



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

**Winter 2017**

**No. 38**

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**Message from the YURA Co-Presidents**

We hope that the holiday was a time of friendship and rest, and we would like to add our voices to those that wish you happiness and health in 2017.

The fall was a busy and successful time

for the Association. Our annual fall theatre trip to the Shaw Festival on October 20 was one of the largest we have had – 45 members and their spouses and friends travelled to Niagara-on-the-Lake for lunch and then

attendance at *A Woman of No Importance* in the Festival Theatre which elicited mixed reviews from the group. It was a day teeming with rain, but everyone appears to have had a good time.

Our Annual General Meeting took place the next day. As was the case last year, we had a guest speaker in the morning, David Crombie, who provided a fascinating analysis of how Toronto can be “fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” He is a marvelous speaker, informal in manner, yet incisive in his comments and prognosis – a past master of substance and style. We were extremely honoured to have him address us.

A new Board was approved at the meeting and the Association publicly thanked those who were stepping down: Mildred Theobalds, our longest-serving board member; Marilyn Cartmill who was retiring from the position of treasurer after many years of service in that position; Jane Crescenzi who was leaving her position of co-president after doing a masterful job of overseeing the transfer of the YURA file from Pension and Benefits to Human Resources; Anna Hoffmann who has been a valued member of the Board. YURA has profited enormously from the hours of commitment, and from the judgement, candour, and good will that these individuals have brought to the Association. Replacing them on the Board are Charmaine Courtis as co-president, Dave Smith as Treasurer, and three new members: Ian Greene, Gabriele Hardt, and Angie Swartz. YURA is in good shape for the year ahead.

On November 8, YURA held its annual showcase and fund-raiser for student bursaries and awards. Many members donated regifiable items and baked goods; others displayed their hobbies and/or sold their wares. Thirty volunteers took part in the day – set-up, sales, and clean-up – and the Association



**Our co-presidents: from the left, outgoing Jean Crescenzi, John Lennox, and incoming Charmaine Courtis**

raised over \$1800 which is the best result that many of us can remember. Our sincere thanks to Pat Murray and Steve Dranitsaris who were such effective and enthusiastic co-chairs of this event, to those who donated items and baked goods, and to all those who contributed their time and talents to this eminently worthwhile event. And, as always, to Neal Corbett for his planning expertise.

Thanks also to Joe Sanguedolce and his custodial staff in their crucial help in setting up for the day. YURA is proud of playing its part in the work of the university through its support of student awards and bursaries and other student-and-community activities on campus.



Two of the graduate students who won a YURA Awards are, from the left, Nashwa Khan and Robyn Verley.

We look forward to a good year for the association. Our two theatre outings are already on the books: Stratford on June 6 for *Romeo and Juliet* and Niagara-on-the-Lake on October 10 for *Saint Joan*. We hope that you will mark these dates on your calendars. More specific information about reserving tickets will come as the dates approach.

We are grateful for the support of each member and, as always, you are invited to contact us with your questions and concerns either by phone at 416-736-2100 ext. 70664 or by email at [yura@yorku.ca](mailto:yura@yorku.ca)

With our best wishes,  
**-Charmaine Courtis and John Lennox, Co-presidents**

### In Memoriam

Neil Agnew	September 27
Diane Adam	August 8
Rima Anani	August 31
Duncan Cameron	September 26
Kathleen Clayton	September 21
Giovanni Covacci	September 15

Maurice Elliott	December 8
Jose Escobar	August 17
Lillian Jacobson	August 11
Michael Kay	October 11
Alexander Leece	October 5
Therese Rochette	August 30
Michele Serra	November 26
David Spring	August 27
Dolly Sutter	August 16
Gerald Vise	November 29
Sharon Williams	November 14

### EDITORIAL: NEIL AGNEW

We lost a long-time member of YURA last Summer. I just want to say that Neil Agnew contributed on several occasions to our publications and was a very interested member who regularly attended our AGMs. His most touching contribution occurred in our *Person-to-Person* bulletin, December 2015, where he recounted how he and his wife Mary moved to The Roxborough Retirement Residence in Newmarket in 2011. Soon it became evident that Mary needed more care and was transferred to a long-term care facility at Southlake Village across from the Roxborough. “We are blessed. There are four other residents in my facility who have mates over in Southlake...whose spouses do not recognize them. Whereas Mary welcomes me each day literally with open arms. We spend each afternoon together, and even after sixty-five years find each other—as Agatha Christie said about her husband—‘good to be with.’”

