



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

Fall 2020

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

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

It has been a summer that we have never before experienced, and we hope it never recurs.

Some of us have been busier than ever before because of extended family responsibilities, or our volunteer work. Some of us have been searching for something we can do to help.

Nineteen (19) of our members have signed up for the **Scotiabank Charity Challenge** by agreeing to walk 5 km any time in October and by finding sponsors to contribute to our grad awards. To date, they have already raised more than \$ 20,000!

Every year, the graduate students we have supported through our awards have testified that they could not have continued without our help. This year, that help is more than ever needed. Some promising grad students will drop out without our help. Please consider helping grad students in need by sponsoring one of our York University team members, or by signing up to walk/run for us in the virtual marathon at any time in October. It has never been easier. You just have to register and then find sponsors. You can do your 5 km any time in October.

Here is the link to donate:

<https://raceroster.com/events/2020/27138/2020-scotiabank-toronto-waterfront-marathon/fundraising-organization/24199>.

To sign up to do the walk or run, follow the instructions on the York University Retirees' Association web page:

<https://yura.info.yorku.ca/scotiabank-virtual-charity-challenge-2020/>. If you need any help, contact Ian at igreene@yorku.ca.

You will see on our YURA website that we have added the **membership renewal form** for you to download and complete if you have not already renewed your membership for 2020-2021. We have been processing membership renewals all summer,

trying to keep up with the mail and getting the memberships out. To date, more than 300 of our members have renewed. But there are still some of you who have not returned your forms electronically or by post. We encourage you to do so according to the instructions which are on our YURA web page. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so. If you need additional help with this, please contact us by phone or email at yura@yorku.ca and we can assist. Our office is closed due to the health emergency, but we monitor our email and telephone messages from our homes.

We are looking for **volunteers** to help us with the office hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays before and after noon hours once the university re-opens and during Covid, monitoring telephone messages and YURA email from your home. If you have an interest in doing so, please contact us at yura@yorku.ca

Many of you will have noticed that we have new **activities** advertised for the fall. Of course, at this time all of them are virtual – available on-line. If you have any ideas for on-line activities for our members during this pandemic, please send an email to Donna Smith at djsmith612@gmail.com

We are delighted that **Royston James has agreed to be our speaker at the YURA Annual General Meeting on Friday, October 30th, via Zoom**. For many years, he has been a prominent urban affairs columnist for the Toronto Star. Like many of us, he is easing into retirement. You will receive an email invitation to join our AGM from York's Learning Technology Services. Please save that email message, and then click on it 15 minutes prior to our October 30, 11 a.m. meeting. If you have never used Zoom before, please contact us at yura@yorku.ca, and one of us will arrange to help you set up prior to the meeting. You can also join by telephone if you do not have computer access,

and the telephone instructions are included in the email you will receive from Learning Technology Services.

We very much look forward to “seeing” you at the AGM, and we appreciate your fundraising help for the graduate awards. Through small steps, we can make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

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

Life As It Was Back then: Reminiscence

Our 31st Reminiscence is authored by Ian Greene. When Ian retired in 2013, he was Master of McLaughlin College and a Professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration. He has chosen to entitle his reminiscence, “A Kid in a Small Prairie Town in the ‘50s and ‘60s”.

I grew up in Innisfail, Alberta – a small town of 1,000 people about 100 km. north of Calgary. My Dad, the local dentist, was a veteran of the First World War. His stories captured my imagination and nurtured my interest in Canadian history and politics. Dad served as a signalman at the Battle of Vimy Ridge (1917), a key turning point in the war. This was the battle that laid the groundwork for Canada becoming a completely independent country. Neither the French nor the British had been able to capture Vimy Ridge – a key strategic site – but 100,000 Canadians captured Vimy in a few hours with insightful planning and relatively small loss of life. After Vimy, it was clear that Canada should not be subservient to Britain, and Canada became fully independent in 1926.

After Vimy, Dad joined the Royal Flying Corps, trained and somehow survived. After the war, he enrolled in dental school at the U of T, graduating

in 1924. He met my mother in Toronto, where her family had settled after emigrating from Scotland. Dad decided to set up practice in Innisfail because half his family lived in Victoria and Vancouver, and the other half in Saskatchewan, and he could visit both parts of the family from Innisfail. Besides, the Innisfail district had some of the best farmland in Alberta and had no dentist, so Dad thought he would likely be able to pay his bills. Mom joined Dad in Innisfail in 1926 after he had established himself. They soon had two daughters. By 1947, the daughters had grown up and moved to Calgary, and Mom and Dad built their retirement home. Then surprise – I was born in 1948. (My two sisters, now 90 and 94, are happy and healthy and living in Calgary.)

