



# PROBUS News.....

## PROBUS Club of Bradford

Volume 127, Published December 2021

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear PROBUS Members:

Despite our world being turned upside down, I do hope that you enjoy the magical month of December. For our family, it is a special time of the year with Christmas carols, colourful lights and, of course, experiencing chocolate overload. Let's enjoy the season, count our blessings and be thankful for all that we have.



A big thank you to our executive team and all volunteers involved in making our Club so successful. They go above and beyond in supporting our members.

A special thanks to Peggy, Brenda and their team for organizing our Christmas party "Burgers and Boards". What great fellowship and friendship! It was wonderful seeing friends "catch up" after not seeing each other for almost two years. I hope that everyone enjoyed their charcuterie board at the general meeting and the entertainment provided by our favourite Irish singers, Martina and Thomas.

To add to our Christmas spirit, Patricia's "12 Days of Christmas Wine Elimination Contest" was a blast again this year. Congratulations to the winners! By the way, who is the Dion Gang?

We had targeted February 8, 2022, for our return to in-person general meetings. As you know, right now our world is very fluid. I am sure you understand that we cannot commit to an in-person meeting date yet. We will continue to monitor the Covid situation and based on Public Health guidance decide when we may meet in-person. We want everyone to be safe and feel comfortable. As well, based on the new Public Health vaccine requirement we will again ask all members who wish to attend in-person events, activities, and meetings to show proof of their three shot vaccinations.

I did not have time to present the bad joke of the day at our General Meeting so here goes (can you relate to this?):

December is the month when the kids begin to discuss what to get Dad for Christmas. Some insist on a shirt. Others on a pair of socks. The argument always ends in a tie.

The executive and I wish you and your family a very white Merry Christmas ([see video](#)) and all the best in the new year. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Dave



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### 2020/21 Executive Committee:

President: *Dave McMillan*

Vice President: *Bunny Kaufman*

Secretary: *Cheryl Blair*

Treasurer: *Lorna Foti*

Social Chair: *Wendy Van Straten*

Communication Chair:

*Deborah Liukaitis*

Technical Chair: *Pete Liukaitis*

Speakers' Chair: *Philip Junop*

Members Chair: *Patricia Dion*

Major Events:

*Brenda Andrews and  
Peggy Michaud*

Members at Large:

*Dale Tasker and Pat Mohren*

Past President: *Dave Martin*

## Christmas ZOOM MEETING with Family Affair

Our 2nd Christmas ZOOM meeting opened with a Michael Bublé video singing "Let It Snow". (Many thanks from the ladies Pete.)

### WE HAVE MORE NEW MEMBERS

Last month we welcomed Janis Bell, Bonnie Connolly, Sonia Conway, Barbara Martin, Lavina Mitchell and Carol Rettig.

Our newest members this month are: Ted Dodds and Dayna Dixon.

Family Affair, our favourite Irish duo, entertained us, in the Christmas spirit with an Irish flair. Wonderful to hear them once again. Another great meeting!

Thanks to the hard-work of Pete, Deb and Dale (on the geek side) our ZOOM meetings do continue to set a higher bar. We have come a long way in two years. This quote from Dale puts it into perspective:

"The geek in me continues to be amazed at how much the internet and zoom have shrunk the world. It's no longer a big deal to have a band play in Ireland to a group in Canada while a couple from Saskatchewan listen in from Hawaii... boggles the mind a bit. Not to mention we book a speaker from South Africa .... two years ago we would have thought these ideas were totally nuts."

Until it is safe to have in-person meetings, ZOOM is our reality and thanks to some great talent we can look forward to more successful and entertaining meetings.



## WHO IS IT? with Lorna Foti

This month the "Who Is It" person is Dave Martin (a.k.a. Red) for his, not so existent now, red hair.

He taught scuba diving off the Great Barrier Reef

He is related to Fred Turner of Bachman Turner Overdrive and he is a long time volunteer of the Shriners.

He has also been a Santa at malls and private functions.

Amazing the bits you learn about people.

