



PROBUS Global Newsletter



March 2025



From the President

Welcome to your first Probus Global newsletter for 2025.

Strengthening Probus Through Marketing and Engagement

Probus Global continues to grow, but membership challenges remain, particularly after the pandemic. Many clubs have seen declining numbers, making effective marketing and outreach more critical than ever. To ensure the future of Probus, we must actively promote our clubs, highlight the benefits of membership, and create opportunities for engagement.

Expanding our Reach.

One successful approach to attracting new members has been the adoption of a combined club model, which brings together individuals with diverse interests and backgrounds. This format offers a more dynamic experience, encouraging greater participation. Social initiatives like the ROMEO group (Retired Old Men Eating Out) have also proven effective in keeping members engaged and fostering strong connections.

Marketing Probus effectively requires a mix of digital and traditional outreach. Our newsletter, now reaching over 2,100 subscribers, is a key communication tool that shares updates, success stories, and upcoming events. Additionally, we have rebooted our Facebook page as an extension of the Virtual Probus Club, offering another platform for global interaction.

Promoting Probus Day Globally

Probus Day has been widely celebrated in Australia and New Zealand, but awareness remains limited in other regions. Expanding recognition of this event internationally could boost interest in Probus and provide an opportunity for clubs to showcase their activities. Organizing local events, sharing member testimonials, and increasing social media engagement can help generate excitement and attract new members.

The Power of Word-of-Mouth and Community Partnerships

While digital marketing is important, word-of-mouth remains one of the most effective ways to grow Probus. Encouraging members to invite friends, family, and colleagues to meetings and events can have a significant impact. Clubs should also explore partnerships with local organizations, libraries, and senior centres to increase visibility and attract potential members.

Looking Ahead

Probus Global is committed to strengthening our outreach and engagement strategies. A management review meeting in April will focus on evaluating marketing initiatives and identifying new ways to support membership growth. We welcome ideas and input from all members on how to best promote Probus and expand our reach.

Finally, we take a moment to honour and acknowledge our Probus members who served in the Second World War. Their contributions and dedication deserve our deepest gratitude.

By working together and prioritizing effective marketing, we can ensure the continued success and growth of Probus. Let's embrace new opportunities, strengthen our connections, and welcome more members into our global community.

Richard Furlong

Contact PG [here](#)

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Contributions welcome (200-500 words) for June issue. Deadline May 15, 2025

newsletter@probusglobal.org



Editorial

A recent survey of retirees found that the most appreciated aspect of retirement was freedom – “freedom to sleep in, travel, catch up with friends and family, renovate, garden, get fit, try art classes, learn Italian and if they can afford it, spend up big.” But even freedom can have a downside. What many participants missed most, were social – the opportunity to make new friends, to engage in new activities, and to feel useful. Money was also mentioned, as they witnessed their dwindling reserves. It seems work provides income and social contact, and can engender a sense of meaning and purpose. Many retirees felt they lost their identities on retirement because they no longer had the status, an en-

hanced understanding of self, and the confidence built by achieving work goals. However, successful retiree participants adjusted to the transition by adapting their roles and expectations. They re-oriented their identity from worker to someone who finds meaning and purpose in different activities. This change usually involved renegotiating relationships with family and friends and experimenting with new activities, interests and friendship groups. Over a period, they planned their finances, maintained a healthy lifestyle, stayed socially integrated, challenged themselves mentally, and remained positive and flexible. And, of course, I presume they joined Probus which helped them along the way.

Mary

Good Idea

In Australia and New Zealand, Probus South Pacific Ltd., provides, free of charge, Medical Cards, which fold in three, and become the size of business cards that fit into purses and wallets. (See inserted picture). Members can complete them on both sides to contain essential information such as chronic conditions, medications, allergies and contact details of relatives or friends who can help in emergencies. They have proven useful if a member falls ill or has an accident when on a tour, an outing or at a meeting.



An Environmentally Friendly Practice

Most Probus clubs have tea or coffee, if not a meal at their meetings. Some use environmentally unfriendly disposable single-use cups, and for others, china cups are supplied by the caterers. The **Lakefield (Canada) Probus Club** has an environmentally friendly solution. Every member brings their own mug and takes it home with them. There are a handful of mugs for guests (embellished with the PROBUS logo), and presumably for those who forgot to bring their own. When our Webmaster attended a meeting at the Lakefield club, he didn't see a single member who needed to borrow a mug. He suggested that retiring to beautiful, peaceful, Lakefield must be good for one's memory. Most members elsewhere forget their badges, some even forget where they park their cars!