My earliest memories are building sand castles on the beach in the summers at nearby Sylvan Lake (where my parents had a cottage previously owned by Governor General Roland Michener’s family), helping my parents rake and burn leaves in the fall (when burning leaves was permissible), making snow forts in the winter (in the days when we had really cold winters), and getting my boots hopelessly stuck in the mud in the spring. There were no concrete sidewalks, and only a few wooden ones, so spring muds were unavoidable.

Every morning, winter or summer, milk was delivered to our house by horse and cart. The horse knew exactly which houses to stop at while the milk man carried bottles from the cart to the houses. I got up early every morning to watch the ritual.

I survived two years of private kindergarten, where we got our hands slapped if we giggled during the morning prayer, and we learned to play pick-up sticks with spaghetti. When Grade One came, it was in an old two-storey, eight-room red brick schoolhouse with a steeple on top housing a huge bell that rang to summon children to school and

could be heard over the whole town. School was generally fun, except for the lingering fear of one day being called to the vice-principal's office – which meant the strap would probably be administered to one hand for a minor offence, or both for a major one. Somehow, I made it through without being strapped, though came close several times. I remember the smell of the oiled floors, the hefty wooden desks bolted to floor tracks, and the ink wells and jars on the desks. Recess was spent playing broom ball in the winter, and baseball or soccer in the fall and spring. After school activities included cub scouts, piano lessons, and choir practice.

Our home was one of the first to have a black-and-white television in 1953. My friends came to my house after school to watch Howdy Doody. One year for Christmas I received a Howdy Doody puppet. My friends and I made several more puppets. We put on amazing puppet shows for our parents and their friends and charged the same as admission as the local theatre: 5 cents.

There was a vacant wooded lot next to my best friend's house, and several of us boys pretended it was our own independent country. We built forts, elected governments, put down rebellions, and created prosperity. It was devastating when someone bought the lot, destroyed the forest, and built a house. We then moved on to electronics and learned to build our own transistor radios and transmitters. We sometimes got into trouble interfering with the radio or television reception of neighbours.

1955 was the 50th anniversary of the creation of the province of Alberta. Those of us in the elementary grades in the red brick schoolhouse were marched next door into the gymnasium of the tiny high school, where we heard a day of speeches about how far the province had come in 50 years. We heard many stories about the hardships faced by the

pioneers. Of course, I had already heard many stories from my parents about the challenges of living in Innisfail in the 1920s. Electricity had been available only for two hours a day. The rest of the time, my Dad filled teeth with a foot-operated drill. Water came from a pump well in the back yard. During the Depression, Dad was often paid with vegetables or eggs, and once with a cow, which he kept in the back yard and milked. In 1958, the Alberta government decided to build large schools in towns like Innisfail, and bus children in from the farms in a 30-mile radius. Suddenly, Innisfail went from having a very small school to having one of the largest schools in the province. This change attracted superb teachers. My Junior High and High School classes were for the most part well-taught and engaging. My friends and I got permission to create a school "radio station" so that we could "broadcast" the latest hit music – like the Beatles and Herman's Hermits – through the school PA system.

I had enjoyed my piano lessons since kindergarten, and when I reached Grade 7 Mom told me that I could quit if I wanted to. However, my grade 7 teacher introduced me to jazz, and as a result I developed a whole new appreciation – guess what – of classical music. It occurred to me that Bach and Beethoven intended their music to be as much fun as Dave Brubeck's jazz. (What a thrill it was for me, 50 years later as Chair of Senate at York, to help present Brubeck with York's Hon. Doc.) I asked my parents if I could continue taking lessons, and eventually earned my Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto piano teacher's diploma in the same year as completing Grade 12. Along the way, I was recruited to be the church organist in our little Presbyterian church, and I had fun trying to perk up the Sunday services on the Hammond organ with a jazzy beat to the otherwise stodgy hymns. Sunday attendance seemed to increase.

