



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

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Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Dear YURA members,

We are pleased to be starting the second year of our mandate as co-presidents, having ended 2023 on a high note. The need to move our office twice during 2023 was challenging and taxed our energies, but with the help of volunteers and wonderful support from UIT we got through it all and YURA is now happily ensconced in the Lorna Marsden Honour Court. We had multiple celebrations of our new space during the Fall months, first with the Executive Committee members when we held our September meeting in person, and then on October 3rd with our Charity Challenge walk beginning and ending at the YURA office, allowing all participants to enjoy some socializing in our courtyard after the exertion of the 5 km trek around the Keele campus.

After our AGM on October 27th, office volunteers gave a tour to all those interested in seeing the new space. If you happen to be on campus during our office hours (Tues., Wed., Thurs. from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), you are warmly invited to drop by the office. Your queries and suggestions are most welcome, and your interest in YURA is appreciated.

We committed significant resources to our Annual General Meeting on October 27th, opting to hold it as hybrid event. This choice, which involved IT support, rental of space on campus and a light lunch, allowed us to achieve two important goals. The first was to facilitate attendance at the AGM by as many YURA members as possible,

including all those who for various reasons are not able or prefer not to come to campus. Second, we were able to offer an in-person option with a light lunch, to create an opportunity for YURA members to meet the Executive team, to socialize and to experience the joy of being with others-- a joy that was sadly lacking during the pandemic years. The hybrid option does involve significant resources, however, and the Executive is currently discussing whether we can afford a hybrid AGM again in 2024 or whether we should have an online AGM and a separate in-person event such as a lunch at another time of the year. In whichever format, **the 2024 AGM will be held on Friday, October 25**. Please note the date in your calendar! Details of the guest speaker will be forthcoming.

Our guest speaker at last October's AGM was Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto, who leads the largest local public health agency in Canada, providing public health programs and services to the city's nearly 3 million residents. Her talk to YURA members, delivered in her trademark calm, clear and empathetic style, explored the challenges and opportunities of Public Health with its focus on collective safety and well-being. She underscored the paradoxical nature of preventative work because safety measures that prevent catastrophic events are easily taken for granted and then it becomes more challenging to maintain visibility and to acquire the necessary resources. Dr. de Villa called the pandemic a transformative moment; she expressed deep concern about the especially cruel way the pandemic

exposed health disparities and inequities. She concluded her talk by engaging in a discussion of lessons to be learned and emphasized that organizations such as YURA have a role to play in strengthening connections and collective well-being. More information about her talk and photos of the event can be found on the YURA website: <https://www.yorku.ca/yura/annual-general-meeting/report-on-the-2023-yura-agm/>

Photos of our October 3rd Charity Challenge walk can also be found on the YURA website: <https://www.yorku.ca/yura/2023-charity-challenge-update/>

Before leaving the topic of the AGM, we would like to thank our Executive members for their reports, UIT's Learning Technologies Services for its technical support, and the office volunteers who welcomed participants and ensured that the event came off smoothly. We would also like to thank all those in attendance for unanimously endorsing a resolution to contribute \$10,000 of YURA's accumulated surplus to the endowment of our graduate student awards, to ensure the necessary funds to pay out three awards annually. These awards mean a great deal to the recipients, not simply for the financial support they provide, but also for the validation they represent and in the words of an awardee, the "confidence boost." Elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, we share with you the thank you letter received from Parsa Mirzadeh, recipient of a YURA Graduate Student Award. In a subsequent *Newsletter* we will share with you thank you notes we have received from recipients of the other awards YURA sponsors (the William Small

Award and the YURA Mature Student Bursary).

As we start a new year, we express our appreciation to Sheelagh Atkinson and Angus Anderson, long-serving members of the Executive, who have made valuable contributions particularly with the organization of events, and who have now completed their terms. We warmly welcome three new members: Sheila Forshaw, Debbie Hansen and Richard Weisman, along with ex-officio member, Pat Murray, who previously served on the Executive and has informally acted as YURA's liaison with the U.S. based, Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE). We are grateful to Bruno Bellissimo, who has completed three terms on the YURA Executive and has agreed to continue ex-officio to represent retirees on the Pension Fund Board of Trustees. It also gives us pleasure to acknowledge the many contributions of Fred Fletcher who, for the past decade, has been the principal link between YURA and ARFL (the Association of Retired Faculty & Librarians at York University) and between YURA and CURAC, the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada.

