



The Telescope

Monthly News Letter for the Greater Hartford PROBUS Club

February 2017

MINUTES:

Probus Chapter Meeting of January 18, 2017: Minutes @ The American School For The Deaf in West Hartford, CT Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m. by **President David Hoff**.

Mark Goldberg gave a brief synopsis of what our Probus club is, including a history of our chapter and our civic involvement within the community. A roundtable introduction of members then occurred for the benefit of our invited guests this evening. David Hoff's guest Matt, who works at AFLAC Insurance greeted us and explained his experience working with non-profits and international exchange programs. **Bob Goldberg** then segued into introducing **Jack Hoover** who works at The University of Hartford as their Director of Ticket Sales & Operations. Jack has a personal initiative to give back to the community, which he shares with the university. He is a young, energetic individual who oversees ticketing for their 16 Division 1 sports teams.

Bob then introduced our special guest speaker for the evening, **Kim McNeill. Kim is the U. of H. Lady Hawks head basketball coach.** She is a Virginia native, in her 18th season of coaching. She took over for longtime U. of H. women's hoops coach Jennifer Rizzotti, who left to become the head coach at The George Washington University. Kim is replacing a legend and beloved Connecticut icon. Kim is a University of Richmond graduate, who has also worked at James Madison University, Cal Berkeley, The University of Georgia and The University of Virginia. Kim said that in replacing a legend, "I can only be me". She is a self-described fierce competitor who subscribes to the FAB principle: Family/Academics/Basketball. Her team is off to a great start of the season with a 12 win/5 loss record so far. She drew the parallel saying she is like Probus in that she subscribes to the "giving back aspect". She strives to impact the lives of, in her case, young ladies and helps to create a foundation for them. She stated that she always wants to instill some things that prepare them for the real world. She cited examples such as teaching the student/athletes how to deal with both failure and success and how to deal with all types of people. Kim added that her job is truly an all year-round job, not just a job that occurs during the basketball season. Recruiting eats up a lot of her time in the offseason. She then commented on her efforts to guide her players as they navigate the time management piece in college. She stays on her players to attend all of their classes, communicate with their professors, pre-plan for travel days when they have away games, take advantage of tutors who are made available to them, etc. She sees a direct correlation between class attendance and basketball court presence.

Kim also acknowledged that she and her assistant coaches (which by the way includes her husband!) are now recruiting parents also. She looks at the potential recruit's whole package, which includes what kind of family they come from, and do their parents sit up in the stands at a game and shout inappropriately with attitudes. If so, Kim does not gravitate towards recruiting this package. She explained that every year there are 500+ transfers in women's college

basketball for a multitude of reasons including the desire to gain more playing time. Kim summarized matters, by saying she wears a lot of hats and serves as part mentor, part mom, part psychologist and part role model to her players, and she loves it!

She then did a Q & A with the assembled Probus members. She also shared a poignant vignette about the time she is willing to spend outside the court. She once took one of her players, who was injured and wanted to chat with Kim and discuss some issues/challenges weighing on her mind, to a 2 hour breakfast at IHOP. As Kim explained it, being a sounding board for her player for 2 hours outside of school was more important to Kim (and the player) than how many jump shots the player would put on the stats sheet the next game. Bob Goldberg then concluded by letting us all know that Kim has agreed to attend our Annual Client Picnic in Windsor in September with her University of Hartford women's hoops team!

She was then presented with a token of our appreciation for being our guest speaker: a timepiece and a \$100 check for The Juvenile Diabetes Association in memory of her father.

Bob also acknowledged that he has worked with Jack Hoover at U. of H. for 2 years now and they have forged a strong relationship. A special plaque was then presented to Jack recognizing the strong bond between the University of Hartford Athletic Department and Probus. We have brought many clients from area group homes to attend basketball games at the field house and thus brought a lot of joy to many developmentally disabled individuals. Finally, we had a drawing for some free U. of H. basketball tickets right behind the home team's bench and Shakela Holly won them!

