



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

Winter 2019

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Welcome to 2019! We hope that your holiday with friends and family was fulfilling, and we wish you happiness and good health throughout the year.

Your YURA executive already has a number of events planned for the new year, and more are in the planning stage. Our spring theatre outing at Stratford will be on June 18th: *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The fall date for the Shaw Festival is in the process of being finalized. More specific information about reserving tickets will be sent to you closer to the event dates. Our Annual General Meeting will be on Friday, October 25, and Showcase for 2019 will be on Tuesday, November 12. Building on the success of our visit to the Bata Shoe Museum on November 20th, 2018, more small excursions of this nature are being planned. Please let us know if you have suggestions.

YURA had a busy and successful fall, beginning with our theatre trip to the Shaw Festival on October 2nd to see *The Grand Hotel*. We had 40 participants. It was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy superb musical theatre, and to renew acquaintances with long-time friends on the bus and over lunch.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Friday, October 26th, with Doug Saunders, the Globe and Mail's columnist on international affairs, as our guest speaker (see photos on pages 3 and 4). Doug's presentation on the history and potential for population growth in Canada was captivating, leading to animated lunch-time chatter. Three new members-at-large were elected to the YURA executive for a two-year term: Jane Grant, David Leyton-Brown, and Savitsa Sevigny. We bid farewell to two retiring executive members: Jean Levy, and Ross Rudolph. Jean has been instrumental in organizing our theatre trips for the past few years, and Ross has created a tradition of twice-yearly presentation skills workshops for graduate students, hosted by YURA. Although John Lennox retired as YURA co-president at our 2017 AGM, he has continued to provide his advice and support on the executive as past co-president, and

we are enormously grateful for his continued contribution. The AGM was attended by about 75 people, and was our first event in the New Student Centre.

Our annual Showcase, held on November 13th, raised \$1800 for YURA's student bursaries and awards. Not only did Showcase give us presence in the university community, it was a lot of fun. It was a chance for YURA member to donate re-giftable items, as well as baked goods. Thanks to our 30 dedicated volunteers, led by Pat Murray and Steve Dranitsaris, and the vendors who participated. A special thanks to Noel Corbett this year – his last year -- and for his many previous years.

Our visit to the Bata Shoe Museum, followed by lunch, on November 20 had twenty-one participants, and was a great success. On November 21, YURA volunteers hosted a presentation skills workshop for graduate students.

Thanks to John Wilson, Sara Kozlowski, Philippa Marchetti, and John Lennox who volunteer a day a week in the YURA office in Central Square, and without whose help we could not maintain our regular office hours. Having people in the office to greet YURA members and direct their inquiries is a rewarding activity. Please let us know if you would like to volunteer.

We are grateful for the support of all of our members. Please feel free to contact us with your questions and concerns by telephone (416-736-2100 ext. 70664) or email at yura@yorku.ca.

With our best wishes,

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

York University Retirees' Association – 2018 AGM

YURA'S AGM GUEST SPEAKER – DOUG SAUNDERS



Doug Saunders writes the *Globe and Mail's* international-affairs column. He has been a writer with the *Globe* since 1995, and has extensive experience as a foreign correspondent, having run the *Globe's* foreign bureaus in Los Angeles and London.

He was born in Hamilton, Ontario, and educated in Toronto, where he also attended York University. After early success in magazines and journalistic research, he first worked for the *Globe and Mail* as a general news reporter, then as an editorial writer and feature writer. In 1996, he joined the weekend section where he created a specialized writing position on media, culture, advertising and popular phenomena. In 1999, he became the paper's Los Angeles bureau reporter, covering both social and political stories in the American west and the broader developments in wider U.S. society. From 2003 until 2012, he was the paper's London-based European bureau chief, responsible for the paper's coverage of more than 40 countries. He has also done extensive reporting in the Middle East, North Africa, the Indian Subcontinent and East Asia; from 2013 to 2015 he was the paper's online opinion editor and creator of the online *Globe Debate* section.

