



NEWSLETTER

WOMEN'S PROBUS CLUB OF VANCOUVER

Volume 18 Issue 11, April 2021

Next meeting: **Tuesday, May 4, 2021**

9:45 a.m. - You are welcome to log on to Zoom

10:00 a.m. Meeting online via Zoom. Please be on time.

A reminder of the meeting will be sent last week of April and the link to the Zoom meeting will be sent May 3, 2021.

If you wish to join by telephone: please call Barbara Wynn for the number and ID #.

Speaker: Dr. Catherine Johnson, Professor of Geophysics

Topic: The InSight Mission: Looking into Mars' Deep Interior



Catherine Johnson is a Professor of Geophysics at UBC Vancouver and a Senior Scientist at the Planetary Science Institute, Tucson. Catherine grew up in the UK, but a year abroad at the University of Pennsylvania during her under-graduate degree was the beginning of many years in North America. She did her PhD at Scripps Institution of Oceanography (San Diego), then spent six years in Washington, DC, as a post-doc and Program Manager for an international university consortium.

She is currently a Co-Investigator on NASA's InSight mission to Mars and the OSIRIS-REx mission to asteroid Bennu, and was previously a Participating Scientist on the MESSENGER mission to Mercury. Her research interests are the interior structure and histories of terrestrial (rocky) planets, moons and asteroids. She is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, and in 2019 was awarded the Price Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society and the Shen Kuo Award of the International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy.

In her spare time she practices and teaches yoga, loves to cook and is looking forward to when we can all travel again.

She lives in Vancouver with her family and is a proud grandmother of two.



Women's PROBUS of Vancouver: www.probuswomen.com
Contact us: [PROBUSwomen.news<at>gmail.com](mailto:PROBUSwomen.news@probuswomen.com) (replace <at> with @)
PROBUS Canada: www.probus.org
PROBUS International: www.probusglobal.org

A Message from President Barbara Wynn

Dear Members:

April has seen Vancouver shrouded in a froth of pink and white as we celebrated Cherry Blossom month. It was uplifting to see, in between the dire missives that have been coming out recently with the virus statistics.

This month we had another Management meeting to discuss plans for Women's PROBUS. We talked about the new website, the upgraded and attractive newsletter, the reinstatement of annual dues, future membership, the appointment of an activities co-ordinator, and the challenges of finding a V/P for next year. We also discussed meeting again in person, which is not likely for the rest of this year.

We also welcomed Sharron Williams as our new greeter co-ordinator, following the resignation of Joni Greer who was always a welcome sight with her friendly demeanour, and Mary Gillespie who will take over the role that Dorothy Joplin did so well, for so many years.

As I come to the near end as your President, I do want to acknowledge our efficient and supportive committee members. Without their input our club would be in disarray. They did not abandon their positions during Covid, and our regular Zoom meetings have been very productive.

I would urge you to contribute to our newsletter or pick up the phone to call another member to see how they are coping.

I know for many of you that music, reading, gardening, bridge, virtual contact with family and friends and other hobbies have been your solace. One day we will all meet again in person.

Meantime stay safe,
Warmest regards,

Barbara



These lovely Hellebores are in my garden.

Membership Information

Management Committee Contacts: Please see the last page of this Newsletter for confidential telephone or email contacts when you need or want to send information.

Zoom Meetings: This modern way of meeting is keeping our Club together during the pandemic, although we do look forward to meeting again in person one day. If you have not joined a Zoom meeting and need help, please do not hesitate to email or call Barbara Wynn or Jane LePorte (contact information is on the secure, last page of this Newsletter). If you don't want to Zoom, you may join the meeting via telephone; Barbara Wynn will give you the number and ID number to use.

The breakout rooms for fifteen minutes after the meeting are popular and are a good way to chat in a small group with other PROBUS members.

New Members: There are no new members to welcome this month and, if you know someone who would like to join, the dues and initiation fee are currently \$40.00 for a membership through August.

The application is on our new website, www.probuswomen.com, under Membership Info. NEW: Only one sponsor is required.

Annual Dues: You will receive an invoice, generated by our new website, for annual dues of \$80.00 payable by September 15. Instructions for paying online or by other methods will be in the May Newsletter.

