



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

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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

This new year, 2023, marks a fresh start for YURA, with a new Executive Committee, in a new office space (see details below), and new Co-Presidents. We hope that collectively we experience a renewal of hope and the restoration of the energies needed to realize our retirement dreams and goals. The Roman god “Janus”, for whom the month of January is named, looks both back to the past and ahead to the future. We will do likewise in this message.

As we look back, our first task--a very pleasant one--is to thank Charmaine Courtis and Ian Greene for their strong leadership of YURA. Their impressive run of six and five years respectively as Co-Presidents included the very challenging years of the pandemic. Their vision and commitment have allowed YURA to adapt to changing circumstances, to learn more about how to serve our membership (via the survey of members), and to achieve a major goal of endowing the three graduate scholarships YURA offers each year.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Charmaine and Ian and to the other members of the Executive who have completed their terms. We thank Dave Smith who, as Treasurer for six years, created and maintained the membership database on which we rely heavily; John Lennox, who remained on the Executive for

five years as Past Co-President after serving earlier as Co-President for five years; and Savitsa Sévigny, who served for four years as a member-at-large. We express our appreciation to the YURA members who participated in last October’s “Charity Challenge” and to all who generously sponsored them. A total of \$25,691 was raised, allowing us to reach our endowment fundraising goal...an accomplishment we celebrate.

We wish also to thank international policy thinker, author, and strategist, Irvin Studin, featured speaker at our October 2022 AGM. His wide-ranging and thought-provoking presentation challenged us all to think more strategically about Canada’s situation in the context of current world events. Please mark on your 2023 calendar that our next AGM will be held on Friday October 27 at 11:00 a.m.; we hope that it will be possible to hold the AGM in-person.

As we look ahead, an equally pleasant task is to introduce the new members of the Executive Board of YURA. We welcome Melody King who has agreed to serve as Treasurer, and Rosanna Furgiuele and Stan Shapson who are serving as members-at-large. More information about them and about all members of the Executive can be found on the YURA webpage—simply click on “About YURA” and then on “Executive Committee” and scroll down to the

Biographical Notes about Executive Board members. We are very pleased that Marla Chodak, who joined the Executive in 2021, has taken on the role of Secretary and that Charmaine Courtis will remain as Immediate Past Co-President.

Our new Executive Board has already met once (in December 2022) and reaffirmed our commitment to the mission of helping YURA members stay connected with one another and with York University, and of supporting the activities of YURA members in areas such as physical well-being and in their creative and professional/scholarly endeavours. We take inspiration from a quotation that appeared in the 2014 book *The Upside of Aging*, edited by Paul Irving. The author of one of the book's chapters, A. Barry Rand, who was serving as the CEO of AARP at the time, explains that the book's title represents a different way to frame our thinking about aging. He writes: "people replace the 'D-words' of aging (decline, dementia, dependence, disease, disability) with the 'C-words' of choice, connectedness, curiosity, courage, caring, compassion, creativity, and contribution. This transition to a new mindset embodies the upside of aging." (p. 246). In a similar way, our aim at YURA, is to focus on the "upside", as we continue to learn and develop, and to maintain routines that keep us physically active, mentally alert, and socially engaged.

One "C-word" that tends to evoke ambiguous reactions is the word "change". On the one hand, we all are typically eager to embrace change which we fully understand, which we choose, and for which we actively plan. On the other hand, it is harder to welcome change that is imposed on us, be it technological change or other change. One change that YURA is undergoing, is a relocation to our office space on campus. As you read this *Newsletter*, during the month of January, we will be moving from 101 Central Square, an office location our Association enjoyed for the past twenty-five years, to a temporary location in the Bennett Centre (W129A). This move is taking place so that the University can provide the additional space needed by Student Accessibility Services in the Ross-Central Square core.

