



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees' Association (YURA)

Fall 2017

No. 41

YURA is a member of CURAC/ARUCC, the federation of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada/Associations de retraités dans les collèges et les universités du Canada

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Finally. Summer has at last arrived as we write this note in mid-September. "Happy summer" is the rueful greeting we hear students give to one another in the halls after a disappointing succession of cool and wet months.

The YURA year has also begun with our annual call for nominations (deadline September 15) and the announcement of our **Annual General Meeting on Friday October 27**. Our guest speaker will be **Dr. Audrey Macklin**, Professor and Chair in Human Rights Law, University of Toronto, who will speak on "**Private Refugee Sponsorship: The Making and Remaking of Citizens.**" We do hope that members will turn up in their numbers to hear her.

We have been occupied during the summer with the processing of YURA membership renewals. We want to recognize and thank John Wilson, a member of the Executive Committee and office volunteer, for his considerable help with membership renewals over the summer. It was volunteerism over and above the call, and we are very grateful.

The office is in the process of recruiting new volunteers for our open hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. John Wilson was new last year and is now a veteran. As we get underway for another year, we are delighted to welcome and thank San Nolte and Sara Kozlowski for agreeing to help in the office. Their willingness to do so is much appreciated.

We are happy to confirm that response to our fund-raising drive from our members has been helpful to the different York causes that we support. Donations have been received in aid of our various student financial awards, the York Camps Subsidy Fund as well as the York Federation of Students' Food Bank. These are ongoing activities and your continued support is much appreciated.

Please note our Fall list of events:

Tuesday October 10: The YURA trip to the **SHAW FESTIVAL** to see *Saint Joan*. 37 people have signed up to go.

Friday October 27: **AGM** at the Underground
11 a.m. Guest Speaker **Audrey Macklin**: "**Private Refugee Sponsorship: The Making and Remaking of Citizens.**"

12 noon: Lunch (complimentary)

1:15 p.m.: Annual General Meeting

N.B. Please register by October 23 if you plan to attend. To do so email us at yura@yorku.ca OR call 416-736-2100 ext. 70664

Tuesday November 7: **SHOWCASE** (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) **Central Square**. All proceeds are donated to YURA-supported student awards. Last year we raised \$1800. We would love to match or surpass that amount this year. Please come out to see what's on offer and support YURA's efforts. In addition to baked goods and attic treasures, our members will be present during Showcase at individual tables as exhibitors or vendors.

All good wishes for the Fall. We look forward to seeing you at our Annual General Meeting and at Showcase.

As always, if you have questions, please call us at 416-736-2100 ext. 70664 or email us at yura@yorku.ca.

--**Charmaine Coulis** and **John Lennox**, Co-presidents

YURA'S EXECUTIVE MEMBERS



Members of the Executive appearing in the photo are, from left to right:

Front Row: John Lennox, Michele Young, Gabriele Hardt, Ian Greene

Middle Row: Jane Crescenzi, Billie Mullick, Ross Rudolph, Fred Fletcher, Steve Dranitsaris

Back Row: Charmaine Curtis, John Wilson, Ed Lee-Ruff, Dave Smith (Photo provided by Steve Dranitsaris)

In Memoriam

Willard Piepenburg	June 7
Christopher Innes	June 19
Martin Steinbach	June 24
Walter Hall	July 2
Adele Minoli	July 18
Jack McCann	August 16
Mary McLachlin	August 17
Wesley Cragg	August 26

Interesting YURA Demographics

Fred Fletcher wrote: "YURA is a model, with 283 YURA retirees (faculty), 171 YUSA retirees, along with 76 CPM retirees (for 247 staff) and 34 others."

YURA SHOWCASE 2017

Tuesday November 7

9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Central Square

SHOWCASE is coming and we are looking for donations for the Attic Treasures Table. We sent out a recent notice highlighting the kind of items that are popular with our mostly student clientele. These items include the following: jewelry, knick-knacks/curios, framed prints, board games, puzzles – that is, the kinds of items that people would enjoy, find attractive, or be able to use. We are also soliciting recent pocket books, children's books, cook books, and DVDs. We are aiming for variety and are hoping to have strong response from our members. In the next few weeks, we will be posting the dates when we will be receiving items. If, however, you have items that you would prefer to bring in sooner rather than later, please let us know and we will be happy to accommodate you. If you need to have items picked up, let us know by email or phone and we'll arrange to come and get them.

