



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

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Dear YURA Members

As we write, April has treated us to more ice and snow, the robins are hopping around looking confused... but there is finally a hint of spring in the air. This leaves us hopeful that warm weather is not far off. The winter months in the office have been very quiet. We have added to our office volunteers this year and now have John Lennox and Charmaine Courtis on Tuesdays, John Wilson on Wednesdays, and Sara Kozlowski and Philippa Marchetti on Thursdays. Philippa will be doing some training and then will work with Sara going forward. It is gratifying to have members step forward to help.

The dates for the two theatre outings are now confirmed. The first is to Stratford to see the *Tempest*, on Tuesday June 12, 2018 and the second, to the Shaw to see *The Grand Hotel* is on October 4, 2018. There is capacity on these trips to accommodate both YURA members and their guests. Keep that in mind as you plan your summer schedule. Having been on a few of these outings now, I can tell you that it is always enjoyable and stress free.

We are delighted to announce that Doug Saunders, will be the guest speaker for the AGM in October. Mr. Saunders, a graduate of York University, is the international affairs correspondent for *The Globe and Mail*. He has won numerous writing awards, including the National Newspaper Award (the Canadian counterpart to the Pulitzer Prize) on five occasions, He has written three books, and has a fourth coming out that speaks to the policy challenges of Canada's population, both current and future. He will likely speak on that topic unless current events present a more tempting subject.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Annual General Meeting which is set for October 26, 2018.

We have continued with our fundraising efforts this year. Once again, a fundraising letter was sent by Charmaine Courtis, as co-president of YURA, reminding members of the awards and initiatives we support with our efforts and encouraging our members to consider these options for individual giving. Advancement has acknowledged our support of the students at York and will continue to work with us to highlight our efforts. As a result of our latest appeal, we saw individual donations to the three YURA-supported student scholarships, the York Camp Subsidy Fund and the YFS Food Bank. YURA has also supported for a third year the Middle School Initiative of the Access to Postsecondary Project which is based in the TD/York University Access Centre.

Once again, YURA will be well represented at the annual CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) to be held at Dalhousie between May 23 and May 25. Charmaine Courtis, Fred Fletcher, Bob Drummond and Mildred Theobalds will be in attendance. This year, we are particularly excited about our own Mildred Theobalds who will receive the Tribute Award at CURAC for her commitment and dedication of the last many years.

Anne-Marie Ambert is interested in receiving from YURA members more Reminiscences for the *Newsletter*. Who were you before your academic or professional career began? This is one of the interesting features of each newsletter and we strongly encourage you to consider submitting to Anne-Marie a brief memoir in the vein of what has appeared in the *Newsletter* in the past.

We have with this *Newsletter* decided to print one issue to cover both the spring and summer. We hope that you have a wonderful summer. Should you have any concerns, please contact us at

yura@yorku.ca or call us at 416 736-2100 ext. 70664. As always, thanks to all our volunteers who are so generous with their time and energy in support of the Association.

With best wishes,

Charmaine Courtis and **Ian Green**, Co-Presidents

In Praise of Mildred

Each year, CURAC (the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) issues to its member associations a call for nominations of individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their own local association. This recognition is known as the Tribute Award. On your behalf, YURA submitted the name of Mildred Theobalds for this award and we are delighted to announce that she has been recognized as a recipient and will receive the award in person at the annual meeting of CURAC in Halifax at the end of May.

Mildred was a mainstay of YURA as an office volunteer for fifteen years. She took on this role two years after her retirement and immediately set about to organize the YURA office. She became very active in the set-up and running of YURA's annual Showcase, was a resource for every aspect of YURA's day-to-day operations, never failed to pitch in when needed, and was an unfailing support during the many years of her contributing presence to the work of the Association.

Mildred's organizational skills, her personal warmth, her judgement, her energy, her loyalty, and her roles for many years as Secretary and then as Member-at-large on the Executive Committee have been a very important part of the daily work of YURA over a considerable number of years. Whatever she undertook to do was done. At all times, she has been the consummate example of volunteer commitment and professionalism -- both of these qualities being complemented by her warm good nature. Mildred remains a contributing and

reassuring presence in the Association. We were more than proud to nominate her for a Tribute Award and are more than happy at the recognition of her contribution through this richly deserved accolade. Congratulations, Mildred, and thank you from all of us for your open-handed good offices to the Association over the many years of your service. YURA is the richer for it.
-John Lennox, on behalf of YURA.