Honorary Club Membership

Probus Honorary members differ from Life Members but neither pay club membership fees, and both distinctions are awarded for exemplary contribution to the club. The difference lies in that honorary members cannot vote or hold office. In some countries, the latter are usually past members who are no longer active club participants, for reasons such as age or relocation. They may visit occasionally and enjoy all other privileges afforded to members. Many opt to continue receiving club newsletters, as long as it is not a financial burden to the club. They may also join some social activities and would not be expected to pay a visitor's premium when that is included. They are not included in official membership numbers. In other countries, such as Canada, they may remain active and their numbers are included.

Write to us! Does your club have Honorary or Life members? What were the types of service for which your club made these awards?

Letter

From **Geoff Crane**, Queensland, Australia

Firstly – congratulations on the excellent Probus Global newsletters.

As a rule, I am not a fan of AI-generated material of any sort, especially poems. But the Probus Christmas poem in the Dec PG newsletter is pretty good.

So, with your permission, I would like to reproduce it. Plus, your page of Christmas Funnies.

I am the newsletter editor for both the North Redlands Probus Club and the Red Hill-Ithaca Probus Club in Brisbane. Each month I have a poetry page in them to broaden everyone's interest and outlook. For the December issues, I wanted to put in a poem with a Christmas theme. But every

Christmas poem I could find included snow, sleigh rides, log fires, and some even mentioned chimneys, which would have mystified most Queenslanders. So, in the end, I decided to make one up myself. I thought drought and cricket were more typical of Aussie summers.

I have included it as an attachment for your interest, and to use if you think appropriate.

Kind regards,
Geoff



[Editor's note: Permission to use items requested was given. Geoff's poem appears on the PG Website at [Poetry Corner](#). More poems are welcome. Of course, Christmas in Queensland was in the 30s Celsius – no snow or log fires! ...And the photo that illustrated his poem is above].

Food for thought

From the Editor

We all know that while technology has the potential to connect everyone in the world and improve humanity's collective coordination, the physical and social infrastructure of the existing Internet is not currently used with sufficient responsibility or efficiency. It is estimated that the Internet may now comprise around 7.4 per cent of global emissions, with half of that - around 3.7 per cent - made up of bots. They can make it impossible to cancel a subscription without a convoluted dance, or they can pose as a friendly customer service agent. They also fuel all spam traffic and useless bots are everywhere. Indeed, it is likely the majority of the

internet is now automated, driven largely by AI. Bot traffic dwarfs the three per cent of global emissions attributed to all international shipping or global aviation. Useless Bot-related energy waste could now be equated to sending every piece of cargo worldwide from its original destination on an extra round trip. With accurate bot network identification, tracking the perpetrators of automated abuse of network capacity is now possible. Taking action could be one step toward tackling the enormous waste of energy these bots engender, thereby making a significant dent in climate change. The question is, who will organise to resuscitate original ideas of a democratic, participatory digital commons?



*Travels of
a Donkey*



From the pen of the NEWBURGH (incorporating International) Correspondent of the PG Newsletter (Reuters Syndicated)

Episode Ten – “X1 – Actually Travelling”

Greetings Dear Reader “Fit like foo’re ye a’ deein?”

It’ll come as a great shock to one ‘n all – not least me that I’m travelling – running around like a headless chicken. Since our last encounter I’ve been to Mexico, St. Nazaire France, Denmark, Bergen and even Peterhead so International Jetsetter I. Apart from Peterhead which is 20 miles from chez mois – from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Unfortunately, all travel is work-related. All sounds very romantic but believe me it’s not all roses.

Generally, I fly to whichever vessel, normally stay on board, complete the job, then back on the plane and home; not very inspiring, and most of the travel time is spent during the hours of darkness. I sometimes think I should be a Mole – everything’s done in the dark.

I visited Las Palmas in early January to carry out Trials on a couple of Anchor Handling Off-shore Vessels there. Once finished, I travelled from Las Palmas to Frankfurt (4 hours) – a nightmare Airport. I then flew cattle class to Hong Kong, (12 hours), where I was at the back of the plane surrounded by a cacophony of synchronised screaming kids, nappy changing and general discomfort.

Short transit time in Hong Kong then off to Taipei. Got to Taipei where I was met at the Airport and driven to Taichung, another three hours to a Hotel, before joining the vessel.