Business Meeting:

The extensive 3 page Treasurer's Report was presented by Meyer Frankel and accepted by the gathered membership. The Secretary's Minutes from the last meeting were presented by Charlie Dobrow and accepted.

Concerning the **Special Needs Grant program**, we learned that the Bloomfield Public Schools submitted grant was accepted and a presentation ceremony is pending. Also, there are 2 other pending check presentations: ASD and Oak Hill School. We are still awaiting further communications with the Hartford Public School system. In addition, it was suggested that we try to secure Michelle LaCroix from the West Hartford school system to come to our February or March meeting to provide us with an update as to how the grant money we provided to them is being used for their music therapy programs.

Shakela Holly has agreed to lead our Membership Team. Thanks Shakela for stepping up to oversee this important team which is charged with bringing in new members and young members who will be the lifeblood of Probus moving forward! The team will be meeting at **Dr. Robert Dobrow's** home soon to brainstorm and begin planning their strategy.

David Maslin mentioned an idea to develop an abbreviated Probus Annual Report. He foresees there being multiple uses for such an Annual Report. He said it "would serve Probus extremely well in telling our story" and could be a vital component when it is time to solicit corporate donations for our Special Needs Grant program. David feels that we could pull all of our

components together without too much effort as we seek to produce this communication document. He envisions a President's Report (open letter), some basic financials, photographs from our main charity and fundraising events held throughout the year, and some copy and quotes from our members, our clients' caretakers, special education teachers who have received our grants for a niche project, etc. David suggested that we could strive to produce this truncated annual report by the time we have our end of the year Installation Dinner. David shared some example of other non-profits who have produced small, but impactful annual reports including Horizons and the Ron Foley Foundation for pancreatic cancer research and support. Further discussion on this project will ensue at our February meeting.

At our recent December **National Probus meeting** in Wethersfield, **Steve Blotner** agreed to serve as Connecticut Probus Club Renewal Chairperson to help revitalize/reinvigorate chapters which have stopped operating due to lack of membership. Our next chapter meeting will be held at A.S.D. on Wednesday, February 15 th , 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Respectfully Submitted, **Charlie Dobrow Secretary.**

**12 Probiants attended the University of Hartford Women's basketball game 01-25-17:
Bob,**

I want to thank you for all your hard work for last night's U of H women's basketball game. The VIP treatment the 12 of us received last night was great. The food served upstairs was wonderful. Having seats behind the women players was great. A double overtime win for the Hawks was so exciting. I am emailing for all the Hartford Probiants who attended last night.

Thank you, Steve Blotner

A dozen Probiants enjoy entertaining night out at **University of Hartford Lady Hawks basketball game!** (if U. of H. star former NBA player Vin Baker had been sitting with us, it would have been a "Baker's Dozen"!) On January 25th 11 Probus members and 1 spouse attended a very exciting University of Hartford Women's Basketball game in West Hartford. We were not escorting/hosting any area group home clients at this particular game, instead it was a mid-winter social night out for the gang and an opportunity to show our appreciation of and support for Coach Kim McNeill who was recently our guest speaker at our January chapter meeting. The evening began with an interesting and unexpected twist. Everyone had brought money to pay for the reduced price tickets and buffet dinner we were going to partake in upstairs in the special V.I.P. concourse. We quickly learned that Coach McNeill had made it known that she wanted all of us to be her guests for tonight's meal and game! So, in the spirit of giving, which is in our Probus D.N.A., we made the spontaneous decision to redirect our cash and instead present it to Coach McNeill as a donation to be sent to her favorite charity: The American Diabetes Association. You may recall from her motivational speech at our chapter meeting that she mentioned she lost both her father and her father-in- law to

Diabetes. This cause is very near and dear to her and her husband's hearts since 2 special people in their lives had succumbed to it. There was no question that this was simply the right thing to do this evening!

