



# THE NEWSLETTER



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

## MEETING NOTICE

**Tuesday, June 13, 2023**

**10 a.m., Muriel Bridge Room, St. James United Church, Simcoe.  
9:30 a.m., Book Exchange and Socializing.**

### Guest Speaker

**Cory Armstrong-Smith  
Fire safety.**

### Who-Am-I?

**Bernd Mueller.**

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### An important vote

At our July 11 meeting, PROBUS members will vote on a proposal to make our club's membership open to men and women. Our bylaws would be changed to the following: "Membership in the Club is open to retired or semi-retired people, regardless of marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other ground prohibited under Section I.3(1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act." Two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in favour for the proposal to carry.

### Review of May 9, 2023, meeting

President **Murray Uren** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. with 20 members present. **Nestor Rosa** led us in our national anthem.

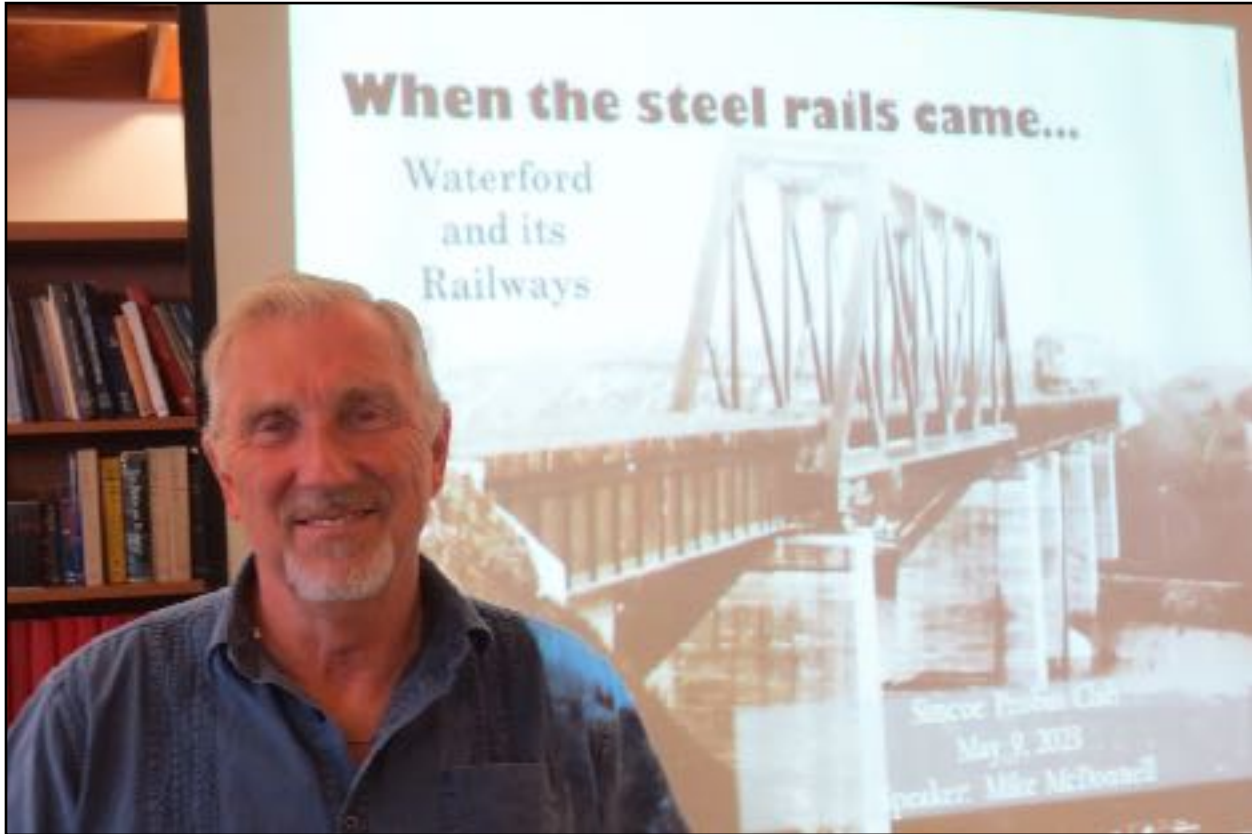
### PROBUS business

President **Murray** announced **Rick Middaugh** is stepping down as house co-ordinator. We are looking for a volunteer to look after setting up and taking down chairs and also to look after coffee. Thank you, **Rick**, for many years of service.

President **Murray** explained the need to expand membership through becoming a mixed club. Our membership has gradually declined in recent years. Initially, we will invite spouses and female friends of the club to join.

Treasurer **Dave Montross** reported our finances are in good shape.

**Gerald Sheppard** is arranging a tour of the Unilever plant this summer. Details to follow.



### **Guest speaker: Mike McDonnell**

For 100 years, Waterford was known as a railway town with up to 120 trains a day passing through on three different lines. Although all the railways now have gone, their legacy lives on in the rail trails that bring visitors to town.

Historian **Mike McDonnell** told the story of Waterford's railways in words and pictures. **Mike** has been our guest speaker several times over the years, usually on a military theme such as the American Civil War.

The Great Western Railway in 1854 was the first railway in Townsend Township, stopping at Renton. It carried freight and passengers between Buffalo and Detroit and so had little impact on Waterford.

In 1872 the Canada Southern Railway came to Waterford, boosting the town's economy and residents' ability to travel. The line was built with horses and hand tools. In 1889 the C.S.R. was leased to the Michigan Central Railway. Later it was leased to the New York Central Railway and the Penn Central.

Two more lines came to Waterford: the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo in 1889 And the Lake Erie and Northern electric railway in 1916.

