

# BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

We, the leaders and members of WFYR are eager to be aware of the needs of our fellow YMCA retirees and to do our share. Let us remain focused on our goals for 2020.

**Hopes and Dreams for a New Year:** It is time to take stock of the past year, to give blessings for family and friends, and to think about our hopes and dreams for 2020. What are yours, for yourself and family, for your community and country and for the world? As I write this, our 101 year old aunt is quite ill and my wife, as the health proxy, is making decisions for a loved one. So, I hope my aunt lives her final time in dignity and that my wife is able to handle the natural stress of that role. I just completed eight years serving as an elected member of our local Board of Education and I hope the 10,000 students are served well in the coming year. In 2020, I hope the long nightmare, which started with the last Presidential election in the USA, comes to an end. I have two hopes for the world. That WFYR continues to make progress on our four fundamental goals and that some part of the world, that is in conflict, finally finds peace.



**New Leadership:** We welcome two new WFYR leaders of their countries FYR groups. **Rev. Graham Clarke** is taking over the reins of FYR in the United Kingdom from **Jim Lamb** and **Taweechai Termkuna** has accepted the same role for FYR in Thailand. We also give thanks to **Kurt Kabuth**, who will serve as Treasurer of WFYR, in his role as Assistant Treasurer of YMCA Alumni in the USA.

**Fundamental Goals:** We adopted four goals in December, 2018 and continue to make progress on each of them. I thank **Francis Asiema** who is leading the *Global Retirement Initiative* in Africa and is making progress creating support for the dual goal of helping active YMCA staff plan for retirement and current retirees develop financial resources needed to live in dignity. Progress is slow, but steady. **Kohei Yamada** and **Evan Page** are giving leadership to a similar effort in Sri Lanka to achieve our goal of a GRI pilot in the South Asia region. **Bonnie Mairs**

continues to give leadership to *Secours Speciaux*. We are increasing the amount of fund raising activity around the world, and recently five staff in the Bahamas were helped with a grant to help them repair and rebuild their hurricane damaged homes. Of special note is that four of the five staff were support staff who serve at YMCA front desks and take care of our buildings and are both male and female.

**Fellowship among YMCA Retirees:** Our original and continuous goal is to build and maintain fellowship among YMCA retirees both as individuals and organized retiree groups. While we all have an immediate and extended family, we also recognize each YMCA staff member as a part of our larger family. We share the calling of believing in, and helping the YMCA accomplish its larger mission. Some retired YMCA staff can not, or may not want to, participate in organized FYR chapter activities. However, they still appreciate knowing they are not forgotten. My hope is we will find new ways to engage YMCA retirees from around the world, either through growth in chapter membership, creation of new chapters, or finding new and creative ways to engage with them.

**Ambassadors Program:** One such new initiative is the Ambassadors program started by Len Wilson. You need not be active in a chapter to be an ambassador who serves as a local point of contact for any YMCA retiree who is traveling.

**Relevance:** An unstated goal that drives all of WFYR's goals, is to help YMCA retirees remain relevant. Each of us served an important role in our work for the YMCA. We helped youth, families, adults and entire communities to achieve their goals and solve their problems. In retirement we have an opportunity to continue performing important work and I encourage each to find that purpose in life that helps you remain relevant in 2020.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

*Phil Dwyer*  
**WFYR Chair**



# BRIDGES



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

## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

We wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and blessings for 2020.

Merchants in our community are bemoaning the extremely short buying interval between the American Thanksgiving celebrations and the arrival of Santa. Perhaps we should skip the shopping, concentrate on the real story of Christmas and look for meaningful ways to help the needy in our own neighborhoods. Our local church and other organizations need lots of volunteer assistance at this time of the year. We are sure many YMCA staffers realize and celebrate their connections and origins to the birth of Christ. In this edition, you will find information about a new initiative, entitled *onPrinciple* that is working with young Y leaders to develop an awareness of the Christian foundations of our organization.

Your editors wish to share a Christmas card that Joyce painted to illustrate the mystery and meaning of "The Christmas Blessing," as a light of hope beams down upon a bleak scene remembering the spirit of the season.

We asked WFYR leaders to state one or more specific goals that they hope to attain in the coming year. It seems many are pursuing various ways of increasing membership. It is reassuring to witness the excitement anticipated for events in the coming year to gather retirees for planning and sharing ideas.

*Bridges* will continue to provide glimpses into the life and legend of Sir John R. Mott and share news as the concept of providing Ambassador support to visiting Y retirees in various locations around the world continues to gain support and enrollees.