The game vs. the Binghamton (New York) Bearcats was a thriller! The Lady Hawks whose record at the time was 14 wins & 6 losses (5-2 in the America East Conference) took the Bearcats (9-11 / 4-3 in AE Conference) to Double Overtime and prevailed by a score of 76 to 73! This game at the Chase Arena @ Reich Family Pavilion was Hartford's 1st double overtime game since the 2010-11 season. Freshman Sierra Da Costa from Philly scored a career-high 23 points to lead all scorers. By the way, we all enjoyed 2 unique vantage points. We all had a great meal during pre-game warm-ups in the upper V.I.P. section, which we took to mean "Very Important Probians"! Then we transitioned right before tip-off to our seats right behind the Hartford bench. Being down on the floor courtside, the action, speed and emotions were playing out right in front of us! Thanks to our friends at the University of Hartford Department of Athletics and to Coach McNeill for a really competitive game and a fun night out!

Probus Client Activity:

On December 4 the Probus Club were given tickets to the University of Hartford Women's basketball game where there was about 60 group home clients along with 8 Probians. A great time was had by all.

In addition the Probus Club coordinated the donation of tickets for 2 Disney shows, December and the other on January 12. For each show there were 14 clients in attendance.

As a separate note, the Security and Customer relations department at the XL Center treated the clients like Rock Stars. We ran into some concerns in that we had more wheel chairs clients than wheel chair seating. The head of security quickly got all of us situated in the empty room that is used as the bar for hockey games. (No the bar was closed).

With some advance communications for the 1/12/17 Disney on Ice show, they reserved and opened the same room exclusively for our Probus Group. We would like to give a shout out to the wonderful team of Security and Customer Relations staff at the XL Center for making our visits so very special. I told them going forward, we should rename the room as the Probus room. In the upcoming months, we are trying to get tickets to other events and activities.

Bob Goldberg

The American School for the Deaf, located in West Hartford, will celebrate 200 years of 'empowering and educating youth' at an April gala.



American School for the Deaf in West Hartford. (we-ha.com file photo)

In celebration of its 200th consecutive year providing comprehensive educational programs and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, The American School for the Deaf (ASD) will host a bicentennial gala at the Connecticut Convention Center on Friday, April 21, 2017, from 6-11 p.m. as part of a 16-month series of events honoring the school, its legacy and its national success. Among notable attendees will be Academy Award-winning actress Marlee Matlin who is scheduled to address guests the night of the gala.

Greg Barats, President and CEO of The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Company (HSB) and the General Chair of the gala, said, "It is particularly appropriate that HSB is taking the lead on this event, since ASD has been a part of our company culture from the beginning." He continued, "HSB's founder, Jeremiah Allen, was appointed Steward for the ASD starting in 1855 and continued to advocate for the deaf and hard-of-hearing long after he became HSB's first CEO in 1866."

Another notable figure in ASD history, Thomas Gallaudet, is most well-known for inventing American Sign Language at the institution. Founded in downtown Hartford and located on a recently refurbished campus on North Main Street in West Hartford, ASD now serves students and their families from birth through adulthood with programs such as pre-school, K-12 education, college preparatory programs, vocational programs and a program for individuals ages five through 21 with behavioral disorders.

"We see the 200th anniversary of our school as an occasion for people to understand the power of deaf education," Jeff Bravin, Executive Director of ASD said. "Access to high quality education has

had an enormous impact on every deaf child over the past 200 years as well as deaf children in the centuries to come – not just in Connecticut, but across America and worldwide.”

“It is so wonderful to see the extraordinary impact on the lives of deaf people and their families with their innovative programs,” said Barbara Cassin, chair of the Bicentennial Celebration Committee and a 1975 alumna of ASD. “Our 200th year of success is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the progress we have made as a community and to set new goals for inspiring deaf people throughout America.”

Actress Marlee Matlin, who has accepted the role of Honorary Chair, expressed why she is involved in the event: “Education is a fundamental right for all Americans, and ASD has created a model educational program that makes sure students’ quality of education is not only unhindered by being deaf, but also expanded by it,” Ms. Matlin said. “This school’s 200th anniversary is not only a celebration for the alumni of their programs, but also a way to celebrate the beautiful and expressive language they created and the culture that flourished because of it.” Matlin won the Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role for “Children of a Lesser God,” and currently stars on the show “Switched At Birth” on ABC family. In addition to her celebrated acting career, she is a champion for deaf rights and education.

