



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association

Summer 2013

No. 24

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

The health of our association is indicated by the fact that our editor, Anna-Marie Ambert, has enough material for an additional number of the newsletter. Through her efforts, the newsletter and the monthly *Person-to-Person* keep open the lines of communication among our members and offer material of informational and practical interest. We want to thank her for her work throughout the year. Readers' comments about both publications indicate the extent to which they are appreciated.

We have had a good spring, the most recent manifestation of which was the very successful trip to Stratford on May 10 to attend the matinee performance of *The Fiddler on the Roof*. It was a high-spirited performance which did justice to the drama, the music, and the spirit of the play – at once satisfying and unsettling. We were a group of about 35 and the congeniality of the day was constant. Currently, there is a late spring/early summer outing planned to Port Perry for June 25 and word has gone out on the YURA listserve. If you would like to take part, contact Rosemarie Nielsen at rnielsen@yorku.ca or at 416-633-1726 – the sooner, the better.

We have already experienced positive activity generated by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by YURA and President Shoukri last October. As a result of Provost Rhonda Lenton's discussion of the MOU with the deans, YURA was approached by Dean Barbara Crow of the Faculty of Graduate Studies for faculty retirees to take part in their "Scholarly Communications

Series," a morning workshop on Developing Conference Presentation Skills that was held on April 23. Joy Cohnstaedt and Cliff Jansen are to be thanked for taking part. David Rennie had also agreed to do so, but his unexpected death intervened. Both Professors Cohnstaedt and Jansen filed positive reports of their experience and Dean Crowe has contacted us to say that the Faculty of Graduate Studies intends to make this series a regular part of their academic year and that they look forward to YURA's continued participation. In the spirit of the MOU, we have also been pro-active in seeking opportunities for YURA volunteer involvement (both academic and non-academic), where appropriate and useful, in other activities of the university. We will report further to you about the results of our inquiries.

Over the summer, you will be receiving information about nominations for members of the Executive Committee for 2013-2015. This is the governing body of our association and we invite your interest in ensuring and continuing our tradition of a strong and collegial team.

This is the time to thank those who make our work possible: Catherine Federico and How Chee Unh of the Retirement Planning Centre whose help and interest are critical to the association; Steve Dranitisaris for the provision of parking vouchers that are of such help to our members; and those volunteers who are not members of the Executive Committee, in particular Rosemarie Nielsen and Pearl Darlington.

This comes with best wishes for a sunny and happy summer. We look forward to seeing you in the Fall.

--John Lennox & Janet Rowe

Life As It Was Then: Reminiscences

The author of our fourth reminiscences is Pearl Darlington. Before her retirement, she was secretary for twenty-five years to various professors, three deans and the Graduate Programme--all at Osgoode Hall Law School. She has been volunteering for YURA for a number of years. She has entitled her reminiscences "Wartime Memories of Wales."

I was born in Cardiff, Wales, in 1935 and lived in the nearby seaside town of Barry. I was almost four years old when World War II began, and can remember details of life during the war years, some from actual memory but many because the stories were recounted so often. We were fortunate to live where we did – far from London which suffered such devastation in the blitz, and also from major industrial cities further north such as Coventry and Sheffield which the German bombers were later able to reach as aero-technology progressed. Cardiff suffered some bombing because it and Barry had large docks from which Welsh coal was exported around the world. Fortunately, the dock areas received little damage.

There was severe rationing of food and almost every other commodity. My sister and I didn't feel deprived or hungry – mother managed to produce a

tasty dinner each day from whatever was available. We saved our “sweet” coupons for weeks in order to buy a treat such as a chocolate bar or bag of candy! Stringent black-out regulations were in place, with air raid wardens patrolling the unlit streets at night, warning residents about the smallest chink of light showing from their windows which might assist in guiding enemy aircraft. Life went on pretty much as usual for most children in South Wales. Exceptions were those whose fathers or older brothers were in the armed forces. We accepted as the norm carrying a gas-mask constantly, participating in air-raid drills at school and being wakened night after night when the air-raid sirens sounded.

