



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees' Association

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**A HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Happy New Year to all and every good wish for 2015. We hope that you enjoyed a pleasant holiday season. Since our Fall newsletter, we held our Annual General Meeting on October 24 at which the membership approved a new executive committee. Two new members-at-large – Ross Rudolph and Anna Hoffmann – came on board and we welcome them most warmly. Janet Rowe stepped down from her position of co-president to become member-at-large for the remaining year of her term. She is also present on the committee as past co-president. Jane Crescenzi is our new YURA co-president. Since the AGM, we are pleased to have appointed a new ex-officio member, Dave Smith, who has agreed to be YURA's representative on the all-University Pension Committee.

At the AGM, we also had a chance to express at the AGM – as we express now – our deep thanks to Sandra Pyke for her outstanding service as co-president and past-president of YURA. She kept the association on a steady course when Nancy Accinelli passed away so suddenly and since then Sandra has continued to contribute to YURA in many crucial ways, among them, her role as the driving force behind the establishment a new graduate student bursary, as instigator of a silent auction, as an active member (and now president) of CURAC (Colleges and Universities Retirees' Association of Canada), and as a constant and active supporter of Showcase. We also recognized Pearl Darlington for her years of service as contributing supporter and as our banker, and we thanked Sheila Creighton for her part in the work we do together.

As you know, our big Fall event is Showcase, our annual fund-raiser. All proceeds from the Attic Treasures and Bake Sale tables are donated to student awards sponsored by YURA. Showcase requires an enormous amount of time and commitment from YURA members and this year was no exception. Between 40 and 50 people were involved at every level from organization to donation of items to sales tables and demonstrations of hobbies. The impresarios of Showcase were Marilyn Cartmill and Noel Corbett who have acted in this capacity for many years. YURA owes them a tremendous vote of thanks. The final tally of proceeds from the sale was \$1455, a wonderful and gratifying result, and the Executive Committee has decided to donate it in support of our newest bursary, the Graduate Studies Award.

Showcase is a wonderful day. We become visibly present on campus in a prominent location for a day and we involve ourselves publicly in an activity whose goal is the enhancement of student financial support. It's a fine way to highlight the active role that YURA plays in contributing to the ongoing work of the university in the education of its students.

Plans are being made for our trip to Stratford in the spring, but first there is winter to reckon with. Best of luck with that.

-Jane Crescenzi and John Lennox

In Memoriam

George Manupelli
September 14, 2014

Elizabeth Srinivasaga
September 20, 2014

Andre Dekker
September 20, 2014

Mary Lyons
October 4, 2014

Griffiths Cunningham
October 12, 2014

Norman Penner
November 14, 2014

Roy Wolfe
November 15, 2014

Life as it Was back then: Reminiscences

The author of our 10th Reminiscences is Noel Corbett. Before he retired, Noel taught language and linguistics in the Department of French Studies. We have also benefited at our Showcases from his craft as he now restores early Canadiana Country Furniture. He has entitled his reminiscence, "My Tender Youth: 1938-1945."

I was born in Bowmanville, ON in 1938, in a mansion called "South Park" ☺. Judging from the many beautiful 19th c. houses on tree-lined streets, it was once very prosperous. Many impressive buildings of my childhood have disappeared, for example the Bank of Montreal where I cashed in my War Savings Stamps in 1945 (25 cents taken to school each week was big money). The bank's counter was way too high and the teller was in his cage behind bars, so my mother handed over the goods. I netted \$8.25, promptly deposited in my piggy bank.

Other windfalls were at the annual carnival, where the Police would spin a wheel and you could win a bag of silver coins. As my Dad was a friend of the Police Chief, the wheel always stopped at my number. A major industry was the Dominion Organ & Piano Co., partially gutted by fire the night I was born. As my father was a reporter for *The Canadian Statesman*, he had a busy night. My mother too.

Bowmanville was a white bread town and if there were any non-Anglo residents, I wasn't aware of them. Everything was within walking distance. We lived in a semi built in 1837, seconds from downtown. Many people rented rather than owned, or lived above their shops. I was free to roam; the only known risk was getting hit by a car. However, because gas was rationed, there weren't many of them on the road. In winter, the roads were generally snow-covered, with a bit of sand spread on top. Times were simpler, but not necessarily better.

