



## *From the President*

### Connecting through PROBUS Global

In our fast-paced world, staying connected is more vital than ever, and PROBUS Global is proud to bring you the latest updates and insights through our newsletter. This valuable communication tool serves as a bridge, uniting PROBUS members worldwide and reaping numerous benefits for our community.

First and foremost, our newsletter supplies information, offering a curated snapshot of PROBUS activities, events, and achievements from various corners of the globe. Whether you're in Australia, the United Kingdom or anywhere in between, the newsletter keeps you informed about our global PROBUS family.

Beyond its informative role, the newsletter plays a part in fostering a sense of unity. By showcasing member spotlights, shared experiences, and diverse perspectives, it builds a rich tapestry of our collective journey. This shared narrative binds us together, creating a global Probus identity that transcends geographical boundaries. Furthermore, the newsletter serves as an inspiration hub. By featuring success stories, unique initiatives, and member contributions, it motivates and encourages PROBUS clubs worldwide, enhancing the PROBUS experience for everyone.

Last but not least, the newsletter is a powerful tool for member engagement. It opens avenues for communication, providing a platform for members to express their thoughts, share feedback, and actively participate in the global PROBUS conversation.

All PROBUS Global members are invited to the General meeting on March 18 @8AM Toronto time. Attending our general meetings offers invaluable benefits, including:

1. **Insightful President's Report:** Gain firsthand knowledge of PROBUS Global's direction, achievements, and upcoming initiatives.
2. **Membership Update:** Stay informed about our growing community, including new members, upcoming events, and membership benefits.
3. **Recruiting Recent Retirees:** Learn effective strategies for attracting new members, particularly recent retirees eager to connect and engage with like-minded individuals.
4. **Meeting New PROBUS Friends While Traveling:** Discover opportunities to expand your network and forge meaningful connections with fellow PROBUS members, whether at home or abroad.
5. **Virtual Probus Global Club:** Explore the innovative concept for our virtual club, offering a platform for members and non-members to engage with PROBUS Global and facilitating cross-country communication for existing members.
6. **PC New Club Champion Program:** Be introduced to our latest program from PROBUS Canada aimed at fostering leadership and community engagement within PROBUS clubs.
7. **Meet the Management Team:** Get acquainted with our president, country representatives, and other key figures shaping the direction of PROBUS Global.

Attending our general meetings not only keeps you informed but also empowers you to actively participate in shaping the future of our global community. Don't miss out on the opportunity to connect, learn, and contribute to the vibrant PROBUS experience.

**Contact PG [here](#)**

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Contributions welcome (200-500 words) for June issue.

Deadline May 15, 2024

[newsletter@probusglobal.org](mailto:newsletter@probusglobal.org)

***Richard Furlong***



## Editorial

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OpenAI's artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot ChatGPT was unleashed onto an unsuspecting public just over a year ago. It became the fastest-growing app ever, in the hands of 100 million users by the end of its second month. It has forced governments worldwide to wise up to the idea that AI poses significant challenges – not just economic, but also societal and existential challenges. Nations globally are increasingly directing their money, time and attention to attempts to address these issues. White-collar workers have joined their blue-collar cohorts and are now in fear for their jobs. The education sector reacted with some hostility to

ChatGPT's arrival, despite it having much to offer. It has caused copyright chaos with multiple class action suits now in play. The most worrying challenge is misinformation, disinformation and AI's ability to clone voices, videos and people of influence, messing with our voting power and reasoned decision-making. Thank goodness we seniors can still meet and enjoy genuine conversations and friendships through PROBUS because George Orwell's "big brother" will get bigger and more threatening by the day. We'll need to hang on to authentic, face-to-face friendships and communications as if they were life rafts.

*Mary Wilson*

## Maintaining Club Vitality: A question of younger members?

**John Thorne** – Tasmania, Australia

Many clubs have been seeking new, younger members. But what is a 'younger member'? Broadly speaking it is a person who is 10 to 15 years younger than the current average age in your club. We should also keep in mind the estimate for community clubs such as ours that we need about a 10% increase in membership each year to retain our current levels.

There are a couple of suggested ways to increase membership that are weak, and that we should not rely on. They are:

- Asking all our members to bring along a friend or acquaintance as a prospective new member.

