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

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December, 2026







Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 8 at The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre
Speaker: Max Cameron: Professor, Department of Political Science & School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at UBC.
Topic: "After the Midterms: What the Blue Wave Means for Canada-US relations?"
9:00: Coffee and Timbits
9:45: Meeting commences followed by our speaker's presentation

Max Cameron



Maxwell A. Cameron specializes in comparative politics (Latin America), constitutionalism, democracy, and political ethics. He is the author or editor of a dozen academic books as well as over sixty peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Cameron has held visiting positions in the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at Notre Dame University (1996) and at Yale University, where he was the Canadian Bicentennial Professor in 2005. In 2006 he served as political advisor to the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Peru. He founded the "Andean Democracy Research Network" to monitor and report on the state of democracy in the Andean region which received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Martha Piper Fund, SSHRC, IDRC and the Ford Foundation. He participated in a research excellence cluster on the "global challenges to democracy." He has served as the Director of the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions, in which capacity he co-created the Institute for Future Legislators. He has also served as Acting Director of the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, and as a Trustee of the Board of the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies. In 2011-12 he was a Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence, and in 2013 he was awarded a UBC Killam Teaching Prize. He was elected President of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), for 2025-2026. Cameron is a frequent commentator on politics in the media and has provided advice to policymakers on topics such as electoral reform, citizen engagement, and democracy in Latin America. In his spare time he enjoys kayaking, skiing,, and diving. He blogs about practical wisdom.

Professor Maxwell A. Cameron is jointly appointed with Political Science and the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs. In 2020 Cameron was named a Distinguished Fellow by the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies. He was the recipient of the 2022 Guillermo O'Donnell Democracy Award and Lectureship by the Latin American Studies Association for his work on democracy in Latin America.

NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM—TUESDAY, JANUARY 12th

Speaker: Bryan Yu, Chief Economist, Central One Credit Union
Topic: "The Financial Forecast - 2027"

REVIEW OF PROBUS ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

With the year soon coming to an end it is time to review the series of activities organised by the Activity Team over the past year and to assess specific levels of interest.
The focus of the activities is to invite members to develop a sense of curiosity with regards to experiencing the resources available to us in the Lower Mainland.
The main theme of these events is to address specific areas of interest or concern in an experiential manner. These areas can be categorized as follows:

1. The environment, along with ecological issues
2. Cultural issues
3. Reviewing our industrial base
4. Revisiting our Historical Landscape
5. Introduction to technological devices and changes
6. Artistic endeavours (galleries and theatre)

By pursuing these areas with formal and well planned activities, involving the membership, it is hoped to promote the following outcomes:
1. To enhance communication between members
2. To promote exchange of common interests which enhances dialogue and maybe even friendship
3. To offer structure and planning to the member's personal itinerary
4. To offer information on topics of personal interest or concern which could be inspirational and promote further in-depth investigation by the participant.

If you can relate to any of these comments and wish to participate in the Activities Program, give some thought to the activity areas that may be of interest to you.
If you have a personal connection with an area of interest and see it as a potential upcoming Probus event, then please contact me and include some basic details, including:
1. Category of the event
2. The location
3. Any potential expenses
4. Possible dates / time frames for the event
5. Key contact personnel (if known)

Your input would be much appreciated as we plan events for 2027.
With thanks,
Peter Phillips - Chair Activities Committee - pjpphillips@hotmail.com



Report of the November 10th Meeting

*Attendance: **60** Members and Guests*

President Jim Matkin started the formal meeting at 9:45 with the customary welcome and recognition of our guests and speaker. As usual, he started with the traditional story. Jim then called on Peter Phillips to give everyone, including our new members, a summary of our Activities for the year. Richard Spencer was asked to come up to introduce our six new members, including our first women (see page 4).

Jim then called on Bill Hooker to introduce our speaker, John Redmond.

What is the difference between a warrior and a soldier? For John Redmond, curator of the 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum, the distinction lay in whom they served. A warrior might take up arms out of obligation to kin, community, or territory. In that tradition, he saw a kinship between the Indigenous warriors of the Northwest Coast and his own Highland ancestors. Meanwhile, a soldier serves under state command. At Point Grey, those histories share a lookout. Long before Canadian gunners chose the headland to defend Vancouver Harbour, the Musqueam kept watch there for Haida raiders approaching by sea.

Some of the earliest soldiers on the coast wore Spanish uniforms. The infantrymen stationed at Fort San Miguel in Nootka Sound in the 1790s were Catalonian volunteers sent north from Mexico. By 1851, the Hudson's Bay Company's Pacific trading connections had brought another unlikely group together. French Canadian voyageurs and Hawaiians served side by side in the Victoria Voltigeurs, a small armed force whose duties largely involved policing.