Mildred Theobalds

Life as it was back then

Our 22nd Reminiscence, entitled "Escaping from Hungary," is by Adrienne Dome. Adrienne retired from York in 2014. Upon retirement, she was the Biology Graduate Program Assistant.

The first 11 years (1945-1956) of my life were spent in Budapest. I was spoiled, being the only female child in the family and was showered with lots of attention from everyone. My biological father disappeared after my parents divorced, shortly after 1945 and I never knew him. My mother and I lived in my grandmother's house until I was 7. Housing was an enormous problem in

Budapest— usually the communist party members had priority to any available space. My grandmother owned her own house which was surrounded by quite a large property. My grandfather died during WW II, thus I never knew him either. My grandmother's house was not very modern: it lacked indoor plumbing and a washroom. A well was located outside the front door of the building and water had to be pumped and brought into the house for various chores. A wooden shed outhouse was used as the toilet. However, the property had lots of trees – e.g., prune trees, a giant cherry tree, etc. and a gazebo. Chickens and rabbits were housed in the backyard sheds. The chickens produced eggs and were also eaten. The backyard was my playground.

I remember having wonderful special toys to play with and one of my extra-curricular activities was ballet which I enjoyed tremendously. In school I was a good student, however grade 4 became a hurdle - this was the year geometry and algebra were introduced (much earlier than in Canada). Even though I excelled in math, I could not handle the new material. My mother hired a tutor to help me pass my exams. After this struggling year, math became my best subject.

In 1952, when I was 7, my mother remarried and we left my grandmother's house and moved into a one-room store front space, located in the apartment building that my step-grandparents operated as superintendents. We used my step-grandparents' bathroom. Their apartment was quite modern.

One year, as a school excursion, we went to an agriculture fair. To my mother's and step-father's surprise I arrived home with a 1-day old chick. I guess my love of birds and animals started way back in my childhood. I tried to raise the chick in my doll house, in the one-room store-front space, until it became a bit too big and had to be moved to the apartment's shed. Eventually, sickness overtook the chicken and died. I buried it in the back yard.

Life continued until the 1956 revolution. I remember being terrified from the extreme noise of

the continuous bombing and the movement of Russian tanks up and down the streets. On a number of occasions, I hid in the apartment building's laundry room. My mother and step-dad would not leave me by myself so they dragged me everywhere. In early December, when most of the fighting and other action subsided, my mother and step-dad, with me in tow, decided to go downtown to see the monstrosities left behind by the revolution. In the public square, there were communist members hanged by their neck. Public parks were converted to grave yards. Every other building had been destroyed by bombs, etc. It was an awful sight that one never forgets.

One day in December 1956, my mother and step-dad decided to leave Hungary following in the footsteps of others. It was not easy to leave Budapest as a family of 3. Russian soldiers were everywhere, watching. A scheme was formulated: we travelled to a Hungarian border town separately. My step-grandmother took me, by train, to visit friends she knew in a town near the Austrian border. My mother, disguised as a man, went with my uncle in his delivery truck. My step-dad went with my uncle's friend in his delivery truck. After a few days, when we had all arrived safely at the border town, my step-dad hired a guide to take us safely across the border.

One day before our departure, the guide and my step-dad reconnoitered the escape route we planned to take. At night on December 12, 1956 we started our walking trek through the muddy fields. Our only possessions were the clothes on our back and whatever little money my mother and step-dad had. After we had been walking for a while, suddenly we heard loud speakers announcing in German to "come this way, this is Austria." The Russians used this as a decoy to capture escapees. We disregarded the loud speakers and continued walking. Somewhat later, all of a sudden, a big German shepherd dog appeared in front of us. We did not dare move or we would have been attacked. Eventually, two border guards showed up at the other end of the long leash. Luckily, these were

Hungarian border guards from our Budapest neighbourhood, not Russian guards. With lots of negotiating and bribery, these guards continued guiding us towards our destination. Our Hungarian guide turned around and headed back home – to make arrangements to follow us to Austria at a later date. The Hungarian guards walked ahead of us and we followed somewhat further behind them. If they met Russian guards, they would greet them loudly in Russian and we were to hide until they said it was all right for us to continue.

At some point, the Hungarian guards informed us that they could not continue any further. They showed us a bright shining light in the distance and told us to follow the light, it was in Austria. We were exhausted by this time, and found some hay stacks and decided to bed down in them. The Hungarian guide's wife (she and her daughter were part of our group) informed us that the hay stacks look different than the ones constructed in Hungary, therefore we must be in Austria. All night we heard a tractor working the fields. In the morning, my step-dad went up to the tractor driver and learned from him that yes indeed we were in Austria-he spoke German. This farmer eventually showed us the direction to follow to freedom.

