



The PROBUS Pilot



Probus Club of Western Ottawa – serving the western half of the National Capital Region

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The bear that ate me, almost; The dangerous life of a naturalist

In his career as a naturalist, Michael Runtz has explored much of Ontario, from Point Pelee National Park to Hudson Bay, from Lake of the Woods to the Frontenac Axis. His 15 natural history books are lavishly illustrated with his award-winning images. This highly visual presentation focuses on the stories behind them.

Michael Runtz is a well-known and highly respected naturalist and educator. He is a popular keynote speaker and media guest.

Michael's association with Algonquin Park spans more than 50 years and includes working as an interpretive naturalist for 11 seasons. He hosted the international television series *Wild by Nature*, authored and

illustrated 15 natural history books, including *Algonquin Wild*, *Wildflowers of Algonquin Provincial Park*, *The Explorer's Guide to Algonquin Park*, 4th Edition, and *Observing Nature by Canoe and Kayak*. Additionally, Michael provided the images for the award-winning children's book *At Home with the Beaver*. Michael was featured in the TVO/NHK Japan's *Superteachers* series. Michael and his wife Britta worked behind the scenes for the Eastern Wolf segment of David Attenborough's *The Secret World of Sound* and *The Nature of Things*.

Michael has written more than 1,100 natural history articles for newspapers and magazines.

He taught more than 100,000



Michael Runtz

students in Natural History and Ornithology courses at Carleton University.

Numerous awards include the Council of Canadian University Biology Chairs Distinguished Public Science Education Award, the Friends of Algonquin Directors Award, the Friends of Bonnechere Parks Directors Award, and several Carleton University Teaching Achievement Awards.

Michael and Britta can be found on Facebook and Instagram at *Nature by Runtz*.



December lunch out. We had a great turnout for our final luncheon of the year. It was held at the Amberwood Lounge in Stittsville due to Algonquin College being unavailable. More photos on page 2.

The Probus Club of Western Ottawa is part of the international organization of Probus Clubs designed to serve retired and semi-retired, business and professional and like-minded people. The morning begins at 9:45 am with a time for coffee and socialization followed by a guest speaker. Probus Western Ottawa meets at

Kanata Baptist Church
465 Hazeldean Road

The Prez Sez



As we welcome a brand-new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey we shared throughout 2025. Our club has grown in strength, spirit, and connection, thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of our members. Every meeting, every conversation, and every act of volunteerism has helped shape our club, which we can all be proud of.

Now, as we step into 2026, we do so with optimism and a renewed sense of purpose. This is a year filled with possibilities—a chance to embrace new adventures, nurture our well-being, and build friendships that enrich our lives. It's a time we challenge ourselves, to try something new, and to contribute in ways that bring meaning and joy.

Our club thrives because of the energy and generosity of its members. And as we look ahead, we are seeking a few more helping hands to keep our momentum strong. We are inviting members who are curious, outgoing, and eager to learn to consider joining our executive team. You don't need prior experience—just a willingness to share a few hours each month and a desire to make a difference.

We currently have openings for:

- Vice President
- Webmaster
- Secretary
- Membership
- Treasurer
- Coffee Coordinator
- Audio/Video Setup Crew
- Outings

Training, mentorship, and plenty

of support will be provided.

If you feel inspired to step forward, I encourage you to reach out. Your involvement—big or small—helps ensure that our club remains vibrant, welcoming, and resilient.

Together, let's make 2026 our most exciting chapter yet.

David Lee

president@probuswesternottawa.ca

New Year's resolutions for seniors

The new year offers a symbolic fresh start and a chance to set meaningful goals. For seniors, resolutions tailored to their unique needs can bring joy, health, and purpose. Start small, stay consistent, and embrace each step as progress toward a brighter year ahead.

1. Stay Physically Active
2. Engage Your Brain
3. Organize & Preserve Family Memories
4. Strengthen Social Connections
5. Explore New Hobbies & Interests
6. Give Back to the Community
7. Make Healthier Food Choices
8. Embrace Helpful Technology

9. Plan for End-of-Life Matters

10. Volunteer at Probus to fill vacant positions

Join us on 9 Jan. for monthly Euchre

Where: Bells Corners United Church,
3955 Old Richmond Road at Moodie Drive.



Time: 12:30 for social time, coffee:
Games begin at 1 p.m.
We welcome new members!
For Probus members only!
Some knowledge of the game is helpful.

For further information, feel free to contact Barbara or David Stafford at bbole@sympatico.ca



More photos from our December lunch out at the Amberwood Lounge



Euchre Christmas Potluck. Our December Euchre session was well attended and preceded by a potluck lunch and socialization before we ventured into the more serious aspect of actually playing our favourite game.

