



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

**Fall 2018**

**No. 44**

**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**

**Contents**

Message from the YURA Co-Presidents.....page two  
 CURAC/ARUCC Conference 2018, Charmaine Curtis.....page two  
 Photos: award received by Mildred Theobalds.....page three  
 In Memoriam.....page three  
 Life as it was back then: Reminiscence, Robert Drummond.....page three  
 New YURA members.....page five  
 Important article about health and poverty.....page five  
 UnFairbnb.....page five  
 ADHD meds and cognitive function in students.....page five  
 What was NAFTA? Hidden aspects, Anne-Marie Ambert.....page six  
 Rights not “Fortress Conservation” key to save planet, says expert.....page seven  
 More scholarly journals are not peer reviewed.....page seven  
 News from San Lanfranco.....page seven  
 Good Reads, Anne-Marie Ambert.....page eight  
 Humour Department.....page eight  
 YURA Executive.....page ten  
 YURA Office Hours.....page ten

## Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

Summer is disappearing fast as we put this message together. We hope that you have had a safe and pleasant summer and that autumn (fast approaching) will bring continued good weather and will delay as late as possible the beginnings of winter.

Summer was quiet here in the office. We did not have regular office hours; however, we kept up with the membership renewals and preparation for the fall program. The bustle of a busy campus has returned as we move into September and with that we too return to our regular hours and duties here in the office.

We have a busy fall program planned for YURA members in which we hope many of you will participate. Our most important event will be the Annual General Meeting and Luncheon to be held on Friday, October 26, 2018. Our speaker will be Doug Saunders, an alumnus of York, who is the International Affairs Correspondent for the *Globe and Mail*. Doug will speak at 11:00 A.M. As York grows, our meeting location has changed. We will be meeting in the New Student Centre (west of Atkinson, and east of Osgoode and HNES -- the old Admin. Studies building) on the second floor in Convention Centre Room C2. Please make note of this change.

We are currently preparing for the AGM with the call for nominations which has been issued, with the deadline of September 15, 2018.

We have listed our **Fall events** as follows:

Tuesday October 2: The Annual YURA trip to the Shaw Festival to see The Grand Hotel.

**Tuesday October 26: Annual General Meeting**  
**New Location: Convention Center, Room C2, second floor of the New Student Center**

11a.m. Guest Speaker: Doug Saunter

12 noon Lunch (complimentary)

1:15p.m. Annual General Meeting

Please register by October 19 if you plan to attend. To do so, email us at yura@yorku.ca or call: 416 736-2100 ext. 70664

**Tuesday November 13, 2018: Showcase (9a.m. to 3p.m.) Location: Central Square.** Please note that all proceeds are donated to YURA-supported Student Awards.

Tuesday November 20:

The YURA Trip to the Bata Shoe Museum for guided tour followed by lunch at the Fortunate Fox. This is a *new* initiative.

Throughout the fall we will continue to process both renewed memberships and new memberships to YURA. So if you have not returned your renewal form, please complete it and return it with payment as soon as possible to YURA c/o Human Resources, 8 Chimneystack Rod, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto M3J 1P3.

We hope that the holiday was a time of friendship and rest, and we would like to add our voices to those that wish you continued happiness and health in 2018.

--**Charmaine Courtis and Ian Greene**, Co-Presidents

## CURAC/ARUCC Conference 2018

The 2018 CURAC/ARUCC Conference in Halifax from May 23-25th was hosted by the Association of Dalhousie Retirees and Pensioners and the Saint Mary's University Retirees' Association. YURA was well represented by Bob Drummond, Frank Fletcher, Charmaine Courtis and our CURAC/ARUCC Tribute Award recipient, Mildred Theobalds.

There were best practices sessions for retiree associations, at which many ideas were exchanged by the attendees. The remaining sessions over the two days were divided into Community Concerns, Health and Wellness, and Higher Education for Seniors. At these sessions, Dalhousie and Saint Mary's were able to profile both faculty and the new programming they offer for this sector throughout the province.

Perhaps the highlight this year for me was the Banquet, held at the Pier 21 National Immigration Museum, where we had the opportunity to hear from Senator Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard. Her talk “Africans in the Promised Land: The Ongoing Struggle for Recognition, Justice and Development in Canada” was exceptional. It was at the Banquet that Mildred Theobalds received her CURAC/ARUCC Tribute Award. It was a proud moment. Congratulations to Mildred.