Arrived at the Hotel around midnight absolutely done, got an upgrade to a suite on the top floor and was just laying the old head down when the whole building started to sway. Magnitude six earthquake. For anyone who’s experienced this, you can confirm that this is an unpleasant and somewhat nerve-racking experience. It was on the eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year as well. What a way to greet the Year of the Snake (shennian)!

It seems Taiwan is subject to around 2000 earthquakes annually and the Staff of the Hotel didn’t raise an eyebrow – yours truly was one of the few who actually bothered to make the lobby.

Got back to Aberdeen via Munich – 15-hour flight cattle class from Taipei to Munich – same conditions as the flight out - the Airlines must have a collection of ear piercing, enhanced lung capacity bambinos which they deploy to punish we lesser mortals for not availing ourselves of their mind-blowingly expensive Business Class, and to add insult to injury, not even a dram to kill the pain.

Well fans I must be some sort of sadist 'cos I'm off to Singapore end of this week – more ships to play with. You'd think I'd learn. I'll let you know how it goes.

Wishing you all every best wish for 2025 – *Gong Hei Fat Choy!* So, until my next communication... “Lang may yer lum reek”. Sliante

Any comments – I'd love to hear from you – graham@mmsgam.co.uk.

India Update

Unfortunately, PG has no consolidated information about Probus Clubs India-wide. Our Coordinator in India **Dr R.H.G Rau**, is aware of half a dozen clubs in various locations, but to date, none of those clubs have shown any interest in cooperating on one platform – perhaps Probus India. Each one functions according to its own established procedures. Dr Rau will continue with his and his club's (Probus Club of Hyderabad) efforts to keep in contact with the other clubs, if only to promote Probus Global.

Honours for 101-year-old Probian

Paul Tunks PROBUS Club of Cambridge, Canada

John Neu, (pictured below) a 101-year-old World War II veteran and long-time member of the PROBUS Club of Cambridge, was awarded the prestigious French Knight of the Legion of Honour in a special ceremony at our January PROBUS meeting. The French Knight of the Legion of Honour, officially known as the *Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur*, is the highest decoration bestowed by the French government. Created by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, it is awarded to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to France, including Allied soldiers who fought for the country's liberation during World War II.

Mr. Neu, who served with distinction during the war, is recognized for his bravery and pivotal role in the Allied efforts to free France from Nazi occupation. As one of the dwindling num-

ber of living WWII veterans, this honour underscores his enduring legacy and the gratitude of the French nation for his sacrifices. A representative of the French government said, "This medal is a symbol of our eternal thanks to John Neu and his comrades for their courage and commitment to freedom. Their heroism will never be forgotten."

When asked about the award, Mr. Neu humbly remarked, "I'm deeply honoured. It wasn't just me—there were so many who fought and sacrificed. This medal represents all of them."



Probus in France and Belgium

The first Probus Club in France (Le Touquet Paris Plage) was chartered 30 years ago, and at the end of 2024 there were 1350 members in 66 clubs.

Belgium, having chartered its first club 40 years ago, at Antwerp, now has 117 clubs, with around 4,200 members, and is spread across two (Dutch and French) of three language areas. There are no German-speaking clubs yet.



会長より

第4回第期のPROBUS Globalニュースレターへようこそ。

私たちのコミュニティ成長を続ける中、世界中から新しいメンバーを迎えられること
 嬉しく思います。PROBUS Globalの主な目的の1つは、グローバルなコミュニケーションを促進
 することであり、これは私たちの使命の要諦となっています。メンバーは参加することで、世界中の国境
 や半導体後の活況に満ちたネットワークにアクセスできるようになります。PROBUS
 Globalは、長期的な友情を築き、生涯学習に参加し、多様な文化交流に参加する機会を提供します。
 プロブラスとインスピレーションを通じて

々々を結びつけることを目的として設計されており、退職後の生活を充実させるためのサポートと充
 した準備を提供します。
 精神的な健康の重要性がますます高まるという世評の取り組みの一環として、当社は会員の居住する地域に応
 じた新しいプログラムを継続的に開発しています。2025年10月の重要イベントは、第1回第期に
 予定されているPROBUS Global総会です。リンクを受け取るには、参加登録を行ってください。この
 機会に、コミュニケーション戦略とPROBUS Globalの利点に重点が置かれます。選定済みを招
 へ、全球を通じてオープンなディスカッションが行われます。現在、このイベントを成功に導く様々な
 提案を募集しています。あなたの声を聞き取って、その提案者に投票してください。

facebookを利用して交流を図るバーチャルクラブの取り組みは、有望な成果を上げています。現
 在、会員による集約にサービスを提供できるよう、取り組みの範囲を拡大し、改善するための次のス
 ップを提供しています。



