



**A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association**

**Fall 2013**

**No. 25**

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**Message from the YURA Co-Presidents**

With summer past and autumn upon us, we want to send best wishes for rewarding months ahead as we anticipate the pleasures of the fall season.

Since our last communication in the special summer newsletter, YURA members took part in an outing to Port

Perry on June 25. Thanks to the organizing expertise of Rosemarie Nielsen, members and friends enjoyed a marine excursion on Lake Scugog with lunch, a tour of Port Perry shops, and a trip to a local winery. The full day was by all accounts a great success.

The Fall trip to see *Lady Windermere's Fan* at the Shaw Festival on October 4<sup>th</sup> has a full complement of participants. The reviews of the play have been uniformly excellent – as was the case with Stratford's *Fiddler on the Roof* in May – and there is, therefore, the prospect of an excellent day. We are grateful to Jean Levy for her careful attention to the details of the trip as we were in the case of Stratford in May.

In his capacity as YURA representative, John Lennox attended the annual meeting of CURAC (Colleges and Universities Retirees' Association of Canada) in St. John's in June. Two other York retirees attended: Sandra Pyke in her role as vice-president and now president of CURAC (for which warm congratulations) and Al Stauffer as representative of ARFL (Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians at York). Sandra Pyke reports on the meeting in this newsletter.

In keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding between YURA and the University, we are seeking ways in which our membership can participate as volunteers in different events and initiatives at York. In concert with Elaine Wong, who is Assistant Registrar, we have circulated to the YURA listserv a call for volunteers to assist in the October Convocation. The Faculty of Graduate Studies has indicated its interest in continuing to make use of YURA volunteers as was the case in the spring. We are asking other parts of the university if they have occasions when YURA members could participate and assist in a volunteer capacity. When and as more opportunities arise, we will let you know.

The YURA **Annual General Meeting** will take place on **Friday October 25** in the Underground where we have met for this purpose over the past several years. **Lunch will be served at noon and the AGM will commence at 1:15 p.m.** This year, as a thank-you to our members, there will be no charge for lunch. As a fundraiser for our bursary and scholarship programmes, there will be a silent auction of various items before and during lunch. In the give-and-take of university life, we are emphasizing the "give" at our AGM. A notice of the meeting and lunch has been circulated, so please plan on attending.

Our membership renewal forms for 2013-14 were emailed or snail-mailed in August. Many of you have completed and returned yours. For that, many thanks. For those who have not yet returned your completed form and membership renewal fee, please do so at your earliest convenience. Your fee (which entitles you to complimentary parking vouchers if you request them) is our **only** source of revenue for the operation of this association. Baldly put, we need your money in order to function effectively as an organization. **So please renew as soon as possible.**

Keeping to the theme of revenue, please do mark Wednesday November 20 in your calendars. That is the day of our annual "Showcase" featuring a bake sale table, an "Attic Treasures" table, and items offered for sale by those vendors who take part in the day. All revenues generated by the Bake Sale and by the sale of "Attic Treasures" items are donated to the William Small Student Award and the YURA Mature Student Bursary, so the wider the support for this event, the greater the monetary return.

Information about “Showcase” was printed in the Summer newsletter and is also reiterated in this newsletter. We have a committee of YURA volunteers participating in this event under the capable direction of Marilyn Cartmill and Noel Corbett. Please come out in numbers in support of this annual YURA event. It’s the occasion when we are most visible on campus and when we are able to do the most good in support of mature students.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us with any of your concerns. Our message comes with best wishes to all and with the hope that the year ahead will provide opportunities to keep our association strong and make it stronger.

**-Janet Rowe & John Lennox**

## **YURA 2013 Showcase and Sale**

This is a friendly reminder that the Showcase and Bake Sale will be held on **Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**, 2013, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please bring your baked items to the YURA office on the morning of the sale. **All other sale items can be brought to the YURA office, at 101 Central Square, on Friday November 15, Monday November 18 and Tuesday November 19 between 9 a. m. and 4 p.m.**

## **Life as it was then: Reminiscences**

*The author of our fifth reminiscences is Cliff Jansen. Before his retirement, he was teaching in Sociology. Cliff is*

*currently on YURA’s Executive Committee.*

“I was born on the eve of the Second World War, in a place which couldn’t be much further from where the actual conflict was to take place. History decided that the conflict would become part of my daily concerns, as I became aware of the world around me. Cape Town, South Africa, was involved in the European conflict because of our ties to Britain. We were brought up to believe that Britain was our true ‘home.’ Cape Town’s major port, Simonstown, became one of Britain’s major refueling posts. We, locals, acted out our preparedness for an imminent attack. Sirens would go off at night as if we were to have an air raid, and everyone kept their homes in darkness, until the ‘all clear’ was given. White bread was rationed. We were exhorted to not ‘Speak about Ships or Shipping.’ It seemed to me that radio news would always be about the war in Europe. I remember asking my dad, ‘When the war ends, will there be no more news?’