Most of those new members will be the same age as current members. This process though should continue but to a lesser degree.

- Letter drops in nearby streets takes some energy with meagre results.

An effective membership 'campaign' requires a genuine club acceptance of the goal that new members are needed, and those new members should be 'younger.' Wide club acceptance of the goal is vital for success. Also, the club's meetings and activities must be varied and engaging. They should be appealing to anyone who walks through the door on meeting days. The extra activities should be adventurous and stimulating and be varied enough to engage all members.

It may take a club several months to get their house in order and ready to begin accepting a cohort of new, younger members. Whatever campaign is used I would suggest that a gradual membership growth would work better if a handful of new members is inducted at the same time.

The club should have a clear public presence. This would include an active Facebook which remains intriguing, lively, and current. Another measure would be that guest speakers are advertised at the local level, at least. This shows that your PROBUS has 'prestige' in the community and values good people as members. While being enjoyable, inductions should be memorable and focus on the value of the new member to the club. Members need to warmly welcome each new member and sustain that acceptance.

There are clear indications from wide experience aligned with research that it is much easier to attract women into social clubs such as PROBUS than men – whether it is a mixed club or single gender.

Above all, we are not just trying to increase numbers but, while caring for our current members, we are planning for the future. New members need to be ACTIVE members.

Once all the above planning is in place, a strategy I have seen work well in groups such as Legacy, Rotary, Scouting and in Probus is called “5 for 1”. Very briefly, the club members are all divided into groups of five, placing friends in separate groups – all members participate. On a rotational basis each group is asked to meet privately and, over a month or two, come forward with a ‘most likely’ prospective member to bring to the club. Appropriate membership officers explain Probus a little more to the prospective member and other meetings are planned. This campaign works. I have seen it recently used in a club of 80 members who aimed to get 10 new younger members in one year. That goal is being achieved. Of course, the more traditional method of bringing along a friend is also happening, but those people are mostly of a similar age to current members. Stay committed and get results!

If any reader would like to comment on these brief notes, I would be happy to correspond, accept criticism and to assist with further ideas. John G. Thorne. +61 493 092 098 (wherever you are in the world, I can phone you). [thorne.hobart@gmail.com](mailto:thorne.hobart@gmail.com)

### *All Japan Council Newsletter*

In its last newsletter, the All Japan Council published an item by Kenichi Ito, PG’s first Japanese member. From the translation of his article Kenichi Ito said *“I had a strong interest in interacting with professional bus clubs around the world, so I was looking for it on the Internet, YouTube, etc. by chance, . I learned about the existence of a wonderful community called “Global” and immediately became a member. PG is a global community for Probians who are interested in online interaction. Email, video chat, video conference with ZOOM, and regular newsletters. You can interact and exchange information with members of each country.”* He outlined other advantages of PG membership and encouraged Japanese Probians to explore the PG site and join PG.