この号では

- 1 会長より
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PG Newsletter translated into Japanese

Kenichi Ito, PG's Coordinator in Japan, translated our last newsletter into Japanese (using Google Translator) and tweaked it in places to make more sense. (See [The Japanese version of the newsletter](#)). He then circulated it to several Japanese Probus clubs, with some promising to promote PG and distribute the translated newsletter to members. Pictured left is part of the translated front page.



The Rotary Connection

Merv Richens, PG Coordinator, Australia

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International has a program funding Rotary Peace Fellowships for successful applicants to study for a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution, at seven Universities around our global village. Each successful applicant joins a network of over 1,800 Rotary Peace Fellows making a difference in more than 140 countries.

One example of a Peace Fellow is **Abdikheir Ahmed**, (pictured left with other Peace Fellows) a refugee from Somalia who was educated in Kenya before gaining refugee status in Canada. Obtaining his first degree and working in a humanitarian field in Winnipeg, he successfully obtained a Fellowship in Brisbane (Australia) and completed his Master's over 18 months. His family stayed in Winnipeg. Upon his return to Canada, he became actively involved in key initiatives in his hometown. Two months before graduating from the University of Queensland, he was hired as the Interim Executive Director of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, a local refugee advocacy organization. In this role, he helped complete a 60-unit housing complex for newly arrived immigrants and refugees and developed numerous programs to support their adaptation and integration into Canadian society. At its completion, he was selected to lead Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, an initiative for fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for newcomers. Working closely with the mayor and city councillors, he played a pivotal role in developing and implementing Winnipeg's first-ever *Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy*, which helped shape the city's approach to serving its increasingly diverse population. He also spearheaded efforts to build bridges between Indigenous communities and new Canadians, leading the creation of the *Indigenous Orientation Toolkit*.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, he served as a senior advisor to the federal government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, holding several key positions in Social Policy development relating to families, children and other vulnerable people. He is currently the Executive Director of a leading organization that provides therapeutic programs and mental health services, particularly for immigrants and refugees who have experienced trauma. For his impactful work, he has received numerous accolades and honours.

PG Zoom meetings

To make it more convenient for members, the recent Probus Global Zoom meeting (February 10/11) was split in two to accommodate different time zones. A recap follows:

Attendees were from around the world, including Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Japan.

Membership Growth, Speakers, and International impact discussions centred on strategies for growth, Speaker highlights, and PG offerings.

Many single-sex clubs have combined and the combined gender models attract more new active members. **Carwyn Arnold** (Australia) highlighted the ROMEO group (Retired Old Men Eating Out) as a successful example of how some previously all-men's clubs cope with the combination.

President Richard presented updates, noting that the Speakers Corner list boasts 65 active speakers, with an anticipated increase to 80. **Kenichi Ito and Charles Sprong** were introduced as PG's new Japanese and South African coordinators. Charles replaces **Nick French** who has moved from SA. The PG newsletter reaches 2100 subscribers directly (although it is read by several thousand more following distribution by members). It was also noted that Probus Day isn't as widely celebrated

by clubs other than those in Australia and New Zealand. Richard made a slide presentation highlighting that as of December 2024, there were an estimated 275,000 Probians in 4,500 clubs worldwide, PG has 1,435 members from 21 countries. Our web access includes Speakers Corner, Travel Coordinator, Photos by members, PG Awards, PROBUS Day, Quarterly Newsletter, Chat rooms, General Meetings, Club Management advice and Mapping and listings of clubs, PG member locations and more.

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by **Jos Nolle**, a highly-rated speaker and former worker with Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). Jos shared his experiences coordinating projects in Mozambique, with an emphasis on the importance of both medical and mental health training in the face of global challenges. He said the team had around 10% surgeons, 60% doctors and nurses and the balance was administration staff. He noted that MSF, funded by 90-95% private donations, spends \$3 billion annually. During the Q&A, Jos addressed questions about the diverse backgrounds of MSF staff, its method of placement of volunteers, and the importance of cultural sensitivity and negotiation. Videos of both meetings can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/@probusglobal> or on PG's meeting page: <https://probusglobal.org/Meetings/#PG>



The photo (left), of Puffins on Staffa Island (Scotland), taken by **Patrick Whittick** from the Dunmow Club (UK), has been chosen as this quarter's feature picture, from PG's photo gallery on our website.