Send your Who Is It? submissions to Lorna at

[lornafoti@hotmail.com](mailto:lornafoti@hotmail.com)

## WHERE IS THIS? with Pat Mohren



No problems guessing this location. Pat even gave us a picture tour of Santa's home!

Send your photo submissions to Pat Mohren at

[jp.mohren@gmail.com](mailto:jp.mohren@gmail.com) by January 5th for the January 11th meeting

## FEBRUARY IN-PERSON MEETING NEWS

Unfortunately the plans for an in-person meeting in February are pending at this time. The executive will be monitoring the situation and announcements will be made as the February date gets closer.

If the meeting is approved to take place, be aware that all health and safety guidelines will be followed to achieve the successful, safe meeting we are all looking forward to.

# WINE SURVIVOR CONTEST WINNERS!

Another successful 12 Days of Christmas Wine Survivor Contest has concluded.

Many thanks to Patricia and John Dion for organizing; collecting the wine participants entries and bottle collection; Cheryl Blair once again donated space in her "wine cellar" for the safe keeping of the bottles and Carol and Dave MacMillan for maintaining the integrity of the rules as the daily elimination draws were announced.

Here are the final winners and how many bottles they won:

**5th Place—won 5 bottles—Betty Fallis-Trow**

**4th Place—won 7 bottles—Mark Cannata**

**3rd Place—won 9 bottles—Pat Mohren**

**2nd Place—won 11 bottles—Kent Kaufman**

**1st Place—won 14 bottles—Pete Liukaitis**

Congratulations to the winners! My name was in the running until the last day of elimination draws. Oh well. No hard feelings, better lush nes year an all thas rubbiisssh. I mit be downing my shorrows a jis a lishle bit.....



## Wonder why we put up Christmas trees?

Evergreen fir trees are universal winter decorations. Pagans displayed the branches as a reminder that spring would come again. Romans placed them around temples to honor Saturn, the god of agriculture. But the first time the evergreen was used as a Christmas tree was either in Tallinn, Estonia or Riga, Latvia. (Each city says it is the true home of the first Christmas tree.)

In the 16th century, German Christians brought the trees inside their homes as a symbol of everlasting life. When news spread that Queen Victoria had her German husband, Prince Albert, set up a Christmas tree in their palace, the practice suddenly became the height of Christmas symbolism in England and America.





## Future Guest Speakers

### JANUARY SPEAKER... Nick French, Heroes and Villains of the Titanic

Nick French was born in Zimbabwe and was educated in South Africa. He is currently the Chairman of the Probus Association of the Western Cape.

In his presentation, Nick explores the sinking of the Titanic on that fateful day on April 15th, 1912. Nick tells the tale of the Titanic around the interesting characters who played key roles in every aspect of her life leading to her catastrophic sinking and its aftermath.



### FEBRUARY SPEAKER... Terry Fallis, Operation Angus

Terry Fallis returns to entertain us, with his blend of story telling and humour. He will highlight his presentation with snippets from his latest novel, "Operation Angus", the continuing escapades of Angus McLintock, newly re-elected Minister of International Affairs.

Terry is a two time winner of the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour and has authored eight National Bestsellers. Terry earned an Engineering degree from McMaster in 1983, wrote for Maclean's, Canadian Geographic, Toronto Life, The Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star, just to name a few. Terry has worked in many other fields in his career, including political staffer, legislative assistant, public relations and has co-founded his own consulting firm, Thornley-Fallis.

These aren't just any ol' tire tracks.  
...Grandma got run over by a John Deere



So cool! The Tooth Fairy was drunk last night!!!



# **BURGERS AND BOARDS!**

December 13th — Bond Head United Church

What a wonderful sunny day for the Burgers and Boards event. Members came to the Bond Head Church in assigned groups and enjoyed a burger, pick up their charcuterie board gift and reminisce with friends. Many smiling faces, laughs and good natured banter.

**SHOW US YOUR BURGERS!!**



Some burger  
with your onion  
Moose?



These two have perfected  
smiling with their mouth full.



