



# NEWSLETTER

## PROBUS CLUB OF VANCOUVER

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

<https://probusvancouver.com/>

Enriching members with topical, entertaining speakers and social activities

December, 2025

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**Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 9 at The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre**  
**Speaker: Geoff Croll, President, British Pacific Properties Ltd**  
**Topic: "British Pacific Properties - Transforming West Vancouver for 94 years"**

**9:30: Coffee and Timbit**

**9:45: Meeting commences followed by our speaker's presentation.**

### Geoff Croll



Geoff was born and raised in a West Coast Modern home less than one kilometre from the future Cypress Village — overseeing the planning and delivery of the highest standard of sustainable, nature-oriented community is near to his birthplace and his heart. A civil engineer by trade, Geoff led both the Cypress and Rodgers Creek Area Development Plans. He finds playtime in the mountains by hiking, running, skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking. He's been playing on the North Shore Mountains all his life—from hiking to skiing to mountain biking and trail running. Snowshoeing's just another activity on the hillside. His first memories of snowshoeing are of a Scout group 40 years ago going up Hollyburn with these big, wooden, heavy snowshoes.

Geoff is the President at British Pacific Properties based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Previously, he was the Vice President, Development at British Pacific Properties and also held positions at Genstar Development and BCR Properties Limited. He received a B.A.Sc. (Honours) degree from The University of British Columbia. British Pacific Properties, a family-owned business for three generations, is a company that respects the past and embraces the future. Since its inception in 1931, its history has been interwoven with the development of West Vancouver and the North Shore. This includes constructing the Lions Gate Bridge - which opened the North Shore to development - and building Park Royal, Canada's first covered shopping centre. For more than 85 years, they have also played a unique role in developing West Vancouver by building exceptional master-planned communities, from the original British Properties to the recent Whitby Estates, a neighbourhood renowned for its unparalleled views. As homebuilders, they specialize in creating luxury custom homes for clients in West Vancouver, North Vancouver and Vancouver's West Side.

### NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM—TUESDAY, JANUARY 13

**Speaker: Brian Yu, Chief Economist, Central One Credit Union**

**Topic: "Financial Forecast"**

## Report of the November 11th Meeting

**Attendance: 65+ Members and Guests**

President John Kay started the formal meeting at 9:45 with the customary welcome and recognition of our guests and speaker. He then called out the Past Presidents asking them to stand as each was named. Following the customary amusing story he called Past President, Richard Earthy up to introduce the speaker, Col Scott Raesler.

Just ahead of the 11th hour on the 11th day, Colonel Scott Raesler returned to Probus for a timely and reflective address on Remembrance Day and on the state—and future—of Canada's Armed Forces. Two years ago, he spoke to the Club about the condition of the Army. This year, he expanded his scope, offering a message rooted in remembrance, responsibility, and preparedness.

While Remembrance Day is often treated as solemn and passive, Colonel Raesler emphasized that remembrance must be active: a commitment to preserving the freedoms earned by generations of Canadians in uniform, and a duty to maintain the institutions that safeguard them. He reminded members that Canadians have served and sacrificed not only in the iconic battles of Vimy and Normandy, but also in the quiet, steady work that makes any mission possible, like logistics, engineering, intelligence, communications, medicine, and the many trades that keep the Forces functioning. This was the bridge to his central theme: that Canada honours its past by preparing for the future. Today's global environment is increasingly unstable. The optimism that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall has been replaced with rising authoritarianism, cyber threats, disinformation, climate-driven disasters, and geopolitical tensions from the Arctic to Eastern Europe. The notion that Canada can rely on others for our security is no longer tenable.

Despite popular belief, the Armed Forces do not struggle to attract young people. What they struggle with is the same assumption that Canada is insulated from risk. Yet while Canadians view themselves as peaceful and geographically protected, other states openly seek to redraw borders by force. Complacency invites danger, while preparedness preserves peace. The major bottleneck in expanding the Forces is training capacity. In his own brigade, Colonel Raesler receives roughly 3,000 applications annually, but can only train about 250 recruits. The Army is now re-evaluating its training system, moving toward a more modular approach that avoids over-specialization at the entry level. Once this new model is implemented, the Army may double or triple its intake.