We are delighted to have over 450 members in YURA at present and we ask all members to assist us with outreach to recent retirees whom you may have in your circle of friends and acquaintances. For privacy reasons, YURA does not receive a list of recent retirees. Our outreach takes the form of an info-sheet about YURA along with an invitation to join our group; these are sent as an electronic link to new retirees as part of the package sent to them by Pensions &

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Benefits. We are keenly aware that new retirees have a daunting amount of paperwork to file and numerous weighty decisions to make at the time of retirement. Understandably, they often set aside our invitation while they deal with more pressing documents. So, we encourage all members to promote YURA amongst those colleagues/co-workers whom you know have recently retired; a warm word of encouragement from an existing member will speak volumes.

We are very pleased that many YURA members have expressed an interest in planning events and activities. A decision has been taken to focus on a number of small group outings in the Greater Toronto Area during 2024, in order to appeal to a range of interests and thus better serve our diverse membership. Our plan is to organize outings and opportunities to bring members together around shared interests. For reasons of financial cost and logistical complexity, we will not be organizing an outing to either the Shaw or Stratford Festivals during the summer of 2024. **Announcements of upcoming events will be posted on the YURA website and sent via our listserv.**

In the meantime, please note that the YURA Café will be held on Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 12 and Apr. 9 at 10 a.m. We hope also that during the month of January, many of you will share your perspective by participating in the research project focusing on the principles of an age-friendly university – see article on YURA website:

www.yorku.ca/yura/

We wish you all the best for the New Year.

--**Diane Beelen Woody and Steve Dranitsaris**

We recognize that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with the lands that preceded the establishment on them of York. We acknowledge the university's 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 to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

LETTER FROM RECIPIENT OF YURA GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD, PARSA MIRZADEH

Dear YURA members,

My name is Parsa Mirzadeh, and I am a PhD student at York University in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science. I am writing this letter to express my gratitude for receiving the YURA Graduate Student Award.

I started my academic journey at York University studying Kinesiology and Health Science, where I graduated with Summa Cum Laude. My pursuit of excellence further persisted throughout my Master of Science studies at York University. During my first year of studies in my master's program, I had the privilege of achieving the status of a published author through my contribution to an intervention study

LIFE AS IT WAS BACK THEN

Our 44th “Life as it Was Back Then” is that of Harvey Simmons. When he retired in 2000, he was teaching in the Political Science Department. Harvey has entitled his Reminiscence, “Paragon Park Memories.”

What follows are memories from around 1949 to about 1955, when, in my early 'teens, I worked for an uncle who owned the “Fun House” and assorted games along the midway of Paragon Park, an amusement park erected in 1908 in Hull, Massachusetts, in an area known as “Nantasket Beach.” The Park featured games and amusements common to the era including, and especially, a Roller Coaster which was billed as the longest in the world. I have no idea whether that was true. It also contained the famous Paragon Park Carousel, with beautifully carved horses, Roman chariots and cherubs. It was saved from destruction when the Park was demolished in 1984 and continues to operate in Hull today. For reasons unclear to me, those who worked at the Park did not use the term “carousel” but rather called it the “Merry-go-Round.”

My uncle John owned (rented?) “The Fun House,” one of those buildings where everything is slightly askew and surprising. The floors were tipped this way and that, there were false doors and closets and special mirrors which reflected a deformed image of yourself. You would then add to the fun by pulling different faces before the mirror or deforming the image even more by moving your body this way and that. There was also a slide, about 30 feet long, you'd get a burlap bag to sit on as you rode down.

focusing on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). During this time, I actively devoted my experience and expertise into a thesis project on experimental (lab) stress and proximal responses in students assessed psycho-biologically with psychometric self-report and measured Mitochondria cell free DNA levels (ccfMt-DNA) assessed via blood analyses. My thesis project has enabled me to foster effective collaborations with esteemed researchers.

My research was centered on investigating the role of acute stress and its effects on the mitochondrial function using mitochondrial DNA as a biomarker. Our research highlights the profound impact of brief episodes of psychological stress on the human body, more specifically; the mitochondrial energy regulation. It is important to note that the research of acute stress and ccf-mtDNA is relatively nascent, and our lab is amongst the very few who has investigated this relationship.