We spent summer holidays at the family farm. Canada was more rural then, so I learned to work in the fields. Cold well-water on a hot day was like nothing you've ever tasted. Lighting was by coal oil lamp and heating by wood stove. Telephone was by party-line and if you lifted the receiver quietly, you could learn quite a lot. The gingerbread clock chimed every hour on the hour and the chickens made a racket every morning, but I snoozed on. That clock now sits on my mantel. My maternal grandfather, born in 1866, remembered a giant bonfire in 1869, when his father burned the stumps that weren't needed for

fences. When he could no longer work the fields, he fetched the eggs (the hens would never let *me* get one ☺). When he couldn't do that anymore, he split the firewood. He died at 95, outliving his spouse by 47 years. She had given birth to 10 children.

My paternal grandfather ran a bakery in the 20s and 30s. When A&P opened with bread at 5¢ a loaf, he had to close up shop. After that, he ran the cafeteria at Goodyear Tire.

The blacksmith lived in the other side of our house and I'd watch him shoe horses. He gave this up in the 1950s when horses became obsolete, but continued metal-working till he was 86. When tractors replaced horses on the farm, my grandfather couldn't bring himself to shoot his. During the war, milk was still delivered by horse and wagon; the horse knew the route and moved on command to the next address, even without the driver on board. There was a huge cast-iron water-fountain at the Town Hall. People drank out of one side, horses out of the other. Hygiene had not yet been invented.

Milk was left at your doorstep and in the winter the cream would freeze and lift the bottle cap 3 or 4 inches high. Heating was by coal, so buildings got blacker than originally intended. Refrigeration was by ice-box. When the iceman came round, he'd give the kids some ice-chips; these came directly from the lake, but no worries, pollution had yet to be invented.

The Royal Theatre was with a stone's-throw away, but I wasn't allowed to go. The Westerns, in black and white, must have been great because the kids let out

a giant roar when the feature began. My Mom made up for this by taking me to Oshawa's Regent Theatre where we saw Bambi and then Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs, in living Technicolour! Radio was still big. My favourite show was Santa Claus from Eaton's Toyland. I was the saddest kid on the block when Santa signed off for the last time on Christmas Eve. Today, "race-to-the-bottom radio" rules.

I started piano lessons when I was four. I didn't become the second Chopin, but I still love music. On Sundays we'd go to the beach, or to the Cream of Barley Camp, where they had swings plus the odd rabbit and raccoon. Today it's the Bowmanville Zoo and you pay to get in. In winter, we would slide down the hill at Vanstone's Mill, the original power source. Today, Darlington Nuclear is its unnatural successor.

My Dad gave up his reporting job to work at the Ajax Munitions Plant. He had a black McLaughlin Buick with a gas ration sticker on the windshield. It must have been provided for him to take workers to Ajax everyday as we didn't have the money to buy it. Smoking at the plant was strictly forbidden because of the explosives, but legend has it that workers crawled under the pre-fabs to light up.

Countless Union Jacks flew every 24th of May. There were military parades with bands you could march to. One day, a parade passed and they were torching a man on a float. Was I scared! Mom said it wasn't a real person, just an effigy of a bad man called Hitler. I recall the war's end. It had been raining all day, but after dinner the sun came out and church bells

started ringing. More people than I'd ever seen came out of their houses and walked on the streets. Quite the spectacle... and quite the sense of relief.
--Noel Corbett

YURA warmly welcomes the following new members:

Barbara Barnes, Barbara Beardwood, Jill Bell, Bruno Bellissimo, Anne Benincasa, Walter Carter, Angela D'Ambrosi, Julianna Drexler, Leonard Early, Marc Egnal, Robert Fothergill, Helen Freedhoff, Bernard Gooden, Jane Grant, Janice Grant, Robert Gray, Shirley Hickman, Elizabeth Joan Humphrey, Ronald Kawall, Mary Lehane, Janice Johnson, Olney Jones, Harriet Lewis, Sue Manickchan-Hosein, Clara Masaro, Francoise Mougeon, John Pollard, Donna Rosenfeld, James Savage, John Shafer, Ann Shteir, Diane Skinner, Penny Spence, David Stadnicki, Bruce Shuman, Karen Swift, Anthony Wallis, Carol Ann Wien, Frances Wilkinson, Manda Zwarenstein.

