



# THE NEWSLETTER



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

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## MEETING NOTICE

**Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2018**

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

### Guest Speaker

**Retired police officer Eric DeSerrano,  
Bicycle safety.**

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### Review of Sept. 11, 2018, meeting

President **Murray Uren** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. **Brian Cook** led the singing of our national anthem. **President Murray** welcomed visitors **Ed Corden, Jim Doty** and **Peter Vaughan**.

### PROBUS business

- Club dues: Members overwhelmingly voted to raise dues to \$45 a year while continuing to meet at St. James Church with coffee service.
- Treasurer: **Dave Montross** reported on our annual financial statement. Our club begins the 2018-19 financial year with a net balance of \$561.43. Dave is collecting \$45 membership fees.
- Other business: **President Murray** said the current executive members have agreed to continue for another year.



**The Andromeda galaxy as photographed by Bernd Mueller with a one-hour time exposure.**

### **Guest Speakers: Tim Philp and Bernd Mueller**

Amateur astronomers **Tim Philp** and **Bernd Mueller** took us on a tour of the universe — all in one hour. Astronomy puts you in your place in the universe, **Tim** told us. And the universe is a very big place indeed. Our knowledge is constantly changing, with new discoveries arriving all the time.

For many years, **Tim** wrote a weekly astronomy column for the Brantford Expositor. He is executive director of Rosewood House in Brantford, which provides transitional housing for people with mental health and addiction challenges.

Our sun and its planets is just one of many solar systems. Our sun is tiny compared to some of the other suns out there. At the centre of our sun is a nuclear furnace. Heat takes one million years to travel from our sun's centre to its surface. From the sun's surface, heat reaches the Earth in 8.5 minutes. Our sun is 4.5 billion years old. It has another 4.5 billion years before it will burn out.

Stars are astronomical objects that give off light. The closest star to Earth is our sun.

A small percentage of stars are visible to the naked eye or telescopes. Although our sun is alone, most stars are in clusters.

Planets orbit around stars and can appear starlike in the night sky. They are formed of debris that was flung into space after a star was born from a ball of gas. Currently, astronomers have



**Tim Philp**

detected about 3,500 planets. Elements, such as carbon and oxygen, all come from the interiors of stars so, literally, we are made of stardust.

Constellations are patterns of stars. Nebulae are gas clouds that can form stars. Galaxies are collections of stars bound by gravity. Comets are icy dirt balls whose tails always point away from the sun. Meteors are pieces of rock, some as small as a grain of sand, a dangerous few, like the one that wiped out the dinosaurs, as wide as 10 kilometres.

The universe is everything, immeasurable and endless.

**Bernd Mueller** showed spectacular photos he has taken with his telescope. Bernd is a member of PROBUS and also the North Shore Erie Amateur Astronomers Club, which meets on the first Friday of the month, except December, June, July and August, at 7:30 p.m. at the Norfolk Association for Community Living building at 644 Ireland Rd., in Simcoe. For more information about the club, go to <http://my.kwic.com/~amj/>



**Bernd Mueller**

**Dan Pearson** introduced our speakers and **President Murray Uren** thanked them.

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**Member updates:**

- Welcome to new member **Ed Cordner**, a retired aircraft engineer from Ottawa. He and his wife **Ann-Marie** live at 7 Basswood Rd. in Simcoe.
- Longtime member **Gus Takacs** has received a pacemaker.
- Former longtime member **Jay McKiee** has moved to the Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home, Room 25-M. **Jay** would welcome a visit.
- And longtime member **Ken Sheppard** has resigned with regret. He has moved to Sutton West, ON.



**Ed Cordner**

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**Doug Morrison (centre) explains the harvesting machine.**

### **Tobacco farm tour**

PROBUS members have seen the modern, automated way to grow tobacco. Doug and Deb Morrison on Sept. 18 gave a dozen club members and their guests a tour of their farm on Windham Road 10. Growing tobacco is no longer the hot, back-breaking, labour-intensive work of not so long ago. Modern technology and automated machines help four people do the work that took 10 people to do 40 years ago.

It starts in the greenhouse where plants grow in styrofoam trays that float on water. There are no more quotas. Growers need a contract from a tobacco company and a provincial licence. Two workers operate a mechanical harvester that plucks leaves and shoots them into a metal rack or bin. The bin drops onto a wagon and is taken to a bulk kiln to cure for about 10 days. The cured leaves are graded, baled and shipped to the tobacco company. Thank you, Doug and Deb, for a very interesting and informative visit.



**Deb Morrison and Gerald Sheppard with a tobacco leaf.**



**Pinning leaves before placing a bin in a bulk kiln.**



**Grading tobacco leaves.**



**Doug Morrison with bales.**