Peggy is tough. No burger  
for you!



# **BURGERS AND BOARDS!**



So many happy faces!  
Even behind the masks.



This day called for  
that perfect  
Christmas sweater!





# BURGERS AND BOARDS!



Great to see a new member.  
Welcome Sonia!



Bunny distributed the boards.



Some of the hardworking kitchen staff.

Dave at the door.



The two Uber Eats burger delivery guys.

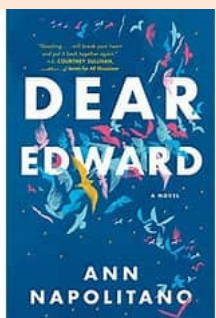
Phil grew something under his mask?



|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Bid Euchre    | Deborah Liukaitis |
| Book Club     | Cheryl Blair      |
| Dinner Club   | Dale Tasker       |
| Knitting      | Linda Alsop       |
| Walking/Hikes | Amy Wright        |
| Bridge        | Bob Evans         |

## BRADFORD PROBUS CLUBS

**BOOK CLUB** (Cheryl Blair) November/December's read is "Dear Edward" by Ann Napolitano.



One summer morning, twelve-year-old Edward Adler, his beloved older brother, his parents, and 183 other passengers board a flight in Newark headed for Los Angeles. Among them is a Wall Street wunderkind, a young woman coming to terms with an unexpected pregnancy, an injured vet returning from Afghanistan, a septuagenarian business tycoon, and a free-spirited woman running away from her controlling husband. And then, tragically, the plane crashes. Edward is the sole survivor.

Edward's story captures the attention of the nation, but he struggles to find a place for himself in a world without his family. He continues to feel that a piece of him has been left in the sky, forever tied to the plane and his fellow passengers. But then he makes an unexpected discovery—one that will lead him to the answers of some of life's most profound questions: When you've lost everything, how do find yourself? How do you discover your purpose? What does it mean not just to survive, but to truly live?

For information or to join, contact Cheryl Blair at [cheryl\\_blair@rogers.com](mailto:cheryl_blair@rogers.com)

January's read is "The second Life of Mirielle West" by Amanda Skenandore.

This link is access to all books the club has read: [Book Club - The PROBUS Club of Bradford](#)

**THE KNITTING CLUB** is taking a break till after Christmas. Hope everyone has all their knitting for Christmas presents done!

For information or to join, contact Linda Alsop at [lindacvano@gmail.com](mailto:lindacvano@gmail.com)

The longer Grandma waited to update her eyeglass prescription, the more entertaining the annual Christmas story became.



When you tell your Grandma that you want a car cover for Christmas







This is a direct quote from Wendy and Chris (Kringle) Van Straten's grandson. A child's opinion that everything magical about Christmas is at his grandparent's home with Santa as the main attraction. The little guy has it bang on! Not a Grinch in sight.

### ***Santa is everywhere!***

Many figurines throughout the house showcase the big guy's twinkling eyes, rosy cheeks, glorious white beard, generous smile and some-

times pensive expression as he watches from his display perch.

Santa ornaments decorate the 8 foot Christmas tree. A huge wreath displays the 12 days of Santa. Many Santa figurines by Royal Doulton and Fitz & Floyd; musical figures and mystery boxes; hand blown glass Santa ornaments; Santa figures from around the world; Santa cookie jars and mugs; early Folk Art Santas; Santa floor rugs; hats that cover the



back of the dining room chairs; plush Santa characters (for the grandkids to play with) and an extensive collection of "The Night Before Christmas" story books. Every piece is unique in its artistic version of the jolly old elf. Especially his portrait that graces the kitchen wall.

Over 30 years of collecting and all lovingly displayed in every room (including the bathroom). You can just picture the "Big Man" himself living in this home which is chocked full of Christmas spirit.

Wendy and Chris got into Santa collecting when a friend gave them a figurine for Christmas and since then they have had fun combing through antique shops, auctions, Royal Doulton, other stores and even had some given to them. Just recently, Bunny and Kent Kaufman donated some Santa figures to their collection.

