



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees' Association

Summer 2015

No. 32

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Most of us are probably already in summer or semi-summer mode and this newsletter carries with it best wishes for a relaxing season. We also want to report on the association's news and recent events.

Our Stratford trip took place on May 19 when a group of 42 YURA members and friends had the chance to attend a production of Rodgers' and Hammerstein's *Carousel*. The staging was captivating and the voices strong, and we look forward to the Shaw Festival in the fall when we will have the chance to see **George Bernard Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* for which YURA has reservations on Tuesday September 29.** You will be receiving information about this trip and we urge you to give serious consideration to joining us for what is always a wonderful day.

Other matters of interest to our members are described under the following headings:

CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada): The YURA Executive Committee was very happy to nominate **Sandra Pyke** for the **CURAC Tribute Award** which recognizes "exceptional contributions and/or achievements of retirees (faculty and staff) to their host university or to the community." As far as we were concerned, Sandra who has done so much for YURA and for CURAC, was a stellar nominee. We are delighted to report that she was a recipient of the award which was presented to her on May 21 at the CURAC dinner during its annual conference at Queen's

University. On p. 3, you will find a photograph of Sandra receiving her award. Warmest congratulations to her. She is always an asset to whatever activity she participates in.

We are also pleased to report that Fred Fletcher was elected to the Board of Directors of CURAC at the Queen's conference. Our thanks and congratulations to Fred.

The conference itself was very well-organized and took as its theme "Looking Ahead." It featured a number of thoughtful presentations by faculty at Queen's and by the president of St. Lawrence Community College. Topics covered a wide range of issues: a national seniors' strategy; senior health and mental health; a public health perspective on elder care; the Alberta oil sands; the Canadian pension system; and colleges' role in the future of postsecondary education. As well, there were delegate sessions on matters pertinent to the work and health of our individual associations. The organizing committee at Queen's deserves great appreciation for a successful conference. As has been the case in previous years, York was very well represented.

Habitat for Humanity: On June 2, YURA hosted an information session with two representatives from Habitat for Humanity – Alice Souvannakhily and Danielle Mandell – who explained the purpose of the organization, the need for volunteers in all kinds of capacities on their building sites, in their ReStores, and in other aspects of their operation. Habitat currently has 8000 volunteers in the Greater Toronto Area and they need more. Alice and Danielle described the basics: orientation sessions, the

emphasis on the safety and health of volunteers on site, and the commitment of time. Beyond those basics, they described the great opportunity for positive involvement, participation, and satisfaction in this important cause. For more information, please visit Habitat's website: www.habitatgta.ca or call Habitat at one of their following three GTA offices:

Toronto: 416-755-7353
Brampton Caledon: 905-455-0883
York Region: 905-868-8722

YUCARE: At its Executive Committee meeting of April 14, Will Gage, the Director of the York University Centre for Aging Research and Education, made an informal presentation to members of the committee about the Centre. In addition to research on aging, the Centre has a second focus on education (including the education of university students about aging) and on life-long learning. YUCARE is seeking closer involvement of both YURA and ARFL (Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians at York) in the work of the Centre. The Executive Committee endorsed the notion and we are waiting for further information from the Centre. For further information, please visit their website at: <http://yucare.info.yorku.ca/#>

That's our budget of items for this newsletter. We send all good wishes for a sunny and happy summer.

-Jane Crescenzi and John Lennox



Sandra is accompanied by John Lennox to the left and Ed Williams, Secretary of CURAC, to the right.

YURA's Showcase 2015

Our annual sale of Attic Treasures and Baked Goods will take place on Tuesday November 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Bear Pit, Central Square. We are soliciting small items (such as personal, decorative, and domestic pieces; new or "gently used" games) and baked goods. We gratefully decline books, clothes, or big items. And we are always ready to welcome volunteers to help with this event.

Showcase Day is YURA's chance to show itself on campus and to raise money for the two YURA-sponsored undergraduate and one Master's award. All proceeds from Showcase are donated to the awards. Every item for the Attic Treasures and Baked Goods tables is donated and there is no overhead charged for the day. Thanks to this kind of generosity, the revenue generated from the sale allows us to continue contributing to student support and to the success which comes from that support.



