

## Council proclaims March PROBUS Month

By Bill Rea

March is PROBUS Month in the Town of Caledon.

Mayor Allan Thompson signed the proclamation Tuesday with the backing of Town council after receiving a request and presentation from representatives of the Bolton chapter.

The origins of PROBUS date to the 1960s.

Tony Smith, president of the Bolton club, said it started in England in 1965 when a group of retired business and professional people in southern England, who were also members of a Rotary club, had the desired to occasionally meet in a more informal session and socialize with out the trappings of the regular club. He said the word spread, and by 1970, there was a club in a small market town in Scotland where his father was an enthusiastic member.

"That experience has stayed with me for over 40 years," Smith commented.

Since then, he said PROBUS has grown to more than 400,000 members in some 4,000 clubs around the world. There are in excess of 32,000 members in 238 Canadian clubs.

Smith said there are seven clubs in Brampton, nine in Collingwood (he said one out of every 10 adults in Collingwood is a PROBUS member), four in Wasaga Beach, but only the one in Caledon.

Smith stressed PROBUS clubs are non-political and non-sectarian. Their charter prohibits them from offering activities that are already available from other local organizations, unless they are requested for unique reasons. He said their role is to expand the range of activities available to retired people by complementing those offered by other agencies, like the Caledon Seniors' Centre, library, etc. He also offered praise for the great job both these agencies do.

"Our charter is not to tread on toes," he said. "We try to do things that nobody else does."

When they started, PROBUS clubs were only for retired professionals and businessmen, but Smith said things have eased over the years to allow men and women with other backgrounds who have enquiring minds and want to be part of an energetic group of retirees.

The Bolton club has 67 active members, and Smith said they are looking for more. He pointed out there are more than 650 members of the seniors' centre. The task is getting the word out.

Smith said he joined two years ago and served on the presentation committee before becoming president this year.

The club meets at 10 a.m. the second Thursday of every month at the Albion-Bolton Community Centre. Meetings usually include presentations from speakers who cover a wide range of topics. After the meetings, several of the members usually go out for lunch. Today's meeting (March 12) will feature a presentation Caledon's Heritage Resource Officer Sally Drummond who will offer a historical look at Bolton.

The April presentation will be by Carol Good and her subject will be a review of projects carried-out by the Bolton and District Horticultural Society.

PROBUS member Lenora Grams said they are looking at taking some trips. The possible destinations include the Royal Botanical Gardens, the recycling facility in Brampton, Great War Flying Museum at Brampton Flight Centre and Alton Mill.

Smith also praised the help of Town staff for being willing to make presentations to the club.

Councillor Annette Groves responded by thanking Smith for the work he has done.

"It's a big job and you've done a fantastic job to date," she remarked, adding she was encouraging her colleagues to help get the word out, as well as give thought to who might make good speakers for the club.