At the start of Grade 10, the high school teachers wanted to change the format of the Student Council to a parliamentary system so that students would learn about parliamentary government. Of course, we students objected, because student council was to plan fun activities, not to learn about government. I suggested that perhaps Student Council could remain the same, but the school could organize a model parliament. The teachers agreed and appointed me to organize the model parliament. (Not the last time I suggested something and then was appointed to organize it.) I collected literature from every political party in Canada, but a fellow by the name of Joe Clark, head of the Young PCs, gave us the most help. As a result, the Progressive Conservatives won the model parliament election. This was during the time of the reign of Social Credit, and the defeat of the SoCredits in the model parliament election seemed to signal a change in party politics in our province. (A few years later, Peter Lougheed became the Progressive Conservative premier, and the SoCred era ended.) Joe Clark invited everyone who participated in the model parliament to Edmonton to meet politicians from all parties, including a rookie politician called Peter Lougheed. Thus my interest in studying political science was ignited.

Another seminal event was attending a concert by Edmonton's University of Alberta Mixed Chorus when in Grade 7. The U of A Mixed Chorus – nearly 100 strong – toured different parts of the province every spring, and I had never heard anything as inspiring as their concert in Innisfail. (Beverley McLachlin – later Chief Justice McLachlin – may well have been one of the choristers, as she sang in the Chorus for several years at that time.) I was determined after that to attend the U of A and to join the Mixed Chorus, both of which happened.

Growing up in a small town can be a wonderful experience. People get to know everyone in the

town and learn to get along with them. But sometimes tough disputes arise. The editor of the local newspaper, the *Innisfail Province*, had a habit of writing editorials attacking French Canadians for wanting to maintain their language and culture. These editorials incensed me, both because of their bigotry, and because part of my ancestry is French. I wrote a strongly worded letter to the editor condemning his views. He published it. My parents were shocked, telling me “we have to get along with people in this town, you know.” In the end, there were several more letters to the editor written by various town folks – all of them agreeing with me. I think this was the start of my passion for human rights and social justice. And in the end, I dated the editor's daughter, and her father learned to put up with me.

There is so much more I could write about – learning to play the bagpipes and going on tour with the local pipe band, joining the track and field team and winning ribbons at various track meets, high school dances and young love. I'm grateful for having grown up in a small town on the prairies, for the “experiential learning,” and for the extraordinary memories.

--Ian Greene

EDITORIAL NOTE

This year, three of the Reminiscences were written by members of our Executive Committee. I am extremely thankful to Fred Fletcher, David Leyton-Brown, and Ian Greene. They came to my rescue as I had totally run out of prospects for this feature of our *Newsletter*, which is much loved by our members but for which it is very difficult to find volunteers. Without their rescue, this feature would have disappeared from the *Newsletter*. (Volunteers are still needed for the near future.)

TRAVELOGUE

Seven Weeks before the Mast

Part 2:

By Jamie Savage

May 23, 2012 Title: **Ascension Island on the horizon**

Just more days of nice sun rises and sunsets...no moon at the moment so lots of stars to look at. Some days have been quite hot and on occasion, windless which makes it hotter. With the sun directly overhead it's tough to find shade sometimes. We were motoring the other day around noon, it was very hot. Then we heard the engines stop which means one thing....swimming!! The water is getting near bathtub temps. Some people were spooked and had to get out of the water when someone on deck mentioned that it was 3.5 kilometers to the bottom! Then things got a little exciting. I have to take my glasses off to swim and I saw this little plastic bag floating on the surface so I was going to pick up this litter. Divan (South Africa) yelled at me from the deck to not touch it, then he yelled JELLYFISH!

We all had to get out of the water ASAP. Turns out there were at least two Portuguese man-of-war and some of us got stung. Ian (Australia) had welts on his back that looked like he had been whipped. Ivo (Holland) got it across his chest and I got stung around my right eye. The worst was Jackie (Nova Scotia), she had tentacles wrapped around her hand and could not get them off without assistance on deck. She had a bad reaction to it; her hand swelled up, breathing issues and other symptoms. The rest of us were ok in an hour or two but Jackie was under medical attention in her bunk. She's ok now. We got the night off and watch the 'A-team' on deck under the stars. I don't see any Oscars for that one. Spike caught a 6 pound dolphinfish/dorado/mahi-mahi (then name depends on where in the world you are) in the morning which we had for lunch. Had the pin rail race today....lots of fun even though

our team lost. Running around the ship finding pin locations for various lines, sometimes under "squall" conditions as the crew was hitting us with salt water hoses....which I think they really enjoyed. They've turned on the A/C which makes sleeping much easier. Ascension Island is on the horizon and we expect to drop anchor later today.

