



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees' Association

Spring 2014

No. 27

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Message from YURA Co-Presidents

For those of you who think that this winter will never end as we write this toward the end of March, hope is in sight if you think of our planned spring excursion to Stratford on May 22 to see Gershwin's *Crazy for You*.

Since our last newsletter in January, there have been a number of initiatives following from past actions. An annual YURA Graduate Student Award, whose funding was the object of the silent auction at our AGM last October, has been approved and the first recipient of the award of \$1000 will be selected in time for the 2014-15 academic year. This is good news and brings to three the number of awards sponsored by YURA: The William Small Award, the Mature Student Bursary, and the Graduate Student Award. In case of the last two awards, please note that, this year as in previous years, the proceeds from Showcase were donated to them -- \$700 for each. The awards funded by YURA are tangible evidence of the fact that the association was intended to be and remains a campus organization which actively supports the university's academic mission. Members have every right to be proud of YURA's positive, ongoing contribution to this end.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies mounted its second Presentation Skills Workshop in early February. At the workshop, graduate students present academic papers in a trial-run setting for the purpose of receiving critiques on their presentation skills before they deliver these papers at various conferences. This year, as last, faculty retirees took part in the workshop and

provided feedback on presentation after each paper. This is a very worthwhile exercise which FGS, in conjunction with YURA, wants to make a regular part of its academic year. We'd like to thank David Bell, Irmgard Steinisch, and John Warkentin for agreeing to be part of this last workshop.

We expect that YURA will be called upon, as last Fall, to canvass for volunteers to take part in Spring Convocation. When the request comes, we will circulate the information via the YURA listserve and we hope that members will give serious consideration to volunteering for this event for the satisfaction of being part of a great day on the academic calendar and as part of YURA's participation in York events. As other volunteer opportunities arise, we will keep you informed.

ARFL (Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians at York) has asked YURA if it would take part in helping to organize a joint seminar this spring on a health-related topic. YURA has agreed to do so and we will apprise you of the date and time when they have been set.

Please accept our best wishes as we voice our fervent hope for some kind of spring at some point in the not-too-distant future.

-Janet Rowe & John Lennox

In Memoriam

We have received word of the death of the following York retirees:

Victor Samuel	December 2, 2013
Lawrence McCullough	December 24, 2013
Norman Collis	December 28, 2013

Michael Cowles December 31, 2013
Christopher Nichols January 5, 2014
Lee Lorch February 28, 2014
Mary Schaufele March 7, 2014

Ryerson Invitation for Seniors

The Ryerson Senior Participant Pool will be hosting **Get Psyched! Engaging with Aging and Psychology** on June 3rd, 2014 at Ryerson University as part of the Chang School's 50+ Festival. This free event will consist of talks in the morning on healthy aging, followed by interactive sessions in the afternoon on the effects of stress, emotion, music, and dance on how we age.

Registration for the event is not available yet but you can sign up for email updates about the festival at:
www.fiftyplusfestival.ca.

We hope to see you there!

Senior Housing at York

The York University Development Corporation has been investigating the possibility of commercial development of the peripheral lands on the York campus. This is in conjunction with the arrival of the subway at York, currently scheduled for 2016. This presents us with an opportunity to think about developing some type of senior housing/retirement residence as part of this development. This location has a number of attractions since it would give residents access to the intellectual, cultural, athletic and commercial facilities on the York campus as well as providing convenient public transport to the centre of Toronto. Equally, the new subway would provide easy access for visitors to the residences. As well, the

campus would offer facilities such as accommodation and meals for visitors during the vacation periods.

We have organized a small group of interested individuals to look into these possibilities. Some members of the group met on March 18 with those interested in Senior Housing at York. This was primarily for information about the various types of housing that might be built at York and the pros and cons of each (condos, apartments, senior residence?). One interesting concept was raised concerning the possibility of renting an apartment in one of the existing buildings at York on a long term basis, perhaps having a life lease. With enough seniors on campus we can organize activities and promote interactions among the group. We will follow this up and provide feedback.

