



A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees' Association

Fall 2015

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Message from YURA's Co-Presidents

As always, the summer has passed far too quickly and we find ourselves in October. The YURA year got off to a very good start on September 29 with the fall theatre trip to the Shaw Festival. We saw a sprightly and stylish production of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*. It's always a treat to be pulled into a play by experienced actors and, in this case, the glamour and ideas of Edwardian England. It was great fun for all and we thank Jean Levy for her careful attention to the details that make these occasions such a pleasure.

On October 5, through the good offices of Rosemarie Nielsen and her oversight of the Gourmet Club, a number of YURA members took part in a dinner in honour of China's National Day (October 1) at the King Dragon Cuisine restaurant. Our thanks to Rosemarie.

On a more pedestrian note, we want to thank YURA members for their co-operation in the moved-up membership renewal process that happened in June instead of August/September as has been the case until now. The response was really good and there will shortly be sent from the office a reminder to those who have not yet renewed. If you haven't yet renewed, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Our **Annual General Meeting** will take place on **Friday October 23**. You should have received a separate notice about it. We are having a **guest speaker**, Dr. Will Gage of the Faculty of Health, who will be speaking on "Aging Research and Education" *at 11 a.m.* His presentation will be followed by a

complimentary lunch and then our AGM. We hope that as many members as possible will be able to attend. Please do let us know if you intend to do so by emailing us at yura@yorku.ca or by leaving a message at the YURA Office at 416-736-2100 ext. 70664. We'd love to see you there.

Showcase, our annual fund-raiser in aid of YURA's student awards takes place on **Tuesday November 10** in Central Square. Notices have been circulated to you about the donation of regiftable items for the Attic Treasures table and of baked goods for the Baked Goods table. If you have a craft or hobby, don't hide your light under a bushel, let us know and we'll be happy to arrange for it (and you) to be part of Showcase and our Exhibitors' tables. Noel Corbett (ncorbett@yorku.ca) is the person to contact about putting your interests and talents on view. You may well be an inspiration to others.

Do plan to be part of our **Showcase** day as a contributor, a participant, or a spender – two out of three would be great – and, in the process, touch base with friends and colleagues. It's great for the spirit, and the proceeds from our sales are great for students who are supported through our YURA awards.

We do thank you for your continuing support of YURA and send best wishes for the new YURA year. As always, we are at your service in 101 Central Square and at yura@yorku.ca and/or 416-736-2100 ext 70664.

Yours truly,

--Jane Crescenzi and John Lennox

YURA and ARFL: York's two retiree associations

There are two separate retiree organizations through which former York employees can maintain their connection to the University. One is the York University Retirees' Association (YURA) whose membership is open to anyone retiring from employment in any capacity. The other is the Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York (ARFL), open to former members of the YUFA bargaining unit.

The two associations collaborate in organizing some events for members and in sharing information of mutual interest, and each has an ex-officio representative on the Executive of the other. In addition, ARFL and YURA are both members of CURAC, the national association of college and university retiree groups.

ARFL is associated with YUFA and is active in pressing for improvements to retiree benefits and maintaining academic involvement. YURA has broader aims, including social activities, health advice, support for student scholarships through YURA's annual "Showcase" sale, and continued connections with York. Retired faculty and librarians sometimes think they have joined both organizations when they have in fact joined only one. Each retiree association requires a separate membership.

Added note from YURA's Editor

In addition, both associations have their own publications: YURA has a quarterly official *Newsletter* and a monthly PTP

(or *Person-to-Person*), the latter emphasizing communication—both practical and health related--among YURA members as well as humour.

In Memoriam Spring/Summer 2015

Josephine McCarthy	May 2
Wolseley Anderson	May 3
Friederike Eckhardt-Schupp	May 4
Angela Stange	May 14
Zenia Melnyk	July 5
E. Ruth Brown	July 11
Janice Nicholson	July 23

Life as it was back then: Reminiscence

This is our 13th reminiscence and we present Alex Blair. Before retiring in 1992, Alex was Associate Professor in the Geography Dept of what was then the Faculty of Arts. He now lives with his wife Mary Elizabeth in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where they are members of The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Southern Mississippi. He chose to entitle his reminiscence, "The Depression and the War."