"A Light Shines in the Darkness"

*Len and Joyce Wilson*

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## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### **IFYR to Celebrate Silver Jubilee in 2020**

*By Thomas Thomas*

Dear Friends in WYFR,

The India Fellowship of YMCA Retirees will be having its 25th annual conference and silver jubilee celebrations in 2020. The annual conference held at Salem a couple of months ago, resolved to have a grand celebration and appointed a Jubilee Committee to work out the detailed program. The Jubilee Committee along with the IFYR Executive Committee met on November 15th and 16th, 2019 in Bangalore. We will be inviting representatives from WFYR and from our neighbouring movements. More detail will follow in due course:

1. The committee decided to have a grand silver jubilee celebration involving the participation of maximum number of retirees, in October 2020 preferably in New Delhi or Mumbai. This will certainly strengthen IFYR. We also propose to invite leaders of WFYR and a few retirees from our neighbouring countries.

2. To raise a benevolent fund for the welfare of members who are suffering from terminal illnesses or who are financially weak.

3. To publish a commemorative souvenir depicting the history of IFYR, career highlights and achievements of the members, other relevant articles and photographs.

These are our ambitious plans and we propose to work for it from January 2020.



**Above is the Revd Dr .Samuel D Stephens, President of Salem YMCA and former Chairman of APAY, kindly addressing the 24th Annual IFYR Conference inaugural ceremony at the Salem YMCA. We are extremely grateful to the Revd Dr. Stephens, Mr. John Michel Jose, General Secretary of the Salem YMCA and the Salem YMCA Board for hosting our conference on a grand scale.  
*Courtesy of Swaraj Sicar, Secretary Treasurer, IFYR***

### **Canada Y Alumni: Goals for 2020**

*by Franco Savoia*

Dear Friends in WYFR,

The Executive meets monthly to discuss goals and priorities.

Our biggest priority for 2020 is leadership. A number of folks are stepping down from our Executive and we need to recruit some new people.

We are still working on the important “value proposition” of being a Canadian YMCA Alumni. Geographic distances makes it unrealistic to have frequent face-to-face get togethers. And currently “retirees” are not a priority for the Y. Our co-sponsored Y Alumni groups located around the larger cities and Ys in Canada have been somewhat successful. But it is largely dependent on numbers: the number of retirees around a specific Y.

Our third major goal is supporting Secours Speciaux. That is about it for now, Franco



Members of the Silver Jubilee Planning Committee



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### onPrinciple Underway with High Hopes and Expectations

**Norris Lineweaver**, former WFYR chair, will provide Bridges with updates as *onPrinciple*, an exciting journey for promising young YMCA leaders, begins work with its first group of participants. The program has been funded by the Harold Smith foundation and combines experiences at the Jerusalem International YMCA and Springfield College, so



participants receive an excellent grounding in the basic Christian values that have been the core for so many YMCA initiatives. These pictures show

participants at Springfield College in November working with their mentors and Springfield faculty.



**Mike Bussey** works with the

consulting group *Donor by Design*, and recently returned from Jerusalem where he finalized the 10-day “Jerusalem Immersion Experience” scheduled for February. *Bridges* will follow this group’s experience throughout 2020.



### Latin America and Caribbean YMCA Retired Secretaries Association

In August, the Brazilian Association of Retired Secretaries held its regular meeting. The devotional was led by Waldir Pereira, who spoke about the Unknown God. In addition, two subjects were discussed:

1. Agape 2020: Roberto Uria Mendez presented the basic points of the event organization. He noted that so far we have 47 percent of the total desired participants. Regarding the financial aspect, he said that almost the entire event is covered by donations from the movements member countries.
2. The second part of the meeting was about the convening of the Extraordinary Assembly of ABS — Brazilian Association of Secretaries, which occurred in September. Invitations were sent to all secretaries.



Attendees at the meeting included Wilton Mazaini, Francisco Wilson Malandrino, Roberto Uria Mendez, Waldir Pereira, Esmeraldino Jose Goncalves Pereira and Luiz Carlos Gonzaga, who chaired the meeting in the absence of colleague Jayme Jose Arujo.

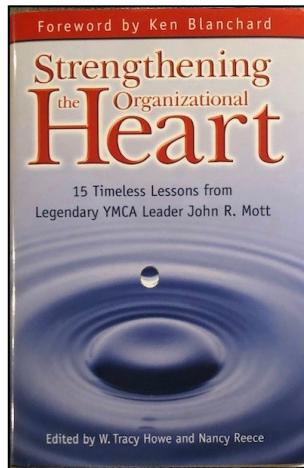




## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### Lessons from John R. Mott

WFYR members are invited to provide a personal reflection on “15 Timeless Lessons from Legendary YMCA Leader **John R. Mott**,” as presented in a book entitled *Strengthening the Organizational Heart*, edited by **W. Tracy Howe** and **Nancy Reece**.