Saluting Anne-Marie

We can't let the publication of this newsletter pass without acknowledging the fine and indefatigable service to the Association that has been provided by Anne-Marie Ambert. She began as editor of the *Newsletter* with the Winter 2012 issue (Number 19). With this Fall 2017 issue, we're at Number 41, which means that over the past almost six years, Anne-Marie has been responsible for producing **twenty-three** (!!) first-class newsletters, all of them carefully and professionally prepared and edited. It was she who proposed the "Reminiscence" feature that has proved to be a regular article of uniformly consistent interest. In addition, soon after becoming editor of the Newsletter, Anne-Marie proposed the creation of the now-monthly bulletin *Person-to-Person* of which she is facilitator. It has grown from

an idea to a communication that members look forward to receiving and that is eliciting the kind of exchange that she envisioned for the PTP from the start.

One of the desired hallmarks of an association like ours is continual and constructive communication with its members. Under Anne-Marie's watch, the Newsletter and PTP are just that. We want to take this occasion to underscore the scope and significance of her contribution to the work of YURA, to celebrate her achievement, and to offer sincere thanks for the conscientious and exemplary care that marks everything she has done for the Association. She is central to YURA in her role of keeping us informed and talking to each other.

On behalf of all of us, Anne-Marie, please accept our gratitude and admiration.

--**Charmaine Courtis** and **John Lennox**
Co-presidents

IMPROVING PRESCRIPTION DRUG SAFETY FOR CANADIAN SENIORS

by **Nicole F. Bernier**, IRP (*Institute for Research on Public Policy*), no. 61, June 2017.

(I have copied part of the Summary and added a few passages from the text of the study itself." AMA)

“On average, two-thirds of seniors take 5 or more prescriptions drugs over the course of a year and one-quarter take 10 or more. It is estimated that as much as half of the medications given to seniors are taken incorrectly or are overprescribed, increasing the likelihood of adverse drug reactions and interactions. Moreover, many drugs prescribed to seniors either have not been adequately studied for this age group or have not been formally approved for the conditions they are being prescribed to treat. ...Seniors face a higher risk of adverse drug reactions, in part because of physiological changes as we age that alter the way our bodies respond to

medication... and process them. For instance, our kidneys and liver tend to lose functional ability and become less efficient in flushing out drugs... Indeed, clinical trials often exclude not only older people, but also people of all ages who take a combination of medications. As a result, certain medications are prescribed to seniors without any evidence they are safe and effective for them, and in some cases even when they are known to present a possible risk (antipsychotics prescribed to patients with dementia, for example)... When medications are not appropriately prescribed and supervised, they can cause adverse drug reactions (ADRs) such as unsteadiness, confusion, delirium, depression and dependence.”

In Bernier's view, improving prescription drug safety among seniors will require systemic change, and hence leadership and engagement, from Health Canada, provincial and territorial health ministries, and local health authorities.

What is needed, she maintains, is a comprehensive national strategy. Building on the 2015 recommendations of the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, such a strategy would entail a more proactive role for Health Canada. It would include revising the drug approval process, monitoring newly marketed drugs prescribed to seniors, improving reporting on adverse drug reactions, and encouraging independent research into off-label prescription drug use. In addition, provinces and territories would be called upon to update their prescribing guidelines regularly, require medication reviews, and provide coverage for effective nondrug therapies.

When it comes to seniors' health, Bernier concludes, “prescribing practices are too often based on little or no evidence, and as a result can be inappropriate and even dangerous... Effectiveness studies conducted at several intervals (for instance, after 1, 5 and 10 years) following a drug's release onto the market are necessary to determine how different groups (such as age and gender groups) respond to an approved drug.”

TRAVEL PLANNING?

CURAC has now had two successful years of partnership with Collette Travel. Members planning future travel may wish to check out the broad range of tours available to them at the following website: <http://www.gocollette.com/en-ca/landing-pages/2015/partner/curac>)

The website lists better than 160 tours to destinations worldwide at a broad range of departure dates. CURAC members enjoy savings on bookings, benefit from professionally planned itineraries and the services of a Tour Manager, and enjoy other perks on certain tours, e.g., roundtrip home-to-airport sedan service.

Inquiries about tours, or bookings, can be made by calling 800.468.5955. Alternatively, bookings can be made through your local Travel Agent. Make sure to mention your membership in a CURAC association for additional savings!