The gold rush of 1858 presented Governor James Douglas with a policing problem on quite another scale. To picture the fortune seekers pouring in from California, imagine "several thousand Donald Trumps." For Nlaka'pamux communities along the Fraser, the immediate danger was armed miners pushing into their territory. Six unauthorized miners' militias took the field in the Fraser Canyon War. That winter, a feud between rival mining towns produced McGowan's War. By the time the Royal Engineers came upriver, a magistrate had himself been seized, tried, and fined.

Offshore, there was still the question of where British authority ended and American authority began. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 placed the boundary in the channel between Vancouver Island and the mainland. There was more than one channel to choose from. In 1859, an American settler on San Juan Island shot a British pig rooting in his potatoes. Both countries sent troops. Fortunately, the pig remained the only fatality of the Pig War.

Elsewhere in the islands, the Royal Navy's intervention had far graver consequences. In the Lamalcha War of 1863, following the deaths of several settlers, HMS *Forward* bombarded a Lamalcha village. Four Lamalcha men were hanged and the village was confiscated. A year later, Tsilhqot'in warriors resisted a road crew cutting through their territory. Five chiefs who came to discuss peace were arrested and hanged. A sixth was executed in 1865. All six have since been exonerated.

Indigenous communities also organized volunteer companies of their own. A photograph of the Port Simpson Volunteers shows men in a mix of European uniforms and Indigenous dress. Farther south, Black settlers from California formed the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps, also known as the African Rifles. The Victoria Volunteer Rifle Corps was a separate, white company, while former Royal Engineers joined the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles. Mr. C. Hall, was Vancouver's first soldier, and he claimed to have walked from New Westminster to Vancouver for every drill night.

By 1912, Vancouver High School cadets were travelling as far as Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. Many later volunteered for the Great War. For Fred Lee, a Chinese Canadian cowboy from Kamloops, even getting to enlist took persistence. Repeatedly turned away because he was Chinese, he eventually joined up and was killed at the Battle of Hill 70. Thousands of men recruited in China for the Chinese Labour Corps also passed through BC on their way to work behind the lines in France. From Victoria and Vancouver, their journey took them clear across Canada. They saw what they could of the country through train windows. The railway cars were sealed, and the men were forbidden to step off.

Even after the Armistice, troops were leaving Victoria, some under protest, for the Siberian Expedition to Vladivostok. German guns travelled the other way as war trophies. When the call came to melt them down during the Second World War, BC lacked the facilities to handle the steel. One howitzer may still lie buried at the PNE. Then again, it could be in one of our backyards.

By then, coastal batteries guarded Esquimalt and Vancouver, and Prince Rupert had an armoured train with the curious distinction of an unarmoured engine. The Army, like the Probus Club of Vancouver, eventually admitted women. Women served in the Canadian Women's Army Corps, and by the 1940s girls in BC were turning out as cadets. Postwar photographs showed Sikh volunteers in a Vancouver artillery unit whose officer had served in India and built friendships with the local Sikh community.

Over the following decades, BC also lost much of the military presence that communities had once taken for granted. The regular infantry who had defended Esquimalt were gone, as were the Voodoo fighters once stationed at Comox. For Redmond's family, unification marked a turning point. Bringing the Army, Navy and Air Force under one command meant giving up uniforms and traditions that people had spent a lifetime identifying with. His father left the Army, as did many in his regiment

Redmond likened public enthusiasm for military service and for pacifism to Vancouver's skunks and raccoons. Just when one seems to be everywhere, the other is scarcely to be seen. After watching the military presence on this coast dwindle, he takes heart in seeing the Navy grow again. Even at the artillery museum, the change is tangible. After years of scraping by, the museum suddenly has more money than it knows what to do with. The money buys display cases. The guns they already have.

David Spicer thanked John for his most interesting presentation.

To view John's presentation, click here

Rotarians' Investment Club

Our October 29th meeting featured a video of Bill Ackman of Pershing Square Capital Management titled "Everything you need to know about Finance and Investing", which generated much interesting discussion.

Watchdog Reports on the nine stocks held by the Club resulted in updates on several companies, but the decision was made to "hold" all positions.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 26th at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. The speaker will be Peter Ting, Senior Financial Planner, CIBC, Imperial Service, and his topic is "Estate Planning". It should include many tips and reminders to update your Estate Plans before "Dementia" strikes!

Our usual Christmas Social is scheduled for Sunday December 13th to enjoy the RVYC Christmas Buffet, to which members' "significant others" have been invited to attend.

Please note that we have changed our timing; we meet on the last Thursday of every month, **starting at the earlier time of 5:30 p.m**. for a "no-host" bar & social; the meeting **will commence sharply at 6:00 p.m**.