Please see the YURA website for details on how to access our new space and for directions from public transit and the closest parking garage. Later this year, from this temporary office in the Bennett Centre, YURA will move to the Lorna Marsden Honour Court, close to the main entrance of the Keele campus and near the York University subway station (details will be provided in a subsequent *Newsletter*). We appreciate your understanding as we navigate this change and the opportunities it provides to edit, purge, and rationalize our office files, and to re-assess creatively how

we promote our Association to prospective retirees and the general campus community.

Another “C-word” that we would like to explore is “competence”, particularly in the realm of digital literacy, or “keeping up with technology”—a key concern that emerged from our survey of members. In the near future, we will seek your feedback on those aspects of keeping abreast of technology that are of greatest interest to our members. In a separate message via the YURA listserv, we will be asking you to rank topics so that we can look into possible workshops, information sessions and online learning modules.

In concluding, we encourage members to participate in the upcoming online sessions of the YURA Café. (Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21 and April 18). Please check the YURA website regularly for news items and details about these and other events:

[www.yorku.ca/yura/](http://www.yorku.ca/yura/) . We very much hope that later this year it will be possible to welcome YURA members back to in-person events.

--Diane Beelen Woody and Steve Dranitsaris

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We recognize that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with the territories that preceded the establishment on them of York. The acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the

Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

### IN MEMORIAM

**Ken Carpenter** was a long-standing member of YURA and a contributor to the *Newsletter*. For instance, one can find his childhood and adolescence Reminiscence in the Fall 2021 *Newsletter* which can be read in YURA’s website. In addition, one can read more about Ken’s professional life in the following link.

<https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2022/10/05/passings-kenneth-carpenter/>

Ken was a very faithful and helpful friend, always willing to help and participate in small social gatherings and regularly contributing food and other help.

I, and many others, know this to be true. Many York faculty members were great friends. Ken was very proud of the groups he belonged to – our Gang of Four, his Berkley Gang, and his swim buddies. But by far, the most important to him was his family and grandchildren. He had expressed a wish to live to 99 to see his grandchildren graduate high school. He loved to socialize

and to travel. He never missed a birthday party I held or a trip somewhere he loved. He once pushed me around in a wheelchair just so I could be part of the excursion and dinner afterward. He was very proud of his friends from the art world and the art galleries here and abroad. Another aspect of his life, and love, was his garden and visits to friend's gardens as a member of the Rock Garden Society.

I find myself missing the phone calls and the excursions he would arrange and how he would include my friends when possible. He always had an opinion and didn't hesitate to express it but that became part of his personality. He will be missed by all of us.

-- Rosemarie Nielsen

### **LIFE AS IT WAS BACK THEN**

*Our 40<sup>th</sup> Reminiscence is that of Liisa North who retired in 2005 from the Department of Political Science. She has entitled her memoirs as "Recollections of Childhood: From the Arctic to the Tropics and the USA."*

I met my father Paavo in Venezuela when I was 9 years old. I was quite upset with him because he tore me away from my grandmother and the farm in northern Finland where I had lived since early childhood.

Why Venezuela? My father was a member of a secret military group that hid guns along

the frontier, for fear of another Russian invasion after the "Continuation War" (the second stage of Finland's World War II history). When the group's activities were discovered by Soviet inspection forces that monitored peace-treaty compliance, the group's members faced prison if they stayed in Finland (the case of my uncle Reino) or they escaped into exile (my father's choice). So, my war-destabilized but idyllic life on the farm came to an end in 1949, after my father was settled enough in Venezuela to invite the family to join him there.

My mother, my younger sister, and I traveled to Venezuela in 1949, first by boat from Helsinki to Copenhagen, then by train to Amsterdam where a Venezuelan consulate could provide the necessary papers, and from there across the Channel to Southampton. The "Queen Mary" took us across the Atlantic to New York City where we visited with relatives for a couple of weeks, then took the train to Miami, a flight to La Guaira (the international airport of Caracas), and another flight to Coro, where my father and his partner had set up an ice cream business, the "Oso Blanco" (Polar Bear).