Being the recipient of the YURA award holds a profound significance for me. It permitted me to reduce my work hours, thereby allowing me the opportunity to focus my attention on my academic journey and interests. Moreover, this award enabled me to devote more hours to my program and helped pave the way to commence my PhD program at York University. I am profoundly grateful for the support that this award has offered, as it has been an instrumental tool in assisting me during my academic journey.

Thank you,

--Parsa Mirzadeh

And, if I remember correctly, fans set into the floor blew girls' dresses up so you could see their legs, or, if you were very lucky, their underwear--as in the famous Marilyn Monroe photo.

Much clearer in my mind, because I worked in them for many summers, attached to the Fun House and facing the midway were boardwalk games such as "Pitch 'til You Win," "Spill the Milk," and others whose names I forget. "Pitch 'til You Win" consisted of a series of wooden planks placed lengthwise and along each plank was a series of evenly spaced wooden clothespins. The customer got three small wooden rings for ten cents (I may be off on the price) and he/she threw them one at a time toward the clothespins. Depending on how many rings encircled the clothespins, so depended the prize you got--balloons, dolls, soft animal toys and small gadgets.

At one point my uncle hired Harvey Gold, a World War II vet who was attending Boston University on the GI Bill. One day, bored with whatever spiel he used to attract customers, Harvey began shouting: "Pitch 'til you Win a Robert Mitchum smoking kit." When Uncle John heard this, he told him to cut it out. To me, the whole thing was incomprehensible even when someone explained that Robert Mitchum, who was a famous actor at the time, had been sentenced to two months in jail for possession of marijuana. "Marijuana"--what was that? I must have been about fifteen years old at the time.

One summer, while I was tending "Pitch 'til you Win," a bunch of small figures headed

purposefully toward my game. They were "midget wrestlers," (the proper term now is "dwarf"), members of one of many acts that came through Paragon at that time. I briefly thought of confronting them, but they never threatened me, and they were bulging with muscles, so I watched them leap the counter and help themselves to the dolls, toys and other prizes on the rack.

"Spill the Milk," consisted of heavy metal milk bottles arranged pyramid fashion on a metal stand. The customer bought three baseballs for twenty-five cents (?), then tried to knock the bottles off their perch. One day a ball rebounded off a stand, hit me in the eye and knocked me out cold. Someone had smelling salts (who carries smelling salts with them, then or now?) and revived me.

Uncle John also ran a game called, "Line-O." I was an announcer there for one summer. Customers bought cards with the names of the capitol cities of the various US states. The announcer then reached into a round continually turning metal container in which tumbled a mass of ping pong balls and pulled one out. On each ball was the name of a state, The announcer read the name of the state and the customer then circled the name of the capital city on the card. You won money if the circled capitals lined up horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

My memory is that Massachusetts had outlawed gambling and stipulated that games involving money had to have some element of skill. In the case of "Line-O," knowing the capital cities of the various

states provided the necessary element of skill.

I also heard rumours that Uncle John was somehow connected to the Boston Irish mob. One story was that he was a character witness for "Jazz Maffie," one of the infamous Brink's robbers, who was tried for participating in the 1950 \$3.0 million robbery of the Brink's storage centre in Boston--at that time the biggest robbery in US history.

From the late 1940s to, I guess, the mid-1950s, my grandparents, Max Simmons and Grandma Bessie owned and ran a rooming house called "Bessie's (or Betsy's) Rockland House," later renamed "Bessie's New Rockland House. My younger brother and I often helped our Grandpa clean up the rooms. A lot of the boarders were "carnies,"-- guys, never women -- who worked the carnival circuit in winter then Paragon Park in summer. The best part of helping my grandfather was that the tenants did not have particularly elevated tastes in literature and so my younger brother and I came home from our weekend visits laden with comic books. Another feature was that Paragon's bumping car ride was right across the street, so my brother and I would often peer through chicken wire to watch the cars thud into each other while in the background one heard music and distant noises of the crowd.

One day at the Park was much like the other, but a few odd memories of specific events still remain, as when the roller coaster got stuck at the top of the highest hill and the customers had to be escorted down the

tracks (or, steps) to safety. How those with acrophobia (like me) walked down without fainting remains a mystery to me.

And everyone who visited the Park over the years remembered George Kasian who, for decades, stood by his scales and charged twenty-five cents (?) to guess accurately your age and weight. Many years after my family no longer summered at Nantasket I returned for a visit and when George saw me, he called me by name, impressing my rather credulous date with the notion that I must be a person of note. The girl later became my wife... and less credulous. It was fun watching the various acts that came through: high divers, acrobats, dwarf wrestlers, and motorcyclists who drove at high speed round and round an immense barrel shaped sphere sunk deep into the ground.