When we arrived in Austria, we were shipped to Stockerau and were housed in a refugee camp set up by the Red Cross. The Austrians hosted us graciously at my first Christmas away from home. Eventually, we learned that university students were housed in Vienna. Both my mom and step-dad were university students - so we moved to Vienna. We were housed in a castle! Food was plenty and we were given daily vitamins to supplement our diet.

My mom and step-dad started looking for places to emigrate to. My step-dad wrote to a friend in Toronto, who eventually sponsored us. On May 15, 1957 (after 5 months in Austria), the Canadian Air Force (via propeller plane) brought us to New Brunswick. From there, we arrived in Toronto by train. The Canadian government provided \$5 each and let us loose in Toronto. From the Union Station

train terminal we walked to Mimico to find my step-dad's friend. I remember it was a long, tiring walk.

Our very first living place in Toronto was a rented room in a house, sharing the kitchen and bathroom. The house owner had a son who spent his days sitting on the couch engrossed in watching some strange box. I hid next to the living room door in order to sneak a view of his entertainment, a TV. I was amazed. I had never seen anything like this before.

From May to September 1957, I was free to explore Toronto—I was 12. A family friend's wife and I spent most of our days in the movie houses (trying to learn some English). Some of the Hungarian business community, in the early days, were centred around Dundas, Spadina, College, Bloor Streets and the Kensington market area. The Hungarian Catholic church was located on the south-west corner of Spadina and Dundas. Later some of this area was taken over by China town. So, in September 1957, I started school at Ryerson Community School located on Dundas Street, between Spadina and Bathurst. For the first 4 months I was placed in a classroom with immigrant kids to learn English. My actual classroom schooling started January 1958 when I was placed in a regular classroom.

The revolution, escaping Hungary and coming to Toronto were very stressful for a young person. I remember having bad dreams for a number of years after we arrived. Mainly, I dreamt that the communists would come and take us back.

-- **Adrienne Dome**

IN MEMORIAM

Sylvia Bell	December 21, 2017
Francine Bernard	December 28, 2017
Margaret Bolingbroke	February 14, 2018
William Dale	February 18, 2018
John Dewhirst	October 21, 2017
Juan Garcia	January 17, 2018

Janice Grant	February 28, 2018
Carole Carpenter Henderson	October 18, 2017
Ronald Hoben	December 15, 2017
Michael Mitchie	October 14, 2017
Stefanie Neagle	December 31, 2017
Ben O	March 28, 2017
Jenny O	October 11, 2017

A Doctorate Worth Having

This acceptance speech was given by John Saul upon receipt last year of an honorary degree from the University of Johannesburg.

I'm pleased to be back at the University of Johannesburg only a year after I was last here. Much has happened in the interim but I think I saw some of the sparks when I was here last time. I gave a paper, some of you may recall, entitled 'The Struggle for South Africa's Liberation: Success and Failure' and I was honoured to have two veterans of the liberation struggle, Judge Albie Sachs and the ANC's Ben Turok, as commentators. The political atmosphere at the event was quite hot, however, and I thought, in retrospect, that it was a bit of a prefiguring of this past year's events.

My own comments, critical of the ANC and what I took to be that party's exaggerated deference to the apparent neo-liberal logic that has come, since liberation, to impose itself upon South Africa, seemed to arouse no negative response – indeed just the opposite. On the other hand, a large number of the students in attendance, while clearly respectful of the struggle credentials of my two commentators, were very far from being deferential to them. I thought at the time that both Albie and Ben were surprised at and perhaps even a little shaken by the aggressive, questioning, atmosphere of the seminar.

Of course you all know what happened in the months that followed, not in any way in response to the seminar, needless to say, but in response to the deep contradictions that the state and the ANC find themselves to be facing vis-à-vis South Africa's university students. But this is also true with respect to other social sectors (e.g. as

demonstrated by Marikana and by the protests of the urban poor within SA's civil society more generally). So I'm glad to be back here in SA to take some further soundings for myself of the political atmosphere...and want to thank UJ for making this possible. I also want to thank the University for granting me this honorary degree, not least because, many years ago and in a quite different academic atmosphere thousands of miles from here (at Princeton University in the U.S.) I was NOT granted the doctoral degree that I had actually earned. And thereby hangs an instructive story that I will share with you in a few minutes.

