



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association

Spring 2013

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

There is not a great deal to report since our Winter newsletter of January. Office business has been ticking over as expected during this rather quiet time of year. The ticket sales for our trip to Stratford to see *Fiddler on the Roof* have been good and there are still a few places

available at this time of writing. Reminder notices have been sent out and we're looking forward to a good day. We also want to thank new Executive Committee member Jean Levy for agreeing to take over this activity.

Three members of the Executive Committee (Gwyn Buck, Michele Young, and John Lennox) had a very productive meeting with Provost and Vice-President Academic Rhonda Lenton and Barry Miller on February 21. The subject of the meeting was the Memorandum of Understanding between YURA and the University that was signed last October. Provost Lenton expressed support for the agreement and her desire to see it implemented. At the meeting, various ways of implementing the MOU were discussed and Rhonda Lenton was going to bring before the deans the topic of voluntary involvement of YURA members in the life of the university. The meeting was extremely positive and we look forward to meeting with her again since the MOU specifies three such meetings a year. We will keep you posted.

The annual meeting of CURAC (Colleges and Universities Retirees' Association of Canada) will be held in mid-June at Memorial University in Saint John's, Newfoundland. John Lennox will be attending as the YURA representative. York is fortunate to have Sandra Pyke on the CURAC Executive Committee in her role as vice-president. We will report in our fall newsletter on the meeting.

As always, we send best wishes. Please do contact us with your concerns and in cases where we might be of service to you at yura@yorku.ca

416-736-2100 ext. 70664
Room 101 Central Square

-John Lennox & Janet Row

Lee Lorch Honoured



The CAUT's 2012 Distinguished Academic Award was presented to Lee Lorch, in Toronto. Lee, who has reached the venerable age of 96, is a long-time YURA member and professor emeritus. He is the seventh recipient of CAUT's award, which was established as a way to honor individuals for extraordinary research contributions, sustained excellence in teaching and leadership in service to their institution and community.

Over a fifty-year career, Lee held academic positions at City College New York, Penn State, Fisk University and Philander Smith College. In 1959, he joined the faculty at the University of Alberta where he helped initiate its graduate program in mathematics. He moved to York University in 1968.

Lee has long been known as an advocate for human rights and social justice. His civil rights activity during the 1940s and 1950s while in the U.S. cost him successive academic appointments before his self-exile to Canada. Besides campaigning for civil rights, he was also a champion of political and academic freedoms.

A fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and elected member of the Councils of American and Canadian Mathematical societies, Lee is the author of more than 80 articles in mathematics. His published work has appeared in such leading journals as

Acta Mathematica. He was a very influential teacher and, as James Turk, CAUT's executive director said, "He is an extraordinarily gifted teacher and researcher, and a man of unwavering principles with a sense of mission."

Editor's Note

We are publishing four issues in 2013 instead of two: This may be a temporary experiment depending on the material we have at our disposal.

I would very much appreciate hearing from YURA women who were faculty members or librarians and would be interested in sharing something of their early lives for the *Reminiscences* below. I have volunteers from all other YURA groups but not women faculty.

-Anne-Marie Ambert

Life As It Was Then: Reminiscences

The author of our third reminiscences is Albert Tucker who, when he retired from York, was teaching history both at Glendon and at the Keele campus. He also was President and then Co-President of YURA for several years until 2007. He has entitled his reminiscences "Remembering Streets and Fields."

I am not sure I knew it at the time, but looking back and reflecting, so much happened between the ages of 12 and 20 that those years seem now like a distinct time with boundaries that make them a stage of life – one which would influence other stages that followed. At the heart of my memory is both a

distinction and a fusion between the rural and urban experience.

I grew up in the east end of Toronto, in one of the many neighbourhoods that developed there after completion of the Prince Edward viaduct in 1919. Most of those who settled there were English working-class immigrants, many of whom were unskilled; but even with low-paying jobs they could buy a small plot on one of the new unpaved streets and, in stages, as they earned enough to buy materials, gradually build their own homes.

The rooms were small and the furnishings sparse, but by the 1920s natural gas and water flowed in underground pipes, and most houses by then had complete indoor bathrooms. Overhead wiring along main streets like the Danforth made it possible not only to extend the street-car system eastward from Bloor Street, but to provide lighting for streets generally and for the plain interiors.