My favourite attraction during those years was "Walking Charlie," a stand fronting Nantasket Ave, near the entrance to Paragon Park. Three wooden dummies, members of the Axis--Hitler, Tojo (Prime Minister of Japan during World War II) and Mussolini, (was there a fourth dummy?) -- were set on a moving walkway. The dummies, each with a teacup hanging from his ear, would trundle out from behind a curtain on the right, continue on a track for some feet in front of the customers and then disappear behind another curtain on the left. You bought three baseballs and threw them at the teacups and won a prize according to the number of shattered teacups. When they broke they made a very satisfying sound. I must have been very young when I first discovered Walking Charlie because I remember seeing men in uniform--soldiers and sailors-- lining

up for their turn. Google shows a Walking Charlie game in Santa Cruz in 1973, and elsewhere; but in those versions the idea was to knock off the dummy's hat. Nowhere near as much fun as smashing a teacup--and striking a blow for the Allies!

Those were innocent days (at least in memory). I was around sixteen when I worked evenings announcing at "Line O." Each night when the place closed, at ten or eleven, I would hitch a ride back home to T Street. Once a man who picked me up began to ask leading questions about my aunt; but he didn't touch me and duly let me out when I got home. It's hard to believe that neither my father, who should have known better, nor my mother, ever seemed the least concerned about my hitching at night.

I'm not sure how many summers I worked at Paragon Park or at my uncle's games, but I never saw serious misbehaviour at the Park. Drunkenness, yes, but that was not unusual for Boston, although I am sure there was occasional violence when the nightclubs opened late at night.

One final memory of those years. One early evening when I had returned from my job at the Park, I sat down for dinner and my mother, whose head was constantly in a book, looked up and said, "Have some soup, Harv." I began to eat it but then said, "Ma, this tastes like dishwasher." My mother, much inclined to sarcasm, as was my father, replied, "All the better, just eat it up." A few minutes before I fell violently ill, my mother suddenly raised her head and said, "Oh my God, I forgot....." However, for dishwasher, it wasn't bad.

Later, my uncle sold the beach house where our extended family lived, and we all moved on. In 1984 Paragon Park was demolished and replaced by a public housing project. I have visited Nantasket Beach and the site of Paragon Park a few times over the years, and then I hear the sound of the roller coaster grinding up the hills and whooshing down the rails, the manic canned laughter emanating from the Fun House and smell the popcorn, hot dogs and salt water taffy wafting through the air.

--Harvey Simmons

A JOURNEY FROM SCHOLARSHIP TO INVENTION: THE MARVELOUS IS THE TRUTH

... a little later, she discovered
the goal of art was not the truth but the
marvelous -- indeed, the marvelous was the truth.
-- Joan Acocella

I always had a yearning to write fiction but felt bereft of stories. I longed to write the imagination and harness creativity. But I was good at left brain rationality: logical, orderly, and grounded in materialism. For decades I took photographs for fun, and participated in writing groups. But research and teaching always came first. It took years after retirement to shift my focus away from scholarship and embrace playful invention. I also discovered that creative writing and photography offered unique vehicles for political voice.

Below I describe some themes in my photography, share my delight in hybrid

text-image art, and consider how creative work differs, for me, from scholarly research and writing.

i) Found Objects and The Art of Recontextualization and Juxtaposition:

I'm constantly picking up detritus: debris, remains, fragments, broken china and glass and combining them to create a new narrative. Objets trouvés is the practice of turning things that are not normally art into art. It is an art of recontextualization. The series *Intimate Conversations* (2020) started with a found object: a white desert snail shell in a Palm Springs canyon.

The images capture Snail nestled in dialogue with various desert plants and woods. These photographs highlight imagined relationships between parts of the desert community. I am struck by how the spiral in the snail shell is a uniting symbol across nature and human culture. More than ever, we need images of intimate interspecies relations and human-nonhuman coexistence and interdependence.

