



The newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association No. 21 Fall 2012

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

This comes with best wishes for the fall and in the hope that everyone has had a satisfying summer. The YURA office has been quiet, but we are gearing up for our two signature fall events: our Annual General Meeting on October 26; and “Showcase,” our traditional fund-raiser which will take place on November 21. We hope that you will make a point of participating in one or all of these events. They give us a chance to see

friends, catch up on YURA business, and help raise money for our two student bursaries: The William W. Small Award and the Mature Student Bursary.

For members of the YURA Executive and interested YURA members, there will be a one-day conference on October 15 of the *Ontario* members of CURAC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada). This

conference will be held at Ryerson University, Heaslip House, 7th floor, 297 Victoria Street, with registration from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. There will be presentations and discussions on topics of interest to YURA such as the Drummond Commission Report, co-residence, benefits, privileges, perks, and the relations with faculty and staff unions and associations. The registration form and programme have been circulated to you. You are most cordially invited to attend.

The Executive Committee met on June 12. In keeping with past practice and as an important continuing contribution to the University community, the Executive Committee unanimously approved a donation of \$1500 from YURA to the York Youth Connection in support of its important work. Another agenda item of interest to members is related to retirees' use of the York email service which was mentioned in the Spring newsletter. This matter is subject to further review with the result that action on the issue of a new domain for retirees has been deferred pending additional study. We will keep you posted.

YURA is sponsoring a presentation on Travel Insurance which will take place on Friday September 28 from 2-4 p.m. in the Harry Crowe Room in the Atkinson College Building. Two participants have been confirmed: Terisa Ducharme, Associate Director, Pension and Benefits, and Francine Dick who is an Estate Planning/Insurance Representative with Qtrade Insurance Solutions. This topic seems to be of special importance to YURA members and you are cordially invited to attend. If you plan to attend, please let us know at

yura@yorku.ca or call us at 416-736-2100 ext. 70664.

We send best wishes for a good fall and for your renewed participation in our various YURA activities. If you need to contact us about YURA-related subjects, please do so at the email address or phone number indicated at the end of the last paragraph. We will do our best to work for you and your concerns.

-Janet Rowe & John Lennox

Annual General Meeting

Date: Friday October 26, 2012
Location: The Underground
Restaurant in the Student Centre

YURA members are invited to attend our AGM to be held on Friday, October 26, at 1:15 p.m. It will be preceded by a buffet lunch to which you are welcome. (Reservations are required for the lunch. Please email yura@yorku.ca or phone (416) 736-2100, ext. 70664 and leave a voice mail message.)

The lunch (served at noon) will be a hot and cold buffet including coffee/tea and dessert. The food was excellent last year. 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 sent under separate cover.

We look forward to seeing you on October 26.

Introducing a New Feature

With this Newsletter, we introduce a new feature entitled, "*Life as it was then: Reminiscences.*" In each issue, we hope to have a YURA member volunteer to reminisce about his or her childhood and/or adolescence to tell us how it was to live back then.

We therefore invite YURA members who would be interested in participating to contact the Editor. As you see below, an option is to give an overview of one's young life up to early adulthood, as Ken has chosen to do. Another option is to focus on a particularly different, or difficult, or interesting, or happy segment of one's early life to explain to us how it was back then.

The "old days," whether good or bad, are long gone even though some of us, as children, saw the beginnings of things to come, such as television. People like to reminisce but, as time goes and we age, we are left with fewer and fewer members of our cohort whom we can do this with. Therefore, this feature will begin to bridge this gap in our lives and also let us know more about some of our colleagues in YURA. This feature is not intended to highlight careers...but is a celebration of young times past while we are still here to talk about those days. It is a good way to celebrate our members while they and us are still here...

-Anne-Marie Ambert

Life As It Was Then: Reminiscences

The author of our first reminiscences, Kenneth Thomson, is a former YURA president, from 1997-1999. When he officially retired from York in 1993, Ken had been the Executive Officer for the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences for 12 years.

"I was born in 1927 in the little country town of Penrith, Cumbria, on the edge of the English Lake District, and in this lovely area I and my two younger brothers Colin and Andrew and even younger (adopted) sister Christine were raised. Our parents were both from Edinburgh, so we really were a family of exiled Scots and escaped there frequently! Released from WWI trenches to complete his medical studies prior to further military service, my father had eventually settled in Penrith as the junior partner in a family doctor practice. The family medical tradition was strong – his father was Dr. John Thomson of Edinburgh Sick Kids, and my maternal grandfather and great-grandfather were also doctors (and my mother was a nurse!).