Please contact us at yura@yorku.ca OR at 416-736-2100 ext. 70664 and let us know if you have items to donate or baked goods to contribute. Further information about dates and times when items can be left at the YURA office will be provided closer to Showcase.

If you are a crafter or would like to display your hobbies for interest and/or for sale, please let us know. We'd be happy to accommodate you.

We encourage our members to come up to campus on Showcase Day. Your attendance will provide welcome support, show the flag, and, who knows, you may find an item or two that appeals to you.

With our thanks for your support.

-Jane Crescenzi

Life as it Was back then: Reminiscences

Our 12th reminiscence is that of Sheila Creighton. Before she retired from York at the end of 1999, Sheila was responsible for Convocations. She has done a great deal of volunteer work and was, more recently, on YURA's executive committee.

I was born in 1935 in Brixton, which is southwest of London and I already had two older sisters, Maisie Rose and Vera.

My father was a musician in a band and my mother had been a dancer in a troupe when they met. Because her parents could not afford dance lessons for her, she had learned to dance more or less by copying others. She became very good. The troupe and the band toured around England, especially in seaside resorts like Brighton. They even toured Germany for one year. After having her first child, my mother became and then remained a homemaker and had seven babies, very closely spaced—six girls and one boy. My older sister Maisie eventually went to live upstairs with grandmother because there was not enough space in the house and she enjoyed her company.

At the beginning of the war, Maisie and I were billeted with another family that had children our ages in the countryside in a village in Dorset. To say that this family did not take a good care of us is an understatement. The older boy used to pinch me and hurt me. I was very defenseless. The mother used to physically punish us for no good reason. Our room was where all their books were but we were not allowed to touch them, yet both my sister and I loved books. But I recall with grateful tears one joyful event: For some reason, one of the grandmothers of this family one day took me to her beautiful garden full of flowers while holding nicely my little hand. This was the only act of kindness received in those days. My other siblings, except for the last baby, were also billeted in the same village in other houses but we rarely got to see them outside of school.

When our grandmother and mother were able to visit us six months after the billeting, they were horrified at how poorly we both looked and how maltreated we were. In order to take us home to Brixton, my grandmother sold her grand piano—and this piano was the love of her life. Back in London, I recall that we were afraid of the air raids but I liked running into the shelters. We all had gas masks and one was like a little incubator to put the last baby in. I started school at four because I wanted to follow my sister. We loved school.

It was always a problem finding lodging for our family because landladies did not like having so many children around. We rarely saw our father because he was a warden at that time in the east end of London; he had not been able to enlist because of eye problems. He would come home two nights a week. I remember that I used to like picking daisies and nature was very important to me. I also remember the balloons in the sky above to catch German airplanes. Some would come down because they had holes that needed patching. To us, this was very interesting.

We were fortunate to have this little park near where we settled again in another part of Brixton. Life was not too bad, all in all. My mother would dance for us. She was a real miracle. I was an active little person who always did something. When we were bombed out, my mother found another house with a wonderful garden and I loved it. (I should note that my maiden name was Blitz, as my father was of Dutch origins, a name very appropriate for the times.) I would paint on newspapers and I loved to go to the

library to get books. I would tidy up the shelves to the librarian's delight who then pretended wondering who was doing this.

Although I loved school, I was not good in math and so did not get into Grammar school. I had to babysit when my parents went out—which was, all things considered, not too often. My sisters and I argued a lot. We were quite a rowdy lot and I don't know how my mother got through this. I started working at age 16 with the help of the headmistress who found me a job as a clerk at the American Chamber of Commerce. I recall also that my older sister had a friend and just for fun I joined with her the Young Conservatives' Association. I wrote an article for one of their newsletters that got published in a magazine.