I also met with Suzanne Cook and Brenda Elias to discuss various possibilities for senior housing at York. One possibility is connecting with the *Graceful Aging Alliance* at York which is interested in all aspects of support for seniors to explore useful interactions and exchange information that may help us reach our goal of having some sort of housing for seniors on the York campus. We hope that this contact will provide us with additional expertise and support to accomplish this.

If you are interested in being part of this group or being kept informed of its progress, send an email to Al Stauffer (stauffer@yorku.ca) or leave a message at 416-736-2100 x77742 giving your name and a means of communicating with you.

-Al Stauffer

End of Life

The following is a thoughtful essay by Catherine Frazee, Professor Emerita, Ryerson, School of Disability Studies:

http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/03/30/a_respectful_postscript_to_edward_hungs_endoflife_letter.html

Medicine of the Future is upon Us

Some of you may already have seen this a few months ago, but it is worth bringing it back. Contributed by Mary Pfister. Click: [iDoctor](#)

Life as it Was back then: Reminiscences

Note from the Editor:

The little cache of reminiscences for the feature “**Life as it was back then**” has ran out: Volunteers are needed, particularly over the age of 70. I am encouraging women faculty as this group has not yet been represented despite many attempts to do so. **All our members (men and women) are welcome to contribute** and tell us how it was to grow up back then. **This feature is, I am told, very appreciated by our readers.** It is also a way of celebrating our members’ lives while we are together.

By default, for this 7th reminiscence, I am presenting my own life back then covering a period of only two years. It is entitled “World War II as lived on a farm in Quebec.” Before retiring in 2006, I was teaching in Sociology.

I was born in the Eastern Townships at the end of 1940 of a Belgian father aged 40 and a French-Canadian mother from Oka aged 27. My father had initially come to Canada for only a few years but the war had prevented his return to Belgium with his new bride. At my birth and until the end of the war, my parents lived on a farm that my father was managing for a Jewish family from Montreal: The farm was located along the US border and would have served as an escape route for them had the Germans invaded Canada. My memories begin at the age of 2.

I was told that I was bilingual at that time but this advantage disappeared later. I have no recollection of this. But I vividly recall sitting in my high chair and later at the kitchen table listening to the BBC and U.S. news with my parents. They had a map of Europe and North Africa pinned on the wall. As the news boomed out of our large radio made of blond wood, they would move little flags glued to some sort of pins on the map to indicate where the Allied and Hitler’s armies were. They would teach me the names of the countries, their capitals and the heads of state as this went on. My parents were particularly worried about my father’s four young children who had fled to the Pyrenees in France along with his two sisters and elderly mother.

He would also explain on the map that, a long time ago, when WWI had erupted, his entire female family and himself (he was 14 at the time) had escaped on a moonless night on fishermen's boats. (But his older brothers had spent that war in those terrible trenches.) They had been wonderfully welcomed by the English who had put at their disposal a beautiful house in Hastings, where he went to a Jesuit college that the British had helped set up for these refugees. I loved to hear that story of their crossing because, with them, were three very spry "maiden" great-aunts aged, respectively, 94, 95, and 97, who had never ventured out of their native village. He used to tell me other stories about these eccentric aunties. I could count to 100 and simply could not fathom what these ladies looked like given that my great grandmother in Oka was 73 (my age now!): The poor woman, who had worked so hard as a farm wife and had had 7 children, the first three before age 18, was *courbée*, very wrinkled, and had gnarled fingers. I was a bit afraid of her because I never saw older persons up close: She represented mystery to me.

My father retained a soft spot for the Brits, and Churchill in particular, and I learned to recognize his voice (and others) over the radio. Two or three times, probably in the early Spring of 1944, my parents took me with them to see the news on a large screen--perhaps in Stansted, our town. I remember how excited I was when Churchill appeared. People were laughing because I stood up on my chair and started applauding and then everyone followed. We also saw the royal family on the screen and this was truly exciting at age 3: a real fairy tale.