ENDOSCOPY – Alert

We all know by now that Joan Rivers died needlessly during an endoscopy at a specialized clinic in New York City. I am writing my personal experience because it could help someone else. I had an endoscopy (for an examination of esophagus and stomach) at Mt Sinai downtown about six years ago. This is not a procedure that I would undergo in a clinic. (And the same goes for a colonoscopy.) At least a hospital has all the emergencies on hand if something untoward happens.

The doctor had agreed that he could do it without sedating me (it's good to avoid as much as possible having general anesthesia or even sedation after 70). Everyone else was being sedated because it makes things easier for the physician. As well, some people are afraid and prefer not to see it. In my case, as I was much awake (and terrified), I sat upright in a special chair, the nurse tied my hands down gently and kept holding me throughout the procedure; she sprayed some local anesthetics in the back of my mouth, and the doctor proceeded. It was annoying but there was no pain and no reason for me to have been so nervous about it. The doctor kept me apprised of his progress and that was it in just a few minutes.

I got up and left with a sore throat while every other patient was sleeping it off in the waking up room. Obviously, neither he nor the nurse were used to a "live" patient as she congratulated me very heartily throughout...like a coach would do. I would recommend it, if needed.
-Anne-Marie Ambert

2014 Showcase and Bale Sale

Photos by Gene Denzel





Good Reads

The Final Cut by Catherine Coulter (Putnam, 2013) is an excellent detective story (FBI + Scotland Yard + NYPD) taking place in New York City, France, and Switzerland. A real suspense full of twists, turns, and surprises. It is well crafted and introduces Chief Inspector Nicholas Drummond of Scotland Yard and Coulter's well-liked special FBI agents and couple Lacey Sherlock and Dillon Savich. The kind of book that exhausts you because you can't put it down. It can be found in the Toronto Public Library.

The smartest kids in the world and how they got that way by Amanda Ripley (Simon & Schuster, 2013). Despite its title, this is an easy book to read. It follows three American teenagers going for one year to a foreign high school, respectively South Korea, Finland, and Poland. While following them, she explores how these three diverse countries have been able to place the value of educational rigor as a core national value, form highly competent and respected teachers, and develop a curriculum that has led their students to ace international testing. She also compares American childrearing to childrearing in these countries. I highly recommend it. Also available in the Toronto Public Library.

BONS MOTS

- Louis XVIII sur Chateaubriand: « *M. de Chateaubriand croit qu'il est devenu sourd depuis qu'il n'entend plus parler de lui.* »

- On the day of the inauguration of Guernica, a German tourist called out to Picasso and asked, "You are the one who did this?" to which Picasso replied, "No, it's you!"
- One day, I will go and live in Theory because, in Theory, everything goes well.
- Monsieur Guitry, comment voyez-vous la vie amoureuse ?
« *C'est très simple: on se veut et on s'enlace; puis on se lasse et on s'en veut.* »

-Reported by Rachel Lewin

COMPUTER CHUCKLE

A woman customer called the Canon help desk with a problem with her printer.

Tech support: Are you running it under Windows?

Customer: No, my desk is next to the door, but that is a good point. The man sitting in the cubicle next to me is under a window, and his printer is working fine.

-Contributed by Mary Pfister



YURA Executive

Officers

John Lennox, Co-President

jlennox@yorku.ca

Jane Crescenzi, Co-President

gemma.crescenzi@yahoo.ca

Janet Rowe, Past President

janet-R@rogers.com

Gill Teiman, Secretary

gteiman@yorku.ca

Marilyn Cartmill, Treasurer

cartmim@yorku.ca

Members at Large

Margo Gewurtz

mgewurtz@yorku.ca

Cliff Jansen

jansenc@rogers.com

Jean Levy

levyjr@yorku.ca

Billie Mullick

bmullick@yorku.ca

Colin Deschamps

colind@yorku.ca

Mildred Theobalds

theobald@yorku.ca

Michelle Young

myoung@yorku.ca

Ross Rudolph

rrudolph@yorku.ca

Anna Hoffmann

annahoffmann@rogers.com

Ex-Officio members:

Anne-Marie Ambert, Editor

ambert@yorku.ca

Fred Fletcher, ARFL

ffletch@yorku.ca

David Smith

dmsmith@yorku.ca

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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Anne-Marie Ambert, Editor.

York University Retirees' Association

101 Central Square, York University
4700 Keele St., Toronto, ON Canada
M3J 1P3

Telephone: (416) 736-2100, ext. 70664

E-mail: yura@yorku.ca

Website: <http://www.yorku.ca/yura>