I was born in 1932 in Windsor. It hit me later that I did not realize at the time that there was a depression going on. My father worked for the Parke Davis Pharmaceutical Company in Detroit through the Depression. People need their medications. His job was secure. He lost only two weeks of work during his 30 years with the Company. One week was a strike, the other flu. My older sister and I never missed a meal, were always adequately dressed, and

lived in a comfortable house my Dad had built in Windsor in the 1920's.

All through the Depression, when old enough, we received 5 cents allowance every Saturday. This was immediately spent at the Candy Store attached to the Bigness family gas station a block away. Imagine spending 5 cents and getting a bag full of goodies. I remember especially black balls, licorice, and bolo bats. For 5 cents, some of the goods and services a child could get were: a one-way bus ride, a bag of popcorn or box of candy at the movies, an ice-cream cone or Dixie Cup, the Saturday matinee at the movies, a 6 ounce bottle of many soft drinks--Coke, Pepsi, cream soda etc. I remember buying small toys for a nickel.

The Saturday Matinee at the movies was always a treat. There were usually three features: a cartoon, previews and the news. At times, there would be a serial such as Tarzan or Superman to keep you coming every week. I also recall the annual family boat trip down the Detroit River to BobLo Island, a great amusement park with all kinds of attractions. The Island was Canadian but the amusement park had been developed by an American Company. Both the boat trip and the park were special. The BobLo boats sailed normally from the foot of Woodward Avenue, Detroit's main street, directly across from Ouellette Avenue, Windsor's main street. At the foot of Ouellette Avenue was a ferry dock for boats that took passengers back and forth across the Detroit River. It was to this ferry dock that the BobLo boat came once a year to take Canadians to BobLo and to celebrate what was then called Dominion Day.

Every spring, toward the end of the school year, our Mother would meet us one day at a park near our home, during our lunch break, for a picnic she brought along in my wagon. The park was a fine setting for a picnic and a place where we spent a lot of time as children. It had the usual swings and slides and monkey bars plus a shallow wading pool for smaller children. There was a lot to do in summer. My Mother's older sister, lived with her husband and three daughters in Garden City, Michigan. Occasionally we would go and visit with them. This involved the usual streetcar and Tunnel Bus and, in Detroit, another bus to Garden City. This was a grand excursion for a child. It was full of new sights and sounds, especially on the Detroit side of the river.

There was one serious problem when I was a child – polio. Several summers were lost when I was quite young because the parks and swimming pools were closed, and we were encouraged to avoid crowds. So those summers were spent in the backyard and on the front porch. We did not worry too much about the other communicable diseases; measles, mumps and whooping cough. There were no vaccines so every child caught everything. The Public Health Department had to be notified and they came and affixed a sign on your front door effectively quarantining you until the disease was no longer communicable. I recall that each disease had a different-colored sign. The street I grew up on was like a small community with lots of children of all ages. There were very few cars at the time and in summer we kids owned the streets where we played a variety of games. It was a good time to be young and carefree.

World War II dominated the forties and our way of life soon began to change in small ways. I was only seven in September, 1939, when the war was declared but I remember feeling that something important had happened. There were rallies and parades and lots of excitement with recruiting drives. The local regiment grew in size as they prepared to go to war, and the automobile plants fairly quickly stopped making cars and civilian trucks and began producing army trucks and Universal Carriers. There was talk of food shortages and eventually some foods were rationed. Meat was rationed as were sugar and gasoline. Many manufactured goods eventually disappeared from the shelves.

The biggest hardship for kids was the fact that candy eventually disappeared as stocks were used up. The ships normally used to carry sugar were turned to carrying war materials and sometimes troops to Europe. Meager attempts were made to make substitutes for real candy bars. My least favorite was the Liberator Bar, named after the great bomber made in Canada. It was made of puffed wheat held together with who knows what and covered with light brown bee's wax. When the war ended, candy bars appeared again on the market. I remember the first one I got. It was a Cadbury's Caramilk, today still my favorite.

Carving an airplane out of balsawood was a favorite pastime when we were kids. A kit cost very little. With the War, the supply of balsa, from a tropical tree, dried up and was replaced by soft pine. The pine was very hard to work, so we quit buying the kits. The War was a time

of austerity. You threw nothing out and made do with what you had.