My father, an electrician with a national transportation company considered an essential service, was not “called up” but was in the Home Guard--a civilian army of volunteers who kept watch on Britain's coastline in case of a *Luftwaffe* invasion, and generally helped to keep everyone safe. During one air-raid my father was on duty, my mother, grandparents, baby sister and I were in our partially-underground garden shelter (government-issued to those who wanted or had room for one) when a terraced house seven doors up the street from ours was hit with a “stray” bomb. My father was first on the scene and found the two girls of the family in the back yard amid the rubble, still lying on their mattress, terrified but unhurt. The back of the house had collapsed. Their mother, whose bedroom was at the front, was screaming in fear for her daughters and my father called to her that they were safe. A miracle!

Skip a number of years...I attended grammar school (by entrance exam in those days) then secretarial college. I met my future fiance, Norman, and in 1955 he decided to emigrate to Canada with his father, who wanted to visit Canada and hopefully settle there. How I dreaded mention of Canada! Couldn't bear the thought of leaving my family and friends but made the tough decision to do so. Came here the following year with my future mother-in-law. No trouble finding employment in Toronto: I had three interviews in one day and was offered all three positions! Lived with my in-laws until marriage in 1958; stayed home until our third child attended kindergarten-- nine years. With trepidation, answered an ad for secretarial work at the young York U, an excellent step as it turned out. But I digress...

The bombed house story had a neat, unexpected conclusion about sixty years after the event. A number of years ago I joined Friends Reunited. One of the ladies my father had rescued, Sylvia, recognised details in my submission on that website and e-mailed me. Of course I remembered her and the story which had been told so often. She had lived in Australia for many years and told me her husband had been skeptical about her account of that fateful night. Before leaving Wales for Australia, she took him to meet my parents who confirmed it was true.

-Pearl Darlington

In Memoriam

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

Andrew Kemeny: November 23, 2012
Rose Elie: November 29, 2012
Maya Jenkins: January 3, 2013
Joseph Dornan: January 9, 2013
Shelagh Young: January 14, 2013
Michael Hough: January 25, 2013
Lucie Cantrell: February 20, 2013
Jamie Ferguson: February 28, 2013
Alexander McLeod: March 4, 2013
Gordon Gard: March 15, 2013
Florence Judt: March 22, 2013
David Rennie: April 17, 2013
Claude Tatilon: April 27, 2013

YURA 2013 Showcase and Bake Sale

Hello, YURA members, and welcome to our new members. We look forward if you can spend a few hours to be involved with our YURA 2013 Showcase and Bake Sale before the sale and/or on the day. It really is social and fun being with 'old' friends and the members coming in the door, smiling, to drop off their contributions at the YURA Office...with a gradual sea of donations around the floor of the Retirement Office reception area.

Already, the YURA Committee have laid some plans for the Showcase and Bake Sale to be held on [Wednesday, November 20th, 2013](#) from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All proceeds from Showcase are directed to two bursaries in support of mature students: The William Small Award and the YURA Mature Student

Bursary. The more donations we receive, we can target a higher cash return.

The Showcase

It's "Spring Cleaning time"! Check your dresser drawers full of jewellery in those gift boxes that have never seen the light of day. Then, run up to the attic, down to the basement, and search in your closets. You'll be surprised what you have stored away (toys, home decorative items, and china), all out of sentiment. We forget! Oh dear! Do we not? But, maybe, you have saved them for our Sale.

This isn't an ordinary rummage sale. We will welcome your donations of past treasures, gifts unused, small home decorative items, jewellery, toys, games and jigsaw puzzles that are in good shape. *Please do not* bring clothes, shoes, books or big items. Everything has to be displayed on the tables.

[Here is some idea of what we welcome for the tables:](#)

Attic Treasures: candlesticks, framed pictures, picture frames, pottery pieces, fine china, fancy glasses, dishes, small table lamps, also, new or washed and ironed linens.

Jewellery: bracelets, bangles, necklaces, pendants and rings, and ornamental hair combs. Also, donations of trinket and jewellery boxes, that would be sure to delight.

Toys and Games: Un-opened jigsaw puzzles, "gently used" boxed games, stuffed animals, toys and young children's books.