Check out Ken and Sydney Craig's account of the CURAC organized European river cruise in the Fall 2016 CURAC/ARUCC *Newsletter*. Ken has promised an account of his and Sydney's "Shades of Ireland" 2017 CURAC tour in a forthcoming issue.

-Fred Fletcher (YURA and CURAC)

"I'm from the government, and I'm here to help."

by Robert Drummond

I always look forward to reading the "chuckles" in YURA's *Person to Person* letters each month, but recently I was moved to reflect with concern on the premises underlying one category of our favourite jokes. The reflection came because the August PTP contained a number of one-liners about government and politicians (though the phrase in the title of this piece –sometimes described as a frightening sentence – was not among them). After I had smiled in appreciation of the various items, I

thought about what it means that our culture is so imbued with distrust of government and politicians that jokes like this are easily made and widely understood. (Jokes about lawyers are similarly common, and as September rolls around, we are always treated to the "hatred of school" cartoons in the comics. But it's the jokes about politics that most concerned this retired political scientist.)

Wry laughter is easily engendered by jokes that paint politicians as blatantly corrupt and government as hopelessly inefficient. Certainly there is enough corruption to go around, though not all of it is in government. Bernie Madoff wasn't a public servant, and Enron was not a government corporation. And if one is seeking high cost, annoying treatment and inefficiency, those can be found in almost any large bureaucracy; think about insurance companies, banks, phone companies and internet service providers. I suspect it is partly because we have little choice in paying taxes for government services – little consumer sovereignty – that leads us to be less patient with public than with private bureaucracies.

I can hear some of you saying at this point, "Lighten up, man. They're just jokes." Quite right, but is there a danger to a democratic society when the premises that make these jokes possible are so thoroughly ingrained that they diminish our civic capacity? If we come to believe that all politicians lie, are we then unable (or unwilling) to distinguish the leader who occasionally "slants" or "spins" the truth from the one who regularly lies outright? If we routinely expect corruption and inefficiency in government, have we abandoned our will or ability to blow the whistle on such instances and to demand better as our citizens' rights? There is an element of laziness in the assertion that no good can come from political action, since there are goals we cannot realistically achieve except in concert with our neighbours. There is plenty of room for debate on what should be the appropriate scope of government, and what things are better done by the private sector. But if we recognize that *some* goods are inevitably "public," then it is our duty (and

prudent besides) to expect that government serve us well in providing them.

I will not take the usual Canadian stance of blaming the cynicism and distrust of government on our proximity to the United States and the influence of their culture. Canadians have ample capacity for cynicism and distrust of our own. I will observe however that there are two somewhat different perspectives on politics, both of which have some validity, but one of which allows for greater optimism (and maybe fewer good jokes). The first is well expressed by the American political psychologist, Harold Lasswell, writing in the 1930's. "The study of politics," he said, "is the study of the influential, and the influential are those who get the most of what there is to get." The second comes from Canadian reformer and rebel (and first Mayor of Toronto) William Lyon Mackenzie. Writing in his newspaper, *The Colonial Advocate*, in the 1820s, he said, "Politics is the science that teaches the people of a country to care for one another." And that's no joke.

(Comments are of course welcome, and debate is the *sine qua non* of civic engagement.)

-Robert Drummond

Comments will be posted in the January issue of the Newsletter. Please send to ambert@yorku.ca

LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

For those interested in the functioning of long-term care facilities in Ontario, the following easy-to-read research paper would probably be of interest. This research was brought to my attention by Poland Lai, PhD candidate, Osgood Hall Law School, York University, Toronto. (The file contains no virus.)

http://www.changefoundation.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Spotlight-report_Final.pdf

ADVOCACY CENTRE for the ELDERLY

Poland Lai also directed my attention to the fact that the above-named Centre's Spring/Summer

Newsletter for 2017 contains several interesting articles. One concerns changes in the law impacting retirement home tenants; and another on grandparents who are now entitled to apply for access to or custody of grand-children in Ontario. Click below:

<http://www.advocacycentreelderly.org/appimages/file/ACE%20Newsletter%20SpringSummer%202017.pdf>

GOOD READS

The Women in the Castle, by Jessica Shattuck, 2017.