The era from the 1920s to the 1950s was the golden age of railways with 100 trains passing each day through Waterford. In 1921 the L.E. & N. carried 600,000 passengers on its line between Galt and Port Dover.

In the 1940s, Waterford's downtown had two main lines, five sidings, a huge coal hopper and several buildings that served the railways. For a while, the T.H. & B. line through Waterford served the Nanticoke industrial area.

In 1955 the L.E. & N. discontinued passenger service and its station near the Black Bridge was torn down. The site is now a parking lot for the Waterford Rail Trail.

All of Waterford's rail lines have been removed, mostly to become parkland or rail trail. Waterford's downtown station survives.

**David Judd** introduced **Mike** and **Murray Uren** thanked him.

### **Who Am I: Frank Brock**

**Frank Brock** was born at Easter 1945. His boyhood home was on a 200-acre dairy farm three miles west of Jarvis. He went to school at SS 10 Townsend.

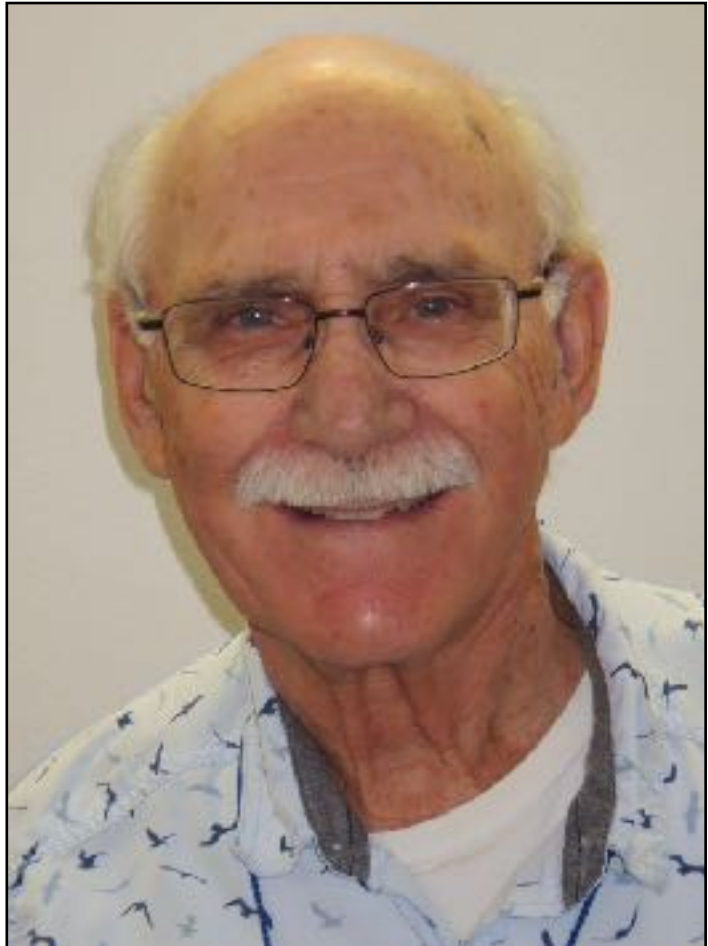
In 1954, the **Brocks** sold their farm and moved to the north end of Brantford. **Frank's father** soon died at age 54, leaving **Frank's mother** to look after five children.

In 1964, **Frank** got a job with CIBC at the bank's branch at Market and Dalhousie streets in Brantford. Here he met **Teller No. 10**. He and **Margaret** married in 1967 and raised three sons – **John, Craig and Matthew**.

Over the years, **Frank** worked at many CIBC branches, including Ailsa Craig, Hamilton, Woodstock, Harrow and Niagara Falls. He was assistant manager at Simcoe and manager at Binbrook, London, Ingersoll and Delhi.

**Frank** retired in 2001 at age 55. He and **Margaret** have six grandchildren. Their first great-grandchild is on the way in July.

**Frank** is a big Hamilton Tiger-Cats fan. He also plays the banjo. **Frank** joined Probus Simcoe 15 years ago and has served as president. Thank you, **Frank**, for telling us your story.





**Wayne Welsh (left) tells Probus members and guests about his family's asparagus operation.**

### **Tour of Welsh Bros. asparagus farm**

The Welsh family has been farming in Norfolk County since 1855. Today they specialize in two crops: asparagus in the spring and sweet corn in the summer. **Wayne Welsh**, helped by his son **Charles**, gave 21 Simcoe Probus Club members and guests a tour of the asparagus operation.

Welsh Brothers grow 60 acres of asparagus on Windham Road 7 and package it at their facility on Windham Road 3. The work employs 50 offshore workers, some from St. Vincent, and half a dozen family members and local residents. Each acre produces up to seven or eight tons of asparagus. The packaging facility produces 1,200 boxes a day.

On our visit on May 26, the asparagus season had a week or 10 days to go. Welsh Brothers do not sell to grocery chains. They sell their asparagus and corn to independent markets, stores and stands that can deliver it fresh to customers.

Asparagus is a perennial plant. From the time it is planted, asparagus takes three years to produce a first crop. Its roots grow up to 20 feet long and 20 feet deep. Asparagus can grow an inch an hour on a hot day.

Workers riding on a harvesting machine cut the asparagus by hand. At the processing plant, it is washed, cooled, graded and packed. Prices are determined by the market.

Following our tour, 18 Probus members and guests enjoyed lunch at Flux Brewery Co. near Oakland.

*To see more photos of our tour of Welsh Bros. Asparagus farm, go to <http://simcoeprubusclub.weebly.com> and click on newsletters.*