We did all this without speaking a word of English or Spanish. I don't know how. In fact, my sister Riitta and I enjoyed the voyage most of the time, especially in the Amsterdam Zoo's petting area with its donkeys, deer, and other creatures exotic to us. Even when we got hopelessly lost on the

“Queen Mary”, we found it more exciting than scary. We once wandered into first class and were amazed to see an in-boat pool.

I think of my childhood as idyllic because of the love, the sense of security, and the extended “clan” that surrounded and protected me – the families that lived on just about all the nearby farms were relatives. Rural schools in distant places like our farm district did not function in the post-war era; everything we ate was produced by “us” in a harsh semi-Arctic climate; there was no electricity, and only one spout of cold running water in the kitchen.

But there were colts and horses, one a gentle mare named “Ripsa” who had pulled canon in the War and was treated to little bread buns on all baking days; there were calves and about a dozen cows that were milked by hand and in drifting smoke from fires set to protect against swarms of mosquitos in the summer; rams, ewes, and lambs that were occasionally rejected by their mothers and raised by my sister and myself – to become sturdy rams who bonded with the two of us and scared the neighboring children; there were a few chickens who roamed all over the barn; hunting dogs and cats who sat mouth agape, waiting for a squirt next to cows as they were milked. I still enjoy the heady aroma of a barn and of manure spread on fields in the spring. The neighs of horses give me a deep sense of comfort.

Our food would be considered intolerably monotonous for today’s menu. Breakfast was always porridge with a bit of salt and a pat of butter, and blood pancakes were prepared when animals were slaughtered in the fall. Meat would be sold for the city market while the family -- *ukki* (grandpa), *mummi* (grandma), mother, and her sister and two brothers in addition to my sister and myself – ate the liver, kidneys, tripe, and bones as well as the occasional rabbits that one or other uncle brought home from hunting. During the war, soldiers had killed all the *hirvi* (elk) that are now abundant once again.

The only occasion for generous portions was Christmas, when the much-loved pig was sacrificed. It started its piglet life indoors, in the *pirtti*, the “living and work room” with oven, looms, dining table, corners for repairing harnesses and carding wool; the barn was too cold in January when temperatures could descend to, and get stuck at -35C. Piglets are lively, smart, neat, and friendly. They can be toilet trained in a matter of days, and *ukki* taught them tricks before they continued their life in the barn after a month or so.

Summer brought treats like delicious *kesäkeitto* (summer soup), prepared from crops and herbs harvested just before the soup was made, impossible to replicate in taste at any other time of the year. The ingredients of the *kesäkeitto* were the same that took the family through winter –

potatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage, and tubers of all kinds that could be stored to last. Oats and rye for making bread, wheat for making Sunday pancakes, and other grains were cultivated, all of them wonderfully gritty since they were milled on the farm.

Late summer and autumn were dedicated to collecting berries in the mosquito infested forests and swamps (my sister and I were told to stay away from mushrooms since some were poisonous and we were not trusted to make the right choices). Preservation of sufficient quantities of berries for the entire winter was a herculean task that also required a scarce commodity, sugar. Vinegar was needed for the green tomatoes and pickles. Glass jars were always in short supply.

And there was the weekly *sauna*, which was a place of intimate care, a separate 2-room building next to a stream for which the farmstead was named, *Puro*. Heating the fireplace stones took all day. The men of the family and any male guests bathed first; women followed when the heat was milder. Scrubbing each other's backs was essential and someone always had to help pour the *sankko* (pail) of cold water over your head to end the ritual. Hot soup followed in the *pirtti*.

Of course, there was the War. My uncle Kaarlo had stepped on a mine, spent over a year in surgery and rehabilitation in a

hospital in Sweden, and returned to recover and work on the farm. My aunt Alli contracted tuberculosis and was sent home from the university she was attending to recover in fresh air with family care. Although not a teacher, she periodically taught basics in the rural one-room schoolhouse that was about an hour's walk from the farm. That walk included an exciting game of hide and seek with a colt that patrolled the corral through which the path to the school ran.