Most aspects of life were semi-rural. Behind the houses across the street was an immense field where boys could play at cowboys and Indians; at the end of the street was a sand-lot where we could improvise a baseball game; and a few blocks north was the ravine of the Don River, on which we could play hockey in winter, or along which we could hike or just wander in summer.

There was no supervision or planning by community authorities, very little of organized sports or recreation, and trips downtown happened only once or twice a year. The neighbourhood gave us a self-contained social life that seemed as rural as it was urban. Even the two-kilometre walk to East York Collegiate

passed by fields that only recently had been cash-crop farms.

For me, between the ages of 12 and 16, this division between city and country was enhanced by spending my summers on a large mixed farm in southwestern Ontario, where I learned very different lessons from those of the school-room. There was no electricity, no indoor plumbing, and no budget yet for the new phenomena of tractors and pick-up trucks. The cutting and reaping and hauling of crops were all still done by teams of Clydesdale and Percheron horses.

By the time I was sixteen I had learned how to drive teams of those horses, how to pile and shape a full wagon-load of hay, how to stook wheat and oats with a fork, how to direct the blower on a threshing machine powered by a wood-burning steam engine in the middle of the field, how to form a large, rounded stack of straw that would provide bedding through the winter for the milking cows, the horses in the stable and the pigs and sheep. They were all challenges that led to growing confidence in an adolescent mind.

But the farm was also isolating. There was little time or opportunity to make friends or mingle with neighbours. The streets of east Toronto, by contrast, instilled a sense of sharing with others. In nearby houses lived widows and children who had lost their husbands and fathers in the trenches of Flanders; or children with a father who had survived a gas attack and would never work again. We all knew that such households survived on small monthly pensions and we shared that knowledge as part of the

social attitude towards income, spending and a sense of equality.

So - rural and urban were for me a rich amalgam that stays in my memory, where recurring scenes make me reflect on how or if my early life might affect the thoughts and emotions of later years.

-Albert Tucker

In Memoriam

Although we will publish the list of those colleagues who have passed on this year only in the Winter 2014 *Newsletter*, we wish to note that Lucie Cantrell, whom many of you may have known as she was a long time member of YURA (CPM) and once a member of the Executive Committee, passed away on February 20 in Nelson, B.C.

Co-Housing Seminar

A small but enthusiastic group of ARFL and YURA members turned out on February 1 to learn more about co-housing for seniors. Our guest, Walter Schenkel, described what is meant by that term. Basically, it is a community (in this case of seniors) living in a condo-like development with extensive shared facilities and a varied program of activities open to all residents. In the ensuing discussion, it was obvious that attendees had a variety of ideas about preferred types of housing for seniors. While the standard idea of co-housing was attractive to some, it requires at least three years to plan and build such a community. In order to speed up the process, there was support for the idea of buying an existing development and renovating it to suit our needs. Another idea was living together

in accommodation (e.g. a large house) where each resident had their own bedroom but shared common facilities such as the kitchen and lounge. Still others talked about moving into standard rental apartments but engaging in activities and mutual support as a small group.

After two hours of lively discussion, it was agreed we should meet again with the idea of forming working groups to look into these various options. If you would like to join us, please send an email to stauffer@yorku.ca and we will put you on the email list for further notices of our activities.

-Al Stauffer

YURA: Past Presidents

A year ago, in this *Newsletter*, Albert Tucker presented a brief history of YURA. To pursue this topic, please find below a list of past presidents as researched by Sandra Pyke who diligently “beavered at” this task for quite a while. We thank her.

C. David Fowle, 1987
Yvonne Aziz, 1988
Michael Boyer, 1989
Joyce Aspinall, 1990-1991
J. Ward, 1992-1993
Jean Burnett, 1993-1994
Michael London, 1994-1995
Virginia Rock, 1996-1997
Ken Thomson, 1998-1999
Albert Tucker, 2000-2004
Albert Tucker & Nancy Accinelli, 2005-2007
Sandra Pyke & Nancy Accinelli, 2007-2009

Sandra Pyke & Janet Rowe, 2009-2011

John Lennox & Janet Rowe, 2011-current

Good Reads

If you are interested in a whistle-blowing type of expose, Bruce Livesey’s *Thieves of Bay Street* is an excellent book. It’s subtitle is “How banks, brokerages, and the wealthy steal billions from Canadians.” The subtitle says it all. It can be found in the TO Public Libraries. The author lives in Toronto, by the way.