One new practice that benefited us was the official establishment of Victory Gardens. People were encouraged to grow their own food. As it happened, the lots behind where we lived were undeveloped, so my Dad, actually Mum, signed up for three lots to grow a victory garden. One lot was dedicated to potatoes. The middle lot had a strawberry patch that began small but spread rapidly over the years. Also in the middle lot were a variety of vegetables. The third lot had vegetables, but also a small pumpkin patch. I remember a lot of carrots, rutabagas, tomatoes, peas, cucumbers, cabbage and some corn. The three small lots produced an abundance of food, much of which my Mother preserved. Cucumbers were made into pickles. Cabbage was made into sauerkraut and rutabagas were coated in wax to preserve them over the winter.

There was much sadness. A young man I knew joined the Merchant Marine and was lost in the North Atlantic when his ship was torpedoed by a German submarine. The father of a friend was in the Royal Canadian Air Force and lost his life in combat. Three brothers, the Walker boys who lived across the street, all served in the war. My favorite, Jim, was in the navy. The other two were in the army. I joined the "Write a Fighter Corp" and periodically sent Jim letters of encouragement. He wrote back when he could and appreciated receiving mail from home.

One of the saddest days of the war was when reports came in of the Dieppe Raid on the fortified coast of France which was meant to test the German defenses.

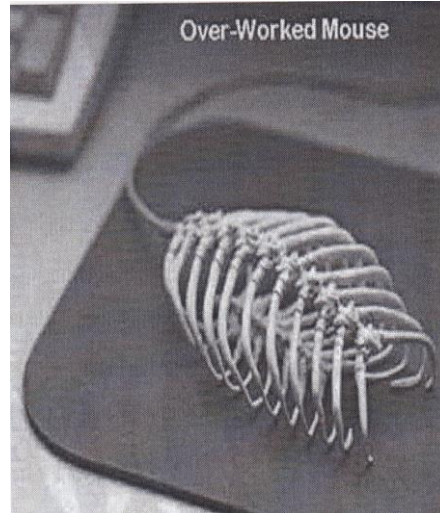
It did, and many lessons that were learned at Dieppe aided greatly in the planning for Operation Overlord, D-Day. Some say that without the Dieppe Raid, Overlord could have been a disaster. The problem for Windsor was that the local regiment, The Essex Scottish, was the lead unit in the Raid and was decimated. The list of dead and wounded was long and the list of prisoners who spent the war in concentration camps was longer. Many people had to work overtime and three shifts a day became common. There were “tag days” to involve us young people in the war effort by having us collect money for various relief projects. Scrap drives were organized on a large scale for metals and paper. One metal drive used the playground at our elementary school as the collection point. It was amazing what people turned up in their basements, attics and garages to donate to the war effort.

V-E Day, the official end of World War 2, was a joyous occasion. Fortunately it was a warm spring day and every one took to the streets to celebrate. It was a day long party. Those with ration cards for gasoline drove around town honking their horns. The celebrations were repeated on V-J Day. As a child, I did not know what a momentous event World War II was and how it would change the world. We were just happy it was over. Looking back, the war years were an exciting time to grow up.

-Alex Blair

For information on The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute:

www.usm.edu/lifelong-learning



Good Reads

A friend introduced me to a mystery writer from the Montreal area, Louise Penny. Her focus is not so much in terms of gory details but about the people and places in Quebec as well as mystery. But I was so taken with her writing that I have read 4 of her books already. I just had to know what was happening next with one of her characters. She has written 10 books. I did notice into my third book that I was reading out of order, so it's best I think to read them by order of earlier to later editions.

-Betty Wilson

If you like a bit of science spiced up with a context of human evolution, “fossil diggers,” quarrels and jealousies among scientists (does not exist at York!) spanning well over 120 years, you will like Martin Meredith’s *Born in Africa: The quest for the originis of humanity*, published in 2011. It is very interesting and is up to date in terms of human evolution, when pre-humans and humans went “travelling about the world,” and how early humans lived

around 120,000 years ago. Immensely readable.