I was born into a very poor family, but it took me some time to realize this fact, since we never went one day without a meal. In South Africa, the school year begins in January and ends in December. In total, primary and secondary school consisted of 12 years. I started school before I was 6 (as my birthday was in February), skipped a year and ended the equivalent of grade 12 when I was still 15. I went out to work as an office clerk until I was 21, bringing my weekly salary home.

When I was 6 my father contracted tuberculosis. He had to give up his job, was taken off to a far-away clinic, while

my sister and I were taken out of school and put in a convalescent home, while ours was fumigated. After a few weeks, we could return. But everything had changed. My mother went out to work. My father returned from the clinic, earned what he could at home, as he never went out to a job again. On December 13, 1949, at age 47, he died. My mother lived until age 96.

I don't know when it happened, but I remember being shocked when my sister confirmed that we were not Europeans. I had no idea why I thought we were, or why I thought it would be good to be one. The war ended in 1945. In 1948, South Africa got its first government that was not pro-British: The Afrikaner government was finally able to implement its policy of Apartheid. It was defined as 'Separate but Equal Development' and spelled out what each of the races meant and were allowed to do. Officially, we were not White, not Black, not Indian, but a residual race, called 'Cape Coloured.'

My life would have progressed along the lines that the apartheid government had destined for coloured males, had our family not, at a much earlier time, converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism. We had grown up in a Catholic school and parish. The Catholic Church was eager at the time to have coloured priests. Several of my friends had entered a seminary and were to be shipped off to Rome to study. They could not join the seminary in South Africa, as laws did not permit people of different races to live together. My parish priest eventually convinced me to join my friends in the seminary. On 21 September 1956, five of us left Cape Town. I had no idea how my life was to

change. I would not put my foot in South Africa again until 1991 (35 years later). After two years in Rome, I left the seminary. Meanwhile, my sister had become a nun, and was in Belgium. I joined her there, not knowing a word of French, not having a job, but somehow feeling freer than I had ever felt in my life. I entered university there, loved studying and eventually ended up a professor at York University in Canada.

Meanwhile, among my four colleagues, one is still living today and he is the retired Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town. He attended my 75th birthday in Cape Town, February 2010. I reminisced that I once stood a 1 in 5 chance of becoming an Archbishop instead of a Sociology professor! My mother died after living her last years in Canada. A few years later, going through her belongings, I found my primary school report cards. I noted that I never got more than 50% in any subject, except religion. The nuns had written on my report card 'This child is going nowhere in life!' "

**-Cliff Jansen**

## **Welcome to New Members**

YURA extends a hearty welcome to the following new members:

Diethard Bohme, Linda Briskin, Sheila Browne, Sara Costantini, Daisy Couto, Margaret Crowe, Marie Deparnay, Lynne Earls, Debbie Farrell, Suzanne Firth, Linda Gamble, Margaret Gibson, Gerry Ginsburg, Doba Goodman, Ian Greene, Deborah Groves, Elaine Gutmacher, Linda Hansen, Lewis Hertzman, Carol Irving, Renee Koeppen, Barbara Lowens, Grant Macdonald,

Angela Mattiucci, Donelda McLean, Vivienne Monty, Robert Naylor, Coleman Romalis, Saber Saleuddin, Anita Samardzic, Irmgard Steinisch, Anna Tesoro, Alain Vercollier, Anna Maria Visconti, Mary Elizabeth Watson, Richard Weisman, and Yuk Lee Wong

### **Life in BLACK AND WHITE in the South of the U.S.A.**

Fifty years ago, in 1963 in Montreal, I watched Martin Luther King give his speech, "*I have a dream.*" In the fall of 1967, at the age of 26, I started teaching at an all-black college in Augusta, GA. I was fresh out of Cornell U. and had applied to and had been accepted at both the white and the black colleges in Augusta where I spent only one year because I was simply joining my new husband, also a sociologist, who had to be an army officer for two years at the height of the Vietnam war.

