

A Brief History of the Probus Club of Etobicoke

The origins of our club go back to March 2003 when Etobicoke residents Josef and Dorothy De Haas, who belonged to the Probus Club of Mississauga Centre, met with two other members of that club to discuss starting a club in Etobicoke. As a result, a meeting was held at the Unitarian Fellowship (across the road from Weston Golf and Country Club) on May 13, 2003. At that meeting thirty-eight people signed up as charter members and an executive was chosen.

The Unitarian Fellowship building was too small for such a group, so the club soon moved to the Markland Wood Golf Club. That club eventually proved inadequate also and in 2005 Probus moved to the Weston Golf and Country Club which is across the road from our original meeting place. Because the location, facilities and service are excellent, we continue to meet at WGCC. Our membership grew to 250, which we had previously decided would be our maximum. In a short time there were so many names on our waiting list that in September 2007 we started a new Probus club, The Probus Club of Kingsway-Islington. Then in May 2010, we started another Etobicoke Probus club, The Westway Probus Club, which now meets at St. James United Church. The three Probus clubs in Etobicoke now have a combined membership of 625 (with some duplications) and all have waiting lists.

In October 2005, Barclay and Ann Nutter started the practice of having joint presidents and this tradition has continued, for the most part, with either a married couple or two individuals.

One of the first activities for our club was bowling. This was followed quickly by walking and biking groups. Bridge lessons developed into social bridge and then into a duplicate bridge group. The Investment group, started by the late Bob Bruce, became the largest group in our Probus. Other popular groups include Computer-Media, Dinner, and Book Clubs. More recently we have begun wine tasting, lunching and movie groups.

An important part of our club is the monthly newsletter, which was edited for many years by Paul Dickey and Vickie Hayler. Sally Jordan and David Furlong took over as editors in October 2011. The newsletter keeps us current on upcoming events and is very useful to anyone who is unable attend all the general meetings.

A key feature of every monthly meeting (except December when we have our Christmas luncheon) is our guest speaker. We have had many excellent speakers, too numerous to mention, and several were enjoyed so much that we invited them back for a second time.

Almost every month we have an event or outing of some sort. We have taken a number of day tours to various places around the province, including the aircraft museum at the Hamilton airport, the Baps Mandir Hindu temple in Rexdale and HMCS Ojibwa in Port Burwell. The Day at the Races at Woodbine was so popular it became an annual spring event.

Since our modest beginning in 2003, we have grown into a large, active club known for its friendliness and the wide range of activities for its members.