### Life as it was back then: Reminiscences

*Our 18th Reminiscence is written by Sandra Nolte. Before she retired the first time at age 55, Sandra worked in*

*Admissions, Fine Arts, Economics, and LAPS. Her formal retirement was mandated to help her mother navigate various medical appointments as her health had declined. But later, when it became known that Sandra could work part-time, she was recalled to occupy a variety of positions until her last retirement. Sandra has entitled her reminiscence "In my life's story, two facts stand out."*

"First, I am an offspring – of a friendly, wild-child dad and a loving, letter-writing, list-making mom. Second, before I turned 19 years of age, we lived in 10 different homes, in 3 different American states.

Background: Dad, and Mom, were born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. He and Mom married in 1941. My Dad chose not to serve in WWII. He registered as a CO, Conscientious Objector: a very unwelcome choice. Yet Cincinnati Ohio was a German town through and through. WWII broke the hearts of first generation German moms. My Great grandmother was heard to say, "Die Liebe Gottes! German boys killing German boys! This is not gute!" All through my growing up days, I remember that line, echoed by my parents.

When the Americans did join in the fighting, men were allowed to register for the alternative services: Forestry- or public-land-care or working within the mental hospitals. Dad then went to *Coshockton, Ohio in land service, briefly. But he chose to go, with Mom, and serve in Philadelphia.* Here they encountered many levels of 'madness' at their major hospital.

More stories echo here: In the middle of the day, all residents were permitted to gather in a room that was the size of a gymnasium. One day a tall and fierce woman with an odd expression on her face walked along the four walls, in a circuit. Over and over she walked. Each time, as she passed Mom, she stepped on her foot. Did this for the full 90 minutes midday break. When the break was up, she stood facing Mom and nodded. From that day forward she was Mom's guard and saved her from three attacks by other fiercely insane residents.

Early on Mom became pregnant with my older sister. Halfway through her term, a high-ranking member in the eastern conference of the Society of American Friends [Quakers] was concerned for Mom's safety. Feared she could be placed in harm's way. He and his wife arranged for her to serve in their home for the rest of the war.

More stories echo: Mom was in the washroom one day, and the Quaker man knocked on the door, and whispered, "Is thee taking a leak?"

When the war ended, my parents returned to Cincinnati, OH, where I was born, early in '47. Not surprising, local folks did not welcome Dad, a man who "could not bring himself to go away and kill others". It was not an easy time for Dad and Mom. Many locals had friends or loved ones who died over there. Siblings, husbands, sons, a dad. So we moved, to Colorado.

Dad and Mom drove out with clothing, bits of furniture, many cloth diapers and us two young ones: My sister was 4 years, and I, under 1 year. The truck they borrowed broke down halfway there.

[Both parents are gone, so I've missed the chance to ask how THAT played out.] Their time in Colorado was important for my parents. They lived near other pacifists. Dad found work quickly. He was skilled in his two hobbies, trombone and photography, and both of provided income. But here is where the shift came.

Dad original had intended to study Electrical Engineering in university. Yet he felt a 'call'. His friendly nature, his constant urge to help others, his habit of greeting total strangers on any sidewalk, stirred in him a longing to serve as a church pastor. Other C.O.s must have known. Letters would have gone to friends, who were now in their own 'hometowns'. One friend in Minnesota contacted Dad – saying there was a small church that would gladly take Dad - for one year. He'd not even started studies in Divinity! Wish I could see the face of Dad and Mom when that letter arrived. Or the call, if the fellow cared enough to spend funds to make a call.

That Minneapolis congregation fell in love with my Dad even with his pacifist, 'turn the other cheek' urges. In subsequent ministerial placements Dad never stopped mentioning each man's right to choose not to fight. My Dad, even after retirement, would engage in that debate. And, he was a true wild child. He spoke to everyone he met, he helped anyone found to be in need. People found it hard not to love him. He gave stuff away. Even gave some of Mom's belongings away... if he saw a need. Yes, a few spats occurred. For move No. 3, we returned to Ohio, making Mom and all grandparents happy. It was a short drive away for them, and not far from Dad's school.