In the 1920's, Dad's senior partner still made his rounds by pony and trap, and the Practice employed a groom. (In those days doctors still visited their patients, in addition to having afternoon and evening office hours). Dad convinced his boss to buy a *motor car*, and the groom was instantly converted (not very successfully!) into a chauffeur. One of my later jobs was to ride with my father to open farm gates while he drove through, and close them afterwards.

Fortunately Colin showed keen interest in medicine which, sadly, I did not. (Andrew chose a Royal Navy career, and Chris – of course – became a nurse!)

In the barbaric British custom of the day, I was packed off to a boys' private boarding school at age 8, followed later by both brothers. Education and sports were very high quality. Based on muscular Christianity we were also trained for leadership as little empire-builders, with models like Scott of the Antarctic and Lawrence of Arabia, but sometimes it seemed a cruel form of prison. (At least, after this baptism, nothing in my later undistinguished army career could daunt me!).

World War II forced many changes. My mother, herself a wonderful leader, organized the billeting of the boys from Newcastle's Royal Grammar School, evacuated to Penrith in September 1939 to avoid the bombing. They lived with local families and shared the town's school facilities--initially we ourselves housed four RGS boys, eventually reduced to one. By 1940, Mum was convinced that the Nazis were coming so she brought all three of us home and we attended the local (Co-Ed!) Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. In the Britain of those days, this was something of a culture shock for us boys! (Chris later went to the girls' boarding school that our mother had attended).

As with medicine, engineering studies were exempted from call-up until graduation (or failure). At age 17, I enrolled at Heriot-Watt College, a very practical engineering school in Edinburgh affiliated to Edinburgh University – and now itself a university – to study electrical engineering for a

college diploma. My colleague Douglas and I decided, with our parents' agreement, to study further for a University of London external degree, but part way there the armed forces decided they needed both of us although WWII was long over, so Doug chose the RAF and I the Royal Engineers. Surprisingly, I enjoyed army life, and after boot camp, officer cadet training and the School of Military Engineering, I was commissioned and sent to Egypt where our small unit was involved in supplying drinking water, electricity, and further services to a number of other army units along the Suez Canal. Eventually, however, a civilian engineering career triumphed over the army for me, though I did spend 17 years in Britain's (part-time) Territorial Army, finishing as a major.

After our two years' absence, Douglas and I resumed our studies and both qualified. On the first weekend after our return to Edinburgh, however, another friend insisted I accompany him to a local dance. There I met a young lady who had been similarly importuned by her friend. We were married in 1952, and here we are, in Canada, 60 good years and two adult children later!"

-Ken Thomson

Welcome to New Members

YURA is pleased to extend a hearty welcome to the following new members:

Trudy Bodak, Shirley Brown, Karen Cassel, Danielle Cyr, Colin Deschamps, Marilyn DiFlorio, Robert Drummond, Leslie Fernando, Suzin Ferris, James Fisher, Bruna Gaspini, Anita Helman,

Sandra Innanen, Dorina Jackson, Peter Landstreet, Elaine Newton, Philip Olin, Ronald Pearlman, Concetta Scalzullo, Martin Steinbach, Cathie Stone, Janet Webber, Mark Webber, Klaus Weiermair

If you are a new member and your name does not appear, please let us know.

In Memoriam

We have recently lost the following members of our community.

Allan Burgess, May 29, 2012
Isle Fulton, July 7, 2012
Nancy Hall, May 5, 2012
Alexander McKay, July 5, 2012
Gerald Jordan, August 15, 2012

YURA's 13th Annual Showcase and Sale

Wednesday, November 21st, 2012 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Located in Central Square in the corridor just outside the YURA office

Are you a Baker or Canner?

Turn your skills into support for a York student

All **BAKE TABLE** proceeds will also be donated to the YURA Mature Student Bursary



Your offerings of home-baked pies, pastries, cookies, cakes, squares, muffins and preserves, are very welcome. Please no raw eggs, raw dairy or meat can be accepted according to York regulations governing bake sales.

Do you have too many things in too small a space or, gifts you received but have never used?