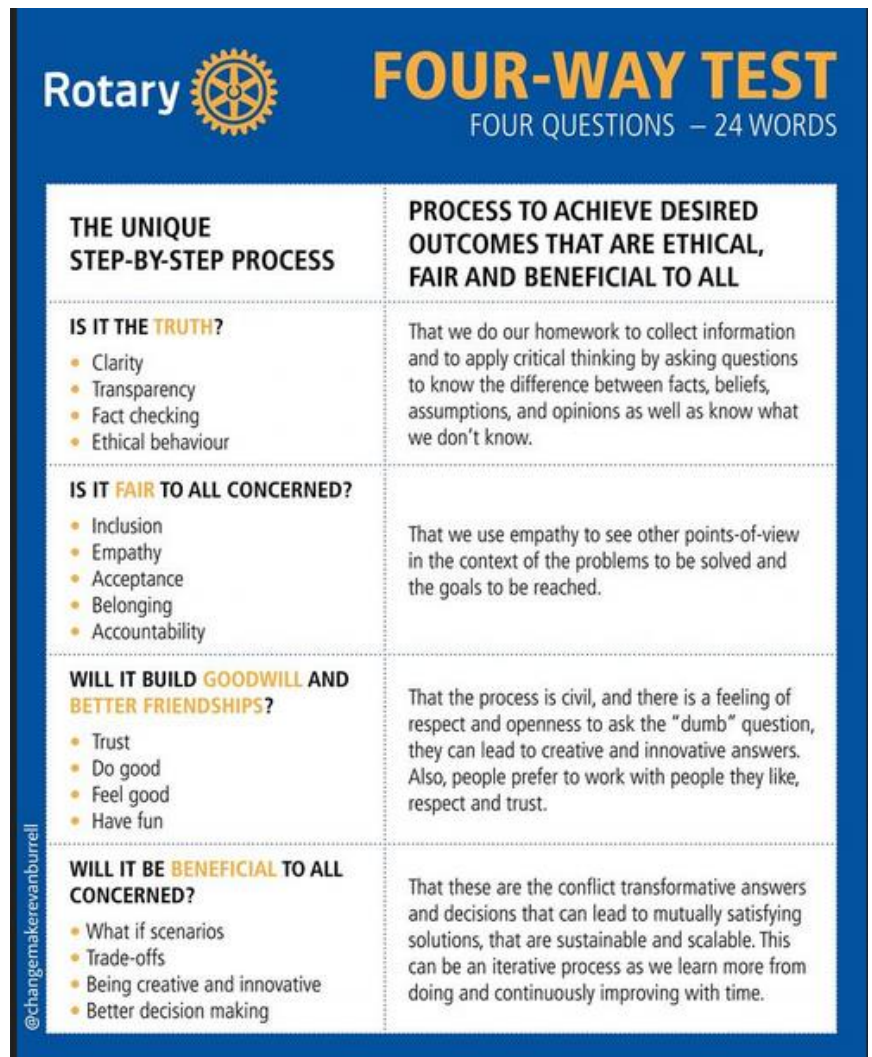
### *Consumers fighting back with available software*

These days there is no such thing as a single published price. We are used to the plethora of rules, loyalty programs, vouchers, cash-back and payment options, and they give the consumer choices. However, an item, from the same store, under the same conditions can now cost you \$x, and me \$y. Artificial Intelligence is extensively used for individual price discrimination. For example, if you are trying to fly on a certain day, and booking by phone or through a bot, the conversation is monitored, and the airline will accommodate you at an inflated price if you can’t change the

date. Sophisticated machine learning algorithms and real-time experiments continuously tweak the prices and deals retailers and businesses offer. **But the tables are turning.** Consumers can now get online to such websites as Comparison and Haggle It, and new haggle bots are on the way. Even ChatGPT now has plug-ins for e-commerce, restaurants and groceries. It is set to force our oligopolies to compete in ways they’ve not been used to, putting downward pressure on prices rather than helping keep them high.

As part of the Rotary Family, PROBUS Clubs are independent social clubs enriching the lives of the senior members of their community and are not involved in fund raising or service projects as are Rotary clubs. Although a Rotary Club may have sponsored a Probus club in the past – they are essentially service clubs and have many “irons in the fire” and may be no longer interested in Probus or what Probus does. This should not prevent your PROBUS Club from approaching a local Rotary Club to send a representative as a guest speaker, to share with your members, the local and international projects with which they are involved. One of the slogans of Rotary is **“Service Above Self” – Try and make a positive difference in others' lives and your life will be enriched beyond words.**

Part of the ethos of Rotary is also what we call the Four Way Test = of the things we think, say and do.



THE UNIQUE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS	PROCESS TO ACHIEVE DESIRED OUTCOMES THAT ARE ETHICAL, FAIR AND BENEFICIAL TO ALL
<b>IS IT THE TRUTH?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity</li> <li>• Transparency</li> <li>• Fact checking</li> <li>• Ethical behaviour</li> </ul>	That we do our homework to collect information and to apply critical thinking by asking questions to know the difference between facts, beliefs, assumptions, and opinions as well as know what we don't know.
<b>IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Belonging</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>	That we use empathy to see other points-of-view in the context of the problems to be solved and the goals to be reached.
<b>WILL IT BUILD GOODWILL AND BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Do good</li> <li>• Feel good</li> <li>• Have fun</li> </ul>	That the process is civil, and there is a feeling of respect and openness to ask the “dumb” question, they can lead to creative and innovative answers. Also, people prefer to work with people they like, respect and trust.
<b>WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERNED?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What if scenarios</li> <li>• Trade-offs</li> <li>• Being creative and innovative</li> <li>• Better decision making</li> </ul>	That these are the conflict transformative answers and decisions that can lead to mutually satisfying solutions, that are sustainable and scalable. This can be an iterative process as we learn more from doing and continuously improving with time.