He has won the National Newspaper Award, the Canadian counterpart to the Pulitzer Prize, on five occasions, including an unprecedented three consecutive awards for critical writing in 1998-2000, and awards honouring him as Canada's best columnist in 2006 and 2013. He has also won the Stanley McDowell Prize for writing and has been

shortlisted for a National Magazine Award. His work has been awarded the Schelling Prize in Architectural Theory, the National Library of China Wenjin Book Award and the Donner Prize.

He has published three books. His first, *Arrival City* (2010) chronicled the unprecedented wave of rural-to-urban migration and the rise of urban immigrant enclaves, using firsthand reporting on five continents. It has been published in eight languages and has won numerous honours, including the Donner Prize for best book on politics and a runner-up for the Gelber Prize for the world's best international-affairs book. His second, *The Myth of the Muslim Tide* (2012), examined the effects of immigration from Islamic countries to the West and has been published to acclaim in Canada, the United States and Germany. His third, *Maximum Canada: Why 35 Million Canadians Are Not Enough* (2017) is a detailed examination of Canada's history of population loss, its current problems of underpopulation and the obstacles to future population growth.



Ian Greene welcomes Doug Saunders to the AGM podium



AGM photos taken by Steve Dranitsaris



**YURA AGM Speech by Recipient
of YURA's William W. Small Award,
Kyra Dougherty**

First, I'd like to begin by saying how grateful I am to speak here in front of you today. This award provided relief in a time of stress and hardship for me.

For a little background information, my dream is to become a scientific researcher in the field of microbiology and genetics. I have a particular interest in agriculture because my ultimate goal is to contribute to the development of a more sustainable

system that can adapt to climate change. I have many years of education ahead of me before I can make my dream a reality.

Last year had been an especially heavy load. At that time, I was taking courses that were particularly challenging for me. In order to ensure that I understood the concepts properly, I dedicated significantly more time to studying than is usually required for such a course load. Between my part-time job, my studies, and seeking laboratory work for the summer, I found myself struggling to find a moment to myself to unwind. My days were filled with work and studies, and my evenings were spent combing over previous chapters. I quickly began to feel burnt out.

Receiving this award provided me the opportunity to cut back a little on my working hours, allowing me the chance to take a breath and re-evaluate how to more effectively use my energy to find success in my education. I was also immensely flattered and humbled by the idea that someone out there believed in me enough to give me this award. It solidified in my mind that I was, without a shadow of a doubt, on the right path.

To the York University Retirees' Association and to the many donors of this award, I want to sincerely thank you for helping me. I feel indebted to you. I want to make it right by continuing my hard work to achieve my goals so that, one day, I can be of service to the scientific community, and to Canada as a whole.

Thank you for believing in me. Thank you.

--Kyra Dougherty



Charmaine Dimick and Ian Green with Kyra Dougherty, recipient of YURA's William W. Small Award

In Memoriam

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Allan Sangster | June 9, 2018 |
| Elizabeth Bentham | September 17, 2018 |
| Robert Cox | October 9, 2018 |
| Maurice Mann | October 14, 2018 |
| John D. McFarland | October 17, 2018 |
| Barbara Everison | November 9, 2018 |
| Mona Ambrose | November 9, 2018 |
| Leona Burns-Davie | November 11, 2018 |
| Bella Kruglyak | November 15, 2018 |
| William Gault | November 19, 2018 |

Life as it was back then: Reminiscence

Our 24th Reminiscence is authored by Wendy Ounpuu who is a resident at Christie Gardens where I also live. I ran out of YURA volunteers and, as I know that our members like to read these Reminiscences, I went farther afield. Wendy retired from nursing in 1990 because the work had become too hard on her back. She is also a gifted artist. Wendy has entitled her Reminiscence "My Early Years."

"I was conceived by an eighteen-year-old woman, in 1934, just as the Depression really got under way. My parents, Lorna Bullen and Keith MacDonald, got married, and, within two years, my brother, Tristan, was born. Life was not easy for

them and their marriage quickly broke down under the strain. Our father left to go to Barbados, leaving our mother, who had been training to be a concert pianist, to struggle along. There was definitely no demand for concert pianists during the Depression! Later on she bred and sold purebred dogs on which she was able to make a fairly good living as she was well known in the town of Penzance, U.K., where she lived.

