

PROBUS CLUB OF KINGSTON

December 2015 Newsletter Issue No. 210



Probus Club of Kingston

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President **Albert** opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday the 11th of November 2015 to an audience of approximately thirty (30) members. The president informed the membership that the cutoff date for payment of the yearly fee of \$40.00 has now passed. If you have not as yet paid your dues, please do so immediately.

President **Albert** announced that the Christmas Luncheon meeting will be held on December 16th at the Donald Gordon Centre. The cost will be \$30.00 per person, wives included. The Luncheon will be in lieu of our regular meeting in December.

To conclude the business section of the meeting, the president said that some members have lost their name tags. They may be replaced at a cost of \$10.00. He added that since today is Remembrance Day, the Club will suspend its operations at 11:00 am to observe two (2) minutes of silence. He then called for a fellowship break.

After the break, president **Albert** called on **Mike McKeown** to introduce our guest speaker **Robert (Bob) Wells**. His topic was the **Indian Residential Schools**. He began by saying that for more than 100 years in Canada, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. These government-funded, church-run schools were located across Canada with the express purpose of eliminating parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of their children. The last of these schools closed in 1996.

During the time the schools were in operation, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were forced to attend them some of which were located hundreds of miles from their homes. The cumulative impact of the schools has resulted in a legacy of unresolved trauma, passing from generation to generation, affecting in a profound way the relationship between the indigenous peoples of Canada and other Canadians. The speaker then gave an audio-visual presentation showing images of these schools together with compelling stories of the mistreatment of three individuals who attended them. *(Continued on page 2)*

PROBUS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Our Christmas luncheon will be held on Wednesday December 16, 2015 at the Donald Gordon Centre in Kingston. The price will be \$30.00 per person, which includes taxes and gratuities. Details regarding the luncheon and a reservation form are given at the end of this newsletter. Please note that seating is limited, therefore, reservations will be accepted on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Elder Esther's Story:

"I do not naturally seek recognition or exposure, however, I have worried that soon there would be no one left to help better understand a piece of Canada's history that will soon be lost from living memory.

"In my seven years at Pelican Lake Indian Residential School the only academic subjects taught were English, arithmetic, and religion. The emphasis was on vocational skills and religion. The boys were taught farming and forestry work skills. The girls learned sewing, cooking, and laundry work. But the first lesson learned was to fear the authority of the people in charge.

"Reverend Marshall systemically ran the school in a way that made children believe that being born "Indian" was a crime, and there is no doubt in my mind that this kind of mistreatment is responsible for a lot of today's social damage.

"I will never forget how we kids would gather around and watch the Wawahte—the northern lights. There was no limit to our misery, yet in our own very special way, we found moments of peace with Wawahte.

"When Reverend Marshall died on Christmas Eve, I pretended to be sad, but I was not. My friend Bertha and I decided that if Reverend Marshall was now in heaven, as they said he was, it was not the place where we wanted to go when we died. This presented us with a problem—how to be bad without being caught and punished, so that when we died, we would go to hell.

"This experience has troubled me my entire life. I have been angry for what happened. I tried to understand why and how this happened to me, and the thousands of others who attended residential schools. As awful as my school experience was, it taught me skills that I have used every day of my life. I now know who and what I am and that I will no longer bow my head in defeat.

"I take pride in my Cree ancestry, being a Canadian, and living in one of the few countries in the world that promotes a multicultural society."

Elder Bunnie's Story:

"When I was one-year-old, my father placed me and my two-year-old sister in the care of McIntosh Indian Residential School operated by the nuns. We grew up being generally cared for, however, the separation from our family for long periods of time, left us with unresolved issues. Despite this, we survived and eventually I raised sons of my own."

Elder Stanley's Story:

"The Indian Act stipulated that the decision to allow an Indian child to attend a community day school was that of the local Indian Agent. From what I now recall, many aspects of my day school experience were not unlike those children who attended residential schools. I remember well becoming aware that I was an "Indian" in a rather painful manner.