Yes, Tammy (USA), part of the permanent crew, is a doctor from Boston

**Movies on deck were shown on a large spare white sail stretched across the front of the deck house. **

May 26, 2012 Title: **Ascension Island - part I**
Woke up to see Ascension Island. It is somewhat barren and rocky but it has lots of beaches. There is a story that Charles Darwin planted trees up on Green Mountain (in the centre of the island) and now there are forests up there thriving in the humid misty conditions. Went into Georgetown which is really a ghost town. 1000 inhabitants but no permanent residents. They rotate in and out from St. Helena and work at the big USA/British air force base and at island infrastructure jobs. The 'stores' keep weird hours and we have trouble finding any open and can't find a place to eat. Ascension is also a breeding ground for giant Green sea turtles at a certain time of year, fortunately it's now!! Back to the ship for a big BBQ dance party on deck. The ship is really rolling at anchor and it's a real test while dancing to keep ones balance. Surprisingly, alcohol seems to help.

It's dark now and we have the spotlights up in the rigging turned on and we see lots of baby turtles swimming past the ship heading out to sea. Tiny little guys but very fast swimmers...couldn't be cuter. We see a giant female turtle swimming towards the beach to lay her eggs. There are dolphins around the ship. We hear them before we see them. You hear them surface and breath in the dark. They swim in and out of the light. A couple

of them put on a show for us with a couple of jumps.....very cool. We're here for two nights and are planning to rent a couple of cars to tour the island. There are transmit/receive towers and radio dishes all over the island due to the military installation and BBC relay sites. It really gives one the impression that there's other stuff going on here that we probably don't want to know about. The airstrip is large enough that it is an alternative landing site for the space shuttle and an old NASA tracking station is here. Rumour has it that it was this site that first received Armstrong's famous transmission...'the Eagle has landed' etc....There's only one building left and it's in sad shape now.



May 27, 2012 Title: **Ascension part II**

We rented a small car and toured the island. Drove up Green Mountain (first time driving a right-hand drive vehicle as we're in another British Overseas Territory). It's a single lane switchback road that we take as far as we can and then hike the rest of the way up to Dew Pond. This is the highest point on the island...the last few hundred feet are like walking through a jungle, heavy vegetation, stands of bamboo and extremely humid such that the top of this mountain is always in a fog. Went to the beach at English Bay. No strong current, great swimming in crystal clear water with lots of fish. Back into town that night and went to Long beach late at night to look for turtles. We found tracks in the sand that looked like they were made by a monster

truck, but these are giant turtle tracks. We followed them and found one in her nest, only using red coloured flashlights so as to not disturb her. She was huge, her oval shell looked to be a 3' by 4' oval and she must have easily been over a few hundred pounds. We just watched for a few minutes as we couldn't tell if she was actually laying eggs...which is the only time you're supposed to watch them as they are in a trance during egg-laying. This one may have still been digging the nest, which can be up to 3 feet deep. So we left her alone (kinda felt like we were peeping Toms anyway). What a unique experience!!

Went back to Long beach in the morning and saw several tracks leading to nests where we could see where the mothers had covered their eggs in sand. Later in the day we watched some babies hatch. We were shooing away the birds to let the babies at least make it to the water. The odds of survival are not good for these little guys. I have a couple of videos of the baby turtles digging themselves out of the sand and making a beeline to the water.

Back to the ship as we sail at 1400. I went aloft to unfurl the Top Gallant sails, maybe 60 feet up off the deck. I was going to go up the mainmast first but it was very diplomatically pointed out that it's a tight squeeze to get through the cross-tee platform and perhaps I'm better suited for the foremast where it's not so *tight*. This ship really rolls when at anchor so it was 'interesting up there' to say the least. Anchor up at 14:00 and we're now sailing due north...28 day straight days at sea before the Azores. Looking forward to crossing the equator and the nautical ceremony that takes place there.

** Sails on the Main and Fore masts from bottom to top are, Course, Lower Top, Upper Top, Top Gallant, Royal and Sky**

** The ship is not licensed to fly the Sky sails (the highest ones) when in Antarctica (not exactly sure why) but now we can use them so, it was

entertaining watching the crew installing the Sky sails 80-90 feet above a rolling deck while we were under sail. One must remember that, the higher you go the more you sway.**

Here's a link to a series of photos of the trip from St. Helena Island to Ascension Island

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/4qHxBr1AiM21jfidA>

Here's a link to photos of Ascension Island

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/YrT4PVu3DyadZZTLA>

Here's a link to a one-minute video of baby turtles digging themselves out of the sand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyoS-S1msYY>

Here's a link to a one-minute video of a baby turtle making it across the sand to the ocean.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pu-PWLydCKE>

– **Jamie Savage**

TO BE CONTINUED

THE CRABBY OLD WOMAN

When an old woman died in the geriatric ward of a nursing home in Saskatchewan, it was believed that she had nothing left of any value. Later, when the nurses were going through her meager possessions, they found this poem. This little old woman, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this beautiful anonymous poem.