-Anne-Marie Ambert

If politics, economics, and corruption are among your (intellectual) interests, K. Silverstein's *The secret world of oil* contains fascinating facts about lobby groups, scandals, and names names. It is all about the power of fossil fuels on politics and the environment. It's an eye-opener because some of his information is rather extreme in the sense that it is very raw and shows aspects that we may have never realized. It was published in 2014 by Verso Books in New York. Both books are available in the Toronto Public Library.

-Anne-Marie Ambert

Oddities

En Russie, beaucoup de conducteurs utilisent des caméras fixées sur le tableau de bord pour filmer ce qui se passe devant eux, pour éviter d'avoir recours à des témoins en cas d'accident.

Ces caméras captent parfois des scènes irréalistes qui nous font reculer dans le fond de notre fauteuil.

http://www.youtube.com/embed/5RAaW_1FzYg?autoplay=1&modestbranding=1&rel=0&showinfo=0

SEX EDUCATION BACK THEN

The way it was. Ontario is coming face to face with the problems of Sex Education. As far as my education in the 1940/50's in the UK went, it did not include this subject. However, there was a natural curiosity and hence some discussion occasionally outside of the classroom. We were beyond the stage of

the gooseberry patch down the lane or the stork, but really not sure where to go next. It was obvious that it was the ladies who had children, many by going into hospital and reappearing with a babe in arms. But how did it happen?

In one fairly intense discussion I remember at around 10 or 11 years old, one of the apparently more mature boys decided to impart what he had been told by his parents. It seemed that the male and female had to be married and sleeping in the same bed. During the night, while both were deep in sleep some sort of ectoplasm left the male and crossed under the sheets and entered the female. Locations unspecified, this resulted in a "pregnancy" which would later require the hospital trip to extract a baby.

Another boy came up with his parents' explanation which actually went into a simplified explanation of the mechanics involved. Although this turned out to be very close to the true story, none of us were prepared to believe it. It just sounded too ridiculous. The majority opted to go with the first account. And there it stood, curiosity sated, on with the cricket game.

A few summers back, visiting my sister, one of her old school chums showed up and the conversation somehow drifted into those early years. Apparently she had been told the full and true creation story by her mother but asked not to speak about it to other children because other parents might not like it. However, there was no trouble with that because, in fact, she just didn't believe a word of it. As she explained, "I just wouldn't accept that the Queen would be involved in such things so it couldn't be true".

So how did people procreate without instructions? This was sort of answered many years later (1960's). I was in Graduate School at UWO (London, Ontario), and a news item appeared in the media about a teenage Tennessee "mountain folk" couple who had been found late at night on the highway trying to get to a nearby town. They were given a lift to the local hospital where the young girl was found to be at the delivery stage of a very difficult pregnancy. The child was born and her life saved, but it was reported she had been told it would have to be her last. She already had three older children, and had been interviewed on radio about the whole thing. The part that stuck in my mind was the last question posed "so do you think you might try for another child?" to which she answered "not now that the doctor explained how it happened!" Problem solved, the innate creativeness and curiosity of the human brain!
Final Joke.

Child to Daddy "did you see the stork that brought me"
Daddy "just the Bill part, son!"
--Clive Holloway

VERY BEAUTIFUL VOICE

STREET SINGER "You raise me up"

What is wonderful about this video below is that people usually walk past an older person as though they don't exist. This wonderful elderly gentleman caused them to stop and pay attention! His name is Martin Hurkens, this clip was made in Holland.

Turn up your sound.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10201870505357473>

contributed by **Mary Pfister**

My brother contributed this link for Martin Hurkens' life story:

<http://www.martinhurkens.nl/biography-martin-hurkens>

ANAGRAMS

PRESBYTERIAN:

When you rearrange the letters:
BEST IN PRAYER

ASTRONOMER:

When you rearrange the letters:
MOON STARER

THE EYES:

When you rearrange the letters:
THEY SEE

THE MORSE CODE:

When you rearrange the letters:
HERE COME DOTS

SLOT MACHINES:

When you rearrange the letters:
CASH LOST IN ME

ANIMOSITY:

When you rearrange the letters:
IS NO AMITY

ELECTION RESULTS:

When you rearrange the letters:
LIES - LET'S RECOUNT

A DECIMAL POINT:

When you rearrange the letters:
I'M A DOT IN PLACE

(I thank the person who sent this months ago: I failed to record his/her name.)

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