



THE NEWSLETTER

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

ANNUAL
\$35 DUES
ARE DUE

MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2017

10 a.m., Muriel Bridge Room, St. James United Church, Simcoe.

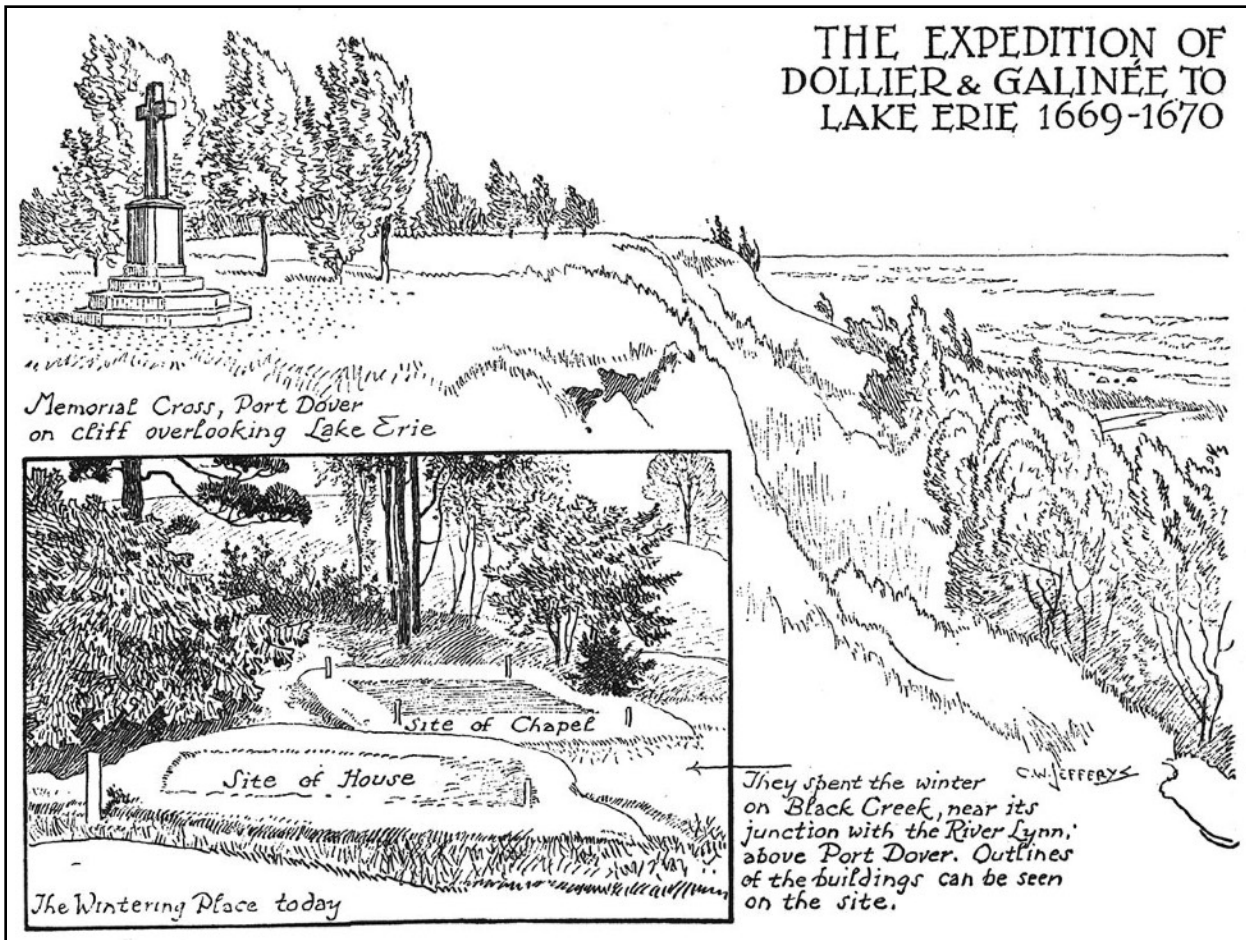
9:30 a.m., Book Exchange, Socializing and Coffee.

Guest Speaker

Historian and former Crown Attorney

John Ayre.

Topic: French explorers Dollier and Galinée
and their time in Norfolk County.



A 1942 illustration by Canadian artist C. W. Jefferys.