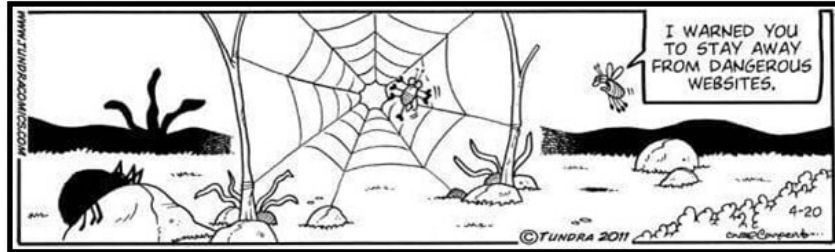
Update Your Contact Information: To ensure you continue to receive the Newsletter and emails with important information, update any changes to your postal and email addresses or phone numbers in one of these two ways:

1. Email Membership Chair loislindsay@telus.net with any changes.

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2. Your changes could also be done on the new website www.probuswomen.com. Instructions were emailed early in April but if you need them to be resent or need assistance, please contact Estelle Jacobson (her contact information is on the secure, last pages of this Newsletter).
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Vaccination is a job well done. That's the point of it.

Kudos to Webmaster, Estelle Jacobson, who has worked very hard in past weeks to develop our new website www.probuswomen.com. Many PROBUS Clubs in Canada are using this company, Wild Apricot, and with Estelle's help we will all be able to pay dues, change our personal profiles and, when the time comes, book space on outings online. The latter will happen when we are moving around the city freely and when we have found an Activities Co-ordinator! Any volunteers????



Newsletter: Material to be included in the next Newsletter should be submitted to Editor Jane LePorte by the 10th of the month.

Correspondence: If you know a Women's PROBUS member who should receive a get-well or condolence card, please let Davinder Grewal know.

Book Nook

Some book recommendations from Meredyth Kezar:

Early in the pandemic I seemed to be reading less (partly due to libraries being closed and a preference for real books), but in 2021 I seemed to have got back into reading.

Last year as a reaction to the Pandemic and the political situation in the United States, a friend in Seattle formed a Zoom book club. I have been honoured to be the only Canadian member with most of the other members being in the Seattle area. We have focused on non-fiction books and are now on our fifth book. Our favourite book so far has been *How to be an Anti-racist* by National Book Award winner, Ibram Kendi. This is excellent, as the author describes his own evolution in attitude as well as giving a wider historical and social view of how race came to be construed.

We are currently reading *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, another award-winning author. This book is about the movement of Black Americans out of the Southern United States to other parts of the Midwest, West and Northwest from approximately 1915 to 1970, an exodus of almost six million people. She focuses on three different people as well as describing the bigger picture. An excellent read that gives a history of terrible wrongs and great determination.

I am always happy when I find a page-turner, a book I can't stop reading. Recently, I read *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. This novel describes a woman and her two children who end up leaving the dustbowl of Texas in the Depression to look for a better life in California. They discover once they are there that all those who have come seeking work are regarded as Okies even if they aren't from Oklahoma. They are treated as subhuman and poorly paid for hard, hard work and entrapped in company store debt. Elsa, the mother, initially reluctantly becomes a leader in the movement to unionize the pickers. She also gains confidence and a voice, although the price is very high. The book seems strangely relevant currently.

On a lighter note, I like mysteries. The most popular mystery writer currently seems to be Louise Penny, whose novels are mainly set in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, where I happen to be from. In a survey recently in the *New York Times*, Gameche, her detective, was the most popular fictional detective, with Sherlock Holmes placing second. Her books have really helped tourism in the region, and she even acquired Hilary and Bill Clinton as fans and friends. I recently have found a couple of other mystery writers that I am enjoying and hadn't read previously, Deborah Crombie and Elly Griffiths, so you might want to check them out if you are a mystery fan.

I recently watched a movie I really enjoyed on Netflix, based on a true story, *A Call to Spy*, about three women spies in the Second World War. Someone just recommended a non-fiction book about Virginia Hall, one of the women in the film, by Sonia Purnell entitled, *A Woman of No Importance*. I think I will be putting this one on my future reading list.