These are all fond memories, even wounded uncle Kaarlo's returned from Sweden (little pieces of bone would travel through his skin) and aunt Alli who had tuberculosis and returned from university (she eventually lost a lung). She was the first person in the family to seek higher education.

The painful memories include *ukki*'s death from a heart attack. I watched him lying in an improvised casket in the potato cellar, the coolest place in summer, and I had nightmares about my visit with him – perhaps real, perhaps imagined – for years on end. It took more than a decade, by then a student at Boston University, before the nightmares left me.

The evening radio news were chillingly scary. The farm was close to the Russian border, just about a hundred kilometers from us, and discussions of relations with our great neighbor and former imperial master featured in all broadcasts. The entire

household listened silently and then analyzed carefully, probably the origin of my decision to study politics.

Scariest of all were the commercial flights that followed the war. Every time that we heard one, high in the sky, grandmother was convinced that the war had started again. She would hustle us into whatever space she thought was safest from bombing. Later, as an adolescent in the Bronx, I would freeze every time I heard a plane. It took me years to overcome the urge to run.

Venezuela was a difficult place for us. My father was arrested for the murder of his ice-cream business partner, Aari, who had committed suicide, a complex man who had been a spy for the Finnish army and spoke some half dozen languages without accent. The local students tried to trick him into making mistakes in Spanish, but he always won the games they set up. Father was released from prison on the condition that he sign over the ice cream business to the *cacique* (strongman) of Coro and leave town. So, we did that and eventually wound up in the Bronx, where relatives sponsored us to enter the USA in 1951.

My sister Riitta and I never did go to primary school on a regular basis, neither in Finland nor in Venezuela. Riitta started school in the fourth grade and I in the sixth in the Bronx. A Finnish friend told my mother simply to lie about our previous education and to place us in our age groups.

It was her opinion that the first years of school in America were worthless.

I found it more difficult to adjust to life in a big city and to spend time with children than to learn English, especially when the public library across the street provided lots of books about horses and horse racing. It also turned out that my sister and I had been well educated by grandma and kin, taking care of animals, working in the kitchen garden, picking and preserving berries, walking from one farm house to another with cows that needed to be bred with the cooperatively owned pedigreed bull . . . enjoying life immensely. I was perplexed when my American schoolmates thought that I must feel very lucky and very happy to be in the Bronx, in a “free” country.

-- Liisa L. North

### **CYPRUS' EXTREME CLIMATE CHANGE: TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTATIONS**

A French documentary in September took us to visit Cyprus which is the southernmost European Union country in the Mediterranean. Cyprus suffers from a triple problem which includes sandstorms from North Africa which leave sand in agricultural fields and forests, a rapidly warming climate as well as a continued decline in precipitation to the extent that some scientists project that the country might be in a state of desertification 20 to 30

years from now. Water is often rationed, and many riverbeds are dry and, when not dried up, their waters never reach the sea, as they normally did only a few years ago.



**One of Cyprus' many archeological sites, 2007**

Two interesting technological innovations designed to adapt to the changes and hopefully prevent a worse situation from occurring were detailed. The first one takes place in groves of olive trees which are watered by drip irrigation at the root of the trees. Aided by IT, scientists examine the perspiration rate of the leaves of each tree as well as its production of olives and

computers then control the drip according to the needs of each tree. (Olives are a key source of food and exports for Cyprus.)

The second innovation shows a group of what appear to be solar panels which actually reflect the rays of the sun into what looks like a convector glass reactor. The heat that is generated boils the sea water that is in a huge well-insulated vat at extremely high temperatures and creates drinkable water as well as electricity (renewable energy).

Furthermore, we know that desalination is harmful to the surrounding seas because extracted salt is returned to the sea and increases its levels of salinity. Therefore, this new process of extreme boiling allows for the salt to be accumulated and then can be sold for regular human and animal consumption.

The scientists at the various research centers in Cyprus are communicating with other countries or regions, such as California, which desperately need potable water for humans, animals, and agriculture as well as producing electricity without harming surrounding seas and coastlines.

