



The PROBUS Club of Simcoe & District Meets second Tuesday of each month at St. James United Church hall



## **MEETING NOTICE**

Tuesday, June 13, 2017 10 a.m., Muriel Bridge Room, St. James United Church, Simcoe. 9:30 a.m., Book Exchange, Socializing and Coffee.



<u>Guest Speaker</u> Stuart Rusk and his collection of lighters.

> Who Am I? Don Lounsbury



### Review of May 9, 2017, meeting

President **Murray Uren** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. and led us in our national anthem. **President Murray** welcomed guest **Len G.**, who came to our meeting after reading our club's notice in the Simcoe Reformer.



Rogue the Red-Tailed Hawk.

### **Guest Speaker: Billy Walters**

**Billy Walters** is a modern practitioner of the ancient sport of falconry. He and **Rogue the Red-Tailed Hawk** are partners in hunting.

One-year-old **Rogue** is not a pet. She is free to return to the wild anytime. But she stays in **Billy's** aviary at Port Ryerse because he keeps her safe and healthy and helps her do what she loves best — hunt for rabbits in the forest.

**Billy** is an apprentice falconer. He trapped **Rogue** last fall at the Nanticoke industrial area. Using treats, he trained **Rogue** to come to his glove when he whistles.

Red-tailed hawks are the most common bird of prey in North America and they are much easier to train than bald eagles, osprey, owls, peregrines and other hawks. They hunt from trees or utility poles. **Billy** says **Rogue** is exceptionally calm, smart

# Partners in ancient sport

and good at hunting. She will sit in a tall tree for up to eight or nine hours watching for prey. She can see a mouse move four or five kilometres away.

Red-tailed hawks are born in the spring and grow to full size in two months. The females are bigger and heavier than the males and they are better hunters. Red tails hunt from September to March. They take it easy through the warm months as they moult and gather their strength for fall.

The red-tail population is doing well. Among hunting birds, only the small kestrels are declining in numbers. Red tails live eight or nine years in the wild and up to 25 years in captivity. They typically have one or two mates during their lifetimes.

Ontario has 120 licensed falconers. As an apprentice, **Billy** is in the midst of a 15-month course. He and **Rogue** are both honing their skills. Last winter **Rogue** had a 25 per cent success rate with rabbits. Her rate should be higher this winter. **Billy** answered many questions and gave PROBUS members time to see **Rogue** up close.



Billy Walters with Rogue the Red-Tailed Hawk.

**Billy** was accompanied by his father, **Jamie**. **Dan Pearson** introduced our guests and thanked them. We did not have a business session. Our Who Am I speaker was rescheduled.

#### Farewell, Tom Campbell:

Our condolences to the family of longtime PROBUS member Tom Campbell, who passed away on May 14 at age 85. His obituary and Who Am I talk from February 2014 are posted at simcoeprobusclub.weebly.com. Dougleclick on "Newsletters," then double-click on "Farewell, Tom Campbell."