**--Charmaine Curtis**



**Mildred with Charmaine Curtis, YURA's Co-President**



**Mildred and K. G. Sankaram, CURAC's Awards Chair**

### **In Memoriam**

Anna Baker	June 3
Alex Blair	February 3
MacDonald Bourne	March 1
Barbara Clare	August 3
D. Richard Ewen	April 27
Marion Hingley	June 23
Elizabeth Kinzett	July 7
Louis Lefeber	July 28
Margaret Leitch	June 11
George O'Brien	August 4
Hilda Rich	August 19
Albert Robinson	June 11
Ippolito Spadafora	June 15
Dorothy Thomsett Hodge	June 7

*Note from the Editor: I wish to note that **Margaret Leitch** made regular contributions to this Newsletter, especially numerous Good Reads. In fact, the previous issue contained one of her Good Reads. A.-M.A.*

### **Life as it was back then: Reminiscence**

*Our 23rd Reminiscence, entitled, “Reminiscences of Growing Up in (and Near) Toronto,” is by Robert Drummond. Bob retired from York in 2012. Before retirement, he was University Professor Political Science and Public Policy and Administration.*

“When I was three years old, I had a bout of tonsillitis and pneumonia, and after my tonsils were duly removed, my parents decided it would be healthier to move away from Port Credit (now part of lakeside Mississauga) and settle temporarily in my grandmother’s house in North Toronto, while a new house was being built in the rural wilds of Willowdale. What I chiefly remember of those Days (in addition to being spoiled by my grandmother and maiden aunts) was the horse-drawn milk delivery wagons, and the resultant “road apples.” (This would have been 1948-49.)

When we moved to the new house around my fourth birthday, milk and bread delivery was by truck, but we also had ice delivered for some years until we finally traded our ice-box for a new-fangled electric refrigerator. There was also coal delivery in winter, until an oil furnace was purchased when I was well into elementary school. When garbage was put out for collection in winter, it was accompanied by a can of ashes from the furnace.

Although this area is now part of the City of Toronto (thanks to Mike Harris) it was then the Township (not Borough) of North York, and more rural than urban in many ways. There were open fields across from our front door, and that remained the case for a year or two after we moved in. Even when construction began on expanding our housing subdivision, there remained some areas without houses and those fields provided a great place for youngsters to play, gathering wild strawberries, catching butterflies, and generally staying out of our parents' hair until the street lights came on. An old apple tree served well as a pirate ship for kids who were developing their imaginations. A large boulder, that was not removed until the house-builders needed the land on which it sat, was admirably shaped like a very large skull. Just the thing for small boys. And a small creek that did not become a storm sewer for decades was a great place for tadpoles and other fauna.

When construction crews went home, the half-built houses provided another (no doubt quite dangerous) play location, and the sites were doubly interesting for the discarded soft-drink bottles the workers left. Redeemable for two cents each, they provided a valuable income source for candy-loving children, when quite a lot of candy could be purchased for a nickel.

I don't really know if snow was much deeper then, or we were all so short that drifts could easily exceed our height. The most memorable winter was probably the one when the boiler at our elementary school developed a problem that required school to

be closed for a week. The father of one friend flooded their back yard and we skated and played hockey there all week, stopping only when a neighbour with an ailing wife complained to us (not to our parents, mark you) that the noise was too much for her to rest comfortably. It was not until I was nearly ready for high school that an artificial ice surface was built in a nearby park and we could skate without having to clear the snow first.

In those naively innocent days, my friends and I were routinely expected at the age of 10, 11 or 12 to make our way downtown without risk on the bus and streetcar (and by 1954, the new subway). One favourite destination (and one acceptable to parents) was the Royal Ontario Museum. In those days (and perhaps soon to be again) entry was by the doors on Queen's Park Circle. Over one of the doors into the Museum was a notice of its founding date, with the letter "u" carved as a "v" and the word divided as:

FOVN

DED

1912

The sight caused us, in pre-adolescent glee, to shed an insincere tear for poor Fovn and to wonder of what he had died.

In the days before the subway, streetcars ran up Yonge Street to the city limits and the "Glen Echo Loop," just south of Hogg's Hollow (near York Mills). There was a small café at the loop where my father would buy me a milkshake after I had accompanied him downtown for some errand or other. It was a good reward for the energy I had expended at the age of four or five trying to keep up with his long stride (no stroller in our house). Even after the subway ran to Eglinton, the loop remained a bus terminal, and only after the subway was extended to Finch was it abandoned. It is now the parking lot for a Loblaw's. I remember when each streetcar carried, in addition to the driver, a "conductor" who sat in the middle near the rear door and collected fares (three cents for children, as

I recall – now they ride free, so some progress there). On Sundays (when cars ran less frequently, but passenger traffic did not significantly decline) they often had a “trailer” – an older car with wooden seats (Calvinist austerity for the Sabbath?) – that I liked to ride because it was different.

