



BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES

The Chalice Letter

Aging with Dignity and Grace

Have you noticed that despite the priority focus of early childhood education, youth development, and younger working families, the elderly are coming in increased numbers to the YMCA? What does this mean for you and me?



Throughout our experiences with the YMCA, each of us can remember remarkable elder members who simply exuded the philosophy of spirit, mind and body in the way they related to others. They took care of themselves. They showed up for others. There was a sense of grace in their manners, a consummate positive attitude, and though they lived modestly, their gratitude about having enough was demonstrated each and every day.

There seems to be a common thread led by their example of at least **five** attitudes that define and promote healthy aging. I share them with you in this column:

Accept that complexity and longevity are kissing cousins. Wisdom frames acceptance of a complex world. Growing old has three phases: go-go, slo-go, and no-go. The closer we get to no-go through the slo-go years, the more awareness we have of the complexity of our own bodies, as *warranties* begin to expire. Acceptance provides for us an open window to face the facts and take an active role in healthy choices that may require personal behavior changes from old habits. The longer we live, the more complex things become in the world around us and within our own bodies.

Think positive about healthy aging. We preached all our careers about building a strong healthy spirit, mind and body among our loyal members. The pulpit now is in the mirror before us. Our bodies develop more aches and pains, less flexibility, pinched nerves, joint issues, and skin that's not quite as tight as it use to be. There are no aches, grinding parts, or pulled tendons in our brain. This 3-pound muscle in our heads can significantly improve with age. It has 200 billion neurons and 125 trillion synapses in the cerebral cortex alone. Today we know that the brain forms new connections and creates new cells. It's called *neurogenesis*. This happens in us older folks. It's not a matter of brain capacity as much as self-imposed limiting habits that keep us stuck. Study groups divided into those with a positive attitude towards aging, and those with a negative

attitude. The positive group outlived the negative group by an average of 7 ½ years. Lower blood pressure and cholesterol increased life spans by 4 years. Exercise, weight loss, and non-smoking added 3 years. But a positive attitude towards aging had an even greater impact on longevity.

Blow your mind. Exercise your brain. If it is a Wow! or a *Ah-hah!* maybe you're on to something. Scientists call it neuroplasticity. Yes, some of our brain cells die, but we have over 100 billion, most of which are in reserve for the final quarter of our lives. Some of you take college courses to learn something entirely new. Others do not hesitate to take on new challenges that require critical thinking. Just like the message inscribed in stone over the Jerusalem International YMCA gymnasium: "They can if they think they can."

Embrace new interests. Refresh childhood interests you did not have time for in your active career. Our brains love stimulation brought on by learning new skills. Old hobbies now have applications of new technology. Engaging in new learning has proven through studies on healthy aging to improve memory. The result is a healthier, sharper mind.

Invoke more gratitude and forgiveness. A Harvard study of adult development concludes that those who have aged most successfully are those who worry less about cholesterol and waistlines and *more about gratitude and forgiveness.*

There is one attribute I see in all remarkable elders throughout our YMCA careers and that is awareness. Good attitudes connect through awareness. Awareness connects us to the current reality with both self and others. All things considered, awareness brings both worry and reward.

Too much worry can be the cellar door to misery. Gratitude is the window to reward. Self-doubt attempts to hold you hostage to do nothing at the crossroad. Through practice of faith and positive attitude, hold both worry and reward in trust and let them fly. One you let go and with the other you fly on the wings of new possibility.

Aging with grace and dignity is all about the journey of possibility. May God's blessings grant you healthy choices.

Norris Lineweaver

WFYRChair



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(If we missed your group or erred, please let us know.)

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

It is heartbreaking and a growing worldwide tragedy to note that the most recent editions of our newsletter have followed horrible attacks on innocent travelers and fun seekers. Orlando is the largest mass killing in American history. We mourn for all the victims and share the shock of their loved ones.

This issue of Bridges celebrates a very successful conference, "AGAPE 2016", held last April in Montevideo. Twelve countries from WFYR were represented by the 59 participants in attendance. The pictures demonstrate the support and enthusiasm for WFYR throughout the conference.

Our friends in Canada enjoyed visiting the Aquatarium in Brockville. Among those present was our own Norris Lineweaver, who summers in the nearby area. Norris is being claimed as a distinguished member of CanaFYR. Readers of Bridges are encouraged to visit the AYR website Yretiree.org and link into the CanaFYR newsletter "Tielines".

YMCA retirees in Germany are part of a larger retiree group that affords a wide range of travel and study opportunities. Their latest trip provided details on the extraordinary contributions of 24 Ys working collaboratively with other organizations on issues of secularization and the emerging challenges of assisting refugees in their service areas.

Mary Carol Fish, President of AYR, provides details and outcomes of a unique leadership training activity held across the country last May.