If this has all-inspired you to be involved, you'll find YURA'S telephone number on the back of the Newsletter cover. Please leave your name and telephone number along with a short

message. We will be delighted to return your call.

The Bake Table

Home baked pies, pastries, cookies, cakes, squares and muffins. Ah, mouth-watering, delicious, naughty and so yummy! Breakfast cookies and muffins for the healthy, hungry customers, and don't forget the favourite apple pies like mother baked, or better. You will find a recipe that will bond with you. That's the one! Do it, please. Find your baking spirit to join our baking enthusiasts. We cannot have too much to sell and it will be much appreciated.



IMPORTANT: Regarding certain ingredients, [please note that we cannot accept recipes requiring refrigeration](#), including whipped cream and cheese-cakes, for example, and those containing raw eggs, meats and sausages. We follow the guidelines for sale of baked goods on campus. It is also necessary to print your recipe on a small card for the table, as there may be those who *cannot eat* baked goods containing certain ingredients.

[Please bring your baked items to the YURA office on the morning of the YURA sale.](#) Thank you!

You can bring all other sale items to the YURA Office, 101 Central Square, on the following days: Friday November 15, Monday November 18 and Tuesday November 19 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Any questions, contact me at: sheilac@yorku.ca or 416-614-0628.

YURA members, thank you for your support.

-Sheila Creighton

Presentation on Aging Vision

On April 16, the Retirement Planning Centre sponsored a presentation by Dr. Martin Steinbach, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of the Department of Psychology, on the subject "Aging Vision."

Dr. Steinbach made it clear that he was speaking as a researcher and not as a clinician. He spoke first to the importance of being extremely careful about consulting sources on the internet because there is so much bogus information circulating within it. He emphasized the imperative of consulting authoritative sources and listed bona fide sites like those of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the U.K.'s Royal National Institute for the Blind, and the U.S. National Eye Institute.

Dr. Steinbach stated that, absent the presence of any kind of pathology, the eye ages naturally and undergoes the normal decline in vision that comes with age. After a basic lecture on the structure of the eye, Dr. Steinbach went on to talk about five pathologies: (i) age-related macular degeneration; (ii) cataract (the leading cause of blindness in the world); (iii) diabetic eye disease; (iv) glaucoma;

(v) dry eye. He addressed each of these conditions and talked about the various treatments for each. He also talked about other natural, benign conditions associated with aging vision that have been experienced by many of us: (i) "flashes" that occur when the vitreous "jelly" in the globe of the eye pulls away from the retina and (ii) "floaters" which are usually visible when one lies back and concentrates on the surface of the eye itself. However, he did warn that whenever either of these conditions is accompanied by a dark "curtain" at the periphery of your vision, then you may be very likely experiencing a detached retina. In such cases, medical attention must be sought immediately.

Dr. Steinbach concluded by briefly describing new, developing treatments for eye disease: (i) stem cell therapy and (ii) gene transfer. He underscored the importance and potential of these developments and of the ongoing clinical trials and treatments for vision problems.

The presentation offered a concise and fascinating overview of the field of aging vision as well as a command of the techniques of effective presentation.

-John Lennox

Editor's Note

[A photo of the group who went to the Stradford theatre will appear in the July/August PTP.](#)

Good Reads

For those who are interested in biographies, I recommend Shelley Emling's [Marie Curie and her daughters](#), published in 2012 by Palgrave Macmillan. This book covers Marie's life (her husband, Pierre Curie, had died accidentally in 1906), those of their daughters Irene Joliot Curie (and her husband, Frederic Joliot, as well as their children), and the less well-known Eve Labouisse-Curie. These men and women in the same family garnered at least five Nobel prizes and Marie was the first woman to obtain one and then two. Incredible life stories of courage, activism, scientific devotion and war—very interesting and contain some surprising information. The book can be found in the Toronto Public Library.

A lighter fare is Jeffrey Archer's 2011 novel entitled [Only time will tell](#), which is the first volume, probably of three, of another family across generations. This first story takes place in England from 1919 to the beginning of WWII. A very good novel with a lot of suspense. Also available in the TO Public Library.

-Anne-Marie Ambert

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

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