Again, a tiny community church welcomed us. In home No.3, a little brother was born. Most nights, after we kids were in bed, Dad studied long and hard, and Mom wrote many letters. Her address book swelled greatly. She could not seem to stop connecting with family and with friends she cared for.

DATA: In the mid1900s, U.S. Protestant churches retained a pastor for no more than 3 years. We were in home no.5 when we were blessed with a little sister. Echoed story: I was 8 when she came along. And when she cried, I went over and picked her up and rocked her. Grandma warned, over and over, "Betty, she's going to spoil her."

Basically, we lived in 5 parts of Ohio, mostly in the church's parsonage: inner city Toledo, Portsmouth, Leipsic, Bayshore and Oregon. Then I spent one year in university in Michigan. Echoed story: Leipsic's parsonage was actually the home of a deceased millionaire who could not walk, but lived 'in a wheelchair'. So – there was a manual elevator in the house. Mom's rule, "That elevator must *always* be left on the first floor, always!" One afternoon a hide-and-seek took place, and someone had left the elevator on the second floor. My brother raced in to hide and fell down into the basement vault. Mom was furious. Raced upstairs to spank one of us but suddenly remembered, half way up, that perhaps my brother could be injured. He was not, of course.

The Canada aspect: Our older sister wanted to move to Toronto. Dad went with her to 'help check out' rental places. Three days later they returned with stories of a delightful Canada. So in 1967, Mom, Dad, and all 4 Nolte

offspring applied for Permanent Residence status. Late in August, we came, driving a car and a truck, and all our belongings, including a cat. By 1968 all of us had different jobs. Some worked down in the city, some worked at &/or were enrolled at York University. Now today, 49 years later, three of us are still here, in Toronto. One returned to the U.S. And all four Nolte 'kids' ...have retained bits of wild-child. Giving too much to charity, and being audited because of it. And letter-writer is within us. My brother did the MFA and taught at YU and a H.S. in the GTA and has 600+ friends on FB. And we have 3 Canadian children, and they've given us 3 grandchildren."

**-Sandra Nolte**

### **FOR OUR FRANCOPHONE MEMBERS**

I have by now read the Newsletters from several Canadian universities' retiree associations. I have found the Newsletter of the Universite du Quebec at Montreal to be of particularly high quality with very interesting articles.

Here is how to access their Bulletin. Google [www.apr-uqam.org](http://www.apr-uqam.org) and click on Bulletin on the horizontql bar; then scroll down and click on the most recent issue or, if you want earlier issues, click on Archives. (I found no. 68 particularly interesting.)

In order to get out of one issue to return to the list in the Archives, click on the "turn page" sign that appears on the top left of your computer

If these instructions are not clear enough after you have tried a couple of times, do reach me. It took me a while to get the hang of it. **Anne-Marie**

### **DOES TAKING COLLEGE COURSES WARDS OFF DEMENTIA?**

"As fall approaches, it's time for you to think about going back to school. Yes, you read that correctly: Researchers say that taking college courses can stimulate older adults' brains and possibly ward off dementia.

Australian scientists followed 359 adults between ages 50 and 79 without dementia who enrolled in college courses, such as philosophy, fine art, history, and psychology. After a year of taking courses either part time or full time, the pupils fared better mentally than a control group of 100 people who chose not to take courses. What's more, the cognitive effects lasted over the four-year course of the study.

More than 90 percent of the back-to-school group improved their cognitive capacity {...}" But only 56 percent of the control group did. "The researchers also point out that those who took college courses volunteered to do so, indicating they might have been more inclined toward a higher cognitive capacity than the control group.

Most participants took classes on campus, but some chose online learning. While the study didn't compare the effects of the two settings, the researchers suggest that you might gain the most benefits from taking courses in person since social interaction with professors and fellow students may boost your cognitive capacity even more." (Quoted from *Health After 50 Alerts*, online, August 2016).



