



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association No. 18 Sept 2011

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Since the publication of the last newsletter in May, several interesting activities have occurred. Janet and I attended the annual conference of the

College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) which took place at the University of Regina in May.

Message (cont'd)

Also in May, an open meeting of members of Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians (ARFL) and YURA was held with Provost Patrick Monihan to explore ways and means of enhancing the interaction and interconnection of retirees with the university.

Growing out of this meeting, a joint ARFL/YURA committee was established to develop an action plan in collaboration with Vice-President Monihan. Our delegates on this committee are Janet Rowe (co-president), Albert Tucker (past president) and Gwyn Buck (secretary). Their first meeting will be held this fall.

A wonderful trip to Prince Edward County, the initiative of Rosemarie Neilson with the assistance of Sam Lanfranco, took place in July. It was a jam-packed day and thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees.

A number of individuals have been nominated for positions on the YURA Executive. They include John Lennox who is nominated for the position of YURA co-president, replacing Sandra Pyke who will be moving into the role of past president. Also nominated are Clifford Jansen, Billie Mullick, Noli Swatman and Michele Young. In addition to these nominations by the Executive Committee and in accordance with the constitution, a general call for nominations will be directed to the membership at large in advance of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for October 28.

Other upcoming events include a trip to Stratford to see Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming* starring Brian Dennehy. And remember the annual Showcase on November 22; it's always a fun event.

Incidentally, we are looking for a volunteer to take on the coordination of theatre trips for 2012. As indicated in the next column, the current coordinator, Anne-Marie Ambert is moving on to another position within YURA.

In honour of the 25th anniversary of the association, a special luncheon/lecture event is planned. The topic to be explored is seniors' housing. Paula Freeman is coordinating this program initiative which is being planned and conducted with the partnership of the Retirement Planning Centre. This event is scheduled for October 7 with more details to follow. Please be sure and mark your calendars.

We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank Iryna Ostapchuk who has served as the YURA Newsletter editor since the September issue of 2008. This current issue marks the seventh that she has edited. Several innovations were implemented during Iryna's reign not the least of which was the introduction of colour photographs and a new masthead. The association is most appreciative of Iryna's contributions in keeping us well-informed. We would also like to welcome Iryna's replacement, Anne-Marie Ambert who has kindly volunteered to take on the editorship of the newsletter.

We have recently undertaken a major overhaul of the membership database. Hopefully the modifications will improve the accuracy and efficiency of the records and enhance communication with our members.

As always, thanks to all the volunteers who so generously contribute their time and energy in support of YURA. Also thanks to Catherine Federico and How Chee Un at the Retirement Planning Centre.

-Sandra Pyke & Janet Rowe

A Note from the Editor

As Sandra Pyke and Janet Rowe have noted in the previous article, I have been editor of the YURA newsletter for three years. It has been a very interesting and productive time for me. I have learned a great deal about YURA and its members.

Many of you have been very kind to me as well as giving of your time. Therefore I want to express my gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee, all the contributors to the newsletter and everyone who made my experience as editor such a positive one.

-Iryna Ostapchuk

Annual General Meeting

Date: October 28, 2011

Place: the Underground Restaurant in the Student Centre

YURA members are reminded that the AGM will be held on Friday October 28 at 1:15 p.m., preceded by a buffet luncheon. (Reservations are required for lunch.)

The lunch (served at noon) will be a hot and cold buffet including coffee/tea and dessert. Wine and beer will be available at the cash bar. The subsidized cost to members is \$15; guests and friends pay \$25.

Parking passes will be issued at the registration desk in the restaurant to those members who require them. The full agenda together with registration information for the luncheon will be mailed out separately.

We look forward to seeing you on October 28.

Welcome to New Members

YURA is pleased to extend a hearty welcome to 37 new members:

James Alexander, Paul Antze, Robert Bain, Maureen Boyce, Janis Boykach, Jane Crescenzi, John Davis, Leslie Greenberg, Stanley Jeffers, Marika Kemeny, Bonnie Kettel, Ed Lee-Ruff, Suzanne Legault, Cheryl Lemaitre, John Lennox, Jean Levy, Albert Lotito, Lawrence Lyons, Kathleen Macdonald, Esther Maciuk, Philippa Marchetti, Anne McGaughey, Tahir Mohammed, Bill Newell, Donald Pelletier, Rebecca Peterson, Steve Quan, Domenico Raimondo, Aileen Rakocevic, Elsie Ramkhelawan, Harriet Rosenberg, Ross Rudolph, Harvey Simmons,

New Members (cont'd)

Linda Smith, Karen Solomon, Josephine Stauffer, Mary-Jane Warner.