It takes a week to start the decorating (although there are cabinets in the family room that display Santa figurines all year long) and nothing is packed away until the end of January in order to include the Orthodox Christmas and the Winter Carnival in Richmond Hill held the first week of the new year.

For the past 16 years (before COVID) the Van Straten family holiday generosity was extended, in a



Christmas open house, to family, neighbours and friends. As many as 50 people would show up with their Christmas "spirits" and enjoy good friends and the delicious spread of food laid out in the dining room. One year Wendy recalls doing a check on the grandchildren, who were playing in another



### ***I believe!***



This butler caddy Santa is one of Wendy's favourites. He has an old world charm with the woodland creatures on the base.



Wendy's favourite Christmas decoration has a very sentimental history. This hand-blown ornament was one of her mother's. Wendy's daughter enclosed it in the wine glass for safe keeping.



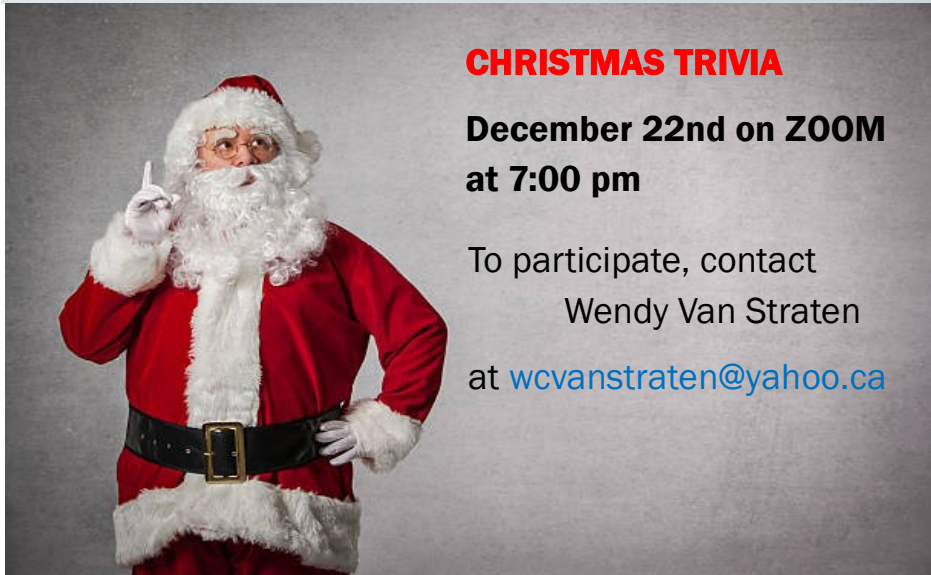
er room, and finding an extra child had no idea where he came from! All ended well when they found out his grandpa brought him but no one saw him enter the house. All's well, "he was a good kid", according to Wendy.

The Christmas spirit is very much alive and well in the Van Straten house and it was a pleasure to be invited into their "Santa sanctum".





## EASY CHRISTMAS TRIVIA EVENT



### CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

December 22nd on ZOOM  
at 7:00 pm

To participate, contact  
Wendy Van Straten  
at [wcvanstraten@yahoo.ca](mailto:wcvanstraten@yahoo.ca)

Wendy and the event team are  
planning more ZOOM events.  
Notices will be sent of any new  
events...  
Possibly music trivia?

## SANTA'S EMOJI LETTER

Long before emojis existed, Santa had already figured out how to use them to spread joy. Can you decode this Santa letter form the T. Eaton Company fonds, sent to children in 1950?