Within a short period of time, we moved to two villages but I'm not sure how long we stayed in each. However, I do remember that the three of us were living in our own house. One day, when Tristan and I were playing in the front garden, an elderly woman walked up our driveway. We were both curious and when she got near to us, she asked "What are your names?" I responded "I am Wendy and this is my little brother, Tristan." "Where are your shoes?" was the next question. I sanctimoniously told her "Our Mummy thinks it's much better for our feet not to wear shoes."

She 'harrumphed', marched up to the front door and was let into the house by our mother. The very loud shouting that went on after that fascinated both Tristan and me. We sat quietly near a window so that we could hear what they were saying. We actually were unable to understand what they were shouting about. After she left, we quickly went inside and found our mother crying in the kitchen. She put her arms around us both. Since neither of us really knew what was happening, we went back outside to play again. That night, our mother came into the bedroom, woke me up, and said "You must always remember, 'Granny Phelan [*their father's mother*] is a very wicked woman.'" I did remember that for a long time, and, in fact, I remember it still.

A few days later, our mother and her friend, Bernie, loaded up their car with most of our favourite toys and belongings after which we set forth on what seemed like a very long journey to Brockenhurst in Hampshire and then went into Granny Phelan's house carrying all of our belongings with Bernie's help. Tristan started wailing loudly. I hissed at him

“Stop crying. Granny won’t keep us if you cry.” As we walked up the path to Granny Phelan’s house, I realized we were going to live with the ‘wicked woman’. Then I started to wail as well. [*Ed.’s Note: Wendy did not see or communicate with her mother for 23 years when her mother decided she wanted to come to Canada from Penzance to see her three grandchildren.*]

We didn’t need to worry about her keeping us. Within a very few weeks, she enrolled us both in a convent boarding school (Bournemouth) where I stayed for seven years (I was 5 at the time). I loved living in The Convent of the Religious of the Cross. I was getting a very good education: when I got to Canada at about the age of twelve, I was ahead of my grade as far as academics were concerned. I probably was immature but I had many years to work on that. About three weeks after our arrival at the convent, the boys’ section had a devastating fire and was closed. Tristan, who was 3 then, was sent back to Granny’s house. She found another boarding school that took three-year- old children, and she went back to her life again.

When I was twelve and Tristan was ten, we were told we were going to Canada to be reunited with our father who we hadn’t seen for nine years. At that time, he had remarried a woman named Marjorie, and they had had two girls, Susan and Angela, ages three and one. We were both very excited, but Tristan and I had seen little of each other during the intervening years. We travelled with Granny Phelan across the Atlantic Ocean on the Aquitania, a ship which had been a fashionable touring ocean liner for wealthy travelers in its better days. It was used as a troop ship during the war to take soldiers from North America to the U.K. So I was quite disappointed when I saw the grey paint all over this formerly grand ship.

We had a wonderful time running around the ship, and Granny Phelan had difficulty rounding us up to get us into bed in the evenings on the seven -day voyage. Little did we know that our lives were soon going to take a drastic turn, and not for the better.

We arrived in Halifax in April 1947. We then got on a train for the trip to Montreal and within a very few weeks, we moved to Midland, Ontario to live in our stepmother’s parents’ house. We were enrolled in the Midland Public School which we attended for that year before yet another move to Toronto.

Our lives then spiraled out of control. Our stepmother did not want two more children to look after and she decided that we could work inside and outside the house, all the time being verbally and physically abused by her. We were both short, a terrible thing according to her. I was assigned to work inside the house and Tristan was assigned to work outside, which included snow shoveling, gardening, and anything else that needed to be done—we were only 13 and 11, respectively. Life in our boarding schools had not trained us for this sort of work. I was given the job of meal preparation, washing all the dishes, ironing for six people, and a lot of the cleaning in the four-bedroom house which was now our home. As a result of all this, my school work suffered for the first time in my life. I had always been a good student.

Marjorie said once to our father, “I did not expect to have to look after your bastards”. There was dead silence afterwards and she came to the side of my bed that evening and woke me up to apologize. I pretended to be asleep and she stayed there for about ten minutes and then left. It was a very difficult dilemma for my father and me. It was never mentioned again.