2011 YURA Showcase and Sale

Plans are already underway for the 12th Annual Showcase & Sale on November 22, 2011.

Once again we are asking for your help to make this year's event a great success. Are you considering downsizing to a smaller home? Do you have too many things in too small a space or gifts that you have received but never used?

Our **Attic Treasures** table will welcome your "like new" candlesticks, pictures, picture frames, pottery, china, fancy glasses, dishes, lamps, linens, and knick-knacks from estate quality to hand-me-downs.

Our **Jewellery** table will welcome your collection of baubles, bangles and beads along with trinket boxes, jewellery boxes and hair ornaments.

Our **Toy Box Corner** will welcome your "gently used" games, unopened puzzles, stuffed animals, toys and children's books.

Would you like to be involved in making Showcase a success?

We need vendors with handicrafts and other interesting items for sale. You can rent a table for only \$20. As always we appreciate your delicious donations to the **Bake Table**.



You are encouraged to dust off your oven mitts and get out your treasured recipes. All offerings of home-baked recipes. All offerings of home-baked pies, pastries, cookies, cakes, squares, muffins and preserves are very welcome. Be sure to include your name and the list of ingredients with your creation (required by York Food Services Office). Please note that items requiring refrigeration (whipped cream and cheesecakes, for example) and those containing raw eggs, meats and sausages **cannot be included** in the sale, in keeping with the guidelines for bake sales held on campus. Kindly bring all contributions of baked goods to the YURA Office on the morning of the sale.



All other items can be brought to the YURA Office from Monday, November 14 to Monday, November 21 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Helpers are needed to sort and price attic treasure donations prior to Showcase and to work at the tables on the day of the Sale. Any questions, contact me at: cartmim@yorku.ca or (905) 727-3337.

YURA thanks you for your support.

-Marilyn Cartmill

CURAC Conference 2011

The 2011 CURAC Conference was held at the University of Regina in May; Janet Rowe and I attended as YURA representatives. The theme of the conference was “Keeping Up”.

The conference opened with welcoming remarks from Vianne Timmons the president of the university, John Meyer, the president of CURAC and Linda Havershock, president of Tourism Saskatchewan. Bobbie Lubker, the president of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROE), the American counterpart of CURAC, was also in attendance. The CURAC banquet featured Senator Pamela Wallin who was presented with the Distinguished Canadian Award.

A fascinating, research-based presentation was given by Max Cynader on the aging brain. His advice for maintaining a healthy brain: sleep well, exercise, avoid stress, eat less, and be happy. These factors will enhance the operation of the hippocampus through improved cognitive functioning.

Another outstanding address was given by Shadia Drury, a professor of political science at the University, on threats to democracy. Drury argued that Canada now has a neo-conservative party – a party no longer moderate or progressive, a party with an anti-democratic streak. Pillars of the new conservatism are religion, family values, nationalism and economic growth.

Interesting presentations were provided by the president and former president of the First Nations University (FNU). This session was held in the beautiful new building housing the university which opened in 2003. Former president Eber Hampton articulated some of the differences between FNU and more traditional universities, in particular, the involvement of elders.

In response to the question of how you became an elder, Hampton replied that it happened when the community started treating you as one. Adopting the storytelling tradition Shauneen Pete, in a highly entertaining style, described her own background and the challenges facing her as the current president of FNU.

Ryan Maili (University of Saskatchewan) and Greg Marchildon (University of Regina) collaborated in a very informative session on “Saving Medicare”. Data was presented illustrating that publically funded medicare is cheaper, more efficient and of better quality than privately funded systems. Access, quality and costs are not improved in for-profit models. Then Greg Marchildon outlined three options in terms of where we go from here.

CURAC (cont'd)

Interested readers are referred to the CURAC website – www.curac.ca – for more detailed information on the conference.

-Sandra Pyke

YURA: A Brief History

YURA came into being in 1986, largely through the initiative of William (Bill) Small who at the time was Vice President, Administration. With experience as a senior administrator going back to the founding of York University in the early 1960s, Bill Small was a prominent figure in the central management of the university.

He played an active role in the formation of the York University pension plan during the early eighties, opposing the idea of separate plans for faculty and staff and giving strong support to the comprehensive scheme that eventually included most, though not all, retired members of the university.

Questions then followed: How were the interests of retirees to be expressed and defended and how would retirees be able to continue their relationship with the university? These questions led to the formation of YURA with representation on both the All University Committee on Pensions (AUCP), composed of members from the various collective bargaining units of the university, and the Pension Board of Trustees (PboT) which reports directly to the Board of Governors.