The following remarks reference an article in the book by **Nancy Reece**. The book provides personal responses from current YMCA leaders to each of the 15 lessons stated by Mott as he reflected on his lifetime of service to the YMCA and his Lord. The book is out of print, but numerous copies are still available at a modest cost on the internet. Over the course of future editions, *Bridges* will provide details on specific lessons and reference testimonials in the book. WFYR readers are encouraged to submit their own responses regarding Mott’s lessons to *Bridges*.

The lessons are as follows:

1. Jesus Christ Is the Foundation;
2. Rule by the Heart;
3. Study Priorities;
4. We Can Trust Others;
5. Study and Promote the use of the Bible;
6. The Discipline of Prayer is Essential;
7. Do “Multiplying” work;
8. Use the “Heroic Appeal;”
9. Strategy is Important;
10. We need to Get into the Field;
11. Small Groups Are of Great Value;
12. Adolescence is a Crucial Time;
13. Don’t Overlook Old People;
14. Emphasize the Immediate;
15. Be Attentive unto God.

**Nancy Reese**, coeditor of the book, presented a copy to *Bridges* editor **Len Wilson** after she provided him with the Stahl Award for writing

during his lifetime YMCA career at a ceremony at a recent YMCA retiree gathering in the US.

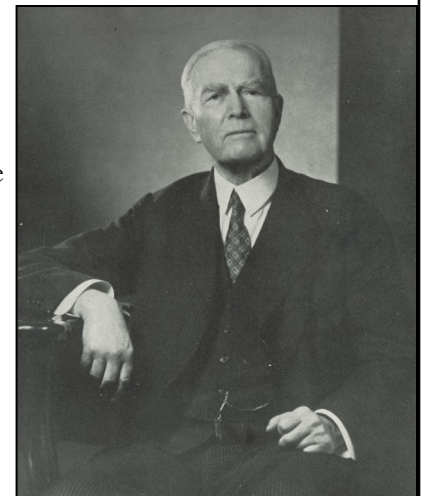
For the book Nancy wrote an article that illustrates lesson number 2: “Rule by the Heart.”

Mott amplified this lesson with these words: “*People are reached via the heart. There is no substitute for love and kindness and sympathy.*”

Nancy provides personal and YMCA related experiences in which acts of kindness, love and sympathy demonstrate a heartfelt response and reaffirm the dignity and worth of persons supported in a time of need or misunderstanding. Nancy agrees with Mott that we must make every effort to rule by the heart, As we treat others with love, we are no

longer a threat to them or their world. Nancy quotes **Mother Teresa** who said, “If you judge people, you have no time to love them.”

Perhaps *Bridges* readers recall when they or their YMCA acted from the heart and changed the course of an individual or family. Let us hear from you.



John R. Mott, YMCA Internationalist

### WFYR Global Retirement Initiative

**Kohei Yamada**, vice chair for East Asia, met in Boston with **Phil Dwyer**, WFYR chair, and **Evan Page**, WFYR vice chair, USA, to discuss expansion of the WFYR Global Retirement Initiative (GRI) and other priority issues that developed during 2018 conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand.



Nancy Reese presents the Stahl Award for writing to Len Wilson at a YMCA Alumni regional gathering.



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### JFYR

by Kohei Yamada

Japan YMCA hosted the APAY General Assembly in Tozanso, near Mt. Fuji. There were nearly 400 participants including 120 young people, many student YMCA members. JFYR decided to hold its annual meeting right after the APAY gathering so that some of them could participate their memory place of YMCAs. Several YMCA retirees attended the APAY meeting and enjoyed their fellowship with many of their YMCA friends as well as absorbing the energies coming from the YMCA participants.

At the JFYR meeting, we start with the new JFYR chair person, **Shinichi Sakata**, former NCY Japan staff retired since 2005. He has been an active member of JFYR in the last few years. During the last few years we have increased our membership gradually and right now we have 127 members registered from all over Japan.

The keynote speaker was **Mr. Shiro Abe**, a well-known scholar as well as practitioner of Social Welfare in Japan. He is 94 years old but spoke about 60 minutes of his experiences and his philosophy without any memos in his hand. An amazing speech and spirit along with entertaining memories and sense of humor! He came to this meeting by a three-hour drive and spoke one hour and then left for his home. Everyone was amazed with his energy.

Another discussion was about a new proposal pertaining to the making of wills so that the JFYR members can support the good projects of YMCA movements in Japan.



JFYR Meeting with a special guest speaker, Shiro Abe in the middle. Sept 6, 2019

### YMCA Alumni

By Laura Slane

The YMCA Alumni Reunion was held September 24-26, 2019. There were 145 YMCA Alumni members from all across the country who met in Louisville, KY. We kicked off the reunion with a dinner cruise on the Louisville Belle riverboat. This was a great way to reconnect and enjoy Louisville by night.