We lived in an all-white area in the back apartment that an elderly couple was renting out to military couples. Our landlady approached me one day, very annoyed at my job and said that I was not American and therefore did not understand the situation "down here, and we hope that you will not bring any of these people to the house." Apart from this, the first incident happened in late October when I woke up one night to dancing lights in our window and then smelled fire. We ran outside to find a smallish KKK cross burning very close to the house in the backyard. We extinguished it with the garden hose and I don't know if any of the neighbours saw this commotion or, for that matter, had put it there. My husband was Texan and was far more shaken than I was—I

didn't quite understand the fearful ramifications of this situation.

At some point later, my car broke down in the parking lot of the college. I phoned our garage (white) and he said, "sure, we'll get it and tow it here, if needed." When I gave him the address, there was absolute silence at the other end, and then he hung up on me. A colleague phoned a black garage and then offered to drive me home. I gratefully accepted and asked him to drop me at a grocery store near my house. When my husband returned and I told him the story, he very ominously said, "Don't ever accept a ride from a black man alone in a white area here because he could get killed and something not too pleasant could happen to you." I couldn't believe what I was hearing but my husband seemed quite shaken up again.

The fourth incident occurred in January. The Dept of Sociology at the U of Georgia (Athens) invited sociology majors in the South to a day long info session. I talked to some of my students: Two males and four females were really excited about going and one of the two male students offered to drive us. My husband instructed me to sit in the back with the other women in case we were stopped by the highway patrol. During the entire trip, while we all babbled away, the two guys kept looking back anxiously for any sign of the police.

We arrived late by a few minutes. Followed by my six students, I opened the door of the meeting room where about 35 white Southern students were assembled with some profs. There was utter silence and astonishment in the room and people were staring gaping.

Finally, one of the profs stood up and welcomed us. He asked me to introduce my students and I was so shocked that I was completely mute! The rest of the day is total amnesia: I can only recall how happy my students were on the way back and how they chatted excitedly about talking with the “white kids” and the wonderful food we had been served. It was the first time in their lives that they had sat at a table with whites.

My student’s car broke down near the Woolworth store from where I phoned my husband. As it was cold in the early evening, we all went inside and stayed at the entrance near the cashiers. One male student offered me some cheese bits. We were in a circle and, as I put my hand in the bag, I will always remember this: Some of my students stood frozen in place, so I looked around and we were surrounded by 8-10 white men who were moving closer. Suddenly, in walks my husband in his officers’ uniform and I called out his name. The men scattered! He drove all the students to their homes and when they were gone, he let out a long whistle of relief. He said he had arrived in the nick of time, otherwise my male students would have been “roughed up” or worse because they were with a “white girl.”

The last incident happened the morning after Rev. King was assassinated. The Dean phoned and asked me to go to the campus chapel for a memorial service. I was driving my first car slowly, a huge white Olds that you could sleep in, along the usual dirt lane in the back of the college, when, suddenly, out of nowhere, a bunch of black teens jumped out, surrounded my car and started rocking it. I had to stop the AC for fear that my battery would overheat. It was hot and I

was afraid to die of heat: There was no way I was going to get out of the car because I could see that these kids were out for revenge on any white they saw.

I can’t say how long this lasted, perhaps just 2 minutes—an eternity. Then, a pickup truck arrived, and out jumped several college students who chased the kids away, yelling at them that I was one of their teachers, and came to apologize. My legs were shaking when I got out. This was my last bad incident. So long as I was on campus, life was very pleasant, although very busy for a person my age with responsibilities beyond her understanding. The outside world was the unpleasant part. The white folks in Augusta were also very nice—except when told what I was doing...which I soon learned to keep to myself.

**-Anne-Marie Ambert**

## **In Memoriam**

We have received word of the passing of the following York retirees:

Ian Howard	June 1, 2013
Joseph Vise	June 23, 2013
John McConnell	July 29, 2013
Samuel Mallin	August 2, 2013
John Gaito	August 10, 2013
Michael Quealey	September 13, 2013