These innovations could produce renewable energy and clean water on a large scale, especially in coastal areas around the globe. One should add that Cyprus is a wonderful destination: it is very scenic with a great

deal of architectural and archeological diversity due to its geographic location at the crossroad of many civilizations, past and present. And most residents speak some English.

–Anne-Marie Ambert

## **HOW I GOT INTO TEACHING STATISTICS AND WHY I LOVE IT**

When people hear that I teach statistics they often think that this must be one of the most boring jobs anyone can get into. Yet, I have a passion for teaching methodology and statistics. I never get tired of it. My involvement started in a rather unusual fashion, largely due to the regulations of the European University, where I began my studies in the early 1960s. The University of Geneva was different from many in North America today. Students had to choose a major right from the beginning and take a set of courses relevant to that major. They could also enrol in any additional courses of interest. There was no tuition, and no time was lost on exams throughout the year.

Instead, there was one comprehensive set of exams for the required courses at the end of the first year. The examination took several days; some sessions were six hours long and included an oral in front of two pipe-smoking professors. I never found out whether the pipe-smoking was for their pleasure or a strategy to put the examinee at ease. All questions required answers in essay format. Since academic labour was

needed to read and evaluate the answers, taking an exam came with a fee. Students who were indisposed or did not feel ready were free to write at a later scheduled session just before the beginning of the new semester or even the year after. However, students could not advance in their studies before fulfilling the prerequisite of passing their first-year comprehensive exam.

Few if any of the professors in the department of Sciences in Education in Geneva used statistics beyond calculating percentages. Nevertheless, students were required to take a full-year course in statistics within their first year. While access to any second-year courses was conditional on having passed the set of first-year exams, students were free to start their academic year either in October or in March, i.e., with the first or the second semester. When I started in March, I found myself in the middle of the statistics course without the basic preparation. It did not take long to realize that this was not working for me, especially since the course was taught by one of the research assistants, who did not have a lot of expertise and from whom no extra help could be expected. Instead of attending classes, I taught myself with the help of the textbook. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise because rather than blindly following the prescriptions of an instructor, it obliged me to rely on what was logical and what made sense. Gaining a thorough understanding of the rationale underlying the statistical procedures helped

me to recognize typing and other minor mistakes, of which there were quite a few in the textbook. At the end of my first year, I passed the introductory exams, including statistics, where I performed very well. During the following year, the department upgraded the teaching of statistics by hiring a part-time professor, who requested the help of four teaching assistants (TAs). I was offered one of the positions.

Being hired as a TA was a life-changer for me. To start with, the salary lifted me out of abject poverty. I could afford to leave the tiny room I inhabited in the house of a rich family in exchange for washing their dishes and polishing their shoes. I rented a spacious attic apartment where, in addition to my duties as a TA, I could offer a private alternative course to groups of four to five students who, having started their studies in the second semester, found themselves out of step with the official course. Even though as the only female in the group of four TAs, I got stuck with some menial chores, such as copying documents, my private lessons served as a great apprenticeship in teaching. Another benefit of my new position was that it forced me to come out of my shell. Having been born uninvited, the last of five siblings, I had always been extremely shy to the point of turning quiet in the presence of more than two or three people. One of my classmates remarked that she would not have taken on a position as a TA because she would be scared. Scared or not scared, I needed the income. For the next three years, I felt sick

to my stomach with fear whenever I had to face a new group. My unease gradually subsided, as I came to know the students and realized that they harboured no hostility.

As a native German, the language of instruction, French, was my second language. I vividly remember the time when I was trying to explain a procedure that involved subtraction. I had trouble finding the right conjugation of the verb soustraire. I tried “Vous soustraite”, but it did not sound right. Then an Algerian student in the first row leaned forward and whispered, “Vous soustrayez”. His helpful move gave me the uplifting feeling that the world is a friendly place. I had a similar experience years later when the first job I got in Canada as a new immigrant was that of a TA at Simon Fraser. I was in charge of helping students to solve a weekly set of statistical problems. One week, I found myself stumped by a question that involved quarters, dimes and nickels. I knew that a quarter was  $\frac{1}{4}$  of something, a diamond was a precious stone and nickel was a metal. Nevertheless, I had to face my students with a heavy heart, confessing that I was not able to solve the question myself. The students laughed good-naturedly and informed me that a quarter meant 25 cents, a dime stood for 10 cents, and a nickel meant 5 cents. Together we solved the problem in no time, and the experience fostered a relationship of mutual support.