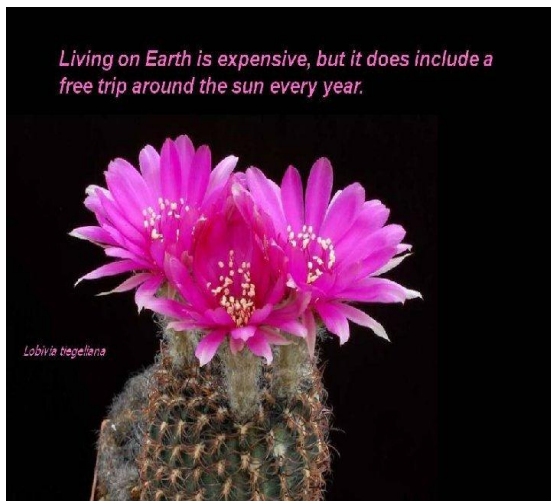
I recall something very strange. I would lie down on my stomach in my little bed that had been moved to the kitchen and my father would pass a pen in circular movements around my back and it felt nice and cool. This happened a few times. I learned much later that I had received the Patch Test for TB and had had such a strong reaction that my back became a huge wound and my skin fell off (I bore scars until about age 19). The reality is that my father was changing my bandages: He would lift them up ever so carefully in a circular motion and the cool air would then touch my back and this is what I recalled as making me feel so good (the "pen"). Because of my strong reaction, it was soon determined that my father had TB: His first wife had died of it in 1936 in Belgium.

I also remember some of the red-headed children of one of the very poor tenant families of Irish origin who lived somewhere on the farm (poverty was rampant in Quebec). In the summer, the children would arrive near our house several times a week in rags, shoeless, dirty, and with runny noses. They wore necklaces made of red caterpillars on a string, which both frightened and intrigued me. My mother had explained that this was a "superstition" that was supposed to protect them against diseases—which the children would regularly catch. As a result, I wasn't allowed to play with them because, in those days, these diseases could kill. We would stand there in front of our house examining each other with curiosity while they waited for my mother to give them food and medicine to take home. In the winter, they came less often because they could keep the supplies in the snow: They would drag the foodstuff on a sled that my father had fashioned for them

and I would follow them from the window until they disappeared from view. I don't recall this but my mother would approach rich *anglais* to get winter clothes and boots for this family.

There was another family that lived nearby and, in the winter, the girl who was about 12 would take me to play in the snow. Right next to our house was the farm road that sloped down to the country road: We would toboggan down in all safety lying on our backs. But, one day, the doctor unexpectedly arrived in his horse-sleigh. As a result, we slid between the horse's legs and under the carriage while he was desperately trying to control the panicked beast. I now cringe at this recollection, but at age 3, I had found this very exciting. This early childhood was the only times of my life that were uncomplicated and where I didn't have to advocate for someone or for myself.

-Anne-Marie Ambert



Contributed by Rachel Lewin

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

I belong to an organization called the Women's Musical Club of Toronto. I found out about it several years ago quite by accident, and was immediately recruited as a volunteer. The organization gives five afternoon chamber concerts a year, which attract a predominantly senior audience because of the afternoon time slot. They are very good concerts given by first-rate musicians. It occurs to me that these concerts might appeal to York retirees who, like me, like classical music but have never heard of the organization or what it does. Here is information about next year's program:

<http://www.wmct.on.ca/concert-series/next-season/> You can also surf the site for more information about the WMCT - there's a lot there.

-Frances Frisken

Getting Away From It All

The author has added the modest subtitle of "A mildly amusing story without a punchline"

One Friday last July, Barbara Rowe, Rosemarie Nielsen, Yvonne Ribeiro and I (Pearl Darlington) set off for Gravenhurst where Barbara had invited us to spend a few days at her cottage. We had Saturday reservations at a dinner theatre to see 'Blithe Spirit.'

