

## **Fun, Friendship, Fellowship in Retirement**

Picture this: You are retired! For over forty years you have had a purpose, to carry out the responsibilities of your career, perhaps also while raising your family and being part of a community that included other people like you—co-workers, other parents, sports teams, etc. Now, the kids are grown and gone, the co-workers are ...still working, but you're not. You may be trying to keep up that contact, but it's hard.

We don't realize it as we are living it, but our social life through those years of working and raising a family revolves around those activities, and when we move on from that part of our lives, we also move on socially. Our interests change, and we have the time to pursue our postponed dreams, perhaps developing new hobbies, more education, or travel. However, it can also mean we lose the contacts we had. Our social circle is shrinking, and it can be suddenly quite lonely.

Probus is an organization that is designed for just this situation. Originally developed in the UK by retiring Rotarians who wanted to maintain the social aspect of their service club, it has grown over the years into a global network of clubs open to all retired and semi-retired people who simply want to meet for fun, friendship and fellowship. It is non-sectarian, non-political, and has no agenda other than social gathering. At this point in Canada, we have over 245 clubs, and 33,000 members, and it is growing all the time. New friendships are happening every day, and a surprising number of re-connections with past friends or acquaintances have also occurred.

When Roy Mackay and his wife went looking for a Probus club in their area a few years ago, they learned about the Escarpment Club in Milton, Ontario, whose president at the time was Wayne Herder. They had both served on their high school student council back in 1965! On top of that, Wayne and Roy's wives had also gone to high school together and were able to re-unite after more than fifty years.

What, exactly, do Probus members do? Well, here is a typical pattern. There is a monthly general meeting for members, but guests are welcome, that normally includes a social time and a speaker. The topic can literally be anything under the sun, from authors promoting a book, to storytellers or musicians of various kinds. The latest speaker our club used was a local actor who had spent several years in the Yukon, and he told the story of the Klondike Gold Rush, with lots of slides and Robert Service quotes, and he brought the whole story to life for us.

A key member of the management team is the Social Convenor. Her committee plans events, usually day trips, for the membership to interesting places in the region. Our club is just north of Toronto, and social events for us have included trips to the Stratford Festival, Niagara's Shaw Festival, Prince Edward County wine tours, and Georgian Bay cruises, as well as local activities

like visits to a nearby bison farm, an alpaca farm, and mini-golf tournaments, all of which are both affordable and fun.

The third major component of a Probus Club is Interest Groups. These can be anything and everything, and only require a small number of interested people, and a coordinator. Here you will find book clubs, dinner clubs, wine clubs, pickle-ball aficionados, hikers, bridge and euchre players—the list is endless.

How much or how little you participate depends on you. We have members that try to do everything, and can be active almost every day, and others who belong but only do one thing—perhaps the monthly meeting, or the hiking club, but whatever you do, you will make new friends, and have an opportunity to expand your social life.

I have often heard people say that Probus was the best thing that has happened to them in retirement. Probus has become the social centre of their lives and they have made a lot of great new friends while having a ton of fun.

Wherever you are in Canada, there is or can be a Probus Club nearby. A simple search on the Probus Canada website ([www.probuscanada.ca](http://www.probuscanada.ca)) can help you find the nearest club, or simply contact us, and someone will help you.

Remember, our only reason for existence is to create social experiences and have fun. There is no other agenda—we are not a service club, we do not raise money for causes, and are completely non-political, non-sectarian and volunteer-based. Everyone who is semi or fully retired is welcome. Discover Probus – Join Probus.

Fellowship, friendship and fun! These are our goals.

Chuck Heroux for PROBUS Canada