Working with found objects and inspiration focuses on invention rather than documentation or representation. It is not systematic like academic work, but serendipitous. Not planful but spontaneous and playful.



ii) The Fluidity between the Natural and the Constructed, the Authentic and the Fabricated, and the Imagined and the Real

On a recent visit to Venice, I was riveted by the plethora of masks on every corner. Even the cheap knockoffs from China were compelling. Hand-made masks tucked away in small ateliers were lush, captivating and seductive. I took hundreds of photos. For the series *Liminal Animism: The Masks of Venice*, I layered images of Venetian masks which are a sophisticated form of art and artifice within photographs of nature. The series challenges the borders between the natural and the constructed, the authentic and the fabricated, and the imagined and the real.



iii) Inventing Images rather than Capturing Them

I like to juxtapose dispersed and unrelated objects like snails and flowers, and birds and shells, bringing together disparate detritus to see them anew. *SkyOceanBirds* began with some seashells—nautilus and coral—picked up on travels. I scanned the shells into Photoshop and then combined them with photographs I'd taken of birds flying in formation at Tom Thompson Park on Lake Ontario in Toronto.

SkyOceanBirds, a photo-montage is in the tradition of surrealism which appreciates idiosyncrasy, juxtaposition and contradiction. Surrealism challenges the boundaries between the normal and the fantastical, promotes the unexpected combining of found objects, and embraces dreamscapes and imagery emerging from the subconscious.

The series *Liminal Animism* and *SkyOceanBirds*, then, are not about capturing images but inventing them. Such an approach is fictive rather than representational; imaginative rather than grounded.

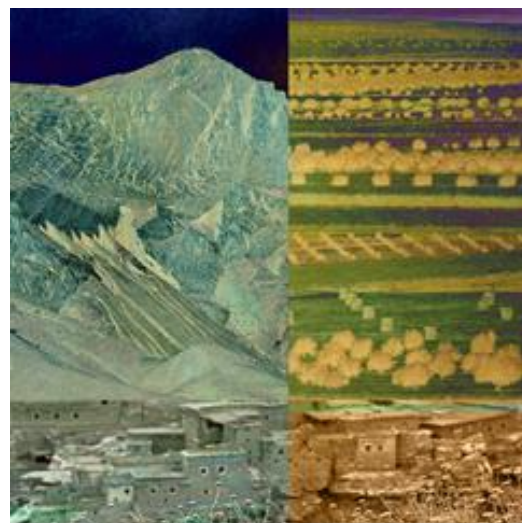


iv) Landscape Imagined

On an recent trip to Morocco, it was hard to resist photographing everything. How to engage with the images? I'm influenced by Susan Sontag's book *On Photography*. She argues that taking photographs is

“a way of refusing [experience]—by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir. Travel becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs.”

Rather than a desire to accumulate, I start from the premise that landscape is invented through our gaze. The series *Landscape Imagined (Morocco)* seeks to re-imagine Morocco, not through what was seen, but rather through what was experienced. When driving through the landscape, multiple images are remembered and forgotten. In this series, I try to represent this fragmentary experience and offer a landscape poetry about an imagined geography and architecture. Such an approach interrogates how we recollect place and construct memories. It highlights the permeability between the remembered and the imagined.



v. Witnessing

Jennifer Baichwal from the Anthropocene Project speaks of art's capacity to provoke change: "not to preach, harangue or blame, but to witness, and in that witnessing, try to shift consciousness." I'm interested in using photography to witness. My foray into political art is neither photo journalism nor street photography. Rather, photo-montage allows the juxtaposition of images to draw attention to political and social issues.

Reclamation is a montage constructed from over thirty photographs, most taken at a car dump on Cayman Brac, a small coral island off Grand Cayman. This image reflects on the discarded trash of modern life. The geometry, textures and colours of junked cars and rusted metal have their own strange and grotesque beauty. The green vines (which I added via Photoshop) weaving their way around and through the detritus are a reminder of the earth's resilience and its capacity to regenerate.



vi) The Freedom of Voice

I am a writer as well as a photographer. In my fiction, I'm drawn to writing about

whimsy, fleeting moments, and the small secrets of interior lives. Lately I have been writing 50-word stories. Recently published (*50-Word Stories*, June 2023) is "Word Envy."

"She envies the poets. The cadence and repetition, the rhythms, the tapestry of tangled words—unexpected and sometimes incomprehensible. They send her mind wandering and wondering. Word play to slow her mind's chatter: palindromes and alliterations, onomatopoeia and allegory, allusion and bricolage, paradox and parody. Desire blooms in her heart."

