



Lindsay Men's Probus Club

Chapter #185: Charter Date: February 23rd 2007



On April 14th, we held our monthly meeting, with 40+ members attending. Following a 30-minute social time, Club Vice-President, John Bennett, opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone. We then rose for O'Canada.

There were no guests at this month's meeting.

John noted that Max Radiff had stepped down as President for health reasons, although he continues as a member. John expressed his thanks to Max for taking on the role as President last fall and for his leadership, particularly in arranging the 2025 Christmas lunch, which raised the bar for that event going forward.

John then asked the membership if there were any dissenting voices with regards to him assuming the role as President, and as there were none, John is confirmed as the club's President subject to a formal vote of the club's Management Committee at its next meeting in late April.

John then called on Ted Abbot to introduce our speaker, Dr. ViTu Banh, speaking about his book published last year, "12 Elephants and a Dragon". This account of his life's journey begins with his early years in Vietnam and his parents' decision for the family to leave as the Communists took charge in the 1970s. His family was one of thousands fleeing the country in small, overcrowded boats. There were many hardships and dangers in the journey, and his talk was supported by many slides and a video showing conditions at the time. More on page 3...

After his talk, there was an extensive Q&A, following which he was thanked by Jack Kyle, who noted the strong and lasting impression that his talk would have on those present.

ViTu then drew the winning 50/50 ticket, and it was won by Jan Mikkelsen.

Our "Who Am I?" Member this month was Pat Dunn. More on page 4...

Three new members were inducted into the club: Eric Dormer sponsored by John Wylie; Mark Knoester sponsored by John Bennett, and Terry Leslie also sponsored by John Bennett. Welcome Eric, Mark & Terry.

John then presented Past President Bill Mackasey with an engraved, crystal wine glass to mark his service to the club and his leadership as President in 2024/25. Bill was given a round of applause from the membership as recognition and thanks.

John closed the meeting just before noon with 20 members going to lunch at the Olympia Restaurant.



PHOTO's



Guest speaker Dr. ViTu Banh was thanked by Jack Kyle and John Bennett



The Who Am I? member was Pat Dunn



New Member, Eric Dormer with his sponsor John Wylie, welcomed by Bob Whitfield and John Bennett.



New Member, Mark Knoester with his sponsor John Bennett, welcomed by Bob Whitfield.



New Member, Terry Leslie with his sponsor John Bennett, welcomed by Bob Whitfield.



Past President, Bill Mackasey presented with a gift of recognition by John Bennett.

“The Banner” ~ Newsletter #206 ~ April 2026

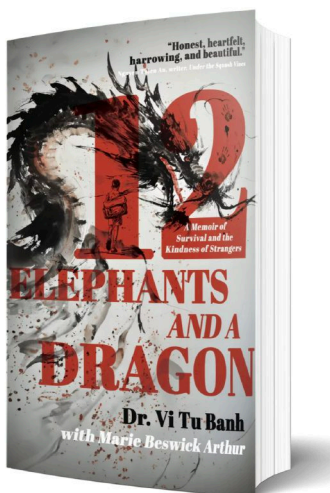
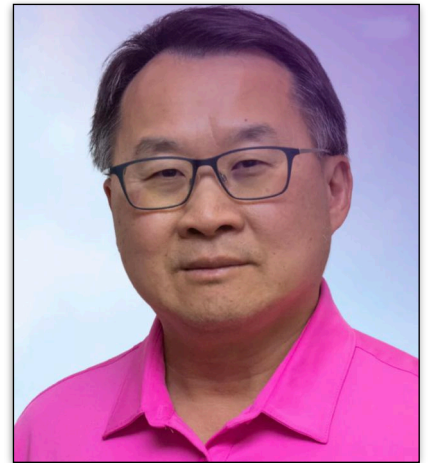
Dr. Vi Tu Banh is a living, breathing part of the diversity of Canada. He graciously serves patients in his Uxbridge, Ontario optometry clinic where he has become renowned for healing balance issues, stabilizing the effects of concussion, and addresses learning challenges by using state of the art technology and current vision therapy techniques.