With this solid base of interest, YURA has steadily grown to a membership of 500, managed by an executive committee of 12 to 14 members whose positions are confirmed or elected at the annual general meeting held in the fall. Since 2005 the executive of YURA has been chaired by two co-presidents, one of whom has been a retired member of the staff and the other from the faculty.

From its beginning in the 1980s the executive has met six times a year to initiate or direct initiatives such as reports on pensions and benefits; the arrangement of theatre trips, gourmet dinners at selected restaurants and walks; the raising of funds for student bursaries; the organization of the AGM and to promote social communication among members. Through the annual Showcase (usually held in the university's Central Square), YURA has also supported the interests and hobbies of staff retirees.

Over the years YURA has also developed a congenial and informal relationship with the Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians (ARFL) which was formed in the early 1990s as an associate of the York University Faculty Association. In 2009 as participants in recognizing the 50th anniversary of York's founding, the two associations, YURA and ARFL, collaborated closely in a project entitled: Reflections, Recollections & Reminiscences. This led to a substantial contribution of essays and materials, submitted by a wide spectrum of the membership. This collection was then presented as a special donation to the York University Archives.

An Outing to Prince Edward County

When in 2001 a number of Canadian universities first broached the idea of a national organization of university retirees, YURA was represented on the steering committee which led to the creation of CURAC. In 2010 YURA together with ARFL hosted the annual CURAC conference at York.

Altogether YURA over the past quarter century has become an effective and welcoming organization for those retired York employees who wish to retain some degree of association with the university community.

-Albert Tucker

New Minister of State For Seniors

The Honorable Alice Wong is the new Minister of State for Seniors. Among the issues facing the minister are pension reform, caregiver support, eliminating poverty among pensioners (which is addressed only in part by the guaranteed income supplement), elimination of mandatory retirement and dealing with elder abuse. The Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) extends a welcome to Alice Wong. On its website, CARP provides a briefing on its position on the above issues.

-Sandra Pyke



The Gourmet Club's full-day visit to Prince Edward County led to a happy and educational trip. Professor Sam Lanfranco (York Economics) joined the full busload at the start of the trip, and provided us with fascinating history and insight into the changes in the county.

Far back, it was an Indian settlement and later became a home for the United Empire Loyalists. In the last several years it has gone from a sleepy farming community to a vibrant, constantly changing landscape encompassing a variety of wineries, galleries, restaurants, craft shops, cheese factories, bed and breakfasts and many other interesting spots. Visitors can find their own personal favourites such as the Sandbanks Provincial Park.

The county is a community endowed with beautiful homes and engaging scenery including sailboats on Lake Ontario. However, what makes the county distinctive is its mix of assets - natural, archeological and historical with wonderful heritage buildings.

An Outing (cont'd)

It is an island community with approximately 800 kilometers of shoreline and a history of water transportation back to its early days. In springtime it is also a haven for migrating birds. Economic wealth has increased, and is still increasing as new entrepreneurs and new money move in. The county is also home to several York professors and their families.

The trip had our members laughing at their answers to the games played on the bus, absorbing the information given to us by Sam and also enjoying the scenery that we passed on the highway and within this historic area. Visits to Picton and Bloomfield gave us time for lunch, some shopping, eating ice cream, looking at the architecture and visiting the Huff Winery, the Oeno Gallery and the Mariners Park Museum (with another lecture by Sam). There was the chance to visit two cheese factories and a private farm and enjoy some wine from the region.

The final stop was at the Waring House for a dinner which was enjoyed by all the participants. We arrived back at York, tired and happy, full of facts and figures (and maps and brochures) a little late but very content. Organized trips outside of Toronto provide members with opportunities that some might not have on their own.



Thanks to all those who participated and special thanks to Professor Lanfranco for a very informative lecture on Prince Edward County.

-Rosemarie Nielsen

Of Interest

York Professor Emeritus, John Warkentin, a long time member and supporter of YURA, was given an honorary doctorate at the June Convocation. As reported in *YFile*, this distinction was “in recognition of his leading international reputation as a historical geographer and his efforts to raise the profile of Canadian history, as well as for his contributions to the University as an outstanding teacher and colleague.” In his convocation address, he highlighted the threats to the environment created by his generation and the need for creative and effective solutions.

Also reported in the July issue of *YFile* was the work of Professor Anne-Marie Ambert, another member of YURA and the instigator of the Person-to-Person project. Dr. Ambert is one of Canada's experts on divorce and its consequences.