Don't miss our upcoming speakers

February 10, 2026: Luc Lalande: "The potential of place: Reimagining new uses for 'Retired' buildings"

March 10, 2026: Professor Ian Lee: "Should Canadians thank Donald Trump for exposing our 50-year economic decline?"

April 14, 2026: Dr. Andrea McCrady, the Dominion Carillonneur: "The voices behind the 'Voice of the Nation' Tales of Canada's Dominion Carillonneurs"



10 Year pin. At our December meeting Janet Simms received her 10-year pin from President David Lee.

After the meeting

We go out for lunch

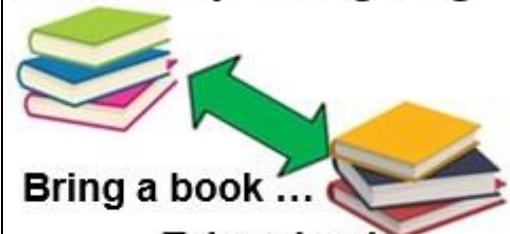
Join us for lunch after our January meeting to socialize and discuss the presentation.

This month we will be at:

Busters Bar & Grill
420 Hazeldean Road

At the beginning of the meeting, we try to confirm planned attendance.

Let's keep this going



Bring a book ...
...Take a book

Check out our book swap table at every meeting

Some Special Interest Group mailing lists frozen

The table at right shows Special Interest Group (SIG) status as of December 9. The SIG names in red font have shown no evidence of activity, nor have they identified a Prime Contact. Consequently, their Gmail group email lists are frozen, and no new signups will be permitted.

Going forward, restarting one of these SIGs, or starting a new one, will require a volunteer willing to respond to queries about the group. To volunteer, please email Ray Jones at sig-groups-coordinator@probuswesternottawa.ca

As a Probus member, you may join or leave a group by either

- using the signup sheet, available at meetings, or by
- sending an email at any time to: [sig-\[group\]-contact@probuswesternottawa.ca](mailto:sig-[group]-contact@probuswesternottawa.ca)

substituting [group] with the SIG name shown in the table below. Put "Join", "Leave" or "Info request" in the subject field: example, sig-bridge-contact@probuswesternottawa.ca

PWO SIG Status		December 9, 2025
SIG Name	# Signups	Prime Contact(s)
Art-Appreciation	4	June Stewart
Billiards	1	Ellen Clare O'Gallagher
Bird-Watching	4	
Book-Club	7	Anne Stenkowski
Breakfast-Club	23	David Lee
Bridge	10	Surinder Khanna
Cycling	3	
Games-Night	6	Nicola Jarvis
Hiking	17	
Knitting	2	Elaine Bradley
Pickleball	4	
Theatre-Nights	21	
Travellers-Club	34	Suma Abraham / Tom Wileman
Walking	20	

Total Signups

156

Red #s indicate a change from November



In December, Laura Reinsborough provided an educational and passionate presentation on our own local Ottawa River. She covered the gamut, from swimming and nature to American Eels and road salt. Laura mentioned that with a length of over 1200 km, intersecting two provinces and numerous local jurisdictions, there are many challenges, such as pollution and protecting wildlife.

The Ottawa Riverkeeper is an independent, charitable organization that champions the Ottawa River watershed. More information is available [here](#).



Free Coffee/Tea Service now offered from 9:45 -10:20 am (to facilitate clean-up)

Membership inquiries may be sent to membership@probuswesternottawa.ca



Keep an eye out for colourful, tiny stars on membership badges, both permanent and temporary. These indicate that the wearer became a brand-new member of Probus since September '25. Give these members a warm welcome!

Travellers Club getting organized

The Travellers Club is busy getting organized with 34 members and looking for more.

There was interest expressed in individual and group travel, with everything from local bus tours to cruises and more. Other topics included travel insurance and the ability to share experiences and travel tips.

It was decided to canvass members with a survey indicating interests and preferences. That should be issued to members in the near future, along with plans for another meeting.



Chuckle Corner



A couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a checkup, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember.

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair. 'Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?' he asks.

'Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?'

'Sure.'

'Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?' she asks.

'No, I can remember it.'

'Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so's not to forget it?'

He says, 'I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.'

'I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that, write it down?' she asks.

Irritated, he says, 'I don't need to write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream – I got it, for goodness sake!'

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment.

'Where's my toast?'



Welcome to the following new members who joined our Probus Club in December:

**Keith Hudson
Valletta Hudson**

Our Website
www.probuswesternottawa.ca

Newsletter comments or submissions
newsletter@probuswesternottawa.ca