## *Rights of Nature*

As the need to protect the environment grows more urgent, developments towards recognition of the rights of nature have attracted international attention. In some countries, they have come about through legislative reform, constitutional amendment and the courts. In legal theory, the “rights of nature” acknowledge all Earth’s natural elements as having an inherent right to exist and flourish. Around the globe, lawyers and policymakers have been engaged in finding ways the law can contribute to the protection of ecosystems. Conferring ecosystems with rights is one strategy we can use to prevent species extinctions and ensure a “voice” for nature. Western philosophers have confined intrinsic value to human beings alone. The same notion permeates the law. However, at a time when we are seeing threats to the environment turn into [catastrophes with alarming frequency](#), the law can be an inflexible tool and slow to respond. Yet recognising the intrinsic value of other species and our broader environment is a pathway that communities and local governments have the potential to adopt, without and despite slow legal responses.

## PROBUS in NZ will Turn 50

Liz Smith, New Zealand coordinator, PROBUS Club of Kapiti Coast

Like many events in life, coincidence, or being in the right place at the right time is how something begins. In 1973 a local Paraparaumu businessman and Rotarian, Gordon Roatz was visiting Scotland and was taken to a PROBUS meeting. The idea of an organisation for retired people interested him and so, on his return to Paraparaumu, he spoke about Probus to his fellow Rotarians. He raised the idea of Rotary sponsoring a PROBUS club at

Paraparaumu and so the first PROBUS Club in the Southern Hemisphere was formed in November 1974. This was an all-male club and it was not until March 2004 that women could join. At the time the PROBUS club was formed Gordon could not join as he had not yet retired, but in 1993, twenty years after his Rotary Club sponsored a PROBUS club, he became president of the PROBUS Club of Kapiti Coast. Thanks to Gordon's vision, fifty years later, on 4<sup>th</sup>

November 2024 the PROBUS Club of Kapiti Coast will be celebrating its birthday with a special luncheon. VIP invitees will include the local MPs, Rotary District Governor, local Mayor, PSPL CEO, PSPL Chairman, and PSPL New Zealand board member. The club is expecting that PROBUS members from around New Zealand and overseas will attend the day and it promises to be one of great celebration with a few surprises.



### *Travels of a Donkey*

Part Eight



By Graham McCombie  
PG's UK  
Coordinator

*From the pen of the NEWBURGH  
(incorporating International)  
Correspondent of the PG  
Newsletter (Reuters Syndicated)*

Greetings Dear Reader or as we say in the North East of Scotland "Fit like foo're ye deein?" For those who've signed up to my Parliamo Doric Classes the above Greeting should be easy. Before going further my sincere thanks to the lovely email I received from my last missive re the Doric/ Scots Language – haven't read the Terry Pratchett Novel – on my to-do list. After a long time in the Doldrums, you may be pleased to learn that I'm once again fulfilling my role as an International Jetsetter having spent the last couple of months gyaanaboot (travelling) in Holland and Germany. Now I know what a Mole feels like and I don't mean a person who works for an organization or government and secretly gives information to its competitor or enemy nor a small, dark spot or lump on a person's skin – I mean the poor little sod who blindly travels around in the dark. I'm afraid the romance and excitement of visiting pastures new have vanished; in essence, travelling seems to have become a real scunner (pain). At the risk of being branded a Grumpy Old Man it occurred to me that those involved these days in the travel industry have scant regard for the welfare of those paying their wages – i.e. we the sorry traveller, who ultimately has to right wrongs and take full responsibility for delays, overbooking, weather, strikes, air traffic control, cancellations (none of which are the fault of the operator), and the carbon footprint required by ferrying the unsuspecting public around. I could go on.