For I first came to Africa from Canada, my home and native land via the U.S. more than fifty years ago – to Tanzania – to do research for my doctoral thesis at Princeton on Tanzania's burgeoning rural marketing cooperatives. But this was a period in Tanzania full of promise, the years when Julius Nyerere was President and socialist possibilities were in the air. It was too exciting a place and time for my wife (who is also here today with me) and I to think to leave very quickly. So I signed on as a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam and we were there for the next seven years (and both our children, who also have come here from Canada for this UJ event) were born there as well.

But a distinctive brand of African Socialism was also born at that time too, with the Arusha Declaration, in Tanzania. And for seven years we lived the dream of a new kind of society in Africa that was being born there. The demise of that dream is a long and complicated story, one that I've been worrying over ever since, but the personal implications are also of interest and bring us back to the current moment. For I did return to North America and I did write my doctoral dissertation for Princeton – on, precisely, the prospects for socialism in Tanzania. But this was not the kind of topic that was popular within the world of American political science...and I myself had been in Tanzania too long and lived with its dream too intensely to conform to the models of "modernization theory" and other fetishes of American political science to write the kind of dissertation my professors wanted from me. And, of course, they flunked me.

My mother, rest her soul, was disappointed of course, and I was myself a bit flummoxed too – what was I going to do now? - although I was lucky enough to find a home at Toronto’s York University despite not having a doctorate (until now!) and to have there a fulfilling teaching career. And I also continued to struggle politically in Canada in support of southern African liberation and also to write quite a few books, mainly on southern Africa. Enough books, apparently, to qualify myself for the degree UJ is today granting me.

But from this experience I also learned one very big lesson that I would especially like to share with you today. It is that in the pursuit of a University degree you will learn skills important to making your opinion known as clearly, as carefully, and as eloquently as you possibly can; you will learn, in fact, how to think more clearly. But one thing you will not learn and that is: **what** to think. That you will have to figure out for yourself, while also letting the consequences be what they may.

At the same time, not having been granted, for my pains, a degree by Princeton, was a set-back, albeit one that I managed to survive. Still, from this story, you can get some sense of why this degree from UJ that I’m receiving from you is doubly important to me, both as a doctoral degree and a degree that I’ve earned in Africa, in my home away from home.

But let me hasten to add that my degree is not any more important to me than your own degrees, also granted today, are to you. For you are all aware of how much time and energy you have spent in order to obtain your degree and how much time, energy and resources your families have also devoted to making it happen. My congratulations to you and to your parents on your joint achievement.

And there is also a final point I would like to make. Again, I reflect back to my own years in Dar es Salaam and to a discussion we used to have amongst ourselves as teachers and with our students as fellow participants in the relatively privileged life offered at the University of Dar es Salaam – a life of learning and training and empowerment. For we sometimes asked ourselves: what are we actually

doing – helping merely to create new educated recruits to the country’s elite of the privileged, or helping to create a new cadre of committed intellectuals who can, in turn, help to make Tanzanians – all Tanzanians (or, in your case, all South Africans) – stronger agents of positive change.

I will leave it to you to decide which side of the growing divide in SA – between rich and poor, between the educated elite and the popular movement – you are to be on. Because for today, at least, I feel especially honoured just to be standing with you as a fellow degree holder of the University of Johannesburg! My thanks and best wishes to each of you on this special day for us all.

– **John Saul**

MOVING SENIORS: A NEW EXPLOITATIVE INDUSTRY?

If you have noticed, just perusing the web, there are now many companies that have sprouted to help/service our age groups as we are important demographically—hence as consumer groups. Some of these services are welcome and badly needed (home care) while others are questionable and even exploitative. In the latter category are some of the special moving companies catering to seniors and especially those seniors who are both moving and downsizing. In brief, I would suggest that if seniors are healthy and fit of mind, they should ask for referrals from people they trust who have moved recently to receive names of **general** moving companies (such as A.J. Campbell; 2 Men and a Truck; Great Toronto Movers; Two Small Men with Big Hearts Moving Company, as good examples). Second, avoid the ones with titles including “downsizing” and “seniors” or “white” or “red” coats. **Seniors should use a regular company that they would have used when in their forties or fifties.** Third, if seniors move to high-end Retirement Residences, they should be leery of the moving companies suggested—most are very expensive.