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Review of July 11, 2017, meeting

President **Murray Uren** called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. **Brian Cook** led us in our national anthem. Michael Kite of Simcoe introduced himself as a guest of **Gerald Sheppard**.

PROBUS business

- Wellness: **Al Robinson** reported PROBUS original member **Ken Keegan**, 94, is living at Rosewood House in Simcoe.
Gerald Sheppard reported **Bob Beam** is still under the weather.
- Program: **Dan Pearson** has speakers arranged through January.
- Special events: **Dick Pearson** is considering a tour of Bonnieheath lavender farm and winery.
- Treasurer: No report.
- House: **Rick Middaugh** has rearranged tables. Our room looks fuller.
- Newsletter: **David Judd** reported on page views of simcoeprobustclub.weebly.com.

Guest Speaker: Gord Christmas

Gord Christmas has many stories to tell. Many people know Gord as a regular columnist in the Simcoe Reformer, writing about whatever catches his fancy.

His roots run deep in Norfolk County. He is related to Billy Smith, reputed to be the first white settler in Charlotteville in 1780. One of Gord's ancestors was killed at the battle of Moraviantown in the War of 1812.

Gord was born in St. Thomas. His parents grew tobacco. His uncle had started the Big Creek tobacco plantation in the 1920s.

Gord grew up in Walsingham as an only child. He suffered greatly from allergies. In 1965, at age 17, he went to Arizona for his health; enrolled in the University of Arizona and discovered beer and motorcycles. He flew with the Civil Air Patrol in Tucson and got **John Wayne's** autograph on a movie set. Gord spent six months working on shrimp boats in a Mexican town with no electricity.

Restored to good health, Gord returned to Ontario, worked in security and became involved with the cadet corps and cadet league. He met **Smokey Smith**, the last living Canadian recipient of the Victoria Cross.

Gord got his high school diploma at age 46, then went on to graduate from university. On his 50th birthday he went skydiving, jumping three times. In 1987, he got work as a counsellor at Holmes House in Simcoe helping people cope with addiction.



Reformer columnist Gord Christmas

Gord started writing for The Reformer 16 or 17 years ago. He is amazed by the number of people who read his columns and comment on them.

Gord and his wife **Peggy** live on their farm between Langton and Jericho.

Dan Pearson introduced Gord and **David Judd** thanked him.

Canada Day:

President Murray asked members how they celebrated Canada Day this year or in years passed.

David Judd read parts of a column written by **Stan Morris** in the Port Dover Maple Leaf recounting how Port Dover celebrated the first Canada Day in 1867. People from round about, including a steamboat from Port Rowan, flocked to Port Dover. Men from the British gunboat the Britomart paraded and took part in games. Everyone had lunch in a warehouse. The afternoon featured a greased pole contest on the pier, followed by games. At night, there were a concert and fireworks.

Gus Takacs recalled that a Harvard Anson aircraft belly landed in a field at his family's tobacco farm in late June 1944. Gus, who was 10 years old at the time, remembers the pilot, co-pilot and navigator were unhurt. His mother fed the men fried chicken in a basket. The flying officer from Villa Nova said it was the best Canada Day he could ever have.

President Murray told about his visit to Ottawa for Canada Day 150. He and his wife Helen booked a bed and breakfast six months in advance. Some 750,000 people came to celebrate on Parliament Hill. Security was disorganized and lineups were long to get on the Hill so Murray and **Helen** went to a park behind the Chateau Laurier. The big, friendly crowds enjoyed the family friendly events despite the rain.

Clarence Hurtubise and his wife **Shirley** took their little dog **Blake** with them to Port Dover on Canada Day. Clarence and Shirley had just got the 5.5-pound Papillon two weeks previously. There was a dog show in Powell Park, so they decided to enter Blake in the purebred class. To their delight, Blake placed second among a dozen competitors. Clarence, Shirley and Blake celebrated with a visit to the chip wagon.



Shirley Hurtubise with Blake, the prize-winning Papillon.

Our condolences

We extend our condolences to **Bruce and Beatrice Bowyer** on the death of their son **Brian Bowyer**, 45, who passed away on July 10.

We also extend our condolences to the family of longtime PROBUS member **Don Walker**, who passed away on Aug. 6 in Brandon, Manitoba.