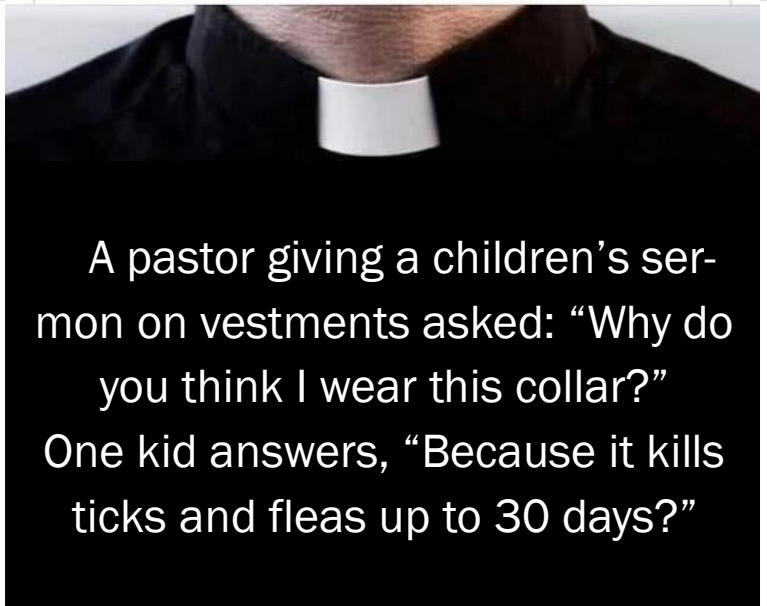




During a funeral, the pallbearers accidentally bump into a wall and hear a faint moan. They open the casket and find out that the woman is actually alive!

She lives for ten more years and then dies.

There is another funeral for her. At the end of the service, the pallbearers carry out the casket. As they are walking out, the husband cries out, *"Watch out for the wall!"*



Despite being dead for over a year, famous author, Agatha Christie, saved a baby's life in 1977.

Agatha Christie's 16-year-old detective story "The Pale Horse" saved the life of a 19-month-old girl dying of a condition that baffled London doctors.

The Arab baby, flown for treatment from Qatar, on the Persian Gulf, was semiconscious when admitted to Hammersmith Hospital. Despite intensive care, her blood pressure rose, her breathing became increasingly difficult and she appeared on the brink of death. The doctors could not diagnose the illness.

As they were making their morning rounds of the wards, Marsha Maitland, a nurse, suggested that the infant might have been poisoned by a compound of thallium, a bluish-white metal that has poisonous salts. Nurse Maitland said she was reading

"The Pale Horse" and the baby's symptoms were remarkably similar to those of a thallium case in the book.

Thallium is rarely found in Britain, and the hospital lacked the necessary testing equipment. Scotland Yard found a laboratory with the equipment and tests confirmed thallium poisoning. The baby recovered after getting the right treatment.

A cowboy told his grandson the secret to a long life.

He said, "You gotta sprinkle a little gunpowder on your oatmeal, see. If you do, you'll live to a nice ripe old age."

The cowboy, following his own advice, continued to do this religiously every day and sure enough, lived to the nice ripe old age of 96.

When he died, he left behind 4 children, 8 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren...and a 16 foot hole in the wall of the crematorium.



## A LITTLE HISTORY

Walt Disney was born on December 5th, 120 years ago. When Jim Henson passed away unexpectedly in 1990, Disney released this black-and-white illustration of Mickey Mouse consoling Kermit the Frog as a tribute to the creative mastermind behind The Muppets and Sesame Street.



## THE GREAT FOG OF LONDON

If you were in London, England on Thursday, December 5, 1952, you wouldn't be able to see past five meters in front of you. This was a result of cumulative events that occurred the day before on December 4. It would be the first of five days of killer smog.

A high-pressure air mass over the Thames River Valley mixed with the sudden cold air that came in from the west.

The city had low temperatures so coal furnaces were blazing across residences. Adding to residential pollution, there was also smoke, soot, and sulphur dioxide from cars, industrial plants, and buses.

London had recently replaced an electric tram system with steam locomotives and diesel-fuelled buses. There was a ton of pollution in the air and nowhere for it to go.

On December 4, an anticyclone stalled over London, which was completely windless, this caused a temperature inversion with cold, stagnant air trapped under a layer of warm air. That fog mixed with pollutant smoke and created a thick smog. The stagnant soot particles gave the smog a yellow-black colour, earning the moniker "pea-souper".

