TALK on HISTORY OF THE COMBINED PROBUS CLUB OF AUBURN (VIC) INC. ON MONDAY, MARCH 3RD, 2014 TO CELEBRATE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLUB

THE BEGINNINGS

As we all know Probus clubs are started by Rotary. The need for one was identified by Glenferrie Rotary and in 2004 letters of invitation to a meeting were sent to people who may be interested in forming a club.

On 29th March, 2004, about 44 prospective members of the proposed new Probus Club met at Kew Heights in response to these invitations. The then president of Glenferrie Rotary, Geoff Hopper, chaired the meeting. The main speaker was David Wells from the Probus Centre South Pacific. He told us about Probus and its aims for retired and semi-retired persons to have regular opportunities to expand interests and enjoy the company of new friends.

David Sutherland from Glenferrie rotary then outlined the arrangements that had been made for the new club.

1. The name Combined Probus Club of Auburn (Vic).
2. Meetings to be held on the first Monday of the month at Kew heights Sports Club.

Those present then agreed to form the club and accepted the suggested fees (joining fee $20 & annual fee $35).

Election of Office bearers and committee followed.

Our first committee was: President Ann Rusden

 Vice- President Tony Smythe

 Secretary June Harrell

 Treasurer Neville Nicholls

 Newsletter Geoff Caldwell

 Membership Bill Woodhouse

 Speakers Connie Gregory

 Outings Peter Gurry

36 people filled in Membership Applications at that March meeting and the first meeting of the new club was set for the first Monday in May.

The first committee met in April to plan the operation of the new club. Much was achieved before May. I want to pay tribute to the two members of that first committee who sadly are not with us now. June Harrell, our first secretary and later our Public Officer organized the post office box, handled the mail as well as minutes and numerous other duties as secretaries do; Neville Nicholls, our first treasurer, opened the bank account organized signatories, and set up the keeping of the books ready for the collection of subscriptions. Both made a major contribution to the success of our new club.

Newsletter:

Geoff Caldwell, our first newsletter organizer, prepared newsletter No. 1 which was mailed to all who had shown interest and who we hoped would join us at the May meeting. Geoff tells me how indebted he was for the help given to him by Geoff Hopper, the Glenferrie President, who spent time teaching him the necessary computer skills required. The newsletter is such an important medium for keeping us all informed and Geoff set a high standard from the beginning. This as we know has continued ever since.

Membership:

Bill Woodhouse took on the membership area. This was a very big task dealing with all the Application Forms compiling membership lists, keeping attendance records, welcoming newcomers and looking after the welfare of members.

There were 62 members present on Monday May 3rd, 2004 for our first meeting and by mid- May we had 83 paid up foundation members, many of whom are still members 10 years on.

Our membership has continued to grow. The 2004 report shows a membership of 109 and a year later, 2005, it was 115 and by 2008 it was 138. I note in the last newsletter it is now 158.

Speakers:

One of the key features of Probus in pursuit of the aims of keeping our minds active and expanding our interests is by having a speaker at our monthly meetings. We have been most fortunate in our 10 years of having the privilege of hearing from people with a wide variety of knowledge and interests.

Connie Gregory organized speakers for May, June and July, 2004 which were able to be advertised in newsletter No. 1. As the May meeting was so soon after Anzac Day our first speaker was a WW2 veteran who was in Darwin when the first bombs were dropped in 1942.As 2004 was an Olympic year we were fortunate to hear from Olympian Ray Weinberg who represented Australia in the 110 m hurdles in London 1948 and again in Helsinki in 1952. He coached and managed our athletes in Mexico too.

The President’s Annual Reports list the many great speakers we have heard since the beginning.

Outings

Another key feature of Probus is the outings.

Peter Gurry, our first Outing’s Coordinator, set the ‘wheels in motion’ and we have enjoyed many delightful and informative day outings and more recently some interesting trips away. Among the first was a visit to the Boroondara Police Complex in July 2004. ( Pat Singleton showed me a photo last meeting taken of our group on that visit.)

The position of arranging outings is a difficult and very time-consuming one but rewarding when positive feedback is received from members-not so when the reverse occurs. We cannot be too appreciative of those who have worked so hard in this area over our first ten years.

We have also been grateful to Thelma who has organized the many ‘caravan’ weeks away. They have been a special of our club since the first one in 2005.

Interest Groups

These have proved to be the main activity where members get to know others with like interests.

The groups started in the first year were cinema, dine out, history and walking.

In our second year, 2005, golf, mah-jong, bowls for fun and sew and sews were added.

By 2009 we also had investment, stitch’n knit, computer, cycling, bridge, 2 book groups, and 2 canasta groups. Bowls for fun had ceased.

This past year 2013 there has been armchair travel, theatre added while investment and computer had ceased. So we now have 16 groups which I think says a great deal about our club.

We are indebted to the many convenors of these groups which have ensured our enjoyment, those who initiated them and those who have taken over and kept them going.

**Incorporation**

Following the recommendation of the Probus Centre South Pacific the first committee recommended to members that we become incorporated. This converts the club into a separate legal entity apart from its members who then cease to have personal liability for debts of the club. The required process was followed and the recommended constitution adopted that complied with the Associations Incorporation Act 1981. The result was that by the end of our first year we had a new name ”Combined Probus Club of Auburn (Vic) Inc.”

In this first decade following Probus rules we have had a new president each year after the first two years.

Presidents: 2004/5 Ann Rusden

 2006 Peter Gurry

 2007 Bill Woodhouse

 2008 Mary Coburn

 2009 Ross King

 2010 Tom Fennemor

 2011 Lorraine Borley

 2912 Frank Hawkins

 2013 Norma Griffiths

Conclusion

Looking back over our first decade we can all take pride in our club and our achievements. Our club is currently a big, vibrant one which fulfills the Probus aims. This is so because so many members have been willing to take the responsibility for the organization whether by serving in one of the committee roles or leading an interest group or by assisting with events and then all of us by participating and supporting those people.

**A VERY HAPPY DECADE CELEBRATION COMBINED PROBUS CLUB OF AUBURN ( VIC) Inc.**

Ann Rusden

March 2014