These short forms of fiction are newly popular, perhaps to deal with short attention spans. I read recently that humans have shorter attention spans than goldfish! In fact, between 2000 and 2015, our attention spans shrank by 25%.

My creative nonfiction bends genres, makes quirky connections and highlights social justice themes—quietly. For example, "[Silence, Please](#)" (*Montréal Serai*, 2022), a collage essay, considers noise pollution from personal, political and scientific points of view, and in a variety of styles/genres including lyrical prose and poetry, and humour, and via images. I'm passionate about silence and have been involved in various anti-noise crusades. Unlike scholarly writing, creative nonfiction embraces quirky connections, genre-bending, speculation, and an assertive political voice.

I'm also intrigued by work which incorporates both text and image, inspired by the Greek tradition of Ekphrasis (the cross-inspiration of art disciplines). The journal *Masque & Spectacle* (2022)

published “[Footprints: Travel Imaginaries Through Photography](#)” which includes fifteen photographs and text. I explore a new way to construct a non-fiction narrative around a photographic series. For [A Still Life](#), I wrote a fictional encounter between the objects on the printer’s tray in one of my photographs, and their imagined owner, Miss Emma (published in *The Ekphrastic Review*, 2022.) Embracing the hybrid and challenging genre boundaries is a pleasure.

This writing is a welcome relief. It’s a pleasure to be released from scholarly rules, rigidities and restrictions, and to speak boldly about issues of concern. However, it’s taken me years to shed academic conventions, the desire to cite, and the careful language of modest and often tentative conclusions. My creative process and the increasingly precarious world has unsettled any remaining certainties I had. Perhaps it is a unique time to appreciate speculation and imagination.

--Linda Briskin

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Visit Linda’s photography, writing and Instagram websites:
<http://www.lindabriskinphotography.com>
<https://www.lindabriskinphotography.com/pdf/writing.pdf>
<https://www.instagram.com/linda.briskin/>

MASS TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: THE CASE OF ZANZIBAR

On July 5th, 2023, the French documentary program, *Envoye Special*, dedicated its 2

hours to the effects of mass tourism on some cities such as Venice, around some monuments such as Mont Saint-Michel, in some natural habitats along the scenic northwest coast of France and, finally in the Tanzanian archipelago of Zanzibar, which consists of two main islands and many smaller ones near the coast of Tanzania in east Africa.

Zanzibar as a destination of mass tourism started about 10 years ago when the French discovered its beauties: soothing aquamarine seas, wonderful sandy beaches framed with palm trees, excellent weather, coastal breezes, and a very willing and friendly population. Since then, hotels have been built all along the beaches, especially in one particular area, with the following effects.

More and more of the palm and coconut trees have disappeared and are no longer shading the area. The hotels, contrary to regulations, have been built, in part, over sandy beaches, and have been surrounded with walls. These walls bordering the beaches are meant to prevent the rise of the sea water.

However, there used to be groves of small trees which are rooted in the sand and act as a natural protector against rising sea water and serve as a housing habitat for all kinds of aquatic life. These are now gone, and the sea will rise within the compounds of the hotels by breaching the walls.

Furthermore, walls facing the village where workers and other residents live have contributed to the deterioration of the life of the native people. The villages are less sanitary than they used to be because they no longer enjoy the breeze from the sea as

they are cut off by the walls. One can see that the inhabitants have a small walkway between their houses and the wall to make a long detour to reach to sea which used to belong to them. It is the same phenomenon that has happened to so many populations in the Caribbean.

Before all the hotels were built, the area around Zanzibar used to be well known for its wonderful colorful corals which are now dying and are bleached white with fewer species of fish. The government with the help of some NGOs has prevented access to a small island off the main hotel coast of Zanzibar where coral is protected and fortunately still alive to shelter a greater variety of fish.

Zanzibar is also well known for its dolphin population and one could see in the documentary small tourist boats manned by natives who need the money paddling to areas where dolphins would swim. These small boats then rush and encircle the dolphins. At that point, many tourists dive in order to swim with the dolphins. The animals feel trapped and dive deeper and try to escape. The scientists are very concerned about the effect on the health and the reproductive system of this dolphin population.

To top all this detrimental change, there is the issue of garbage and especially plastic which these hotels produce in great abundance. There is a service that picks garbage and recyclables at the hotels but the cost of 2,000 euros a month is a deterrent to many hotels which then decide to go on their way. So, the correspondent was driven by the guide, a very concerned resident, to

some secret roads where hotels illegally dump all of their garbage.