To confront this new reality, the Army has launched a significant modernization effort known as *Inflection Point 2025*. Colonel Raesler described it as the most serious and ambitious reform of his 35-year career - a true turning point aimed at rebuilding capacity, updating outdated systems, and adapting to modern forms of warfare. Unlike past reforms, which were often incremental or constrained by limited budgets, the current effort is receiving meaningful federal funding. The challenge now is less about political will than about scaling up quickly and intelligently after decades of austerity.

Modernization, as he explained, is not merely about buying new equipment; it is an overhaul of how the Army organizes, trains, and thinks. The focus includes Arctic defence—something that has moved from rhetoric to necessity as melting ice has opened northern routes to global interest, particularly from Russia and China. If

Canada cannot maintain meaningful sovereignty in the North, other states will simply move in and start extracting resources. Maintaining a presence in the Arctic is not easy. Logistics are punishing, weather is extreme, and infrastructure is sparse, so future readiness will depend on integrating advanced technologies such as drones, automated sensing networks, and rapid-deployment capabilities.

Cybersecurity, communications resilience, air defence, and long-range precision systems were also highlighted as essential upgrades. Canada must be prepared not only to fight wars but, more importantly, to deter them. He pointed to the 2,000 Canadian troops in Latvia, part of NATO's forward deterrence, who are effectively holding the line against potential Russian aggression. Their presence signals to adversaries that any attack on the Baltics would be met collectively. Deterrence is only credible if backed by real capability.

Modernization also depends on people. The Army's greatest strength has always been its soldiers - citizens from every background and community. They are farmers, programmers, new Canadians, reservists balancing civilian careers, and Indigenous Rangers patrolling the Arctic. Whether responding to fires and floods at home or serving abroad, they are "us" - a reflection of the country they defend. Ensuring they have the right training, leadership, mental health supports, and equipment is central to a responsible national defence policy.

During the question period, members asked about the rising number of veterans in their 30s who leave after only a few years. Raesler did not view this negatively. Those who complete their service obligations become stronger citizens. At the same time, Canada also needs long-term career soldiers, particularly in the regular force, who can deploy on no notice and carry the unlimited liability that comes with full-time military service. Both groups are essential.

Questions about Arctic sovereignty prompted some forward-looking comments. The future may depend less on large, crewed vessels and more on fleets of autonomous underwater and aerial drones that provide constant surveillance and early warning. Canada has the technical capability to lead in this space, but industry needs stable federal investment to scale ideas into reality. Encouragingly, that investment is now beginning to materialize.

Defence is not separate from society. The military is a reflection of its citizens, funded and guided by them. While those in uniform cannot advocate directly, civilians can and must ensure political leaders treat national defence with seriousness. Members of the Probus Club carry a lifetime of experience, perspective, and civic responsibility that Canada cannot afford to lose. Your voices matter to the soldiers serving today and to the young veterans who carry the burdens of modern conflict. On this Remembrance Day, he asked the room not only to remember but to act—to safeguard the freedoms inherited from those who sacrificed, and to help ensure that the country remains strong, proud, and free for generations to come.

Al Hurwitz thanked our speaker and handed him our customary honorarium.

### Rotarians' Investment Club

Our October meeting commenced with a presentation from one of our members on the use of AI for the individual investor that provides real time analysis and insights. He also conducted a live demonstration on Chat GPT on the screen, plus gave us a print of his slide presentation.

The Investment Committee reported that each of our individual holdings was within the range of 10.0% except for Visa (15.0%) which we have held for many years, and have sold probably 75% of our original purchase to keep it at a modest % of the portfolio. Currently we hold 17.5% cash in our account for interesting opportunities!

A Probus member applied for membership and will join us at our November Meeting.

Our annual Christmas Party will be on December 14th at the superb RVC.