This novel is set at end of World War 11, in a crumbling Bavarian castle that once played host to German high society. It is a powerful story of 3 German women whose fates become intertwined, before, during and after the war. It is written with great emotional power and gives you a glimpse of what people will do to survive with some degree of integrity. A powerfully written novel and a very good read. The book was published in 2017 and the flyleaf says it took the author 7 years to write it. I can believe it. A good book.

-Margaret Leitch

An article on the biology and conservation of elephants in the July 17, 2017 issue of *The Economist* is well worth reading: "In praise of pachyderms" studies the social organization of African elephants and new scientific methods used to research them. Click on the link below.

<https://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21723394-biology-and-conservation-elephants-serve-elephants-they-hold>

---Anne-Marie Ambert

Life as it was back then: Reminiscence

Our 21st Reminiscence is a bit unusual in that it is written by a non-YURA person as I ran out of volunteers. The author, Helen Mannion, has however contributed a great deal to the humor quota both of the Newsletter and the PTP. Her

reminiscence of a couple of years in her childhood is important as it shows some very typical aspects of life as it was way back then. Helen is 92 and lives in my Retirement Residence and we have become good friends, partly on the basis of a shared sense of humor. She has entitled her reminiscence, High As a Kite.

“I grew up in the then small town of Preston that has since been since absorbed by Cambridge near Toronto. My mother was particularly fond of her wonderfully colorful garden and each year collected the seeds of annual flowers for the next spring and also to bake with, especially poppy seeds. When I was six years old, I and my same-age little friend, would leave barefoot in the morning to go and play by the river or in our next-door neighbor’s barn. Before leaving, my mother used to give us a baggie full of poppy seeds on which to snack. No one had ever realized that, due to our small size, the seeds had a ‘different’ effect on us than whatever it had when eaten on buns or cakes!

We would sit by the banks of the river or lie down in the grass and the clouds, the trees, and the houses we could see would take all manners of shapes. They would float about and above us and we felt dizzy and floating about with the various shapes we saw. This might go on for quite a while. In other words, we were high as kites! At times, we would get up and do a little dance or giggle although we didn’t know why.

On one of these occasions, my little friend suggested that we could fly down the barn with our umbrellas opened, precursors of what we would now call Mary Poppins. Again, high as kites, we climbed the neighbor’s barn roof and using an umbrella, the idea was to jump down and the umbrella would allow us to float gently away. The little friend got scared but she egged me on so I had to go first. I opened my umbrella and jumped! I fell to the ground like a little teddy bear: the small shape of my body had protected me from serious harm. As ‘high’ as I was, I was still scared and never did it again.

Of course, we never told our parents or our older siblings about these escapades nor about being high (we didn’t even know that we were). But what is also amazing in all of this is the freedom that even very small children had in those days to explore their environments without adult supervision. It truly was a different world.”

-- **Helen Mannion**

As a poscriptum to this story, another resident in my building, a man aged about 85, recalls that when he was small, the family used to go to their cottage where the children also had great freedom of movement and more responsibilities compared to today. One summer when he was 7, his mother went on her usual errands and left his older 9-year-old brother in charge of their sister who was then 3 months old. Both boys were swimming like fish by then and were good canoeists. The 9-year-old boy wanted to go canoeing and, feeling responsible for his baby sister, took her and laid her down in the canoe and softly paddled around their part of the lake. When their mother arrived, she watched him return ashore, picked up the baby as if it was the most natural thing in the world. One can imagine a mother’s horror nowadays and even the Children’s Aid arriving at their doorsteps. This was Life as it was back then.....

The following article by Sheila Delany is reprinted by permission of the SFURA or Simon Fraser Retirees’ Association Newsletter.

Writing on the Edge

Hello from Haida Gwai’i, the archipelago--formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands--at the northwestern edge of the province and the country. This is the ancient territory of the Haida nation, a seafaring, warfaring, slave-holding, trading and art-making people. It lies about 350 km (around 215 miles) north of Vancouver Island. Its southern portion, Gwai’i Haanas, is a protected National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, uninhabited except for seasonal Haida Watchmen who supervise it, controlling access to trails, seashore and

abandoned Haida villages decaying back into the forest; from these sites were taken many artifacts now at UBC's Museum of Anthropology. The Haida language is a linguistic isolate with several dialects; SFU supports a program there to record and teach it.