For detailed information about our Rotarians' Investment Club, now in its 28th year, please email John Sullivan at "johnws@telus.net" who is currently out of town, but has limited internet contact.

PROBUS FRED COTTON BOOK CLUB

The Book Club will next meet at **9:30 am on Wednesdays, Dec 2 and Jan 6 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. 2 The Crisis of Canadian Democracy by Andrew Coyne.

Jan. 6 One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This by Omar El Akkad

For information about the club, contact Ken Yule at kjyqc@shaw.ca or 604-266-4563



Probus Insights From The President

One of the great pleasures of Probus is gathering with curious minds to make sense of a rapidly changing world. Lately, a fascinating—and somewhat unsettling—development has been making waves in the scientific community: the rise of **autonomous AI science**.

Until recently, artificial intelligence was primarily used by researchers as a sophisticated calculator or writing assistant. Today, however, experimental platforms are deploying fully autonomous "AI agents" that formulate hypotheses, analyze data, cite literature, and publish entire scientific papers on their own—generating hundreds of studies in a single month.

While the promise of accelerating medical and technological breakthroughs is exciting, leading scientists are sounding the alarm. A recent report in the journal *Science* warned that without careful guardrails, this surge of machine-written research could *"only deepen the AI 'slop' already flooding the scientific literature."*

For those of us who value rigorous inquiry, critical thinking, and hard-won expertise, this trend carries several real risks:

Overwhelming the Peer-Review System: Academic journals rely on human experts to carefully vet new findings before publication. A flood of plausible-sounding, machine-generated papers threatens to bury genuine breakthroughs under sheer volume, forcing major archives to limit how many papers an author can submit.

The Illusion of Authority: AI is remarkably good at mimicking the tone and structure of legitimate scholarship. However, these systems can still "hallucinate" facts, fabricate citations, or draw flawed conclusions—creating polished-looking papers that lack real-world truth.

The Loss of Serendipity: Many of history's greatest breakthroughs—from penicillin to X-rays—happened when human scientists paused to investigate an unexpected anomaly or happy accident. Algorithms, by contrast, are built to follow existing patterns and may simply filter out the very surprises that spark true innovation.

Erosion of Public Trust: Science advances through human accountability, healthy skepticism, and reproducible results. When we cannot easily tell whether a study was guided by a dedicated researcher or generated overnight by an algorithm, public confidence in science—and the policies built upon it—takes a hit.

Technology has always reshaped how we discover and share knowledge, from the printing press to the internet. Yet as AI takes on a larger role in the laboratory, the human elements of judgment, ethics, and genuine curiosity become more vital than ever.

Jim Matkin – President
(see cartoon on left)

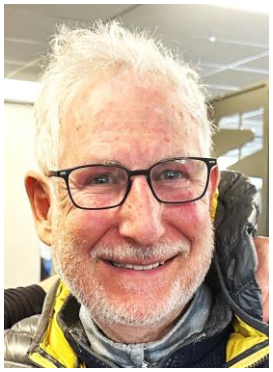
WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS INTRODUCED AT OUR NOVEMBER MEETING



Pauline Kay
X-ray Technician



Tom Haberstroh
General Manager of CTV Vancouver



Harvey Soicher
Sporting Goods Sales Agent



Bobbie Gardiner,
Paediatric Nurse



Christine Chou
Dietician



Lori Cameron
Management Roles in Not-For-Profit Sector

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.

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

On October 28, 16 plucky senior tennis players gathered at the UBC Tennis Centre "Bubble" for our annual fall mixed doubles tournament. They comprised seven Probus members and nine wannabes. The order of play consisted of three one-hour matches with a change of opponents each hour and the scoring was simply total wins per team. The scores ranged from six to 29 with six teams in the 20's. "Gold" went to Mark Jacobs and Marty Levine, "Silver" to John Dawson and Alan Whitchelo/Rick Brenner; and "Bronze" to Richard Feige and Walter Schneider. The medals have yet to be cast. We are now considering a March date as our usual Spring session. If you are interested in joining the tennis players, contact Bill Hooker at **mayneid@yahoo.com**, your convenient convenor.