One of the ways we both dealt with our situation which felt intolerable to both Tristan and me at the time, was by finding paid work. At 10, Tristan became a paper boy and delivered some enormous number of papers every day - I believe it was 360 *Globe and Mails* every morning and 250 *Toronto Stars* every evening. The money from these ventures helped him to run away from Canada at the age of fifteen, about which more will come later. I worked as a “farmerette” in the farms of southern Ontario for the two summers before I turned fifteen.

This involved my being at the corner of Jane and Bloor at 7.00 am to be picked up in the farmer's open truck. We picked raspberries, strawberries and blueberries, and, when the berries were over, we weeded the fields of vegetable. We received 4 cents a basket for the fruit and 35 cents an hour for the weeding. It was the first money I had ever had.

When I was fifteen in the summer of 1949, the Bell Telephone Company trained me to be a long distance operator. When I turned 16 in the autumn of that same year, I became a full-fledged long-distance telephone operator and worked every weekend and one evening during the week, until I left home to go into nursing training. We had to give our father 20% of our pay cheque. I had to show him my pay stub to be sure I was giving him the full 20%.

I cannot leave out the sexual abuse by my new grandfather, Marjorie's father, which started during that time. I experienced this during the years between my arrival in Canada in 1947 and 1950. It started when I was twelve and finally stopped when I was fifteen. I was unable to get away from him. We were living in his house for about one year, and he came to visit his daughter, my stepmother, in her house for another two years. It is hard to believe that no one knew what was going on. When I did tell my stepmother what he was doing, she said "Pull up your socks and get on with it." Much later, I thought she may well have experienced the same thing, perhaps by her father?

I loved working as a telephone operator, but I was still living at home and Grandpa was often there. One way I could move out of the house would be to go in training to be a nurse. I would live in residence and I would have room and board in payment for the work I would do while training. I applied at The Wellesley Hospital and was accepted. In fact, after I went in training, I never lived at home again. I loved living in the residence and I loved nursing. For the first time in my life, I was thanked by the recipients of my work, i.e. my patients. The large building in which I lived, is still

on the corner of Sherbourne and Wellesley Streets, but it is now filled with doctors' offices.

Meanwhile, when Tristan was fifteen, he organized his "running away" to England to go back to our biological mother. He had gone through our father's papers and found the necessary documents. He secretly communicated with our mother, Lorna, and she was delighted to have her son back in her life again. Tristan never told me his plans to avoid my getting into trouble. Apparently Tristan had not gone camping with the Boy Scouts, as he had told us he was doing. By the time he left Canada at the age of fifteen, he had not belonged to the Scouts for more than two years! He was in the U.K. by the time we learned this. He had been helped financially in his adventure by two friends of our parents and the United Church minister, Reverend Lautenschlager, who had known how desperate he was. I was 17 at the time and had a boyfriend, who I subsequently married, so his departure didn't affect me as much as it should otherwise have.

--Wendy Ounpuu

From Elizabeth May, Green Party

(October 21, 2018) Dear Concerned Citizen, I am writing to you today about an important Government of Canada consultation on Canada's International Investment Agreements (FIPAs), also known as Investor-State Dispute Settlements (ISDS). FIPAs (ISDS) have profound impacts on our day to day lives, yet so few Canadians know about how they work or are aware they even exist. Over the last few decades, international free trade agreements have become an important part of Canada's economy. This growth is why it is so critical to make sure we have fair and progressive trade policies. Despite the acknowledged benefits, there are some clauses and sections in these agreements that are not balanced and put foreign and corporate business interests ahead of Canadian interests. While trade agreements increasingly include investor protection, such protections have nothing to do with trade. FIPAs (ISDS) exist to increase the rights of forging corporations.

The inclusion of FIPAs (ISDS) in modern-day trade agreements is an affront to our democracy. These provisions allow investors (including state-owned enterprises) to claim damages against the Canadian government, often in secret, for decisions taken at the municipal, provincial, territorial or federal level that result in the reduction of their expectation of profits. What this means is that if we attempt to improve environmental laws in Canada, any foreign corporation that potentially will lose profits due to us protecting our natural environment can sue Canada. These charges are often arbitrated in secret. A recent tribunal decision saw Canada lose to a US-based company, because we rejected their application to build an environmentally dangerous quarry. Now Bilcon is demanding \$580 million in damages. The arbitration process has been shown in countless decisions globally to generally favour the larger economy in the dispute.