(Ed. Note: I had this poem in my files for years and do not know the origin.)

*What do you see nurses? What do you see?
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?
A crabby old lady with faraway eyes?
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply.
Who seems not to notice the things that you do.
And forever is losing a sock or shoe?
Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will,*

*With bathing and feeding a long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse, you're not looking at ...
me*

*I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
A young girl of Sixteen with wings on her feet.
And soon now a lover she'll meet.
A bride soon at Twenty, my heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vows that I promised to keep*

*At Twenty-Five, now I have young of my own.
Who needs me to guide a secure happy home
At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my man is beside me to see I don't mourn.
At Fifty, once more, babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children my husband and me*

*Dark days are upon me; my husband's now dead.
I look at the future and shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing young of their own.
And I think of the years and the love that I've
known. *

*I'm now an old woman and nature is cruel.
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living life over again.
I think of the years, all too few gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, people, open and see.
Not a crabby old woman. Look closer... see ME!!*

DOM PEDRO II, SECOND AND LAST EMPEROR OF BRAZIL

For years, my favourite channel has been TV5, which is the largely French television channel, with a sprinkle of programming from Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and other countries that are francophone. One series that recurs yearly for a short time is called, “*Les Secrets d’Histoire,*” and each week focuses on a particular historical figure (political, artistic), from birth to death, and within the various places, palaces, and castles where the famous person has lived. New research is always introduced from various archival sources.

In late May, they presented Pedro II, the second and last emperor of Brazil. Considering the current rather disastrous leader of Brazil, the country's environmental problems, the treatment of Indigenous people, and the utter and preventable devastations of Covid-19, a look back is interesting.

Pedro II was born in 1825 in Brazil and belonged to the House of Braganza. He was the son of Pedro I who had been king of Portugal before it was invaded by French troops in 1807; the royal family had then taken refuge in its richest colony, Brazil, where he became its first emperor. But, when the future second Pedro was five-years-old, his parents had to leave for political reasons and entrusted their small son to the care of the people. The Brazilians adopted the child, who was carefully educated for his future role as emperor, learned languages, sciences and geography. He was a quiet child who much preferred to study nature and people than play. His main advisor was a black man at a time when slavery still existed; at a young age, he freed his own personal slaves.

The young Pedro asked to become emperor and acquired his maturity when he was only 14 in order to restore political stability to the country. He was crowned in 1841. He showed a great deal of concern for his subjects, including Indigenous people whom he protected and whose cultures interested him. In fact, he often left alone for weeks and months on horseback and went deep into the jungles and countryside to meet with the various tribes as well as peasants. He was also very enlightened regarding the environment. For instance, when too many trees were cut down for coffee plantations near Rio with consequent problems, he ordered the hills reforested in order to secure the reserves of water and prevent hill slides. He was very concerned about the health of the population and, in 1843, he founded the city of Petropolis in a cooler environment in order to avoid the yellow fever. It soon became a summer residence for people who lived in Rio. In addition to sanitation measures (sewers), Pedro fostered the development of the telegraph, cable, and railroad in order to open lines of communication and facilitate commerce.

Also in 1843, at the age of 18, he married Teresa Christina, a much titled Sicilian princess with illustrious parents and grandparents, who was three years his senior. He had received a much-embellished photo of her in a medallion. When she finally arrived in Brazil, he felt duped because she was much shorter than described and especially not attractive at all. But he remained with her and they established a mutually supportive relationship as sovereigns and parents—only two daughters survived into adulthood.

The main problem Pedro II encountered during his entire reign was the issue of slavery against which he was so opposed. He knew that, one day, this issue would be his downfall. Indeed, the country's economy was largely based on the production of coffee and large landowners were very powerful and exerted a great deal of influence on society and the army. He thus decided to proceed by small decrees rather than abolishing it at once, which would have precluded his subsequent achievements.