On the northern portion, one road connects six villages (one of which, until recently, called itself, with some grandiosity, Queen Charlotte City). Skidegate is an important cultural centre; carving and indigenous language are taught, and there is a fine small museum of artifacts and documents. Charles Edenshaw, Bill Reid, Robert Davidson and many other artists worked here and still do, weaving, painting, and carving in various materials. At Old Masset at the end of the road, artifacts are bought by collectors and institutions from around the world. Port Clements has a fascinating historical museum and is the site of the tragic story of the Golden Spruce. From the northern coast, a speck of southern Alaska--also part of Haida territory--is visible. The beaches are pristine, and isolation has given the area distinctive plant and animal species. If you walk along that road or by the tidal Tlell River, you get the scents of meadow, forest, and sea. I remember Emily Dickinson's lines: "Inebriate of air am I / And débauchée of dew".

But Haida Gwai'i is more than natural features; it's also the struggle to maintain them. Haida numbers fell drastically after contact with European colonial settlers and their diseases; today about 5,000 people live on Haida Gwai'i, fewer than half of them Haida. The first export of interest to Europeans and Russians was sea-otter pelts, resulting in the near extinction of that animal. Fisheries, whaling and timber soon took over, with devastating consequences for the environment and limited access to their traditional lands for the Haida people. Major corporate players in the province were the Hudson's Bay Company (early on), MacMillan Bloedel, Weyerhaeuser, Western Forest Products and, more recently, BC Hydro.

The territory's condition and its new name are due to Haida militancy. BC differs from other provinces

in that most of its land is unceded, i.e., lacking treaties with aboriginal inhabitants. Thus First Nations here have legal claims within the present colonial-settler system and have won significant court victories. First Nations blockades of logging roads were organized starting in the 70s; they continue to this day all over the province and the country to protect hunting, fishing and ceremonial sites from mining, dam construction, or new ski or golf resorts. One of the best known was at Clayoquot Sound near Tofino in 1993, preceded by several others there during the 80s. In Gwaii Hanaas, the long, militant 1985 blockade on Lyell Island, together with its ensuing legal cases and treaty agreements with federal and provincial governments, eventually produced the current cooperative system of governance. There are no guarantees for the future in this arrangement, as ownership remains tactfully undefined; and none of it compensates for Canada's national disgrace, the long genocidal attack on aboriginal people and cultures. But see Haida Gwai'i for yourself, and meet some of the people who were here first.

-Sheila Delany is a retired (2006) professor of English at Simon Fraser University.

References suggested to follow up:

John Vaillant, *The Golden Spruce: A true story of myth, madness and greed.*

Glen Coulthard, *Red skin, white masks. Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition.*

Karen Duffek, (ed.) *Bill Reid and beyond. Expanding on modern native art.*



Travelogue

Travelogues could be a new feature in this Newsletter. Perhaps some of our own members might be interested in contributing.

Reprinted by Permission from *The Newsletter of the Retirees' Association of Brock University.*

by Don MacRae

The Lungau Region of Austria

The Lungau region of Austria occupies a broad plateau, approximately 1100 metres above sea level, south of Salzburg. Its distinction as a UNESCO Biosphere Region highlights its unique traditions and its sustainable ecological diversity. For centuries the Lungau was the poorest region of Austria. Not easily accessible, except over the difficult passes of the Tauern Alps, it was mostly by-passed until the opening of the Tauern and Klatschberg Autobahn tunnels in the mid-1970s. But its isolation is what has contributed most to its attraction today.

Things are done today more or less as they always have been. But in the end this has been to the advantage of the inhabitants of the Lungau. The area is unspoiled by development and now there is an incentive to keep it that way. Instead of large factory farms and industrial development, tourism is now the mainstay of the economy and low-impact farming is the norm.

This is where we chose to spend our winter holiday in Austria. Having enjoyed our ski vacations for more than 30 years in the Stubai region south of Innsbruck, we decided to seek out new experiences (who says “more mature” folks can’t be adventurous?), and turned our attention to the Lungau. In spite of its interesting history and serene beauty it is still a forgotten region of Austria.

We reached our destination by bus (2 hours and 55 stops) from Salzburg passing through the Tauern

tunnel, which forms part of the main Autobahn joining Salzburg with the southern region of Carinthia (Kärnten) as well as Slovenia and Northern Italy. The tunnel has four lanes in two separate tubes, about 6500 metres long, so there is no longer any on-coming traffic. Sixteen years ago an accident and subsequent fire within the tunnel took the lives of 12 people and injured many more in a 60-vehicle pileup. This disaster convinced the authorities to begin again the construction of a second tube which had been abandoned in 1988.