The Club meets at 6.00 pm with a "no-host" bar, (meeting at 6.30 pm) at the RVC 3811 Point Grey Road, normally on the last Thursday of every month. Guests are welcome (we have four lady members). The cost is now \$110.00 (cash or cheque please) for an excellent 3 course dinner including wine with the meal, gratuities & taxes etc.

If it is of interest, please email our secretary (Emily - emilybarcket@gmail.com) and myself to confirm your attendance and I will email the Agenda etc. to you prior to the meeting.

For a summary of our 26 year old Club, please email or phone me.

John Sullivan, Membership Chair.

[johnws@telus.net](mailto:johnws@telus.net)

604-263-4486 (landline)

### Probus Insights From The President



This is the time of year when we look back to celebrate our successes and overcome our disappointments. My personal opinion is that we are very fortunate to live where we do given events in other parts of the

world and to be able to enjoy the friendship and collegiality that Probus offers us.

In my recent President's report, I outlined our strong financial position but commented on the need for more new members. We have a target of 25 new members this year to bring the total to 30. We consider the most effective way of gaining new members is for us to invite guests to our meetings so that they can become familiar with what Probus can offer. So I urge you to consider this request when you are planning to attend the next meeting.

Our speaker in December will be Geoff Croll, the President of British Pacific Properties - the Guinness family investment company. I will briefly outline the events that led to the Guinness family buying 4,000 acres of land in West Vancouver for \$75,000 in 1931. Geoff will then outline the history of the building of the Lions Gate Bridge, the developments in West Vancouver over the past almost 100 years and a description of the latest project - the Cypress Mountain Village, a "Mini Whistler" at the base of the mountain. I am sure you will find the presentation to be most interesting.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you a happy holiday season filled with warmth and laughter. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you in 2026.

John Kay  
President



### **PROBUS FRED COTTON BOOK CLUB**

The Book Club will meet at **9:30 am on**

**Wednesdays, Dec 3 and Jan 7 in**

**The Amenity Room at Elm Park Place, 5700 Larch Street,  
(at W. 41st Avenue).**

The books to be discussed when we meet are:

**Dec 3: Big History: A Journey from the Big Bang to the Modern World and into the Future by Guiseppe Ferrone.**

**Jan 7: Patriot: A Memoir by Alexei Navalny.**

A list of books read since the Club began in 2008 may be found on the Club website by clicking the "Book Club" link. For further information contact Ken Yule at [kjyqc@shaw.ca](mailto:kjyqc@shaw.ca) or 604-266-4563



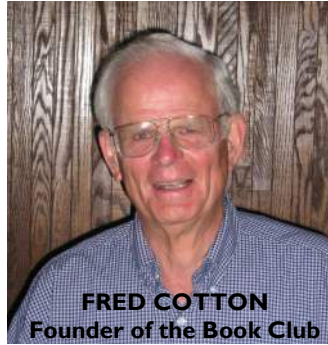


## **PROBUS Club of Vancouver—Social Opportunity Groups**

To see details of how to join any of these groups, click (or ctrl-click) on the heading of each group.

### **Fred Cotton Book Club—Ken Yule**

Information about the book club is featured every month on page 3 of the newsletter. By clicking on the header above, find out full details of the current activities as well as a list of all the books discussed since 2008. The club doesn't meet in July or August.



### **Breakfast Group—Peter Scott**

On November 19, 11 hungry members of the breakfast group met at Yolks on West Broadway. We were seated at one fairly small table and if 2 hadn't cancelled, we would have needed to take turns to eat or 2 sit on someone's laps! However, the food was very good and despite a bit of a parking issue, it was most successful. As usual, several topics of conversation kept us all involved and didn't result in any arguments or fisticuffs! Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 17th** when we will return to the **Shaughnessy Golf Club** at 4300 W Marine Drive to enjoy the Christmas decorations and excellent food. Anyone interested in joining us can contact Peter at [peter26@telus.net](mailto:peter26@telus.net).