How he got there is a heartfelt tale of courage, survival and the power of compassion.

Dr. Banh and his family were Vietnamese boat people who escaped Saigon as the communists were moving in. Vi Tu was a young boy but the oldest of 6 other siblings who fled Vietnam along with his parents on a 60 foot boat crammed with 300 other refugees. They spent 9 months on an uninhabited island before flying from Singapore to Edmonton in the middle of winter. Vi Tu was wearing sandals, shorts and a t-shirt.

It was the citizens of Uxbridge that extended their compassion and generosity to the Banh family. Even though Vi Tu didn't speak English his work ethic in grade school and subsequent high school resulted in him being the valedictorian at his high school graduation. Vi Tu wanted to be a doctor and Optometry was his chosen field.

Dr. Banh always wanted to give back and his book “12 Elephants and a Dragon” was written with all proceeds going to the Uxbridge Hospital Foundation and his book is available here. <https://ingeniumbooks.com/vitubanh/>



Vietnamese boat people refers to over 1 million refugees who fled Vietnam by sea following the 1975 fall of Saigon, escaping communist persecution, violence, and extreme poverty. Facing piracy and dangerous sea conditions, many settled in countries like Canada, the U.S., and Australia. Canada alone accepted nearly 200,000 refugees between 1975 and the 1990s.

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Our “Who Am I?” member this month was Pat Dunn, who joined the club in October 2025.

“I was born in Victoria, BC, at a young age. After the war, my father and uncle started a business fixing radios and TVs in Victoria. It was a good life, but it couldn't support two families. So, my father rejoined the Air Force, and I became a service brat. At four, I moved to France and had a great time. I returned to Canada when I was 11 or 12. Those first five years were pretty good. At 13, I got my first job at a local farm. I earned \$10 a week, plus room and board. It was hard work and not much money.

At 16, I joined the Navy Reserves, which became my full-time summer job and a good job during the winter months. I went to college and majored in bridge. I got headhunted while I was there and ended up working for the Royal Bank. I made \$3200 a year. I applied for the OPP and was offered a raise to stay there, with an extra \$50. I spent 30 years with the OPP retiring as a sergeant in 1998. I am involved in my community since I moved to Lindsay. I coached hockey and baseball. Currently, I chair a housing organization that subsidizes housing for people with mental illness and severe financial hazards. I spent 35 years working with CMHA before giving it up.

I entered politics during the Alan Rock era when gun control was proposed. I opposed it, as did most police officers. This led me to join town council, run for the Reform Party, and the Canadian Alliance, but I lost in both cases.

Despite these setbacks, I've had a fulfilling life, largely due to my faith and self-confidence. I've been fortunate, and in retirement my greatest passions are my family.”

CLUB NOTICES

**Next Club Meeting is on Tuesday May 12th
The Guest Speaker is John Boyko
“Sanford Fleming”**

Be a friend, bring a friend to a PROBUS meeting!

Please consider inviting guests to attend a Club meeting to allow them the opportunity to share the experience and advantages of joining our Club.

Health & Welfare

If you know of any member who is experiencing health issues at this time, please contact Bruce Cameron ~ cam48retired@gmail.com

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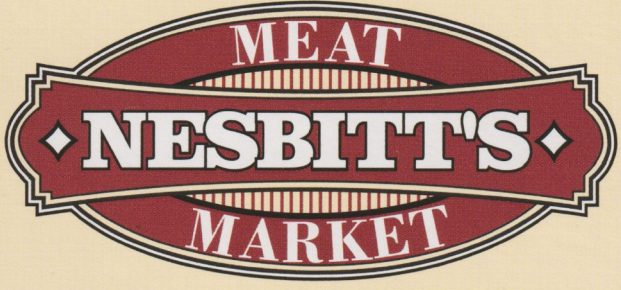
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