On a recent trip through Hamburg, the flight was cancelled due to inclement weather – fair enough – however, the carrier felt that they could manage the situation by sending each of the irate passengers emails advising them of their rebooking and allowing them to organise temporary accommodation, travel, onward flight connections themselves, and absolving the carrier from their duty of care.

Of course, any complaints, and reimbursement of expenses could be done online – not surprisingly this particular carrier didn't have an information desk at the Airport and its check-in staff suddenly found that English wasn't their first language – how comforting a shrug of the shoulders is when answering essential questions.

This begs the question – “Does everyone have emails, are carrying mobiles/ laptops/ iPads or are even semi-computer literate or should have to be?”

My travel is organised through an Agent so the carrier did not have my email address – bah humbug! It is a truism “Travel broadens the Mind”. That holds once you get to your destination.

There is I feel, a Worldwide conspiracy afoot by Travel Operators, to make getting to a place of enlightenment, the longest, shortest and most unpleasant experience possible. Indeed, I'd go so far as to say that major carriers are in serious competition with low-budget providers to outdo each other.

I'm off to Singapore in a few days back to another exciting World in which I spent most of my life. The thought of getting there is less stimulating.

So, until my next communication... “Lang may yer lum reek”. Sliante

Any comments – I'd love to hear from you – [graham@mmsgam.co.uk](mailto:graham@mmsgam.co.uk).

## *PROBUS Canada Appoints Ambassadors*

From **Brenda Andrews**, PROBUS Canada Ambassador

A new initiative for PROBUS Canada (PC) is its “Ambassador Program”. When new leads or enquiries regarding the establishment of a new club is received on the National website, it will be redirected to the PC Ambassadors. The lead will be discussed with the PC District Director who may wish to establish the new club alone, or ask the Ambassador to facilitate the new club's establishment. The Ambassador will also convene and mentor the new club. PC has put funds aside to lend towards the establishment of new clubs. The club will need to repay these funds within a year.

Note: PG also passes enquiries from people in Canada, new to PROBUS, to a PC Ambassador.

## *Is Obesity on the way out?*

Where Viagra, a medicine initially formulated to treat hypertension and angina, delivered unintended ecstasy to millions of lovelorn individuals, there is a chance that now, Ozempic could radically restructure our health and food industries, boost the global economy and possibly even reshape our future. It is a breakthrough in the treatment of type 2 diabetes, but the drug also allows patients to lose remarkable amounts of weight. Manufactured in Denmark, it has accounted for almost all of Denmark's recent economic growth. There are reports the medications [inhibit the desire to overindulge in food, alcohol, nicotine and even opioids](#). If that is the case, there could be a quantum shift in demand firstly for the products that helped create obesity, such as fast foods and fizzy drinks, and secondly for those who have built business empires battling the effects. For example, in the US, Weight Watchers' shares which were trading for over \$40 in 2021, have now dropped to around \$7. The treatment still is in its early days and is not without drawbacks, and it

doesn't work for everyone. But it is early days and if it can be used to curb obesity, it will have profound health benefits for whole nations. The negative financial impacts on businesses could be partly offset by the positive ones on health expenses.

## Cliques



They happen everywhere when people get together. Even in PROBUS cliques can form, where seats get “saved” at meetings and clique members don't mix with others very much. They are different from groups of friends who are supportive and accepting of others. Cliques tend to make others feel unwelcome. So how does the management committee deal with the problem? Breaking up cliques can be a delicate process, as it involves fostering inclusivity and creating an environment where everyone feels welcome. If time permits, incorporate icebreaker activities or games that encourage people to interact with those they don't know well. Instigate the idea that people change seats after morning tea. This helps break the

initial barriers and fosters a more all-encompassing atmosphere. Create a buddy system where new members, even visitors, pair up with existing members, ensuring the pairs come from different groups. Encourage members to reach out to others and make an effort to involve everyone – make it a group norm. If a committee member notices exclusionary behaviour, they should address it promptly and privately. The activities that are organised, if varied enough, will cater for different interests and can provide opportunities for members to interact outside their usual cliques. Building an inclusive environment takes time, patience, and consistent effort, and if a culture where everyone feels valued and included can be developed, it will overcome any resentment and formation of cliques.