### **Bridge Club Jack Zaleski**

Like the Book Club, the Bridge Club doesn't meet in July or August. For information on how the Bridge Club works, click on the heading above for details and how to join. Bridge Club Member Hugh Chaun reports that the Bridge Club (which Jack Zaleski organizes) has had an excellent season of enjoyable games, hosted in rotation in different members' homes. Anyone interested in joining this "fun" bridge group can get more details from Jack at [jack.zaleski@gmail.com](mailto:jack.zaleski@gmail.com)

## **PROBUS Club of Vancouver—Social Opportunity Groups**

### **Rotarians' Investment Club**

Everything you need to know about how The Rotarians' Investment Club operates can be found by clicking on the above heading. Information on the Club's monthly meetings is featured each month on page 3 of this newsletter. For more information, contact: John Sullivan, Chair Membership, Promotion and Hospitality at email: [johnws@telus.net](mailto:johnws@telus.net) or telephone at 604-263-4486

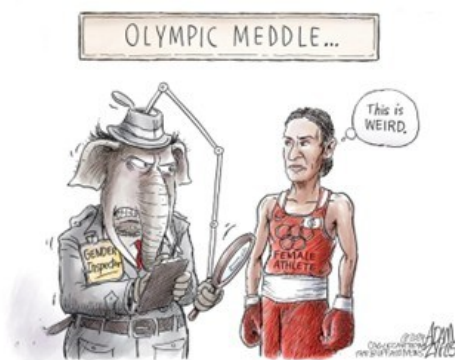
### **Pub Nights—Peter Phillips**

Levity, libations, loose lips! Great pub atmosphere at Hynes' Irish Pub on Broadway last Thursday night, friendly staff, &c. Big turnout!! See Y'All next month Thursday Dec 11th, 4 pm, at the King's Head Public House, 1618 Yew St. [Let myself, Glenn Faris, or Peter Phillips, know if you hope to attend.](#) Contact Glenn Faris at [glennfaris@gmail.com](mailto:glennfaris@gmail.com) or Peter Phillips at [pjpphillips@hotmail.com](mailto:pjpphillips@hotmail.com). If you would like to join us, we gather on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 4 pm. Or just show up!

Peter Phillips, Master Thirst Quencher 🍷 🍺

### **Policy Conversations Cafe—Jim Matkin**

Our policy conversations highlight contradictions, whereas Plato explained that crowds prefer comfortable lies to uncomfortable truths. **The hidden costs of unreliable renewables are an example ignored by climate alarmists.**



"On average, adult men are physically stronger, are more powerful, are faster, and have higher endurance than adult women. This is not a theory; it is an indisputable scientific fact. Olympics organisers moving towards a blanket ban on transgender women from women's sport. The development follows a presentation to the International Olympic Committee by its medical chief, which highlighted the potential physical advantages of competing in women's sports after being born male.

### **The Lunch Group**

There is no convenor for this group which gathers after every monthly meeting (except our October, Presidents' Lunch) at The Local Public Eatery on the corner of Cornwall Avenue and Yew Street. The number of regular lunchers (I got this from AI!) is anywhere from 8 to 12 or more. If you would like to join us, just show up!

### **Tennis—Bill Hooker**

Bill Hooker organises a fun tournament two or three times a year for a group of keen tennis players. They play at the UBC Tennis Centre.

If you might be interested in joining us, stay in touch with Bill Hooker at [mayneid@yahoo.com](mailto:mayneid@yahoo.com).



## VISITATION TO PREMIER PLASTICS PRODUCTION FACILITY



THANK YOU, JOHN



### Report by Peter Phillips, Activity Committee Chairman

A group of 15 Probus members were welcomed by John Richardson to the very large manufacturing and storage compound of Premier Plastics.

John guided us through the process of how large heavy duty plastic water storage tanks and other containers, are moulded into many different shapes and sizes.

Starting with 2 halves of large heavy metal moulds, powdered plastic and colorant are deposited and the halves are then bolted together before being heated to very high temperatures in ovens, to cure the plastic into a solid shape. We ended the tour with Q&As and coffee and donuts. Big thanks to John for an engaging event.

