



THE NEWSLETTER



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

MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2017

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

Guest Speaker

Abu Noman Tarek,
Imam, Brantford Mosque.

Who-Am-I?

Gus Takacs.

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Review of Sept. 12, 2017, meeting

President **Murray Uren** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. followed by the singing of our national anthem. **Craig Cameron** is a new member.

PROBUS business

- Wellness: We have made a donation to the Alzheimer's Society in memory of **Patricia Robinson**, wife of **Al Robinson**. She passed away on Aug. 25.
- Program: **Dan Pearson** has arranged programs for the rest of the year.
- Special events: **Dick Pearson** is lining up a tour of Bonnieheath Estate lavender farm and winery in the spring.
- Treasurer: **Dave Montross** reported on our annual financial statement. Our club is in good financial shape. Dave is collecting \$35 membership fees for 2017-18. We need new members. We have a new brochure to hand out.
- House: **Rick Middaugh** reported all is well.
- Who Am I: **Gus Takacs** is looking for speakers.
- Newsletter: **Nestor Rosa** took notes of today's meeting.
- Christmas lunch: **Clarence Hurtubise** is handling details.

Guest Speaker: John Ayre

Nearly 350 years ago, French explorers found “the earthly paradise of Canada” on the north shore of Lake Erie at the future site of Port Dover. The 1669-70 explorations of Sulpician priests **Francois Dollier de Casson** and **Rene de Brehant de Galinee** are the subject of a new book by retired Crown attorney and Ontario Assistant Deputy Attorney General **John Ayre**.

A cairn along Black Creek, off Donjon Boulevard, in Port Dover marks the national historic site where the two priests and seven soldiers spent the winter. The site was identified thanks to Galinee who described the wintering place in a journal and map now housed in the National Library of France.

The priests’ journey was an important step in the expansion of France’s empire around the Great Lakes and, later, down the length of the Mississippi. Dollier and Galinee showed the Great Lakes are interconnected. And they raised a cross in Port Dover claiming the area for the king of France, Louis XIV.

Their expedition left Montreal in July 1669. Their goal was to travel as far south as modern Pittsburgh to convert natives in the Ohio region. Guides took them to a large Iroquois town called Ganondagan in upstate New York. From there, Dollier decided to seek another route by heading back to Lake Ontario, travelling west at the future site of Burlington, then canoeing down the Grand River, reaching Lake Erie in September.

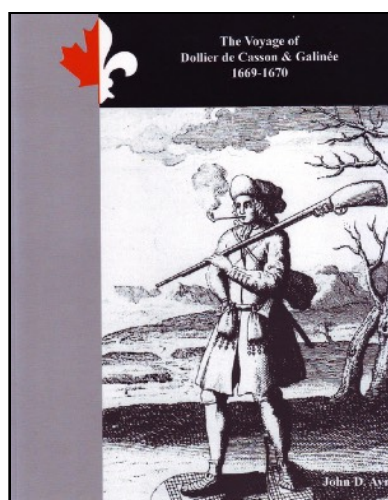
In mid-October the nine Frenchmen in three 20-foot canoes reached Black Creek and decided to build a shelter for the winter. The site teemed with fish, beaver and deer. The explorers hunted bears “fatter and of better flavour than the most savoury pigs of France.” And they made wine from the red grapes that grew in abundance. Galinee wrote: “This earthly paradise of Canada: I call it so because there is assuredly no more beautiful region in all Canada.”

Just before leaving their wintering site in March 1670, the two priests raised a cross and claimed the land for France. After adventures travelling west along Lake Erie, disaster struck at Point Pelee. Rising waves washed away a pack that had been left on the beach. The pack contained the Altar service necessary to perform mass. The priests gave up on their goal of converting natives to Christianity. Instead, they decided to return to Montreal by way of the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair, Lake Huron, Sault Ste. Marie, the French River, Lake Nipissing, the Mattawa River and the Ottawa River. Remarkably, the nine men arrived safely in Montreal on June 18. Galinee returned to France while Dollier became a historic figure in Montreal.

John Ayre’s book, *The Voyage of Dollier de Casson & Galinee 1669-1670*, is available from the author at a price of \$20. **Brian Cook** introduced John and **Dick Pearson** thanked him.



John Ayre



His book.