Our friends in the UK urge us to try to experience the pride of seeing the life of **Sir George Williams** on stage.

We wish to provide one more reminder to send Ken White your Email address if you are willing to receive Bridges electronically. See the rear cover for details.

Len and Joyce Wilson

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WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

EUROPE RETIREES by Albrecht Kaul

Theses, Outreach and Much More Martin Luther's Legacy Today

CSI chairman **Klaus Jürgen Diehl** had a packed senior's Fellowship Week to look back on when he bid the 103 participants farewell with a traveler's blessing in the Hotel Markgraf in Kloster Lehnin on April 24th. In concert with the overarching theme "Theses, Outreach and Much More," one year before the Reformation Jubilee 2017 the speakers and participants had explored Martin Luther's legacy primarily in the Bible studies, but in other events and activities as well. In and through all it became abundantly clear that Luther's central message of God's grace and love and the Christian individual's freedom is still relevant today.



Pastor and Politician Rainer Eppelmann with our chairman Klaus Jurgen Diehl

The seniors had the opportunity to visit the Ostwerk YMCA in Brandenburg an der Havel. The Wichernhaus, located in downtown Brandenburg directly on the shores of the Havel, is home to this YMCA since 1863. Vice chairwoman Tabea Lindauer presented the work of her YMCA. The main focus of the 50 members, one full-time employee and 15 volunteers is missionary outreach. The program includes summer camps, recreational sports events and a TEN-SING group with 20 participants. This group rehearses every week for a big performance with choir and band, dancers and actors. The TEN-SING artists impressed the seniors with a sample performance in the Wichernhaus. This YMCA reaches out to refugees, as well: It offers a German language course and runs an open door café, thus promoting social intermingling. All 24 YMCAs in Belin and Brandenburg (CUJM-Ostwerk) are engaged in various forms of missionary work.

Refugees are also a challenging responsibility for **Helmut Kautz**, pastor in Brück, a community neighboring Kloster Lehnin. He is YMCA chairman there and "the pastor for all Brück residents, including the refugees." In his talk to the seniors in the Hotel Markgraf he explained that 550 of the residents in Brück are refugees. "With so many refugees on our doorstep we sense keenly God's query: Do you love your neighbor?"

The refugees as a current challenge for Christians, the church and the YMCA also constituted the topic in a panel discussion. The Berlin City Mission is providing emergency housing for 1300 refugees; the former YMCA family holiday home in Dassel is



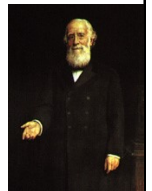
Sport in the breaks

housing refugees since last fall; and the YMCA Brandenburg is promoting social interaction between locals and refugees.

The Fellowship Week's colorful and eventful agenda included evening entertainment with the cabaret artist **Torsten Hebel**, an evening concert with **Christine Roesch** and **Thomas Pense**, and day trips to Potsdam and Brandenburg an der Havel. **Rainer Dick** looked back on the ten years of the CSI's existence and termed the CSI a praise community and a fellowship that testifies to God's goodness.

Sir George Williams on Stage

The life of George Williams and the founding of the YMCA is now a stage play. The Soul in the Machine has been commissioned by YMCA England and written and produced by the Christian Saltmine Trust Theatre Company (www.saltminetrust.org.uk). With a simple set and costumes, an energetic young cast take the audience with verve and pace from George's early days on Ashway Farm in Dulverton through to his apprenticeship in Bridgwater and on to Hitchcock and Rogers in St. Paul's church yard and the establishment of the movement and its development across the world.



The play makes the evangelical motivation of George and the original eleven very clear. Within the story line and emphasis is made of how the impact of the death by rheumatic fever of a fellow worker known as "Poor Morse" made the urgency of saving souls ever more pressing.

The relationship between Edward Valentine and George Williams and their desire to fulfill their Christian calling is a thread throughout the narrative (No drapery pun intended!). We are introduced to Miss Hitchcock, later to become Mrs. Williams and see the impact of George's travels and the Great Exhibition of 1851 on the movement's growth at home and abroad up to the establishment of the World Alliance in Paris in 1855. Imagine hearing the words of the Paris Basis being recited in a play!

Along with evangelical mission and personal dedication, the play expresses a strong belief in the dangers of industrialization and the dehumanizing effect on the spiritual, mental and physical well being of all generations.

The cast and others were inspired by George Williams and the YMCA, its achievements, its relevance today. The play proclaims the value of human beings in the eyes of God. George is quoted as saying, *We are more than bodies to be fed to a machine. We are made for more than work. We have souls; we have spirits; and somewhere in the dead city there must be a place for these things.*

(by Graham Clarke from *Y's Retired of UK*)



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

“Agape 2016”

by Eileen Murray & Jerry Prado Shaw

“Agape 2016”, a reunion of YMCA Retirees from Latin America & Caribbean, took place April 6-9, 2016 in Montevideo; the beautiful, historic capital city of Uruguay. 59 participants attended, representing 12 countries of the WFYR (World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees): Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, USA, Uruguay and Venezuela.