-Sandra Pyke

In Memoriam

The Department of Human Resources has received word of the passing of the following York retirees:

Bong-Sung Ahn, April 19, 2011
James Alexander, June 26, 2011
Helen Annis, January 27, 2011
Gloria Atkins, November 12, 2010
John Becker, September 22, 2010
Dorothy Bevan, September 6, 2010
Frank Burrows, February 22, 2011
John O. Carter, August 27, 2011
Michael Collie, July 21, 2011
Diego Culmone, August 2, 2011
Douglas Davidson, April 3, 2011
Lois Douglas, May 11, 2011
Janis Ezergailis, August 8, 2011
Francis Ronald Fernandez,
December 17, 2010
Branko Franolic, January 11, 2011
Leon Gonzales, March 1, 2011
Stephen Griew, October 2, 2010
Kimmo Inananen, August 3, 2011
Karel Hruska, November 14, 2010
Penny Jolliffe, April 5, 2011
John Katz, November 26, 2010
Ursula Kruger, May 8, 2011
Peter Morris, February 2, 2011
Ethel Nicoll, March 18, 2011
Ruth Rashkis, April 19, 2011

Alan Smith, October 7, 2010
Valerie Smith, October 7, 2010
Ruth Stoddart, October 18, 2010
Richard Storr, March 17, 2011
Gordon Wisdom, December 12, 2010

John Adams Becker July 18, 1932 – September 22, 2010

John Becker died one year ago after nearly 45 years during which York was an important part of his life.

John came to York in 1965, and initially worked in executive support roles for the founding dean of Atkinson College and in the office of York's founding president, Murray G. Ross. From 1969 to 1984 he was Assistant Vice President Student Relations, working closely with college masters, as well as deans and associate deans, on the delivery of student services and both co-curricular and extracurricular student programming. He also oversaw student government, counseling, convocations, and matters of student conduct and dispute resolution. From 1984 until his retirement in 1989, John was Assistant Vice-President Business Operations.

"From my vantage point, John was the heart and soul of York throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. He was the source of information to students, staff and faculty, and the facilitator of many solutions," said Steve Dranitsaris, senior executive officer in the Office of the Vice President Finance and Administration, in a tribute following John's death.

John Adams Becker (cont'd)

John Becker had a commitment to volunteering and making a difference, which found expression in his life at the university, and nowhere more than in McLaughlin College, where past master Ian Greene described him as “a living legend.” John was McLaughlin’s first Senior Tutor in the late 1960s and later served as Residence Tutor in the early 1980s. Ian Greene also recalled John’s involvement in the College’s Robbie Burns Nights, and his “invaluable advice” and “infectious enthusiasm” at the time of McLaughlin’s fortieth anniversary celebrations in 2008.

After retirement from York, John continued to work in the family firm, Becker Associates. He undertook genealogical research, wrote and published a family history, and became active in the Ontario Genealogical Society, serving as volunteer editor of its journal, *Family History*. He also took up watercolour painting. He continued as an active Fellow of McLaughlin College to the end of his life.

An active member of YURA, John was on the Executive Committee for a number of years. He and his wife, Gwenne, often joined fellow retirees on theatre trips to the Shakespeare and Shaw festivals. As YURA’s membership grew, John saw the need for mechanisms of communication. Together with Leona Fields, he wrote and produced a booklet explaining the administration of York’s pension fund for members of YURA.

In the year 2000, he created the YURA Newsletter, which he continued to write, edit, and typeset until 2005. To all of his activities, John brought his unfailing wit and good humour, which are warmly remembered by those who were fortunate to know him.

-Barbara Tryfos

Kim Innanen

Professor Emeritus and YURA member, Kim Innanen died on August 3 at the age of 74. Kim, the son of Finnish parents, was born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario and obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. After a brief stint at the University of Western Ontario (1963 to 1966), Kim joined the Department of Physics and Astronomy at York in 1966 and served as Dean of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science from 1986 to 1994. The Innanen family has strong connections to York as his wife Sandra worked as a research assistant for Ralph Nicholls and his brother Veikko and all three of his children are York graduates. Among many other contributions to our understanding of the behaviour of “Trojans” (asteroids or moons), Kim’s work in the area of planetary astronomy led to the discovery of an asteroid 1941HJ, which has been named after him: – Asteroid Innanen.

-Sandra Pyke

Wisdom according to Will Rogers*

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know 'why' I look this way.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it's such a nice change from being young.

One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been.

Being young is beautiful but being old is comfortable.

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today it's called golf.

Finally if you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you're old.

*These quotations were submitted to the newsletter by Sandra Pyke.

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Monday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
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The *YURA Newsletter* is published by the York University Retirees Association. Iryna Ostapchuk, editor.

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