## AN ARTICLE FROM THE CURAC NEWSLETTER

### **Booted: How Might Older Adults Benefit from Changes in Technology?**

by Dr. Donna Goodridge

Within the health care system there is acknowledgement that there is not enough conversation between those in the system and seniors. The system needs to get involved; it needs to hear the concerns of seniors. SCOA [Saskatoon Council on Aging] is assisting with that. We need to understand the importance of maintaining cognitive well-being, as well as good physical health. We need to understand how many chronic illnesses individuals are dealing with right now. We need to ask and know what are the primary factors in maintaining a patient's independence: physical health; appropriate transportation; proper housing; adequate help with maintaining a home; finances; and other issues. Seniors have identified areas where technology can greatly assist their quality of life such as: self-care tools (to manage health needs remotely); wearable devices (to monitor symptoms and vital signs), online communities (to easily access information from peers); help navigating their health needs; and health tools to quickly and accurately access outcome related data. Some of

these are currently available. For example, a pilot project in remote medical monitoring has recently concluded in Saskatoon. Participants, with COPD [Chronic Obstruction Pulmonary Disease] and an average age of 68, were given tablets for virtual care. They were instructed in using them and asked to check their vitals daily and to fill out a questionnaire which was connected to a nurse in a central clinic. Anything unusual or extraordinary triggered an immediate call from the nurse. Participants' satisfaction rate was 98 per cent.

Other technological aids currently available are: service robots; 156,000 health apps; online ordering from Amazon for delivery of groceries and cleaning supplies; Skype and e-mail to keep seniors involved with loved ones; live stream worship services; Smart Clothing which protects the wearer from fractures; care networks; text reminders to patients for follow-up care or medication.

On the horizon, we can hope for sensor enabled pill bottles, and blood glucose levels better monitored at home. Emerging technologies will better help in the management of chronic illnesses. To get them right, it is important to communicate with seniors, aggregate their responses, analyze the information and then act on the information.

It was noted in the Q&A that for some of the above to work well, an integrated health records system is important. Current health care systems are in the dark ages related to uses of technology. **-Donna Goodridge** is in the College of Medicine, U of Saskatchewan

## Pedophilia and Gender Cognitions

In an article discussing pedophilia in the *Economist* of August 13, there was a discussion about the fantasies that pedophiles often entertain when they believe that children are actually the ones who seek and initiate the sexual contact with adults.

“Such false thinking may flow from the ‘sexual over-perception bias’; a cognitive flaw which makes men (but not women) prone to seeing sexual interest where there is none. That is bad enough when it means thinking a friendly female colleague is making advances; when it means reading a child’s playfulness and warmth as seductive, it is very dangerous.”

## GOOD READS

Edelgard Mahant has two suggestions for books our members might enjoy:

Arnaldur Indriáson, [\*Reykjavík nights\*](#). 2014. This is a who-done-it mystery, not the kind of thing I normally read, but I enjoyed this one. It gives you a good feeling for the city. And the Toronto Public Library has it in large print. The other one is a book I wrote, a light-hearted account of my three years in Botswana, my first attempt at non-academic writing:

Edelgard Mahant. *Grandma's Gone to Africa*. One Woman's Journey to Botswana the Good. Toronto: 2016. The book has its own Facebook page and is available from Amazon as well as the York library system.

**-Edelgard Mahant**

## Historical Insults!

"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second ... if there is one."

- Winston Churchill

"I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here."

- Stephen Bishop.

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial."

- Irvin S. Cobb.

"He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others."

- Samuel Johnson.

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.."

- Mae West.

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go."

- Oscar Wilde.

"He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts... for support rather than illumination." - Andrew Lang (1844-1912).

-Contributed by **Mary Pfister**

## Contemporary Philosophers

The best cure for sea sickness, is to sit under a tree.

Spike Milligan

Lawyers believe a man is innocent until  
proven broke.  
Robin Hall

Kill one man and you're a murderer, kill  
a million and you're a conqueror.  
Jean Rostand.

We are here on earth to do good unto  
others. What the others are here  
for, I have no idea. WH Auden

If life were fair, Elvis would still be  
alive today and all the  
impersonators would be dead. Johnny  
Carson

I don't believe in astrology. I am a  
Sagittarius and we're very skeptical.  
Warren Tantum

America is so advanced that even the  
chairs are electric. Doug Hamwell

If God had intended us to fly he would  
have made it easier to get to  
the airport. Jonathan Winters

### **Editor's Note**

Several amusing photos had to be taken  
out from these last pages because they  
made the *Newsletter* too large a file to  
be forwarded as an attachment. Sorry!

## YURA Executive

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