## Was Machu Picchu a University?

Peter Jennings – PG Webmaster

Jane and Peter



Last month, Jane and I had the pleasure of exploring the ruins of the Inca civilization in Peru. What was most impressive was the undeniable evidence of the depth of their knowledge of architecture, engineering, agricultural science, geometry, physics, materials science, astronomy, metallurgy, mining, and administration.

The conventional belief is that Machu Picchu was a resort and a retreat for Inca royalty and nobles to escape from the clamour of the nearby capital at Cusco. But a recent theory is that it was a centre for the exchange of ideas and knowledge between the Incas and the leaders and elite of the hundreds of tribes and ethnic groups under their control.

Perhaps, 900 years ago, Quechua TED talks by the Incan Newton or Galileo echoed from the stone walls of Machu Picchu, as intellectuals and leaders gathered to exchange ideas and knowledge via the 40,000 km network of roads which unite the two million square kilometre empire. You have to see the precision of the carving of the stones that fit together like giant interlocking legos. Amazing engineering and scientific skills were required to design a system capable of withstanding massive earthquakes and successive El Nino rainy seasons. Not only were the stones carved with interlocking shapes, but they poured molten copper down internal channels to bind them with

flexibility. Water from the frequent rains is carefully channelled to avoid erosion of the stones and the ground on which they stand.

The Incan agricultural research centre at Moray was designed with 12 circular terraces inside a 150-meter-deep crater. This created microclimates for testing different crops in different soils with varying irrigation and techniques. The Incas understood how and where to plant their 3,000 different potato varieties for maximum yield.

Although some tribes were conquered by force as the empire expanded, others joined to eliminate the hungry years when crops failed due to drought or excess rain. The Incan warehouses at Ollantaytambo were filled with freeze-dried potatoes, quinoa, and salted meats, all of which were available for distribution when necessary.

Also impressive were the astronomical observatories with water mirrors - reflective pools of water on a thin perfectly flat layer of gold, used to track the motions of the constellations and calibrate their calendar.

If you haven't been, Machu Picchu is probably already on your bucket list. Many PROBUS clubs organize group tours to places near and far. You won't go wrong with a trip to Peru. Here are [some of the photos we took](#) . Our trip was arranged by [Peru for Less](#) and we recommend their service.



Moray Agriculture



Stone Wall



Maras Salt Mines

## *Sharing Club Memories*

A good way of sharing lasting memories with fellow club members is to include many photos in club newsletters. Everyone likes seeing themselves surrounded by friends and being involved in PROBUS activities. The best way is to have several members take photos of activities and people, and email them to the club Newsletter Editor, who can then pick and choose the best ones, crop them and adjust the lighting and contrast. Alternatively, the club could have a couple of designated photographers whose jobs are to take action shots, portraits of pensiveness or enjoyment, and to capture authentic moments of laughter, camaraderie, and engagement. Avoid using those photos of dining out which include vacant chairs and big spaces between diners. Also, reject photos of the backs of people. Remember, photography is not just about capturing images; it's about storytelling. Group photos are more fun if they are not rigid, but show a little larrikinism among members. If someone in the club is willing to compile slide shows made up of photos of past activities, they can be screened during morning tea or at meeting arrival time. It all adds to preserving memories and demonstrating the vibrant spirit of the club.