When using a regular moving company of good reputation, **all one pays for** are the hours by the number of men/women movers and packers, at time, including time on the road. These companies do not charge us for the expensive intermediaries that fancy senior downsizing and moving companies really are. The most expensive part of the move comes from them. For instance, they also contract general companies. While that moving company may charge \$ 2,500, the value added by the specialist seniors' movers will be an extra \$ 2,000-10,000 depending on the extra services they sell you—a small fortune. Generally, they add a person who supervises the movers. In my opinion, this is a waste because the movers always have a lead man or woman and you can tell them where things go.

However, seniors, like anyone else, have to be specific about the services they need. Generally, a regular mover will pack, prepare and wrap the furniture, move, place the furniture where wanted, and unpack (if asked) and place the items in their place. Anything else becomes an additional service. Other services including hanging the pictures frames or wall art work; taking down and hanging draperies or window coverings; installing computers and televisions come with a fat added fee. Some movers will suggest that they go and visit your new place and make a plan on a computer (this will cost \$ 500 to 1,500). And if seniors want the movers to help them downsize and dispose of items and furniture no longer wanted, the added cost may range from \$1,000 and up.

This said, frail seniors or persons whose parents are frail and very elderly and who do not live close may find comfort in these services and high prices. Seniors don't even have to be present! (In fact, one company insists that they not be.) It should also be noted that some of these companies are franchises and each franchise serves a different region of Toronto—and the services and prices (and especially the friendliness) may differ. Also the quotes given are not exactly transparent as they tend to bunch together a set of services or a sequence of

services while regular movers simply give the per hour price and specify any additional expenditure. Seniors beware.

–**Anne-Marie Ambert**

THE BOOK “DOING HARM”

The link below is a review of the very important book by Maya Dusenberg. The subtitle describes its contents well: The truth about how bad medicine and bad science leave women dismissed, misdiagnosed, and sick. This book should be read by all women.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/03/27/597159133/how-bad-medicine-dismisses-and-misdiagnoses-womens-symptoms>

This book was brought to my attention by **Polly Thompson**



GOOD READ—INDIGENOUS AUTHOR

Margaret Leitch writes: “This review will be of interest to anyone who wants to know more about our Indigenous writers. I first was given Richard Wagamese’s book on meditation and found it very interesting and insightful. The author is from Northwestern Ontario. I was then was given a

novel he wrote--one of many--entitled *Medicine Walk*. It is a very interesting story about a boy who goes in search of his birth father in order to learn more about him. He rides his horse to a town where he finds his father is near death as a result of years of drinking. Both then leave on a hard journey into backcountry's mountainous scenery to find a place where his father, Eldo, could be buried as a warrior. During the trip, he hears his father's story and through this, discovers a life and history he was not aware of. This book is filled with adventure and pictures of nature and our connection to it. I found it a good read. Hope you do too."

ANALYSIS OF THE FEBRUARY 14 PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING INDIGENOUS ISSUES

<http://www.oktlaw.com/can-canada-recognize-whats-front-face-450-years/>

ARTICLE ABOUT THE MURDERS OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN THUNDER BAY

The February issue of the *Walrus* provides background information for the contents of the book listed below: <https://thewalrus.ca/the-deadly-racism-of-thunder-bay/> <<https://thewalrus.ca/the-deadly-racism-of-thunder-bay/>

ANOTHER GOOD INDIGENOUS BOOK

Fallen Feathers. 2017. The author, Tanya Talaga, has won the prestigious Taylor Prize and was short-listed for several other awards. It focuses on the seven Indigenous high-school students who died in Thunder Bay, so far away from their families.

A NEW INTERACTIVE CBC WEBSITE

This web site measures the progress (and lack of progress) on the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After you click on it, please go to the part where they present little flames that you can click on individually: really interesting.

<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>

<<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>>

(The four items above are provided by the leaders of the residents' **Indigenous Awareness Group** at Christie Gardens, which is my retirement residence. Names of contributors cannot be given for reasons of confidentiality.)

INTERPRETING CANADA'S MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAiD) LEGISLATION

From the **Institute for Research on Public Policy**

The entire text can be found on irpp@irpp.org

Summary:

"Uncertainty about the meaning of specific terms in the Canadian MAiD legislation puts Canadians at risk in a number of ways. Eligibility for MAiD may be determined too broadly or too narrowly, and there may be arbitrary inequality of access when the various MAiD assessors and providers interpret the law differently. In this new IRPP report, the authors identify six key phrases in the current law that urgently need clarification. They explain how these phrases are generating interpretive uncertainties, propose an interpretation for each phrase and justify each interpretation. The aim of this report is to determine the most defensible interpretations of the legislation, using the tools of statutory interpretation supported by the relevant clinical and other forms of expertise."

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