I’m sure many of these memories are shared by others who grew up in Toronto and its near suburbs in the 1950s, but I am grateful for your indulgence in allowing me to revisit them.”

--Robert Drummond

## YURA Welcomes These New Members

Simone Abouchar; Vijay Agnew; Trudi Berger; Sam Bucovetsky; Juan Carlos Cadavid; Marlene Caplan; Agnes Choi; Edward Ciantar; Suzanne Claridge; Gayle Comeau; André Carufel; Steve Dewar; Errol Dougan; Kathryn Elder; Sherin Fernando; Norman Ferris; Agnes Fraser; Gladys Fung; Richard Grundsten; Monica Hamilton Elliot; Shin Imai; Brigitte Kleer; Linda Lee; Gregory Leong; Henry Leung; David Leyton-Brown; Vita Lobo; Kim Maltman; Alla Medow; Philip Monk; Michael Morris; Vivian Olender; Dominique O’Neill; Ann Pestano; Trudy Pound-Curtis; Mulchan Rampersad; Rebecca Rampersad; Don Rubin; Vinesh Saxena; Joyce Searl; Elayne Shapira; Douglas Skinner; Jane Skinner; John Smithin; Diane Stadnicki; Nancy Stanger; Patrick Taylor; Jose Toste; Kathryn Turner; Matthew Vander Woude; Andrea Vechter Elson; Connie Vince; Terry Woo

## IMPORTANT ARTICLES ABOUT HEALTH AND POVERTY from the *The Tyee*

<https://thetyee.ca/Series/2018/09/03/All-Together-Healthy/>



Little Indigenous girls at the Fort York Pow Wow  
June 23, 2018

## UnFairbnb

### How online rental platforms use the EU to defeat cities’ affordable housing measures

Perhaps why we have heard very little in the last provincial elections about reigning in bnb practices in order to increase our stock of rentals in Ontario, particularly in Toronto. See the lobbying that is going on at the EU level:

<https://corporateeurope.org/power-lobbies/2018/05/unfairbnb>

## ADHD meds and cognitive function in students

“Medications used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) don’t boost cognitive function in young adults who don’t actually have the condition, and may actually impair their thinking, according to researchers at the University of Rhode Island (URI) in Kingston and Brown University in Providence.

Their small study (just 13 subjects) contradicts common perceptions about stimulants in high schools and colleges throughout the United States:

An estimated 5 to 35 percent of college students in the U.S. and other countries use these controlled substances illegally to bolster their academic performance.

Based on that, the researchers hypothesized that stimulant drugs like Ritalin, Adderall, and Vyvanse could improve academic performance. Instead, they discovered that the expected effects of the drugs – improved attention and focus – didn’t translate to better results on tests measuring reading comprehension or fluency, and in fact, the meds took a toll on working memory.”

Sourced from: *Pharmacy AND Copied from Health Central* (online), July, 2018.

## WHAT WAS NAFTA? HIDDEN ASPECTS

What are we losing with NAFTA obliterated by Trump? Canadians like NAFTA, but, argues Gordon Laxer (2018), “they don’t know what’s in NAFTA. They think it’s about free trade — no tariff barriers among the three North American countries. Wrong. Tariffs between Canada and the U.S. were very low before the 1989 Canada-U. S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and 1994 when NAFTA began. Tariffs have since fallen for Canada, the U.S., Mexico and many other countries under the most-favoured-nation rules of the World Trade Organization. [...] If NAFTA dies, tariffs between Canada and the U.S. would remain at zero for many items and very low for the others. Unless, of course, Trump finds a flimsy excuse to impose them. But he is already doing that under NAFTA.”

More to the point, Laxer explains, “NAFTA is a corporate rights agreement, not a free-trade agreement in the original sense. [...] NAFTA’s Chapter 11 gives foreign corporations the right to sue Canadian governments for passing laws that hurt their anticipated profits. It’s rigged against Canada. It’s ironic that, although the U.S. has not lost a single case, Trump wants to end chapter 11, while Trudeau fights to keep it. Wealthy foreign

corporations have sued Canada successfully eight times, mainly over environmental protection and resource management laws.” So far, Canadian taxpayers have had to pay over \$ 314 million in the defense of these lawsuits.