Turn your “stuff” into support for a York Student

All **ATTIC TREASURES** proceeds will be donated to the YURA Mature Student Bursary



Our **ATTIC TREASURES** table welcomes any small light-weight item in re-giftable condition. Keep in mind that

the majority of our customers are York students. We welcome jewellery, trinkets, jewellery boxes, pictures, picture frames, pottery, china, candle sticks, lamps, linens, knick knacks and antiques. We also welcome toys in good condition including dolls, stuffed animals, games, unopened puzzles, books in good condition for children and adults.

We are accepting donations for the Attic Treasurer table on Monday November 19 and Tuesday November 20. If you have a donation and have a problem getting to the campus contact the YURA office at 416-736-2100 extension 70664

CALL for EXHIBITORS and VENDORS

Do you have a Hobby you would like to Showcase and Sell?

We invite all YURA members with an interesting and/or unusual retirement hobby to participate in our annual pre-Christmas event as exhibitors and/or as vendors. Past participants have offered for sale their art and photography, wood carving, candles, jewellery, Christmas decor, hand knitted and sewn items for children and adults, teddy bears and Canadiana antiques. This year we have booked all the corridor window space from the Cafeteria entrance down past the YURA office and around the corner as well as the Bear Pit area. A donation to YURA of \$20 will guarantee you a table. For further information, or to reserve a space, contact Noel Corbett at your early convenience (ncorbett@yorku.ca) or 905-833-6714

CALL for VOLUNTEERS to Enjoy SHOWCASE

Do you have a special musical talent and would like to help us enliven this event, we would be delighted to have you join our team.

Join in on the fun. We need helpers for the Bake Table and Attic Treasurers Table on the day of the Sale as well as members to sort and price Attic Treasure donations prior to Showcase. Any questions, contact Marilyn Cartmill at cartmim@yorku.ca or (905) 727-3337.

YURA Thanks You For Your support.

CURAC Conference 2012

The 10th annual conference and general meeting of the **College and University Retiree Association of Canada** took place at the University of Victoria from April 18-20. There were attendees from St. John's to, need we say, Victoria. Two American colleagues from the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education attended and took part in the programme. York was represented by YURA co-presidents Janet Rowe and John Lennox. Past-president Sandra Pyke attended in her role as vice-president of CURAC and moderated a panel. Al Stauffer was the representative for ARFL (Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians at York). There were sessions of wide interest covering a range of topics, among them best practices that were discussed with respect to retiree involvement in various university activities such as institutional anniversary celebrations, lecture series,

and other aspects of service to the institution. We heard how best practices are also pertinent to the impact of demographics on successful association practices.

The programme included presentations on the value of regional retiree associations, of the enhanced use of electronic media to communicate with our members, on seniors' living arrangements, and on health, wellness and fitness. Janet Rowe took part in a discussion of pension plan governance and provided an experienced perspective on the need for education, information, balance, and mutual respect in order to ensure the effectiveness of the governance function.

Health and wellness were also the subject of the final session that focused on the pending revision to the Canada Health Act and the possibility of preparing a CURAC position paper. Neena Chappell, Canadian Research Chair in Social Gerontology, made a compelling case for the need for a health care system that balances home and community care with medical care. She emphasized that such a balance will succeed only through an integrated health system that will require tremendous political will and grass-roots support. The final word went to Jack Boan who at the age of ninety-four minced no words in favour of his resounding defense of medicare which he characterized as a public good and a right of citizenship rather than a market-based commodity. He provided a memorable and energetic conclusion to an interesting and successful conference.

-John Lennox

Quotes by Famous Women

I have yet to hear a man ask for advice on how to combine marriage and a career.

-Gloria Steinem

I am a marvelous housekeeper. Every time I leave a man, I keep his house.

-Zsa Zsa Gabor

Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission.

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Old age ain't no place for sissies.

-Bette Davis

In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman.

-Margaret Thatcher

I'm not going to vacuum 'til Sears makes one you can ride on.

-Roseanne Barr

When women are depressed they either eat or go shopping. Men invade another country.

-Elayne Booster

Inside every older lady is a younger lady—wondering what the hell happened.

-Cora Harvey Armstrong

If you can't be a good example—then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.

-Catherine (rest of the name was absent)

Source: unknown (online)

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YURA Executive

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YURA Office Hours

Monday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The *YURA Newsletter* is published by the York University Retirees Association. Anne-Marie Ambert, Editor

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