There were mounds and mounds of plastics and all kinds of garbage. The guide pointed out that the liquid coming from this garbage was polluting the underground water in the natural reservoirs and threatening the health of the residents. (Note that if you google “hotels in Tanzania,” you will see only heavenly scenes.)

Mass tourism has become a form of colonization of small countries, cities, and natural sights, and effectively colonizing the people themselves and their environment. This tourism is heavily promoted by the industries in question, even under the guise of providing jobs for the people involved. But the local population often ends up in degrading jobs that pay little and that take away their ancestral way of life that allows them to feed themselves nutritiously within a non-polluted environment. And I have not even mentioned the effect of short-term rentals—all forms of capitalism that lead to a shortage of housing for the inhabitants of the cities and places in question.

— **Anne-Marie Ambert**

THE EARTH’S POPULATION STATISTICS PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE

The population of Earth is constantly changing, but it’s around 7.9 billion at this very second. For most people, this is an unfathomable figure. However, if we condense that 7.9 billion into 100 persons and then condense it further into various

percentage statistics, the resulting analysis is relatively much easier to comprehend:

Out of 100 people:

60 are in Asia
15 are in Africa
11 are in Europe
9 are in South America
5 are in North America

49 live in the countryside; 51 live in cities

75 have mobile phones; 25 do not
30 have internet access, 70 do not

7 received university education, 93 did not attend college

83 can read, 17 are illiterate

33 are Christians
22 are Muslims
14 are Hindus
7 are Buddhists
12 other religions
12 have no religious beliefs

26 live less than 14 years
66 die between 15 - 64 years of age
8 are over 65 years old

Think about this: If you live in your own home, are able to eat full meals and drink clean water, have a mobile phone, can surf the internet and **went to college**, you are in a miniscule percentage of the population and are a highly privileged person this day. **This equates to being in the less than 7% category.**

(These statistics were sent by **Vivienne Monty** who had obtained them from a reputed website but, by now, neither of us can recall the exact sources.)

IS THIS THE END OF SKI RESORTS IN EUROPE?

Climate change is threatening the long-term viability of many ski resorts in Europe. For instance, this past season, around half the slopes in France were forced to close due to lack of snow. The Alps, which host more than a third of the world's ski resorts, are particularly sensitive to global warming. The climate there has already changed radically over the past century, with temperatures rising by 2°C, about twice the global average. The snowpack is decreasing yearly.

Skiing is an ancient activity: the oldest known skis, found in Russia, are at least 8,000 years old. The Vikings used skis -- the world is old Norse. And, in Norse mythology, the god Ulir and the goddess Skadi are depicted as hunting on skis. Scandinavian armies have used them regularly from medieval times--the last example was the Finnish army fighting against the Soviets during WWII.

Skiing as a sport emerged in the mid-19th century after the Norwegian Sondre Norheim developed curved skis and revolutionized bindings by tying birch roots around his boots, allowing modern downhill skiing, with its characteristics speed and turns. Fridtjof Nansen's crossing of Greenland on skis in 1888 also inspired many. In that same year, an Englishman, Colonel Napier, started a vogue for skiing at Davos, using skis provided by his Norwegian manservant. The first skiers had to climb on foot before descending, but that changed in the early 20th century with the timely invention of tow lifts and gondolas

when the sport became popular in Europe and North America.

The first Winter Olympics were held in Chamonix in 1924 and Alpine skiing made its debut at the 1936 games in Germany. The world's first chairlift opened in Sun Valley Idaho in the same year.

Now, many resorts rely heavily on snow cannons, which blast water droplets on to the cold air, freezing them. However, snowmaking requires a lot of water and energy which is not sustainable and is certainly not environmentally friendly. Many resorts have already made attempts to pivot to activities other than traditional winter sports, rebranding themselves as year-round destinations with spas and activities including hiking, mountain biking, and snow-free tobogganing.

A Swiss study from 2017 estimated that, depending on the rate of reduction of global carbon emissions, snow cover in the Alps will decline by 30% to 70% by the end of this century. (And even in the past three years, snow cover has already declined in some places by 30%.)

(This article was abbreviated substantially from one found in *THE WEEK*, 28th of January 2023. Anne-Marie Ambert)



(Contributed by **Rosemarie Nielsen**)

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