A major asset of the position I had in Geneva was that it offered me ready

admission into the intellectually brewing circle of the most active and advanced students, which instead of drinking beer and playing cards, spent their free time discussing research issues, and a circle where everyone had to pull his or her intellectual weight.

In the long run, teaching statistics gave me a lot of intellectual satisfaction. My passion for teaching the subject does not necessarily extend to statistics itself. "Doing statistics" all too often amounts to using standard recipes to process numbers with little regard for what those procedures entail and the assumptions that need to be met for results to be valid. This is the case particularly for hypothesis testing. Textbooks tend to contain quite a few errors, and writers often copy from each other – mistakes and all. I ended up writing my own text.

--Margarete Wolfram

### **SEXISM IN THE ART WORLD**

When it comes to art, it helps to be a man, says Andrew Ellson in *The Times*. The artist Helen Gorrill goaded by a 2019 article by the German painter George Baselitz, in which he suggested that lower prices for female artists were proof that "they couldn't paint as well as men," resolved to look at the figures.

She analyzed 5,000 contemporary paintings and found a shocking Gap in value: works by men were worth "10 times more than

works by women." Other data support her findings: according to the industry site [artprice.com](http://artprice.com), the 10 best-selling contemporary artists are all men; only a dozen women make the top 100. Gorrill posits that the attitude of auction houses and museums-- which, she says, "are masculine-run--is unhelpful to women." She concludes, "We always think of the art world as forward-thinking but actually it isn't." (From October 8th, 2022, *The Week*)

### **RECOMMENDED PARIS HOTEL: LOCATION! LOCATION!**

In the Fall of 2009, my childhood friend, Martine, and I had planned to spend a week together in Paris before I embarked on a Tauck coach tour. Martine lived near Nice and had lived with her family in Montreal from 1954 to 1959 when we became friends. She was going to come with me, not only so that we could spend time together, but also because it was very difficult for me emotionally to go to Paris given that it would have been my first visit since my husband had died in 2001 and he lived near the areas I wanted to visit.

We decided to stay at the **Hotel du Louvre** where the tour would begin because it was within walking distance to the sites we planned on visiting. (Please note that there are two hotels by approximately the same name and in the same area. The one we intended to use is on Place Malraux.) It has spectacular views all the way to the

Boulevard de l'Opéra and to the Opéra Garnier itself. As well, it is, of course, right next to the Louvre Museum, which also contains the Museum of Decorative Arts which was the main item on our list.

We made these plans before I went away in 2009 for my usual December trip to warmer climes. While I was away, my friend, aged 71, died suddenly of a brain aneurysm while her oldest daughter was waiting for her at the door. I learned of her death upon my return. After the shock wore off, I thought about the trip we would never make together, and I decided to do it for her before going on my coach tour. I will now describe in the first person where I went from the Hotel du Louvre, to the places that had been chosen by both of us.

When I went to the Opéra (up the street), I took this opportunity to go to the department store Au Printemps, which I like because of its splendid dome, decorations, and restaurant. In my own mental geography, this department store is about five minutes to the left of the Opéra.

Another but smaller Museum which I walked nearby was the museum de L'Orangerie where they have wonderful collections of Monet and his contemporaries. It is located at the far end of the Tuileries Gardens, just before arriving at the Place de la Concorde.

One of our goals had been to visit the Sainte Chapelle, close to the cathedral. Before

arriving at the cathedral, I went to my favorite flower (and bird) store where I used to buy flowers for my mother-in-law (also deceased) each time I was in Paris. On another day, from the hotel, I walked to the Invalides to see a cute Museum that few people know about called the Musée des Plans-Reliefs which shows miniaturized representations of fortified towns and fortresses such as those designed by Vauban that one can still admire throughout France. Most tourists never visit the splendid Invalides built by Louis the 14<sup>th</sup>. It contains many other museums as well as Napoleon's tomb.