Today I am asking you to help me ensure as a country we move in the right direction on trade, by:

- Participating in the government's online consultation taking place on PlaceSpeak. This consultation closes for submissions on October 28th.
- Signing the Green Party of Canada's petition calling for an end to ISDS clauses in trade agreements.

Citizen pressure can make a difference. We recently had a victory in the removal of the original ISDS provisions – Chapter 11 in NAFTA. We must continue the precedent set by this and remove all such perverse agreements.

[...] Foreign corporations have repeatedly wrangled and won multi-million dollar settlements from Canada. I am certain no Canadian company will ever benefit from these provisions in our trade agreements. Canada will lose -- not once but over and over again. All Canadians should appreciate how these agreements impact our lives, and it is up to citizens like you to help further this discussion with our government and communities.

Thank you for taking the time to be engaged in our democracy.

Yours truly,

--Elizabeth May

[Ed.'s Note: I apologize to the YURA member who sent this piece: I failed to register his name for attribution purposes.]

HUMOUR DEPARTMENT

The Washington Post published the winning submissions to its yearly contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common words.

And the winners are:

1. **Coffee**, n. The person upon whom one coughs.
2. **Flabbergasted**, adj. Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained.
3. **Abdicate**, v. To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. **Esplanade**, v. To attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. **Willy-nilly**, adj. Impotent.
6. **Negligent**, adj. Absent mindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.
7. **Lymph**, v. To walk with a lisp.
8. **Gargoyle**, n. Olive-flavored mouthwash.
9. **Flatulence**, n. Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.
10. **Balderdash**, n. A rapidly receding hairline.
11. **Testicle**, n. A humorous question on an exam.
12. **Rectitude**, n. The formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
13. **Pokemon**, n. A Rastafarian proctologist.

14. **Frisbeetarianism**, n. The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.

15. **Circumvent**, n. An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.

This has been around before, but more of it is coming to pass. (Food for thought.)

CALLER: Is this Gordon's Pizza?

GOOGLE: No sir, it's Google Pizza.

CALLER: I must have dialed a wrong number. Sorry.

GOOGLE: No sir, Google bought Gordon's Pizza last month.

CALLER: OK. I would like to order a pizza.

GOOGLE: Do you want your usual, sir?

CALLER: My usual? You know me?

GOOGLE: According to our caller ID data sheet, the last 12 times you called you ordered an extra-large pizza with three cheeses, sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms and meatballs on a thick crust.

CALLER: OK! That's what I want

GOOGLE: May I suggest that this time you order a pizza with ricotta, arugula, sun-dried tomatoes and olives on a whole wheat gluten free thin crust?

CALLER: What? I detest vegetables.

GOOGLE: Your cholesterol is not good, sir.

CALLER: How the hell do you know?

GOOGLE: Well, we cross-referenced your home phone number with your medical records. We have

the result of your blood tests for the last 7 years.

CALLER: Okay, but I do not want your rotten vegetable pizza! I already take medication for my cholesterol.

GOOGLE: Excuse me sir, but you have not taken your medication regularly. According to our database, you only purchased a box of 30 cholesterol tablets once, at Drug RX Network, 4 months ago.

CALLER: I bought more from another drugstore.

GOOGLE: That doesn't show on your credit card statement.

CALLER: I paid in cash. I have other sources of income.

GOOGLE: That doesn't show on your last tax return unless you bought them using an undeclared income source, which is against the law.

CALLER: WHAT THE HELL?

GOOGLE: I'm sorry, sir, we use such information only with the sole intention of helping you.

CALLER: Enough already! I'm sick to death of Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and all the others. I'm going to an island without internet, cable TV, where there is no cell phone service and no one to watch me or spy on me.

GOOGLE: I understand sir, but you need to renew your passport first. It expired 6 weeks ago.
(Contributed by Mary Pfister)

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