The Lungau has the reputation of being the sunniest part of Austria and it was this that convinced us to give the area a try. We weren’t disappointed: during our entire stay we hardly saw a cloud in the brilliant blue sky. Through our research on the web, we found a marvellous “holiday house”, or apartment, 200 years old and fully renovated into three guest apartments plus living quarters for the owners, this place was fabulous. We had a huge, fully equipped kitchen, an extra-large bedroom and a spacious bathroom—all spotlessly clean. Our hosts were gracious and, above all, interested in what had brought two Canadians to their remote Austrian village. Over coffee we learned of the history of the house we were staying in and discussed the situation in contemporary Austria. This is the only way to get the feel of a country and its people; it’s far better than being locked up in a hotel room.

One might assume that agriculture would be a mainstay in the area, but we were told that the soil is not really very productive. The most lucrative agricultural product is the Lungau potato which thrives on about 150 hectares of sandy soil in the favourable climate of the region.

The lowly potato provides us with an interesting example of the isolation of the Lungau. Our host, whose roots in the area reach back for centuries, spoke the local dialect, as well as High German, of course, but what he said in his dialect was totally unintelligible to us. The word for a potato, for example, is “Eachtling”. Compare that with either “Kartoffel” or “Erdapfel”, the usual words for a potato in German, and you can see why we couldn’t understand a word he said to us.

Through the centuries the main source of income for the inhabitants was trade: the Lungau lay on the north-south trade route leading to Salzburg from Northern Italy and the Balkans. Historically gold and silver, zinc, cobalt and lead were all mined here until as late as 1980. But with the closing of the mines came unemployment and poverty. Jobs disappeared. Even today our host had to go to Vienna to find work, returning home only once a month. In the Middle Ages the locals were able to find some employment as packers and cartsmen along the north-south trade route I alluded to. But the real wealth fell to the aristocracy and the Church whose officials were able to extract tolls from travellers using the trade routes. The numerous castles in the region attest to that aspect of the Lungau's history.

On one of our excursions we visited one of these castles: Burg Mauterndorf. A "Burg" is a fortified castle; "Maut" is a toll; "Dorf" means village. From the name it is clear what the function of this castle was: from its strategic site above the town on the trade route, it took advantage of its position to tax the merchants on their way to and from Salzburg.

We learned that the meadows are covered with wildflowers in the summer and that the landscape has numerous marshes and peat bogs as well as woodland areas and glaciers at the higher levels. The biodiversity of the region led to its designation.

Although the skiing in the area is good, we decided that we would really need a car to get to the slopes. The bus service was not fully adequate for our needs and so we decided to hike instead. We walked and we walked and we walked. It was glorious: the charm of the houses, the beauty of the landscape, the brilliant blue skies and the friendliness of the people all contributed to making our holiday an ultimate experience.

On one of our hikes we were dropped off at the end of the world in a cluster of houses called Hintergöriach (two restaurants and a handful of houses/apartment hotels).



As you can see from this picture, if you crave the silence of nature, the beauty of the mountains and meadows, this is the place to be. Yes, we did note a few signs of humanity, but very few. We were essentially alone on our 12 km hike back to our apartment in Miesdorf-Mariapfarr.

Historically the Lungau is interesting. There is evidence that human settlement had found its way here in the Late Stone Age. Later it was inhabited by the Celts and then by the Romans. Four centuries of Roman rule have left concrete traces of their civilization such as the milestones that can be seen in the era. Later the Slavs and the Bavarians and even the Carolingian Franks left their mark on the region.

In the centre of it all was the church, pictured above, in Mariapfarr, now a pilgrimage church but first documented in 923 A.D. It was in this church that the Christmas carole "*Stille Nacht*" (*Silent Night*) was written; in fact, the church is called by most, the "Stille Nacht Kirche".

It was here in 1818, while he was serving as a pastor, that Josef Mohr wrote the words to *Silent Night*. Two years later, while he was a pastor in the village of Oberndorf near Salzburg, he asked his friend Franz Gruber to compose music to fit his poem. The result was the beloved carole, *Silent Night*.