My longest walk was all the way to the Place du Trocadero where the Palais de Chaillot in order to see the Musée de L'Homme, but I was terribly disappointed because it was closed for extensive renovations. (Go and see it for me.)

As I was writing this piece, I recalled a funny incident. One day, when it was raining cats and dogs, the hotel loaned me a large umbrella and I walked to the Marais where I believe it was in the Hotel Carnavalet that the writer Madame de Sévigny had lived. It was very interesting and charming—and not crowded. On the way back, as my umbrella was overflowing, I stopped and hid below an entrance to a residential building to shake all the rain off. I happened to look up across the narrow street when I saw standing at one of those long French windows a totally naked

handsome man, and my eyes popped in amused astonishment. As I was turning to leave, he called out to me to come and join him! I had a really good loud laugh, waved at him dismissively, and went on my way, under my vast umbrella. (I don't know if he did that as a profession and if he had any success at all! Perhaps it was a compensation for the closed Musée de l'Homme...) Then, as usual, I went to the huge souvenir shop at the Louvre under the pyramid. It is a great place to shop for art and history books, blown glassware, rare and beautiful stones, and all sorts of objects. You want to go there at the end of your trip...!

There are many other tourist attractions near the Hotel du Louvre not described here because I had seen them before. There are also many restaurants and outside cafes. A very convenient location.

— Anne-Marie Ambert

### **HUMORISTIC HISTORY LESSON**

Rebuilding New Orleans after Katrina often caused residents to be challenged to prove home titles back hundreds of years. That is because of community history stretching back over two centuries during which houses were passed along through generations of family, sometimes making it quite difficult to establish a paper trail of ownership.

A New Orleans lawyer sought a FHA (Federal Housing Administration) rebuilding loan for a client. He was told the loan would be granted upon submission of satisfactory proof of ownership of the parcel of property as it was being offered as collateral. It took the lawyer 3 months, but he was able to prove title to the property dating back to 1803. After sending the information to the FHA, he received the following reply from FHA.

"Upon review of your letter adjoining your client's loan application, we note that the request is supported by an Abstract of Title. While we compliment the able manner in which you have prepared and presented the application, we must point out that you have only cleared title to the proposed collateral property back to 1803. Before final approval can be accorded, it will be necessary to clear the title back to its origin."

And here is the unforgettable response from the lawyer:

"Your letter regarding title in Case No.189156 has been received. I note that you wish to have proof of title extended further than the 206 years already covered in the present application. I was unaware that any educated person in this country, particularly those working with real property, would not know that Louisiana was purchased by the United States from France in 1803, the year of origin of title identified in our application.

## MORE PHOTOS OF CYPRUS

For the edification of uninformed FHA bureaucrats, the title to the land prior to U.S. ownership was obtained from France, which had acquired it by Right of Conquest from Spain. The land came into the possession of Spain by Right of Discovery made in the year 1492 by a sea captain named Christopher Columbus, who had been granted the privilege of seeking a new route to India by the Spanish monarch, Queen Isabella. The good Queen Isabella, being a pious woman and almost as careful about titles as the FHA, took the precaution of securing the blessing of the Pope before she sold her jewels to finance Columbus's expedition.

Now the Pope, as I'm sure you may know, is the emissary of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God, it is commonly accepted, created this world. Therefore, I believe it is safe to presume that God also made that part of the world called Louisiana. God, therefore, would be the owner of origin and His origins date back to before the beginning of time, the world as we know it, and the FHA. I hope you find God's original claim to be satisfactory.

Now, may we have our damn reconstruction loan?"

The loan was immediately approved. Great history lesson as well.

— Found online by **Vivienne Monty**



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### **YURA Office Hours**

Tuesday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Wednesday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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