The Reunion had workshops on the first day that focused on healthy aging and retirement. The second day workshops focused on the YMCA Alumni focus areas of connect, travel and serve. Tours were offered and the group spread out and made visits to Buffalo Trace



Lou Falk rounds up people for a tour. With him are Jan Brucato and Dale and Joy Packer

Distillery, Kentucky Derby Museum/Churchill Downs, Frazier History Museum and Old Forester Distillery, Louisville Slugger Museum and Muhammed Ali Center. We presented our YMCA Alumni most prestigious award to **Len Wilson** with the Stahl Award.



YMCA Alumni reunion participants visit a local distillery.

Award recognizes the significant contribution toward the advancement of professional knowledge and skills through written expression. Over 50 volunteers helped make this reunion run smoothly. The YMCA of Greater Louisville was very helpful and supportive in helping to make this a wonderful event.

The next reunion will be in 2021 hosted by the East region.



Len and Joyce Wilson meet a strangely quiet, notorious former gangster, Al Capone at a pretend "speakeasy."



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### YMCA Alumni Goals for 2020

*By Dale Packer, President*

Dear Friends in WFYR;

At our November board meeting, action was taken to support Secours Speciaux with a grant from the World Brotherhood Fund. We have elected to give Secours Speciaux a grant for four years to support their international work. Each year is renewable with YMCA Board approval.

We set some operation plans to further support the work of the chapters in membership retention. We have a good retention rate, but can always do better. We get a number of new members each year through the first year free membership. Our retention rate for these new members is more than we expected at 38 percent. The new members need more than a welcome letter or E-mail. They need a personal visit or call from the chapter leadership. Many of our chapters are doing just that, but more chapters need to make the calls and invite them to participate in chapter activities. Enough of my soap box speech and feelings.

As a YMCA of the USA region consultant I remember some executives saying that they are comfortable in the job they are doing. Comfortable can be taken in different ways. I am comfortable in the Presidency of YMCA Alumni, but need to be challenged to stay comfortable. I see three challenges for 2020: **Chapter growth** by retention of new members; **Local YMCA support** of their retirees through YMCA Alumni i.e.: fund raising; and a **national service project** that all chapters and members can be involved in.

### Y's Retired of the UK

Jim Lamb will be replaced as President by the Reverend Graham Clarke on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. All members of UK Retired echo the words and spirit of their beloved 99-year-old Reg Wake...as it relates to Jim.. **“Well Done that Man!!”**

*Bridges* and its readers sincerely echo that sentiment. Jim is stepping down due to health reasons. Your editors have worked with Jim for the last twelve years as he led and strengthened the Y retiree movement in the UK. Jim will undoubtedly stay active in the movement and hopefully, he will continue to contribute advice and counsel from the

sidelines with the same vigor and candor as his predecessor Reg. Wow... what a legacy of leadership those two gentlemen have provided.

WFYR looks forward to working closely with Graham Clarke whose words in the latest edition of the UK's newsletter reflect his special vision for the position:

“I hope that through the Y's Retired of UK, the strength of fellowship that was experienced in our more directly active YMCA years can be continued and enrich our lives, that our prayerful support will encourage those who are working in today's challenging environment, that through our support of Secours Speciaux, colleagues in need will be cared for and encouraged and that we will be able to play a part in passing on the story and values of the movement to successive generations.”

Warmest appreciation for Jim and a sincere WFYR welcome to Graham.

### WFYR Ambassadors

From Accra to Boston, WFYR Ambassadors recently provided personal attention to visiting WFYR members and made local Y connections for Bonnie Mairs and Kohei Yamada. Readers of *Bridges* are encouraged to volunteer as Ambassadors by using the format on the last page of this newsletter.



**Bonnie Mairs stands in front of the YMCA hostel with Charles Darko, Tony Yaro, Kwebena Nketia Addie (National General Secretary) and Jonathan Quayefio (WFYR ambassador).**



**Evan Page and Kohei Yamada on “Old Ironsides” in the Boston harbor**

December 2019



C/O Ken White  
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Printing and distribution support for BRIDGES is provided by the Greater Philadelphia YMCA sending a message of "Brotherly Love" to YMCA retirees around the world.



**BRIDGES IS FOR ALL WHO WISH TO RECEIVE IT**

*All who would like to receive BRIDGES will be able to, without a "subscription" fee. However many retirees from countries all around the world have sent a USD subscription remittance to support WFYR. Any who wish to make such a contribution may use this remittance form. Check should be made payable to: YMCA Alumni*

I would be willing to become a YMCA Ambassador.\*

**TO: WFYR Communications Chair: Ken White, 46 Squirrel Road, Doylestown, PA 18901, USA.** "I wish to provide support for WFYR at USD \$7 per year, or \$18 per three years. Extra contribution to WFYR \$ \_\_\_\_\_ I want to RECEIVE each issue of BRIDGES, but I am not able to help financially at this time. \_\_\_\_\_

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