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 18,16 early risers gathered at The Breakfast Table on Granville Street. We were seated at four tables of four, and each table enjoyed a variety of conversations. Our next gathering will be on December 16 at The Shaughnessy Golf Club where we can enjoy their usual annual Christmas decorations and their excellent breakfasts .
Anyone interested in joining us can contact Peter at **peter26@telus.net.**

Bridge Club - Jack Zaleski

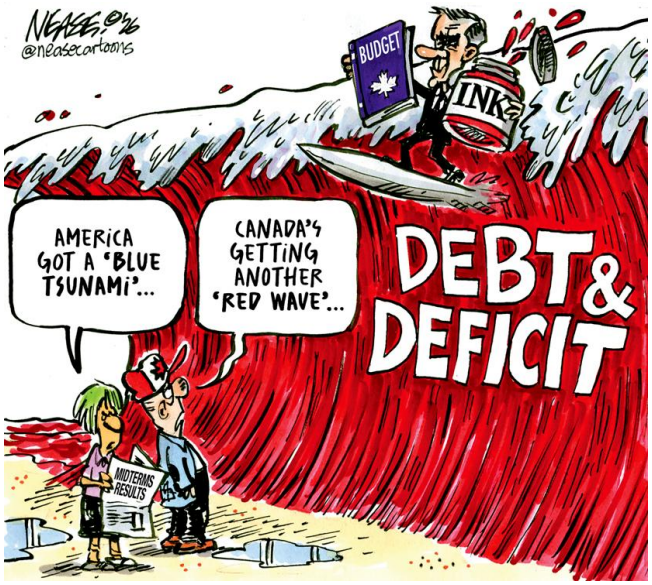
Like the Book Club, the Bridge Club doesn't meet in July or August. For information on how the Bridge Club works, click on the heading above for details and how to join. Bridge Club Member Hugh Chaun reports that the Bridge Club (which Jack Zaleski organizes) has had an excellent season of enjoyable 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**

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.

Critical Conversations Cafe—Jim Matkin

We have an open agenda with a focus on questions and provocative cartoons.
If you are interested in attending a Meeting, contact Jim Matkin -**james.matkin@gmail.com**



We discussed Budget 2026's failure to do anything about the growing DEFICIT AND DEBT!
We liked the focus on our productivity weakness and the gap with the US with the new mega tax write off for new machines and equipment. The write-off will benefit *profitable corporations that buy a lot of equipment, vehicles or software the most. Less gain for businesses with no taxable income, about 45% of Canadian manufacturing.*

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: **johnws@telus.net** or telephone at 604-263-4486

Pub Nights—Peter Phillips

A group of 9 merry revelers met once again at the Wolf And Hounds Pub on Nov 12th.
It was familiar territory for most thirst quenchers and no one was allowed to wear their temperance badges or sit nursing an empty glass!
Merriment and mirth was the order of the day and the revelers left full of good spirit(s)
So join us for our next get together/thirst quencher at the **Billy Bishop Legion, 1407 Laburnum Street on Thursday December 10th @ 4.00 pm**
If you wish to beerdrate with us, contact Peter Phillips at **pjpphillips@hotmail.com**

REPORT ON CLIMATE WALK AT CIRS – OCTOBER 27

On this nippy morning ,our hardy group met at the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) for an introduction by our two students, Angie and Olivia. The CIMA framework for climate change focuses on causes, impacts, mitigation and adaption. We were challenged to provide examples of each category! The ideas behind the Climate Walk were outlined. Basically, we were being sensitized to be more aware of our surroundings in our daily lives paying attention to landscaping, natural features and structure of buildings that make the environment sustainable. We were asked to think of orphan plants that are planted sustainably but are often forgotten or taken for granted. UBC offers a free Catalyst Programme recognizing sustainability, engagement and leadership for faculty, staff and community.

We started the walk in the CIRS' lobby noting the laminated strand beams, the recycling of rainwater and the use of windows to reduce the need for electrical lighting. The front of the building includes plantings to provide shading. Features to reduce bird strikes were noted. We moved on to the earth sciences building again noting the laminated beams and use of concrete to give a hybrid structure. The roof with overhangs uses cross laminated timbers. The floors combine wood and concrete, and the stairs uses specialized wood products. The next stop was the Main Mall Walkway with its wide medians and separation from the buildings with special attention to walking patterns to avoid congestion. Brickwork allows rainwater to be absorbed by the ground. Archival pictures were shown from the days when Main Mall was used by cars. The large trees reflect plantings from the earliest days of the campus.

The Biologic Sciences Building (Leeds certified) is a science hub on campus that has undergone major seismic and efficiency upgrades including heat pumps, demand-controlled ventilation , vertical panels depicting scientific themes, water management and special lenses to bring light into the building. Climbing plants have been added to the two main wings. We turned down University Blvd past a water theme (now dry) with its native plantings and the Musqueam post depicting the origin story of the Musqueam Nation. We ended our walk on the plaza outside the Nest, and our attention was drawn to the brickwork outlining a large conifer on the space. There are many other buildings on campus designed to foster the theme of sustainability.

Our student hosts were thanked and provided with a donation.