A welcoming reception, at the Montevideo YMCA (ACJ), was one of the highlights. This historic YMCA – founded April 6, 1909 – was celebrating their 107th birthday the same night. Another highlight was the “Africana” evening; the group thrilled to an exciting dance and music presentation that told the history of African culture in Uruguay!

Highly inspired morning devotionals opened each day. Five intense, well developed and meaningful workshops inspired lively discussions; and 13 participants shared “My favorite YMCA Story” with the group.

A very emotive and respectful segment was dedicated to colleagues deceased in the past 10 years. During the Friday fellowship dinner, WFYR chairman **Norris Lineweaver** was recognized. Another special, emotional moment honored

“YMCA Hall of Fame” member **Dr. Prescott K. Johnson** for his outstanding contributions to the development of the YMCA throughout Latin America.

“Quo Vadis” closing remarks were given by WFYR VP Latin America & Caribbean **Rolando Dalmas**. Those who generously helped sponsor “Agape 2016” were thanked: Agape 2016” organizers **Julio C. “Tito” Lagomarsino and Jerry Prado Shaw**, the Planning Committee, and the translation team. Former WFYR VPs for the area, **Jose Jayme Araujo** and **Edgar Machado** were also applauded. “The eldest colleague in continuous service to the YMCA movement (70 years) **don Hernan Romero Matute** -co-founder of the YMCA in Venezuela and active WFYR member- was recognized with a plaque and commemorative gold medal of the 100th anniversary of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Paris (1951)!

Despite a busy, exciting agenda, the time dedicated for fellowship was equally memorable. “Agape 2016” left participants with a thousand memories to treasure; and a desire to convene again soon. We thank WFYR for its strong and vital support (our motto: “retired, but not tired”) and thank God for such an inspiring, memorable gathering!



Excellent exchange of ideas at workshop “breakout” sessions



Hector Civitate, Carlos Bianco, Mario Lopez, Roberto and Sionides Uria



Jerry Prado Shaw, Oscar Escalada, and Norris Lineweaver at “Agape 2016”



Dr. Prescott K. Johnson, speaking at “Agape 2016”





WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

"Agape 2016"

photos by Eileen Murray and Michael McAllister Lyon



Argentine Delegation



Visit to historic Montevideo



Co-organizer Rolando Dalmas, Uruguay



Front: Elba Vives, Argentina; Jose Luis Rodriguez Pocero Spain, Alicia Sanjurjo, Uruguay; Back: Daniel G. LaMoglie, Argentina.



Noemi Sanjurjo, 93, tells her story of YMCA archives.



Wonderful sightseeing outing



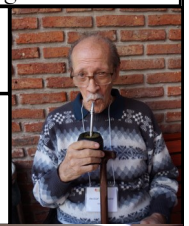
L: Maria Josefina Rios, Paraguay (front) has the 'mate' tea typical of the region, to stay focused

R: Eileen Murry and Jerry Prado Shaw, YMCA USA



L: Jorge Cumbao, Uruguay

R: Hector Civitate, Uruguay, sipping his mate tea



R: "Agape 2016 Plenary Session"
First line: Rolando Dalmas (Uruguay); Manuel Sayan (Peru); Eileen Murray (USA) and Hector Civitate (Brasil).
Second line: Juanita Quinteros (Peru); Enrique Villalon (Peru); Felicia "Licha" Marecos (Paraguay); Eliceo Garay (Peru and Diego Galbani (Peru).

Above: "Christian Emphasis Youth Gathering in Montevideo". Uruguay National General Secretary Jesus Iturralde surrounded by young representatives from Colombia, Germany, Peru, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay.





WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Y's Retired of the UK

President **Jim Lamb** again reflects on how most YMCAs have evolved into inter-faith relationships. We retirees need to make it known that "the times they are "a-changing." He also relates a story from *George Williams and the YMCA* as told by **Matthew Hodder**.

"I well remember when Sir George Williams and I visited Philadelphia in 1876. 'He had a very disturbed night owing to the sound of hammering in the immediate neighborhood. Next morning I told him the noise was caused by workmen who were building the New YMCA premise; the next night he slept like a top.'"

Southwest "Y" retirees continue to enjoy the fun, food, fellowship and serious discussions, all part of their annual retreat at the Trelohan Manor in St. Ives.



it was the bottom of the Champlain Sea through the last ice age to the present.