## **Port Perry Trip**

Another YURA adventure began, at the end of June, with a full bus load heading for Port Perry and a boat ride on Lake Scugog. Port Perry sits in the middle of the Trent-Severn Waterway and is as picturesque as it is relaxing. This tourist

area, known for its Victorian-era downtown and fun shopping, was a perfect destination for our group. We arrived in time to stretch and board the boat to have lunch with wonderful sights, warm sunlight and light breezes stirring the air. After a two hour ride on the MV Woodman Ship, we wandered the shops and the streets indulging in our own interests. From there it was a short bus ride to the Ocala Winery and a tasting – and buying – experience arriving home with smiles and good memories. *(A photo will be included in the November PTP.)*

**-Rosemarie Nielsen**

### **CURAC Conference 2013**

The eleventh annual CURAC conference, hosted by the Memorial University of Newfoundland Pensioners Association (MUNPA), was held in St. John's in June. The conference opened with a thumbnail sketch of the origin of the university provided by Kent Decker, the Vice-President of Administration and Finance. The University was established as a living memorial to the hundreds of Newfoundlanders who died on July 1, 1916 in the Battle of the Somme in WWI. The University opened its doors in 1925 with 55 students and now has an enrolment of 18,000. Another historical perspective was provided by writer and actor, Greg Malone who described the political variables and machinations in Newfoundland leading up to confederation.

Included with a number of informational sessions, historical narratives, social events and comedic performances were two Board meetings and the annual general meeting. Among the lighter

events was a presentation by storyteller Andy Jones with the intriguing title of "How to Catch Rabbits in Wintertime". Andy's presentation was a concatenation of memorable one-liners such as, "You can always identify the Newfies in heaven – they're the ones who want to go home." A particularly poignant address was delivered by Dr. Roger Butler on the topic of elder abuse in nursing homes. He noted a predominance of passive neglect and ignorance about the impact of certain behaviours on demented patients. It is important to remember that we can change how we react to a cognitively impaired person but that the cognitively impaired individual can't change. The need for additional training and education of personal caregivers to respond appropriately to patients with dementia was underscored.

A presentation on the second day of the conference focussed on the CURAC regional meeting which was held in Toronto last October. A number of benefits of regional meetings were outlined. The main feature of the AGM was the approval of a new constitution necessitated by the passage of the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporation Act. Also at the AGM, new members of the Board were elected – Ken Craig, Bryan Harvey, Linda Kealey and Geraldine Thomas.

A recurring theme at CURAC conferences is a discussion of "Best Practices". John Meyer kicked off the session with a presentation which encompassed four priorities of member associations – social, educational, outreach and advocacy. Barbara Cox, the then President of MUNPA described her association which has a large membership of over 1500 members and

(like YURA) includes retirees from both faculty and staff constituencies. Retirees from Memorial are automatically members of MUNPA. There is a voluntary fee of \$24 per year and approximately 65% of the members contribute. With an annual income of \$16,000, the association employs a part-time staff member who responds to emails and maintains the membership base. Like YURA, the Memorial association has signed a memorandum of agreement with the University which identifies a host of benefits to the University and to the retirees. Patti Stoll representing OCRA, contrasted the operation of two quite different but equally successful retiree organizations from the community college network - St. Clair and Seneca. The conference closed with presentations on benefits (Doug Creelman) based on a survey of member associations, and Pensions (Paul Huber). A post convention tour was organized by Peter Russell.

**-Sandra Pyke**

### **Good Reads**

For those who like history and population development, you will be well served by this book authored by Mara Hvistendahl, *Unnatural Selection*, 2011, Public Affairs, NY. It is full of fascinating material (and at times surprising, in terms of the role that the West played in this situation) on sex selection, particularly in India and China (via ultrasound and abortion, or female feticide). It discusses all the repercussions that occur when high sex ratio cohorts mature with too few females: more prostitution, trafficking of women, HIV, violence, and so on. The TO Public Libraries has a copy.

**-Anne-Marie Ambert**

*Gulp* by Mary Roach describes what happens to materials that enter our mouths and come out the other end. She writes accurately, without science jargon (i.e., written for anyone to understand), and with humour. I enjoyed learning about how much saliva I produce during a day (and the enzymes in it that are used in laundry detergent), about early dangers of colonoscopies, about various studies of taste and smell, and about stomach ailments, especially one that Elvis had and that contributed to his death. A nice easy, interesting read, with accurate science content. It is published by Norton, 2013.

**-Arthur Forer**

### **Interesting Bits**

**Paraprosdokians...** (Winston Churchill loved them) are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and frequently funny:

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
3. War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
4. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
5. Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.

**- Source: Internet**

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### **YURA Office Hours**

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.

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Anne-Marie Ambert, Editor.

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