His interests in science and health led him to meet scientists such as Pasteur, with whom he shared many interests in terms of the prevention of diseases. He also met Darwin and befriended Victor Hugo in Paris--his favourite city. He became a member of the French Academy of Sciences, indicating that he was taken seriously as a scientist in Europe. Toward the end of his life, he felt he had done his duty by his country. His daughter, Isabel, was competent to act as regent on his behalf and he left to tour the world to see countries more in depth than he had done on shorter trips. While he was gone, Isabel emancipated, as they had planned, the 700,000 slaves but without having first done anything to provide them with a livelihood and compensate the owners. There was a military coup in 1889 and the entire family was forced into exile in Europe. He died in Paris in 1891. His wife, Teresa Christina, died two years earlier in Porto after the exile. He had reigned from 1831 (1841) to 1889.

His body and that of his wife were returned to Brazil in 1920 and placed in the Mausoleum of his city of Petropolis. His daughters, Isabel and

Leopoldina, married respectively into the royal Houses of d'Orléans of France and Saxe-Cobourg and Gotha in Germany. Some of their descendants returned and still live in Petropolis to this day.

– **Anne-Marie Ambert**

THE ENVIRONMENT

I suggest perusing the website for the association of Farmers for Climate Solutions (Canada). It shows what some farmers in various parts of Canada are doing in order to rejuvenate the soils they toil, act as caretakers of the Commons, and give more control to growers as opposed to large corporations.

<https://www.nfu.ca/introducing-farmers-for-climate-solutions/>

GOOD READS

The Henna Artist, by Alka Joshi. 2020 Mira

The Henna Artist is set in India in 1956, a few years after gaining independence from the British but when the caste system was still very much alive.

Lakshmi is a young woman who was forced into an abusive arranged marriage at the age of 15 in the early 1950s in a rural village in India. Although her husband is abusive, she loves her mother-in-law who teaches her how to use herbs and flowers for medicinal purposes. She escapes and moves to Jaipur where she reinvents herself as The Henna Artist and becomes much in demand by wealthy women of the upper class. Her world is changed drastically by the arrival of her estranged husband accompanied by a young girl who is her sister, born after her departure from her village.

The intriguing and insightful book is riveting in showing a world that is lush and riveting but also stark and cruel.

Dual Citizens by Alix Ohlin. 2019 Anansi Press

Set in Montreal and New York City, this is the tale of two very different sisters, Lark who feels invisible and is overshadowed by all the people around her and Robin, a brilliant pianist who is

consumed by her love for wild animals. Central to Lark's story is Lawrence Wheelock, a renowned filmmaker who is her employer and occasional lover. This is a very different story by a Canadian writer about motherhood, sisterhood and self-knowledge.

A worthy re-read was *A Dangerous Fortune* by Ken Follett. 1993 Bantam Doubleday

In 1866, a tragedy strikes an exclusive school. The mysterious drowning of a young student initiates three decades of treachery involving several families.

Mostly set in London with its exclusive men's clubs and involving the manipulation of wealth and greed, this book it is full of fascinating characters. Was certainly worth a second read.

– **Pauline Callen**

SUGGESTED MOVIE

The Windermere Children (2020) is an 80-minute movie about children and adolescents who survived various Holocaust concentration camps. After the war, they were brought to England where they lived for four months of rehabilitation in the cottages of a disused aircraft factory overlooking Lake Windermere. The film depicts the horrible psychological state of loss, fear, hatred, maltreatment, starvation in which these children arrive and how they slowly change with the help of a very interesting set of Jewish therapists and a tough Scottish coach.

While the beginning of the film, a true story or set of stories, is rather traumatic, the endings (plural) are encouraging. At the end, some of these survivors as octogenarians are shown at the lake and talk about their lives in England since these years.

--Suggested by **Anne-Marie Ambert**

FOR OUR FRANCOPHILES

For our members who love France and, especially for those who have at least some “hearing” knowledge of French, I highly recommend the following documentary entitled *Sur les Chemins du Var* which explores, after the environs of Toulon, the nine hilltop villages of the Pays de Fayence, in the Var region of Provence (Fayence is one of the nine villages). Toward the end, a special focus is placed on locals living in these perched villages who are reviving the cultivation of a special rose that perfume-makers, like Christian Dior, among others, highly value for their best perfumes. (When I visited this “pays,” in the early 1970s, these villages were being depopulated and some of the agriculture had been left abandoned. Now, as seen in this video, young people are trying to bring life back to this area of France, which is a bit difficult of access even though it is so close to the Cote d’Azur.) This documentary is one of many in the series entitled “*Des Racines & des Ailes*” which airs during some seasons on TV5, the international French channel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mV_nrv6cUn4

Suggested by **Anne-Marie Ambert**

And after 75 years of progress, here we are:



(Contributed by **Vivienne Monty**)

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