Much lighter fare, albeit longer, is Bob Spitz’s 2012 biography of **Julia Child** entitled, *Dearie*, which can also be obtained via the Toronto Public Libraries. It’s a truly fun book to read. Julia was so full of life. It also teaches a lot about food and cooking. It’s interesting from yet another perspective: She and her husband lived in so many different countries. And she had a great sense of humour. All 534 of its pages are worth reading!

The following book is suggested by Ulla Purdy: *Just a larger family: Letters of Marie Williamson*. 2011. Marie’s daughter Mary is a YURA member. Ulla comments: “In 1940 Marie and John Williamson (Mary’s parents) welcomed two English brothers to join them in Canada with their two children (Mary and her brother) in order for the boys to be away from London in wartime. Marie wrote over 150 letters to the boys’ mother, Margaret Sharp, over the next five years to make Margaret feel she was still with her children. I see the book as a snapshot of a time (WW II) and place (North Toronto) and a certain socio-economic segment of the

population. Mary and Tom Sharp, one of the evacuated boys, have edited those letters. It is available in Scott Library.”

The next book is suggested by its author, A. Saber M. Saleuddin, and is entitled, Clams and Snails: A Memoir “The book covers my personal and professional life experiences from the time I was 15 to 45 years old. I grew up in a family of 12 children in the Bangladeshi culture and sought a university education in Bangladesh and Reading, England in order to become a university Professor, then pursued my academic career in North America. My personal experiences with issues such as culture, language, race, religion are recounted throughout the book as I grew from a teenager to a university student, to a doctoral candidate in England, post-doctoral fellow at the University of Alberta, then instructor at Duke University and finally a full professor at York University. The time frame of my book covers the years when East Pakistan struggled to become the independent country of Bangladesh and I describe the personal impact the struggle had on my family. An e version is available via Google.”

YURA SHOWCASE & SALE

The yearly showcase and sale will take place **November 20th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** in the Central Square corridor from the Cafeteria to the East Bear Pit plus the surrounding area. If you are a Crafter and interested in displaying/selling your hobby items, we would love to hear from you.

This year all display tables will be located at the corridor level. We are also looking for volunteers to help organize

this annual event. If you are interested in getting together with former colleagues or have any questions please contact Noel Corbett [ncorbett@yorku.ca], Marilyn Cartmill [cartmim@yorku.ca] or the YURA Office [416 736-3100 ext 7-664].

Home Energy Contracts

I noticed something on the web page of the *Toronto Star* (November 2012) about home energy contracts. In general to get out of a home energy contract normally involves financial penalties. The information in *The Star* implied that seniors over 65 could automatically negate an unfavourable contract without penalty.

After investigating with the Ontario Energy Board I learned that there has always been the possibility, as a courtesy only, for those perhaps unable to meet their obligations to negotiate some sort of arrangement. But there definitely are no special arrangements in place for seniors. You can certainly plead your case but each situation will be looked at (if at all) from the perspective of age (unspecified), health (unspecified) and income (unspecified), and only if your energy supplier is inclined to do so.

I hate seeing people misled, but clearly some media don't mind publishing false information. I asked *The Star* to retract the information but they declined.

-Clive Holloway

Sayings and Fun (from Newfoundland)

Them that get their asses burned have to sit on their blisters (*Be prepared for consequences*)

Feeding the gulls (*Vomitting from seasickness*)

Done up like a stick of gum (*Spiffy-looking*)



He was the goalie for the dart team (*He had a bad complexion*)

A liar wants a good memory (*When one tells lies one has to remember every lie so as not to get caught*)

All mops and brooms (*Unkempt hair*)



Don't get your pee hot (*Calm down*)

Long may your big jib draw (*Good luck. The jib sail is at the front of the ship and is not used when winds are unfavourable. When this sail draws—is filled with—wind makes for a speedier journey.*)



Source: Ron Young's Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador.

(photos: Anne-Marie)

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

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

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