We visited the church where we encountered a very friendly lady who willingly acted as our guide and

spent an hour showing us the treasures of the church and its related history, especially the details pertaining to the writing of *Silent Night*.

One of the most fascinating aspects of our stay in the Lungau was a natural phenomenon. Every morning we found crystals of ice literally growing on the branches of trees and on fence posts and rails. It was cold: minus 15 – 20 C. but there was little wind, so the cold was no problem at all. Overnight the moisture in the air froze on the trees posts and the crystals “grew” into the most marvelous patterns and shapes.

The Lungau introduced us to a new and fascinating part of Austria. Will we return? We hope so, probably in the summer and with a car, so we can visit the more remote parts of the plateau and enjoy the serenity of the mountains.

AROUND THE WORLD

This is a beautiful 15-minute video of certain cities and particularly enchanting natural sites in a few chosen countries. Absolutely worth seeing.

(Contributed by **Mary Pfister**.)

https://www.youtube.com/embed/ICFQS_ipzFY?rel=0

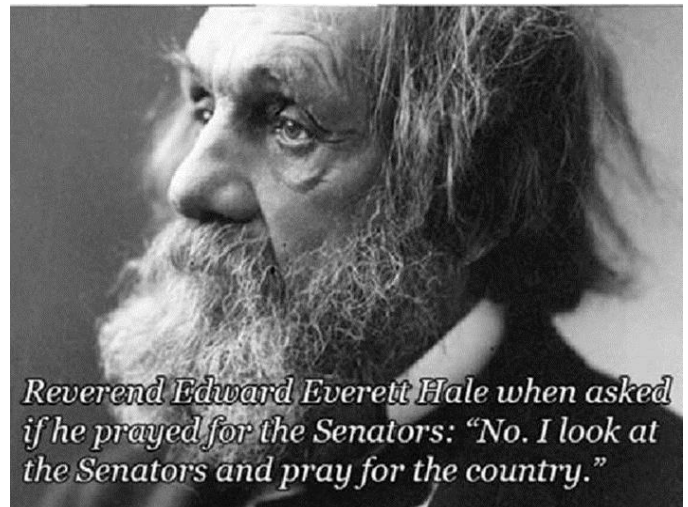
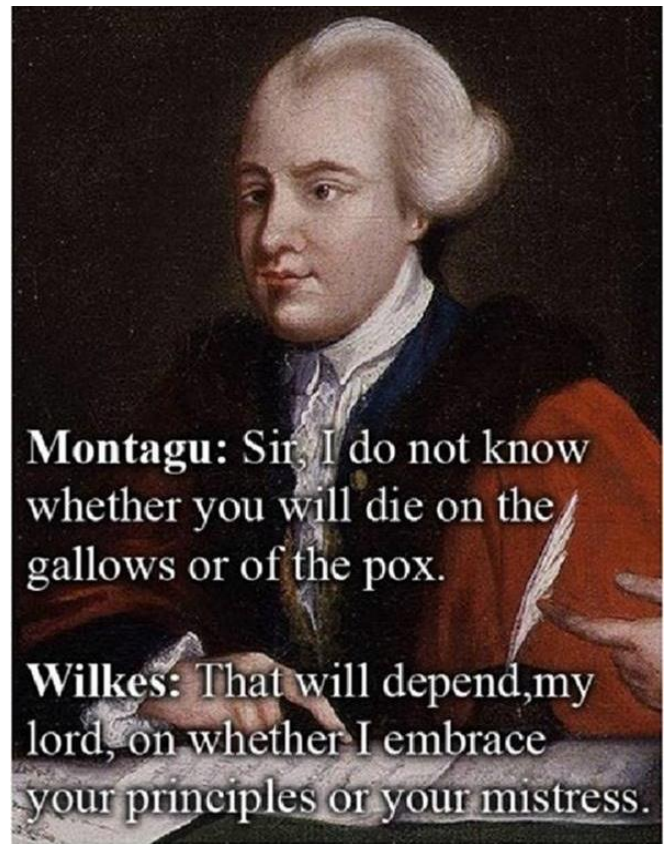
HUMOUR DEPARTMENT

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible.
George Burns

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year. Victor Borge

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. Mark Twain

(Contributed by **Ron Jackman**)



My luck is so bad that if I bought a cemetery, people would stop dying. Rodney Dangerfield

We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress.
Will Rogers

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