Of course, smog is more dangerous than half of its portmanteau makeup, as it has the same restricted visibility and the added respiratory repercussions. Between December 4 and December 8 an estimated 4,000 to 12,000 people died.



FACT

@factt5



In 1990, the high school dropout rate in Serioville, Dolly Parton's hometown, was over 30%. In 1991, Dolly launched The Buddy Program, offering 7th and 8th graders \$500 if they graduated. The dropout rate for those classes went down to 6% and had generally retained that average to this day.



## A STORY OF COMPASSION

A Dr. Frank Mayfield was touring Tewksbury Institute when, on his way out, he accidentally collided with an elderly floor maid. To cover the awkward moment Dr. Mayfield started asking questions. "How long have you worked here?"

*"I've worked here almost since the place opened," the maid replied.*

"What can you tell me about the history of this place?" he asked.

*"I don't think I can tell you anything, but I could show you something."*

With that, she took his hand and led him down to the basement under the oldest section of the building. She pointed to one of what looked like small prison cells, their iron bars rusted with age, and said, *"That's the cage where they used to keep Annie Sullivan."*

"Who is Annie?" the doctor asked.

*"Annie was a young girl who was brought in here because she was incorrigible—nobody could do anything with her. She'd bite and scream and throw her food at people. The doctors and nurses couldn't even examine her or anything. I'd see them trying with her spitting and scratching at them.*

*I was only a few years younger than her myself and I used to think, 'I sure would hate to be locked up in a cage like that.' I wanted to help her, but I didn't have any idea what I could do. I mean, if the doctors and nurses couldn't help her, what could someone like me do?*

*I didn't know what else to do, so I just baked her some brownies one night after work. The next day I brought them in. I walked carefully to her cage and said, 'Annie, I baked these brownies just for you. I'll put them right here on the floor and you can come and get them if you want.'*

*Then I got out of there just as fast as I could because I was afraid she might throw them at me. But she didn't. She took the brownies and ate them. After that, she was just a little bit nicer to me when I was around. And sometimes I'd talk to her. Once, I even got her laughing.*

*One of the nurses noticed this and told the doctor. They asked me if I'd help them with Annie. I said I would if I could. So that's how it came about that every time they wanted to see Annie or examine her, I went into the cage first and explained and calmed her down and held her hand.*

*This is how they discovered that Annie was almost blind."*

After they'd been working with her for about a year—and it was tough sledding with Annie—the Perkins institute for the Blind opened its doors. They were able to help Annie and she went on to study and she became a teacher herself.

Annie came back to the Tewksbury Institute to visit, and to see how she could be of service. At first, the Director didn't say anything and then he thought about a letter he'd just received. A man had written to him about his daughter. She was absolutely unruly—almost like an animal. She was blind and deaf as well as 'deranged.'

He was at his wit's end, but he didn't want to put her in an asylum. So, he wrote the Institute to ask if they knew of anyone who would come to his house and work with his daughter.

And that is how Annie Sullivan became the lifelong companion of Helen Keller.

When Helen Keller received the Nobel Prize, she was asked who had the greatest impact on her life and she said, "Annie Sullivan."

But Annie said, "No Helen. The woman who had the greatest influence on both our lives was a floor maid at the Tewksbury Institute."



**Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan**

## JUST THE FACTS

This is something that happened at an assisted living center. The people who lived there have small apartments but they all eat at a central dining area. One morning Tom, one of the residents, didn't show up for breakfast so my wife went upstairs and knocked on his door to see if everything was OK. She could hear him through the door and he said that he was running late and would be down shortly, so she went back to the dining area.

An hour later Tom still hadn't arrived, so she went back up towards his room but found him on the stairs. He was coming down the stairs and had a death grip on the hand rail and

seemed to have trouble getting his legs to work right. My wife told him she was going to call an ambulance but he told her no, he wasn't in any pain and just wanted to have his breakfast. So, she helped him the rest of the way down the stairs and he had his breakfast. When Tom tried to return to his room, he was completely unable to get up even the first stair step, so the staff called an ambulance for him.