A perfect day! In Gravenhurst we stopped for lunch before grocery shopping and driving the final few miles to the cottage. As we waited for our lunch, the lights flickered off and on a couple of times. Was this an omen or a quirky Muskoka happening? The waitress assured us our fishburgers were being prepared as the cook had a gas fryer! Hydro was restored, but

afterwards as we walked on the main street under a now-threatening sky, a ferocious wind and torrential rain suddenly blasted the town. We could hardly stay on our feet as we ran across the street into a bakery for shelter. Thunder and lightning, power out, sirens wailing, ambulances passing by. Optimistically, we bought a loaf of bread and cream cakes for later and waited out the storm...a tornado, we eventually heard. Returning to the car, a strange sight met our eyes. In a main intersection a man in a wheelchair was directing traffic – frantically spinning around and beckoning the rows of cars to come ahead. He was doing a pretty good job until the police moved him on!

Devastation! Large trees were felled in the town, some onto houses. We proceeded towards the cottage as Barbara was anxious about possible damage, but couldn't continue as a tree and power lines were down across the road. No-one wanted to return to Toronto, and anyway the tornado might have headed that way; also our theatre tickets were for the next evening. Back in town, chaotic with traffic jams and police everywhere, we booked two rooms at Howard Johnson's, *sans* hydro and hot water, at reduced rates consequently. No generator at this Ho-Jo's! We borrowed the hotel luggage trolley, and to the amusement of a crowd of biker guests, in the rain we transferred everything inside including a cooler of food which the ladies had brought. Since there was nothing open in town, we enjoyed an impromptu picnic – pate, brie, cucumber salad, fresh bread, followed by the delicious cakes and preceded by several screwdrivers (I had vodka and a carton of orange juice in my bag). Not a bad menu!

Early to bed while a glimmer of daylight remained. Fortunately we had brought two flashlights. Saturday was beautiful, but for those brave enough to take them the morning showers were cold! We enjoyed breakfast at a restaurant on the waterfront where we heard the hydro had been restored. The *Segwun* and *Wenonah II* were bobbing gently in their moorings, apparently undamaged. A couple of restaurants had their windows and glass patio tables broken. Dozens of bikers were arriving for a rally scheduled for that weekend.

The cottage road had been leared...apart from the driveway and deck being littered with twigs and branches, there was no damage. We enjoyed some time there admiring the lovely surroundings but decided not to stay overnight. We emptied the fridge of perishables – just as well, as power was not restored in rural areas for almost a week.

Headed home with Barbara driving, after confirming there would be no dinner theatre – in fact, power was not restored to the town for a couple of days. Rosemarie invited us to her house to barbecue food from the cottage freezer supplemented with other goodies – an enjoyable finish to our weekend. Thankfully we were safe and had fun in spite of Mother Nature's nasty surprise!
-Pearl Darlington



Humour Department

I have seen the following short video before but I am not sure if I have shared it with you then. At any rate, seeing it again is still amazing. Contributed by Mary Pfister who writes: “A young lady visits her father. She asks him how he liked his Christmas present. It's in German.....but no words are needed. Just click on this link.”

<http://www.snotr.com/video/8965/>



Sayings and Fun

(part 2, from Newfoundland)

I'm so hungry that I could eat the lamb of God.

Brew a cold (*develop a cold*)

Just show it to the pan (*don't cook it too long*)

Put an Irishman on the spit and you'll find two more to turn him (*Irishmen don't look after each other*)

She's not lazy—she was born tired.

Arse over kettle (*to fall down*)

He's so crooked (*cranky*) he could eat a four-inch nail and shit a corkscrew.

He was behind the door when brains were passed out (*he's stupid*)

Source: Ron Young's *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador*



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