April Speaker – Nurjehan Mawani



Afghanistan: Protecting the Gains of Equality. Speaker Nurjehan Mawani

For the last 20 years the world has been very aware of Afghanistan. We all watched as life there seemed to improve, but in recent years the future seems fragile. One wonders if it is possible that the Taliban will regain power and rights for women and minorities will be lost again.

Our presentation on April 6 by Nurjehan Mawani was fascinating and somewhat reassuring. After a distinguished career with the Canadian Civil Service, she became the Diplomatic Representative of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) to the Kyrgyz Republic in 2005 and then the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from 2007. In these countries, Aga Khan Development Network has diplomatic status. In this

role she was able to travel throughout Afghanistan's even most remote areas and support the improvement of education, health and economic empowerment of women. This occurred during periods of political, security and economic transitions from 2007 to 2018. She was able to observe and listen carefully to Afghani women, especially mothers, to see what the needs really were and possible solutions. These women were very aware of the importance of education for their children to have a good future. To have real change and improvement, you need multiple types of inputs and interventions.

In 2007, for instance, girls often stopped going to school when they reached puberty. One reason was because families didn't wish their daughters to have male teachers. Thus, training of women teachers was very important. She saw a school with 400 students, but no electricity and only one toilet, so this needed to change. When there was extreme poverty, school was not a priority as you had to walk miles to get firewood. Everything was just focused on getting food.

Health was another concern. Afghanistan had the highest infant mortality in the world under the Taliban. There have been great strides in the area of health. She told us about the Old Banyon Provincial Hospital

which focuses on woman and child help and was built with the help of Canada. In the Aga Khan University of Faizabad, one-tenth of the country's midwives are now trained in this remote province.

Another exciting program has been the Post Graduate Medical Education Programme where women specialist doctors are trained in Kabul. This program is supported by France, Canada and the Aga Khan Foundation. Afghanistan's first clinical pathologist is a woman graduate of this program. The President and his wife were unable to attend the first graduation in 2017 but invited the graduates to the university for breakfast at the palace, which was a thrill for the graduates. A class graduated this year. The program is not stopping despite escalation of conflicts. "*Fear is infectious but so is hope*" to quote the Aga Khan.

This picture is taken in a remote area of the country bordering China and Tahlkistan close to Pakistan. She noted how important it is to show what the government has done to improve life in these areas so that people are resistant to the Taliban. In this village in 2018 they met with men and women together to talk about needs. This wouldn't have happened ten years earlier and that building wasn't there.



Women have been able to start businesses with micro loans and with women bankers. There is an Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, so their voices and concerns can be heard. The chairperson of this is on the Government's High Economic Council.

3.2 million girls are now in school and now the focus is on improving the quality of education. Covid has also made things more difficult as they don't have our online resources everywhere.

She brought us up to date with recent political developments. The United States in February 2020 signed an agreement with the Taliban with no input from the Afghan government. In anticipation of American troops leaving Afghanistan in May 2021, the Taliban agreed not to attack American forces or international personnel and assets, but there have been more attacks on Afghans. Since then, talks between the Taliban and the current Afghan government representatives have taken place in Kotor and will resume for ten days April 16 in Istanbul. There are four very good women on the government team, but no women on the Taliban team. These are very critical talks.

The Afghan people want peace but without sacrificing gains made. There is concern about the possible eroding of the Afghan constitution which enshrines rights for women and minorities. What leverage does the international community have? There is much lobbying going on. Canada is one of the top ten donors to Afghanistan. Any government formed will want recognition at the international level and will need financial support as the country can't survive otherwise.

This was an excellent presentation. Thanks to Nurjehan Mawani's talk, I think we will all be watching closely what happens in Istanbul and next in Afghanistan. Members may be interested in getting involved with a group such as Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan. And may the women of Afghanistan stay strong and hopeful.

- Thank you to Meredyth Kezar for the summary of our speaker's message emphasizing the plight of women. Estelle Jacobson introduced Ms. Mawani and Barbara Wynn thanked her.

Catherine Johnson, The InSight Mission: Looking into Mars' Deep Interior

Non-members may contact us at PROBUSwomen.news@gmail.com