Animals cooperating

Animals often cooperate to reach an objective, but usually, they are of the same species. However, on

close examination, it is not rare to find cooperation between individuals from different species, but Darwinists emphasised competition and denied cooperation. A classic example of cooperative effort is the close relationship between dogs and humans, whether in herding sheep, hunting prey, or sniffing and locating contraband. Dogs and humans work together to achieve a goal. Underwater species also sometimes cooperate. A nice example is the joint hunting behaviour of [moray eels and grouper](#). They have hunting forays together, the grouper uses signals to indicate where prey may be hidden in the coral matrix and the eel scares it out of its hiding place. For both, the chances of catching their dinner are greatly improved, on hunting together. Establishing the precise details of how this cooperation works in the animal world is difficult. However new evidence demonstrates that each partner in the interaction plays a specific role. There is no true leader – they are democratic. Both fish and mammals show clear signs of social competence and, often, advanced cognition. Other cooperating examples are egrets picking harmful insects from water buffaloes and helping to alert the cattle to danger. Meat ants use swarming tactics to protect their nests and their caterpillar neighbours. Ostriches and zebras team up in packs for added protection from predators. The list goes on. Contrary to Darwinist ideas, competition and cooperation on equal footing foster progress in all aspects of evolution. Unfortunately in our war-torn world, it is a lesson many of the apex species – humans – ignore.

Question of the Month

Following a long hiatus, the [QOTM](#) has returned to the PROBUS Global website and the [Facebook page](#). Answers to the QOTM often reflect the diversity of our members and highlight both the commonalities and divergences of our preferences and experiences.



We began the year by asking about the seasonal foods enjoyed over the Christmas season. Katrina, remembering apricots ripening on Christmas Day certainly showed us the difference between the hemispheres. I bet she didn't have to shovel the driveway to get the car out. Cinder Toffee vs Bubble and Squeak, fresh cherries vs fried mackerel, buttery champ vs plum pudding. We all have our favourites.

In February we moved to the books we are reading and recommend. Everything from Lessons in Chemistry to murder mysteries is in the hands of our avid readers.



What are you reading now? <https://probusglobal.org/questions/>

Join us to answer the question for March or chime in to Facebook on any previous questions.

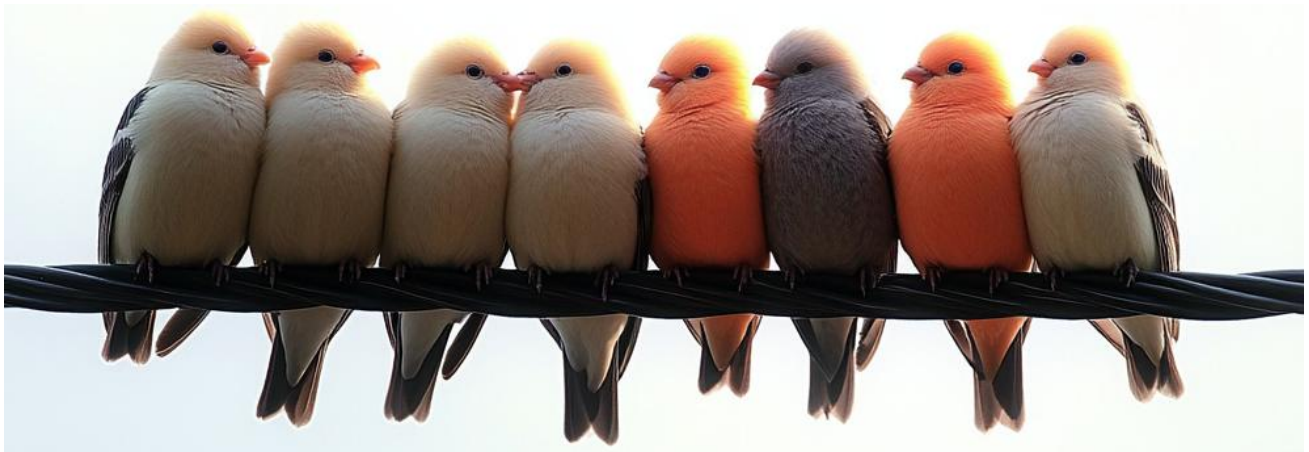
Ethnic Diversity and Probus

It may not be the case in Canada where many Probus clubs have memberships in the 100s, but elsewhere, many clubs struggle to attract members. Consider this:

In wealthier countries, the human population is diminishing. Population numbers in many middle or lower-income countries are about to drop too. One major factor is greater choice for women. They have children later in life and fewer children on average, due to improved career options and better education. As populations age, fewer younger workers are available. By 2100, the world is [expected](#) to have just six countries where births outstrip deaths – Samoa, Somalia, Tonga, Niger, Chad, and Tajikistan. Expect to see migration policies boost the numbers of working-aged people. When people migrate to a developed country, it is usually advantageous to both the adoptive country and the migrants. Probus can still grow along with the ageing population, but we will have a more ethnically diverse membership in years to come. In my club, we are not exclusive by choice, but despite living in a multicultural society, we don't seem to attract immigrant members who haven't lived here most of their lives. **Perhaps it is time for those clubs wishing to increase membership, to market their clubs directly to specific ethnic groups in groups' newspapers/newsletters and where they meet.**

[Ed]

Meet up on Facebook



The private [PROBUS Global Facebook](#) group now has 58 members. If you are on Facebook, join us and let us know what is up in your corner of the world. It takes a critical mass of participants to get a good conversation going. You can help.

Just in! News from Japan



The 11th General Meeting of All Japan Probus Clubs was held late last year. It is convened every two years. Probians from all over Japan appointed **Mr. Yasuhiro Baba** from the Asahikawa Probus Club to the Presidency of All Japan Probus. Following the meeting, a lively social gathering was held, after which everyone enjoyed viewing the towering Neputa of Goshogawara from a special viewing area. The magnificent Neputa is over 20 meters tall, celebrating the local culture.

Kenichi Ito

HUMOUR

When a police car ran into a beer delivery truck, they cracked dozens of cases.

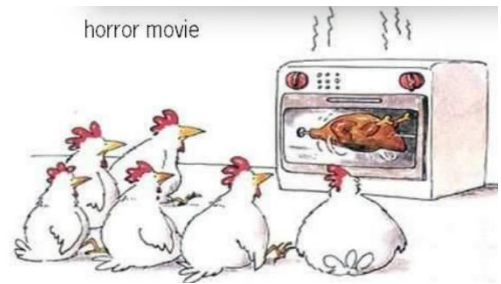
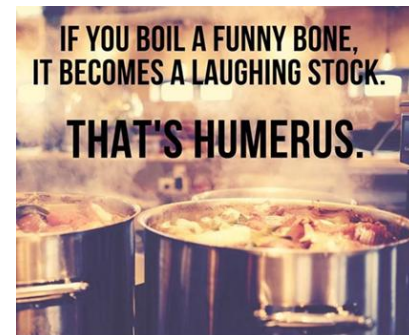
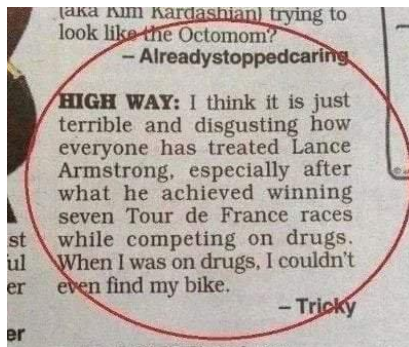
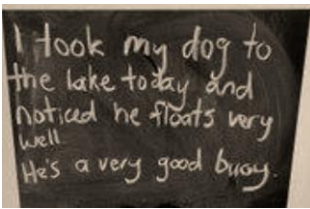
When I tell maternity puns, it is all about the delivery.

The guy who invented Lifesaver, made a mint.

The fellow who fell off the roof of the bar was definitely not a bouncer.

Fishermen live off their net income.

Repair men have been sent to fix the restroom which was out of odour.



I see people around my age mountain climbing, I feel good getting my leg through my underwear with out losing my balance

It's 6 months since I joined the gym and no progress. I'm going there in person tomorrow, to find out whats really going on...

My wife said: "That's the 4th time you've returned for dessert! Doesn't it embarrass you?" I said: "No, I keep telling them it's for you."

When I was in elementary school, we learned about a shape called a rhombus and that was the last time I ever heard about that shape.

I met my wife at a singles night. I was surprised because I thought she was at home with the kids.

Yesterday I bought a world map, gave my wife a dart, and said, "Throw this and wherever it lands, I will take you on vacation." We're spending 3 weeks behind the fridge.