A couple of hours later my wife called the hospital to see how Tom was doing. The receptionist there said he was fine, he just had both of his legs in one side of his boxer shorts.

Send this to your children so that they don't sell the house before they know all the facts!

## The Church Dinner



A group of friends from the Cottonwood Baptist Church wanted to get together on a regular basis, socialize, and play games.

The lady of the house was to prepare the meal.

When it came time for Al and Janet to be the hosts, Janet wanted to outdo all the others. She decided to have mushroom-smothered steak. She then told her husband, "But mushrooms are expensive."

He said, "Why don't you go down in the pasture and pick some of those mushrooms? There are plenty in the creek bed."

She said, "No, some wild mushrooms are poison."

He said, "Well, I see varmints eating them and they're OK." So Janet decided to give it a try. She picked a bunch, washed, sliced, and diced them for her smothered steak.

Then she went out on the back porch and gave Ol' Spot (the yard dog) a double handful. Ol' Spot ate every bite. All morning long, Janet watched Ol' Spot and the wild mushrooms didn't seem to affect him, so she decided to use them.

The meal was a great success, and Janet even hired a helper lady from town to help her serve. After everyone had finished, they relaxed, socialized, and played '42' and dominoes. About then, the helper lady came in and whispered in Janet's ear.

She said, "Mrs. Williams, Ol' Spot is dead."

Janet went into hysterics.

After she finally calmed down, she called the doctor and told him what had happened.

The doctor said, "That's bad, but I think we can take care of it. I will call for an ambulance and I will be there as quickly as possible. We'll give everyone enemas and we will pump out everyone's stomach. Everything will be fine. Just keep them calm.."

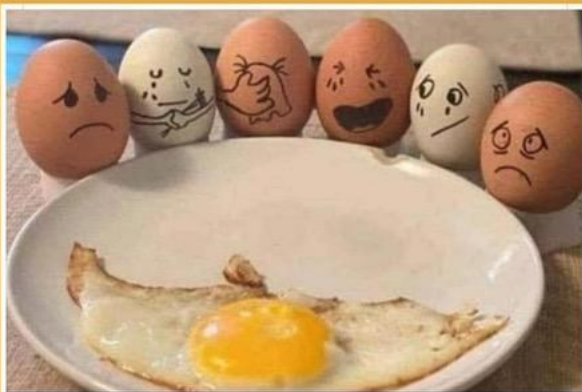
Soon they could hear the siren as the ambulance was coming down the road.

The EMTs and the doctor had their suitcases, syringes, and a stomach pump.

One by one, they took each person into the bathroom, gave them an enema, and pumped out their stomach.

After the last one was finished, the doctor came out and said, "I think everything will be fine now," and he left. They were all looking pretty weak sitting around the living room and about this time the helper lady came in and whispered to Janet,

"You know, that fellow that run over Ol' Spot never even stopped!."



He died last fry day. Thank God he wasn't beaten. Don't worry, he went over easy. He's now on the sunny side. He's definitely in a better plate.

shared by silversurfers.com

My friend told me she wouldn't eat beef tongue cause it came out of a cow's mouth...

So I gave her an egg.



# THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Well folks, another year of PROBUS newsletters is done and want to thankyou for your wonderful comments and notes. I am very happy to know that I have managed to give you a smile or chuckle as well as provide information and entertainment. I also want to thank those members who welcomed me into their homes and allowed me to write their stories.

Your feedback has been heartwarming and encouraging. I hope to be able to keep up the same standard in the newsletters for 2022!

You may know, an old Irish tradition is to open your door at midnight and let the old year out and the new year in. I think 2021 deserves to have all the doors, windows and garage doors to be open!

So, from our Tasker household to yours, I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and the happiest New Year. See you in 2022.

Pat and Dale Tasker

If you can't get into the Christmas spirit...[click on to this SNL Macy's commercial](#) to get you in the mood.



*The next PROBUS  
ZOOM meeting...*

*January 11, 2022  
at 10:00 am*

*Drop in early to get  
in a chat room.*