Yet, these lawsuits are benefiting largely an inner group of investment and corporate lawyers with close ties to the multinational firms on whose behalf they seek to litigate. As the stakes are so high for the nation, one may ask, which legitimate Court is involved in the lawsuits? None! Instead, NAFTA is written in such a way that closed arbitration by a three-lawyer committee decides on the outcome and penalties. These are called “investor state dispute settlement mechanisms or ISDS mechanisms.” These three private individuals, often with conflicts of interests on their part, and no oversight, are entrusted with the power to review, without any restriction or appeal procedure, all actions of the government, all decisions of the courts, and all laws and regulations emanating from parliament. This is private, not public law. In effect, these committees override the democratically elected government and entirely bypass countries’ legitimate legal system. They defend corporate rights. Yet, *people* in all of this have no rights—and neither does the environment.

However, with international investment and commercial free trade pacts, *corporations* are protected, even if a local company defaults as a result of its risky investments. In effect, impoverished citizens pay the bill of risky and unscrupulous investors and their law firms. [...] For instance, with such “free trade” treaties, foreign companies and investors gain the right to sue countries where they have companies, even when these countries are experiencing an economic meltdown and are trying to shelter their citizens by setting protective rules that may lower the profits of investors—hence the rationale for lawsuits. In the past decade, in Europe, countries that were in crisis, such as Greece, Spain, and Cyprus, have been victims of these lawsuits under various “free trade” agreements. As a result, they have been forced to cut social spending while unemployment and poverty were spreading among their citizens. In

2013, Spain was spending millions defending itself against transnational corporations' lawsuits, and was cutting health expenditures by 22 percent and education spending by 18 percent.

Further, “Chapter 6 prevents Canada from reducing the proportion of fuels exported from Alberta’s tar sands and fracking. Two research reports I wrote show that retaining proportionality would lock in an additional 1,488 megatons of greenhouse gases between now and 2010 and likely torpedo Canada’s Paris climate promises (Laxer, 2018).”

Similarly, when Quebec put a moratorium on fracking, Lone Pine Resources, a Canadian-based company, used its Delaware branch to sue Canada for compensation via NAFTA arbitrators rather than via a Canadian court.

These agreements make it difficult for a country to regulate its environment, health, and public safety as it sees fit (Whittington, 2014b). When one really thinks of it, this is a form of colonialism—of countries, their legal system, and their citizens, by transnational corporations.  
--**Anne-Marie Ambert** (2016, from an unpublished manuscript on inequalities and the degradation of the environment)

**References:** Gordon Laxer, 2018. Op Ed. “Yes. Our future could prosper without it.” *Toronto Star*, Op Ed., June 19, 2018. Reprinted with permission. G. Laxer is a founding director of the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta and the author of *NAFTA 2.0: For People or Polluters* and *After the Sands: Energy or ecological security for Canadians*.

Whittington, L. 2014. Banks can sue over preferential conduct. *Toronto Star*, September 7.

## **RIGHTS NOT “FORTRESS CONSERVATION” KEY TO SAVING PLANET, SAYS UN EXPERT**

Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples calls for a new, rights-based approach to conservation

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/andes-to-the-amazon/2018/jul/16/rights-not-fortress-conservation-key-to-save-planet-says-un-expert>

## **MORE SCHOLARLY JOURNALS ARE NOT PEER-REVIEWED**

Here are a few facts from an interesting article in the June 23 issue of *The Economist* entitled, “Publish and don’t be damned.” It reports the results from several researchers who have tried to find out how many scholarly journals that pretend to be peer-reviewed are actually not. Generally, the authors pay a publication fee. An analytics firm in Texas by the name of Cabells came up with a list of around 8,700 journals. Other researchers have even compiled a list of around 12,000 journals.

A journalist with a Ph.D. in molecular biology, John Bohannon, submitted an article containing false data to 121 “blacklisted” journals and his article was offered publication in 69% of the cases. But he also found that 38% of the 167 supposedly “trustworthy” journals also fell into the trap and accepted his article for publication.