After a much enjoyed lunch at the Tall Ships' Grille, we toured the displays with our own special guide. . . friendly staff, interesting displays, some cutting edge technology mixed with hands-on features that included a shallow tank of mollusks and other small sea creatures that we were encouraged to pick up and examine closely. Good fellowship combined with an outstanding educational experience.



Among those present was Norris Lineweaver who is currently President of WFYR. Although Norris is a citizen and resident of USA, he "summers" in the Rideau Lakes district of Eastern Ontario, an extensive group of lakes north of Brockville. We claim him as a distinguished member of CanaFYR.

Those present were **Jack and Joyce Bernhardt, Gary Schofield Bill and Mary Douglas, Doug and Grace Irvine, Frank Farr, Norris and MaLes Lineweaver, Roder and Anne Willson, and Russ and Keitha Davey**. We will have another gathering in the fall.



IFYR by Swaraj Sircar, Secretary/Treasurer, IFYR

I hope that this finds our WFYR family in good health by His Grace. The Madras YMCA, one of the oldest and most prestigious in India, has kindly agreed to host the next IFYR Conference from 18th to 20th August, 2016 at the YMCA International Youth Centre 6/74, Ritherdon Road, Vepery, Chennai- 600 007.

The inaugural function will be held the evening of 18th August, 2016.

Our IFYR financial position is extremely alarming. We have sent appeal letters to different established YMCAs seeking their kind and generous donations and we are asking our members to please contact the local YMCA General Secretary and management for their kind donations to IFYR.

CanaFYR by Jack Bernhardt

Eastern Ontario Regional members visit the new Aquatarium in Brockville this spring

On a pleasant spring day, fourteen CanaFYR members and friends got together to visit a new feature of the beautiful town of Brockville: The Aquatarium. Recently opened, this museum presents many interesting displays of the geology and flora and fauna of the great lakes district of Canada and the United States from millions of years ago when



millions of years ago when



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

AYR by Mary Carol Fish

24 Hours in May 2016

Our second "24 Hours in May", held in three regional locations, was deemed a very successful event. We had 100% participation from all chapters. Our training teams did a great job of bringing the information and collaborative opportunities to each region in innovative and different ways. Evaluations were very positive and chapter leaders appreciated the opportunity to learn through interaction with each other.

Topics included the 2017 changes in membership signup, updates on the triennial Strategic Plan, opportunities to share successful membership drives and chapter activities, and time for planning and goal setting.

It was not all serious work as the bottom photo suggests, but there was plenty of time for renewing old friendships and acquaintances, catching up with each other's lives, and the opportunity to meet new friends. The 3 F's of Food, Fellowship and Fun (as well as lots of laughter) were the dominant features of these busy days in May.

Thanks to all for making the effort to attend, and to AYR board leadership for bringing this event to the rest of AYR's leadership.



AYR Leaders Pat Ritter, Mary Carol Fish, Walt Griese and Bea Halk

AYR Leaders: Ellie Cumings, Walt Griese, Lou Cummings and Mike

JFYR by Kohei Yamada

As of today we have 124 registered members in JFYR. Most of them were former professional secretaries exclusively. In the last meeting in November, 2015, we reviewed the MOU of JFYR and decided to include retired staff members of YMCA inclusive to the non-professional categories. We will meet once in the east Japan and the next year in west Japan.

This year we will meet in Kyoto on November 14-15. In each meeting, we will invite a special guest speaker on some issue of general interest to the members. This year we will invite a

speaker from the National Organization on Dementia and the Families.

In the middle of April, there were two large-scale earthquakes in Kumamoto Prefecture in Kyushu (southern) island in Japan. JFYR has decided to raise some funds to help the YMCA, and retired members have been actively helping the evacuation centers.

Bangladesh FYR by Thomas Tapan Karmaker

Greetings from Bangladesh FYR

We are happy to inform you that Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees met for the third time on 6th May in Dhaka. In this meeting we discussed some present issues in our country as well as new fellowship members who live outside of Dhaka. Last week we contacted Secretaries outside of Dhaka. They are interested to meet with us but it is not possible for them because they live in different districts and towns. They conveyed their interest about Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees. We thanked them for their good remarks about the Fellowship. We spent time discussing the draft by-laws and Membership form as well as future planning about Fellowship members. Next meeting we will discuss more about the by-laws of the Fellowship. We distributed by-laws to all members for their comments or correction or any addition.

We are attaching some photos of the 6th May fellowship meeting. Fellowship members. Mr. Sudip Arinda and Mr. John Bose could not attend the meeting due to emergency programs. Our next fellowship meeting will be held on Friday, 10th June; 2016 at the same time and same venue. We will continue to keep WFYR informed.



Attendees at Bangladesh Association of YMCA Retirees 3rd Meeting in May, 2016



AUGUST 2016
BRIDGES

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USA



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