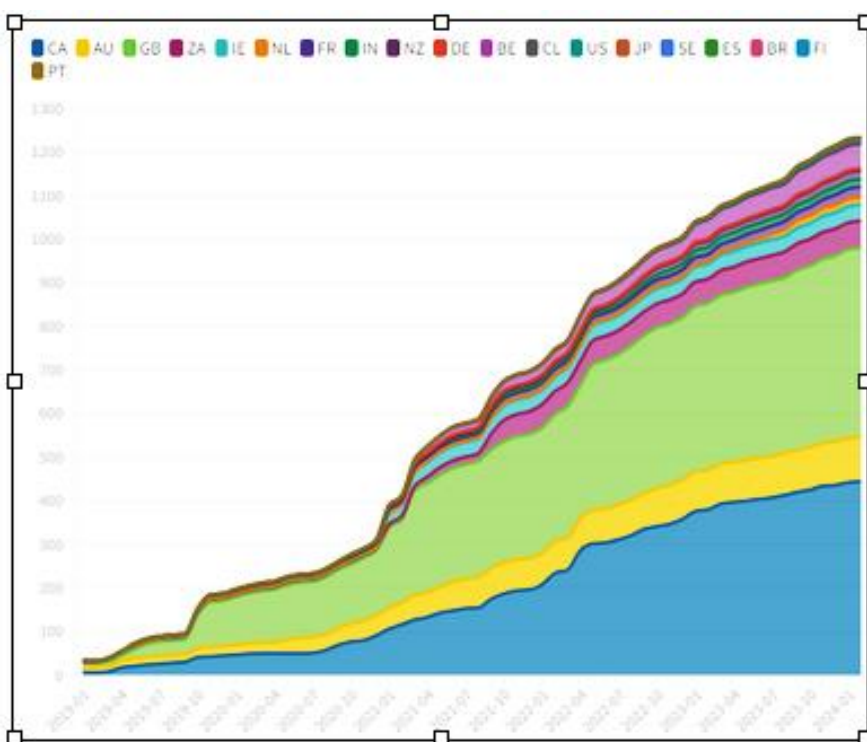
## *Talent in a club*

**Mary Wilson** – PG Newsletter Editor

I wonder how many of us appreciate just how much talent there is, even in small clubs. Having a practical bent and creative ability limited to writing, I am always agog when I come across a member



whose skills have been hidden. Some time ago, my club had a type of “show and tell” display, akin to kiddies taking their treasures to school and talking about them. Each of those who brought something for the display table could speak for two minutes about their hobby or art. (Some stayed silent). One brought a painting he did, just one of those which adorned the walls of his home. A few ladies brought craft work such as a finely crocheted tablecloth, knitted babywear, and quilted goods. Another displayed her magnificent 3D, hand-crafted cards, many of which the club uses to send to sick members. Then there is our Grey Nomad member with exceptional photography skills. He has filled many cameo spots for us with his stunning slide shows. One of our past Treasures has won state-wide prizes for cake decorating, and on two occasions we raffled off the spun sugar posy which decorated the club’s birthday cake. At one stage, one member showed us his culinary skills by contributing to our morning tea, and another read his poems. The list goes on, and as we acquire new members over the years, I am sure we’ll discover more hidden talents. Recognition and appreciation of these skills are always valued and fun to expose at the club level.



## PROBUS Global Growth

As of January, we have 1246 members from 19 countries. There are 445 from Canada and 434 from the UK and the rest from the other 17 countries. So many opportunities for you to meet fellow Probians on your travels. Not travelling much, reach out for a conversation by email or chat in the [Video Chat room](#).

Charts showing the growth of PROBUS Global over the past 5 years are on the web site at <https://probusglobal.org/Statistics/>

### Valuable Information

**PG’s website has valuable information about a variety of concerns a club may have. There are articles about succession planning, club websites, membership recruitment, Zoom meetings, and keeping members happy among others. You’ll find them on the PG Home Page. Click on about at the top.**

Did you know you can support PROBUS Global with a [donation](#) or by becoming a [paid subscriber to the Newsletter?](#)

We thank those who have generously supported us in the past with donations or as volunteers on the Management Team.

My young son asked me  
“Where does poo come from?”  
I was somewhat bemused but  
gave him an honest answer. He  
looked at me perplexed and  
asked, “and Tigger?”



I was watching a show for about 10 minutes and a lady was listing all of these great things to do for fun. Then I realised it was one of the religious channels and she was reading a list of sins!



**Just failed my driving test. When the examiner asked me “what sign would you expect to see down a narrow country road?” Apparently ‘fresh eggs for sale’ wasn’t the answer...**

Tip of the day: Before starting a project, check if you have the resources available



**Cricket:** I was asked to explain cricket to someone. “It’s quite easy to understand,” I said. “There are two teams: ours and theirs. One out in the field and one in. Each person in the side that’s in goes out, and when he is out, he comes in and gets the next man who is out. Then, when they have all been in and all out, the team that’s been in the field goes in and the team that’s in goes out and tries to get out those coming in. Sometimes you get players still in and not out. Then when both sides have been in and out, including not-outs, that’s the end of the game. Simple.”