"I entered grade one in the Pagwa Village day school at the age of eight and had traumatic experiences because speaking Cree, the only language my family spoke, was taboo at school. Within my first 15 minutes at school I was strapped six times on each hand with a heavy leather strap for speaking "Indian." Not only was I not allowed to speak my own language on school property, but also like other Aboriginal children I was subjected to methodical abuse from teachers whose role it was to quash, or so it seemed, to beat the Indian out of us. My hands were so swollen from my first day's strapping that I was unable to hold a pencil for a week. Then there were the icy stares from the teacher while the rest of the class would, with the teacher's approval, roar with laughter whenever I attempted to speak English or participate in anything academic.

"These childhood experiences did not give me a good feeling about being Aboriginal. There was no attempt by teachers or the school administration to understand or accommodate native children's cultural differences, let alone understand how we were taught to learn differently from Euro-Canadian children."

Following the audio-visual presentation, the speaker said that although only three individuals have been cited here, their cumulated experiences represent scores of thousands of indigenous children forced to attend the schools. He added that sexual abuses and assaults were commonplace, and continued unabated for years.

In his summing up, the speaker said that the collective efforts from all peoples are necessary to revitalize the relationship between the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and Canadian society. Reconciliation is the goal. It is a goal that will take the commitment of multiple generations but when it is achieved, it will make for a better, stronger Canada.

A very interesting question and answer period followed the presentation. President Albert then thanked the speaker and presented him with the customary book.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be the Christmas Luncheon Meeting to be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 at the Donald Gordon Centre. Further details of the Luncheon are given on page 4.

The speaker for the occasion is **Ted Hsu**. His topic will be a **Perspective on Canadian Politics**.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Our next committee meeting will be held at **10:00 am on Wednesday December 2, 2015** at the Cooke's-Portsmouth United church, 200 Norman Rogers Drive, Kingston.

PICK-ME-UP-FOR-PROBUS

Members living east of Sir John A. Macdonald Boulevard, requiring a ride to Club meetings are asked to call **Mike McKeown at 547-6568**. Members living west of Sir John A. Macdonald Boulevard, requiring a ride to Club meetings are asked to call **Bob MacMillan at 389-8757**.

PROBUS WEBSITE

For those who are on-line, go to the website www.probus.org and learn more about the PROBUS organization.

SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

The editor welcomes submissions to the newsletter. To submit an article for publication, contact the editor at the telephone number shown on page 1 or by email at blrook1@cogeco.ca. Please note that for submissions to be published in the next edition of the newsletter, they must be in the hands of the editor no later than the **first Tuesday following a Club meeting**. The editor reserves the right to change the text of any submission to fit the requirements of the newsletter.



PROBUS CLUB OF KINGSTON CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Donald Gordon Centre (Union St. West just east of Sir John A. MacDonald)
(Free Parking. Disabled parking and access)

Note: The room will be available at 11:30 a.m. Luncheon begins at 12:00 noon sharp.

The luncheon will be **served**. It will be a turkey meal with Chef's potatoes and seasonal vegetables. A vegetarian option is available. This will be followed by dessert, coffee or tea. Fresh baked rolls & butter will also be available. The cost per person is **\$30.00**, which includes taxes and gratuities.

Complete, detach and mail the reservation form below with your cheque to The Probus Club of Kingston, 47 Jorene Drive, Kingston, ON K7M 3X5.

NOTE: RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY DECEMBER 11, 2015.

cut along the dashed line to detach the reservation form

Annual Probus Christmas Luncheon Reservation Form

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Please reserve _____ place(s) for me at the luncheon.

Enclosed please find my cheque for _____ at **\$30.00 per person** payable to the **Probus Club of Kingston.**

Spouse/partner Name _____

Guest(s) (1) _____

(2) _____

Please complete the following meal information by placing a tick in the appropriate spaces bounded by the parentheses.

	Advertised Luncheon	Vegetarian Option
I would Like	()	()
My spouse/partner would like	()	()
My guest (1) would like	()	()
My guest (2) would like	()	()