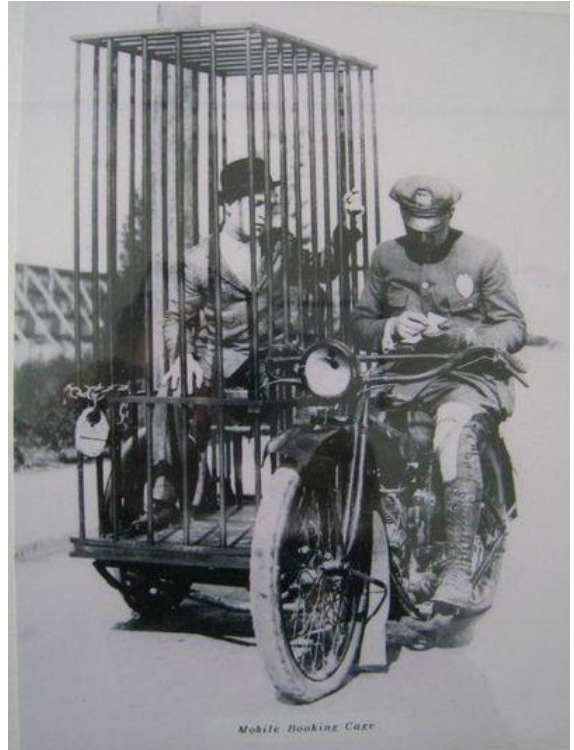
Many questions are asked but are difficult to investigate, one of which is: How many professors who gain promotion have had articles published in such journals?

## **NEWS FROM SAM LANFRANCO**

I have just accepted a three-year Visiting Professorship with the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool Univ, Suzhou, China. It is located in a HighTech area west of Shanghai. I and my German colleague will be helping with curriculum development around global governance and global digital citizenship issues in the Internet ecosystem. I will be going back and forth to China. No term teaching. It is the first of several initiatives with plans to expand elsewhere in China, and in India and Africa.

## GOOD READS

**End Game** (2017) by David Baldacci (NY: Grand Central Publishing). This is a CIA/Special Forces type of story, a thriller, and an addictive page-turner. Despite the trail of murders, there is a great deal of human emotion expressed during the dangerous mission that special agents Will Robbie and Jessica Reel are sent on to find their secret leader, code named Blue Man. Most of the action takes place in a very small Colorado town and surrounding countryside. Several of the town's inhabitants, including its attractive and competent woman sheriff, are active participants in the action. The secret/special agents realize that their equally secret leader has been kidnapped by a nefarious group and fight to find him alive. The text includes well-drawn descriptions of neo-Nazi groups, skinheads, and other such militant fringe groups, all involved in the story line. A couple of low-key love stories are part of the main drama which contains surprising little sex and swearing. This is a well-written book by a very successful American author.  
—Anne-Marie Ambert



## HUMOUR DEPARTMENT

### LEXOPHILE

"**Lexophile**" describes those that have a love for words, such as "you can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish," or "To write with a broken pencil is pointless." An annual competition is held by the *New York Times* to see who can create the best original lexophile.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.



Contributed by **Rosemarie Nielsen**



England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

I got some batteries that were given out free of charge.

A will is a dead giveaway.

Police were summoned to a daycare center where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it's just two-tired.

He had a photographic memory but it was never fully developed.

When she saw her first strands of grey hair she thought she'd dye.

Those who get too big for their pants will be totally exposed in the end.

## ONE-LINERS FOR THE ELECTIONS

The problem with political jokes is they get elected.  
~Henry Cate, VII

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office  
~Aesop

If we got one-tenth of what was promised to us in these State of the Union speeches, there wouldn't be any inducement to go to heaven.  
~Will Rogers

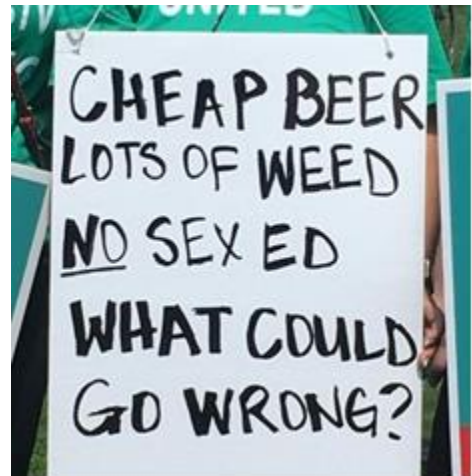
Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river.  
~Nikita Khrushchev

Politicians are people who, when they see light at the end of the tunnel, go out and buy some more tunnel.  
~John Quinton

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.  
~Oscar Ameringer

I offer my opponents a bargain: if they will stop telling lies about us, I will stop telling the truth about them.  
~Adlai Stevenson, 1952

(Contributed by **Rosemarie Nielsen**)



(Contributed by **Bruno Bellissimo**)

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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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