now to Syria - a country of mainly Sunni Arabs with some Kurds, Jews and Christians, but ruled by a very small tribe of Shia Alawites who control the army, and were encouraged by France who still had the mandate. This saves France from billeting a large corps of the French army to keep the peace in Syria. It is an impossible combination for a peaceful and cohesive country, so the ruling faction holds power with vicious authority. Eventually it boils over as we see today. The population of Syria which had been around 23 million is now down to 12 million. There are huge numbers in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, some in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and in Europe. There are apparently about 6 million who can be called "internal refugees" - those who have lost their homes but are still within the borders of Syria. Of the external refugees, 80% are male, they are mainly upper-middle-class with enough money to pay their way out - \$2500.00 is the going rate to Greece. (All told, some experts claim, there are probably 60 million people in the world who are on the move looking for a better place and a better life. Many are embittered and may become terrorists.)

Now to ISIS. At the time when Bush/Chaney induced the USA to attack Iraq, that country was ruled by Sunni Muslims while the majority of the population was Shia. After the conquest, the USA turned the country over to the Shia majority and this disillusioned the Sunni faction which in due course gave birth to ISIS and co-opted much of the military equipment left there by the USA. This oversimplifies the sequence of events but the highlights are roughly as they happened.

Briefly, Somalia is in chaos because the west has dumped toxic waste into the waters there and so, instead of fishing, the Somalis are now involved in piracy. The speaker did not expand on this thesis.

One is left with the impression from the speaker that things will get worse, and that life in the Middle East would have been better today if the western nations, Britain, France, USA and to some extent Italy, had minded their own business back in the period between the two world wars and had stayed out of the Middle East.

Rob Gourley graciously thanked the speaker.

For a version of the above which includes questions and answers, please go to our Probus website at

www.probusvancouver.com,

click on "Speakers" then on "Dr. Gerolymatos"

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



My thanks to Doug Jones for presiding over our meeting in November while I enjoyed playing golf and soaking up the sun in Phoenix. My timing was certainly right as I escaped the onslaught of rain and weather that descended on Vancouver

last week.

A personal welcome to our newest members, Richard Nicholls, Rhys Eyton and Gary Duke. I hope you will all take the opportunity over the coming months to introduce yourselves to them and welcome them to our Club.

Dr. Andre Gerolymatus was our speaker on the 10th and I understand he gave an excellent presentation on the Middle East and its development from World War I to the current day with all the trouble in Syria, Egypt, Israel and other countries in the Middle East. I am told it was a fascinating and informative talk shedding new light on the causes of current turmoil. He gave us a new and slightly provocative viewpoint on how things got to be where they are today.

Look forward to our speaker in December. Duncan Davies, CEO of Interfor will speak to us on the BC Forest Industry. More than 40% of the province's regional economies are based on forestry activities, supporting 55,000 direct jobs in more than 7,300 businesses. Several of the world's largest forestry companies are headquartered in B.C. and the province is the world's largest supplier of softwood lumber to world markets. It promises to be an informative presentation.

IN MEMORIAM

*It is with regret that we announce the passing of
Craig Arnold on October 26th.*

Our condolences to his family.

*The Probus Club of Vancouver will make
a donation in Craig's memory to
The Heart & Stroke Foundation*

The Probus Club of Vancouver is delighted to provide this opportunity to attend one of the VSO's concerts for an extremely attractive price.

This has been arranged through
Estelle Jacobson, a member of the Probus Ladies Club and whose husband is a member of our club



ALEXANDER MELNIKOV CONCERT
One of Russia's most highly-decorated pianists

14 MARCH 2016 - 8 P.M ORPHEUM THEATRE



Distinguished conductor **Christopher Seaman PROGRAM**
Walton's intense and powerful *Symphony No. 1*

Beethoven's Piano Concert No. 5 in E flat major, "*Emperor*" *Piano Concerto*

Pre-concert talk Nicolas Krusek, Conductor, at 7:05pm in the Auditorium Free to ticket Holders

The VSO have offered us tickets at the generous price of \$33 (normally \$70). Because of the substantial discount, tickets will have to be purchased and paid for by the 12th February. If members desire to give tickets as Christmas presents, please send in this form before December 1st and the tickets will be made available at the Probus meeting on December 8, 2015.

No Refunds. - This offer is open to members and friends.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE # _____

EMAIL _____

NUMBER OF TICKETS _____

CHEQUE (# of tickets X \$33) \$ _____ made out to Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Mail form and cheque to:

Estelle Jacobson

1192 Nanton Avenue

Vancouver, BC V6H 2C5