Other events in the Bicentennial Celebration will include a triathlon, an informative conference series and an “Iron Chef”-inspired competition in which ASD students will work with renowned deaf chefs from across the country. More information about the gala and other bicentennial events can be found on the ASD Bicentennial Page –<http://www.asd200.org>. For more for information about attending the gala, call Margaret Lawson at [860.275.7259](tel:860.275.7259). *Founded in 1817, the American School for the Deaf is the birthplace of American Sign Language and deaf education. Today, ASD provides pre-kindergarten through high school academic programs to approximately 200 students at its West Hartford, CT Campus, with another 317 children, youth and adults benefitting from a variety of outreach and support services that ASD provides off-campus. ASD provides comprehensive educational programs and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, empowering them to become educated and self-directed, lifelong learners. For more information about the American School for the Deaf, visit www.asd-1817.org*

Donation to The Probus Club of Greater Hartford: By the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro, NC by George and Muriel Hoff of \$300 (see letter below).



JEWISH FOUNDATION of Greensboro

December 22, 2016
22 Kislev 5777

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Probus National
P. O. Box 1403
Fairfield, CT 06825

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are pleased to enclose our check for \$300.00 representing a contribution that has been recommended by Ms. Muriel Hoff from *The George and Muriel Hoff Philanthropic Fund* of the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro and approved by the Board of Directors of the Foundation. This contribution is designated in honor of David Hoff.

A formal receipt should be remitted to the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro for our records indicating that no goods, services, or benefits were provided to the Foundation or the donor/recommender in conjunction with this gift. Please also acknowledge this gift directly to Ms. Muriel Hoff, 3504 Flint Street, Apt. A217, Greensboro, NC 27405.

By accepting this check, you agree that it does not represent the payment or satisfaction of any legally enforceable obligation, and that no material benefit or privilege in return for this distribution is to be provided to any person or entity.

The Jewish Foundation of Greensboro is happy to be of assistance to Probus National in achieving its goals.

Sincerely yours,

Susan R. Guterman
Endowment Director

Enclosure
SRG/sp

cc: Ms. Muriel Hoff

Developing, sustaining, and ensuring the social welfare, cultural heritage, and continuity of the Jewish community through the creation and growth of endowment funds.

3509-C West Friendly Avenue, Greensboro, NC 27410-4211 • Telephone 336-852-0099 • Fax 888-305-5614

Reminder: Next Probus Meeting:
Date: Wednesday February 15, 2017
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: American School for the Deaf
139 N Main St, West Hartford, CT 06107
Speaker: None This is a business meeting.

An Easy Fund Raiser

Occasion Cards

As you know, the Probus Club is 100% committed to helping those that, for no fault of their own, cannot help themselves. One of our fundraising events that we sponsor is the ability for us to be able to accept contributions to honor, praise, memorialize or make a special acknowledgement to someone who is either in our presence or in our memory.

By you making a contribution to the Probus Club, our very own Bruce Stanger will process your contribution; inform the donee that a contribution was made to Probus to recognize him or her and for the event that is being recognized. Also, an acknowledgement will be sent to you, the donor, to thank you for your charitable contribution to the Probus Club. As always, 100% of donations to the Probus Club are used exclusively for charitable purposes.

Consider the Probus Club when honoring or remembering someone special.

Bruce Stanger can be reached at:
Attorney Bruce Stanger
433 South Main Street
Suite 112
West Hartford, CT 06110

The check should be made payable to The Probus Club and forwarded to Bruce along with the information necessary for a proper acknowledgement. Thank you for supporting The Probus Club.

Meyer Frankel, Editor

The “Telescope” is the monthly newsletter of the Probus Club of Greater Hartford.