I came to Canada in a sort of random way, when one thinks of it. It was in 1959. At the time, I had a friend and we would go as a group with others dancing and engage in other fun activities over the weekend. This friend fell in love with a Canadian and she firmly believed that he loved her. So she decided to move to Canada to join him and on a whim, I said, "I'll come with you," for which her mother was very thankful because this friend had psychological problems and was vulnerable. We first arrived in Montreal and came to Toronto by bus and my friend went on to Vancouver. The next day, I saw an ad in the *Toronto Star* for a secretary and got it over the other candidates.

Unfortunately, about six months later, I had to leave for Vancouver in order to take care of my friend who had become

distraught because the Canadian she had met in London had married someone else. But it was in Vancouver that I met my future husband, Jim. As my heart was in Montreal, we decided to settle there and find work but Jim wanted to go to England where we stayed for two years. We returned to Toronto two years later with the first of our three children.

After ten years of homemaking and volunteering, I signed up with an agency and got a temporary job at York...and stayed until I retired!

-Sheila Creighton

In Memoriam

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Joyce Blyth | March 1, 2015 |
| Millie Mony-Penny | March 6, 2015 |
| Alan Hockin | March 14, 2015 |
| David McQueen | March 18, 2015 |
| Kenneth Gibson | March 31, 2015 |
| Patricia MacBain | April 4, 2015 |
| Wesley Coons | April 19, 2015 |
| Hans Raj Joshi | April 21, 2015 |

Good Reads

James Patterson's *Hope to Die* is his newest detective thriller featuring Detective Dr. Cross. It is quite the suspense and I am glad that it is not a movie because both the plot and the killer's actions are, well, gory. But one just can't let it go. Published in 2014, it can be found in the Toronto Public Library.

On a much more serious level, a very intriguing book, full of fascinating information, is *The Future of the Mind*, by the physicist Michio Kaku of the City

University of New York. It is the most up-to-date and comprehensible work on what we can expect within the next 20 to 100 years in terms of what science will be able to accomplish with the human brain, and more specifically, the mind and consciousness. He explains how scientists will be able to cure and prevent mental illnesses as well as dementias, Parkinson's, and Huntington disease, and repair people who have suffered terribly brain injuries. That's the good part from my point of view. Most of this book is, however, devoted to presentation of future advances whereby scientists are aiming to "improve" the human brain, to extend its intellectual powers, to upload it onto a computer, to allow for an "Internet" of the brain whereby all the interconnected brains could communicate directly throughout the world and even with other planets. At the same time, our body is being transformed. It is very difficult to see what is left of human nature. This book is a scientist's dream and a sociologist's and humanist's nightmare. Published in 2014 and also found in the Toronto Public Library.

-Anne-Marie Ambert



Cordoba gardens

A Bit Of Fun

Press the Control key and Click.
It's a cute video about kids discovering
the typewriter. (Contributed by **Mary
Pfister**.)

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/vfxRfk
ZdiAQ?feature=player_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/embed/vfxRfkZdiAQ?feature=player_embedded)



YOUNG AT HEART
Slightly older
in other places.

**Aphorism: A Short, Pointed Sentence
That Expresses A Wise Or Clever
Observation Or A General Truth**

Seat belts are not as confining . . . as
wheelchairs.

How come it takes so little time for a
child who is afraid of the dark . . . to
become a teenager who wants to stay out
all night?

Business conventions are important . .
because they demonstrate how many
people a company can operate without.

Why is it that at class reunions . . .
you feel younger than everyone else
looks?

No one has more driving ambition than
the teenage boy or girl . . . who wants to
buy a car.

There are no new sins . . . the old ones
just get more publicity.

I've reached the age where . . . 'happy
hour' is a nap.

Be careful about reading the fine print . .
there's no way you're going to like it.

The trouble with bucket seats is that . . .
not everybody has the same size bucket.

After 70, if you don't wake up aching in
every joint . . . You're probably dead.
(contributed by my brother **Jacques
Dermine**, Boucherville, Quebec)

A father was approached by his small
son who told him proudly, "I know what
the Bible means!"

His father smiled and replied, "OK so
what does the the Bible mean?"

"That's easy, Daddy," the young boy
replied excitedly. "It stands for 'Basic
Information Before Leaving Earth.'"

(contributed by **Clive Holloway**)

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