



BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES

The Chalice Letter

Faith, Hope and Charity ... the Three Gifts of Christmas

This past weekend, as I pen this column, **MaLes** and I walked through the Christmas Market in the Old Town of Prague on the Elbe River in the Czech Republic. The local tour guide had



explained to us about religion in this fabled region as we walked by gothic cathedrals and synagogues. 10% of the population are adherents to the Catholic Church. No more than 1% are Protestant. 54% declare other or unspecified. 34% declare none. The guide left us with the conclusion that protracted periods of conflict over centuries eventually compromised the populations' interest in religion that provides few answers and only conflict and anguish. There is a sadness, and yet here we are in the

midst of a festive celebration known around the world. Olive wood carvings from as far away as Bethlehem are sent by Palestinian craftsmen to be sold in the market.

Surrounding the Christmas Market in the Old Town Square were heavily armed security forces and armored vehicles. This was a familiar presence throughout Europe on high alert in response to the Paris terrorist attacks. And yet masses of people come to seek something that perhaps gives them hope and shared vision for peace.

On return home, I receive an urgent message from my friends in Jerusalem. Far right wing factions have called for an attack on the Jerusalem International YMCA for promoting the lighting of a Christmas Tree and inviting all to come and participate in the ceremony. This has been an annual tradition of JIY for decades. The mainstream media in Israel is supporting the YMCA knowing of JIY's consistent engagement of interfaith observances and honoring the religious identity of all in Jerusalem throughout the year. Is it enough to read the headlines of brutal force on the dignity and lives of others that we must also hear of such an attack on Christmas. What else is left to celebrate love, peace and goodwill toward all men?

Well ... this is why I am especially compelled to write this column for this edition of Bridges. I write as I am thinking about

you. For the moment, put aside worldly concerns and secular distractions. As we gather with loved ones and dear friends to celebrate the birth of Jesus, let's remember the three essential gifts of Christmas: faith, hope and charity. I will spin three action steps you can do through the fortnight forward from Christmas Eve into the blessings of a New Year.

Since our discussion at Estes Park at our last WFYR world council gathering, I have said we are first a fellowship of faith among friends. Faith is the first gift of Christmas. This fellowship of faith is essential to bridge the distance of our colleagues across vast oceans and continents. Know that a colleague is thinking about you and the good memories of times gone by. During the fortnight (two weeks following Christmas Eve) pick up the phone, write a personal note in a greeting card, or even an email wishing a colleague a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous Healthy New Year. Nothing else ... just a message of faith genuinely expressed to share Christmas.

Hope is the second gift of Christmas. Hope is the bridge from despair to personal well being. You know colleagues who recently suffered the loss of a spouse or loved one or had a serious setback to their own health. Christmas is an especially difficult time for them. Reach out and just say I have been thinking about you and I hope you are feeling better.

Charity is the third gift of Christmas. WFYR is blessed to have a network of caring colleagues looking out for the welfare of fallen friends who have experienced medical emergencies and other issues that threaten their well being. Secours Speciaux is our signature charity to provide immediate resources in response to substantiated need. During the fortnight, make your commitment for 2016 to ensure our capacity to help colleagues in distress.

With these three gifts, I leave you with this final message for 2015. Our Christmas past is our present. May you make wonderful memories for tomorrow. For tomorrow is a mystery that hope springs forth for renewed dreams to build a better world. And today ... on Christmas Day ... is a gift from God.

Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy and Prosperous New Year

Norris Lineweaver



BRIDGES



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

We say goodbye to 2015 and pray that the New Year will witness a world united in a quest for peace and refuge to the thousands of people around the world that are homeless or threatened daily with the terror of violence and war.

WFYR and Bridges say goodbye and best wishes to good friend John Flynn, President and CEO of the Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA. John retires this year after a most successful career, highlighted by the spectacular growth of the YMCA of Philadelphia during his tenure.

A WFYR task force is hard at work developing criteria for funding individuals in countries and associations not able to guarantee adequate retirement after long years of service.

Retiree groups around the world are looking forward to important gatherings in 2016. The Association of YMCA Retirees (AYR) in the US has decided to focus on local chapter leadership training in order to accelerate recruiting and retaining new members and will not be scheduling an Annual Reunion. Enrollment for the Y Retiree cruise in 2017 is on target and Y retirees around the world can get information on the cruise by viewing AYR's website Yretiree.org. Canada and Latin America are planning important gatherings during the year. Our friends in Japan have announced new leadership, and have confidence that the enthusiasm and involvement provided during the term of Yukio Yamasaki, will continue with Kohei Yamada, new WFYR Vice Chair for East Asia.

AYR has benefited by the emergence of female leadership at the national and local levels of the organization. Mary Carol Fish, current President of AYR, is an outstanding example at the highest level, but local chapters are tapping into an experienced and able source of new leadership within the ranks of female retirees. Canadian PM Justin Trudeau says his cabinet is half women '**BECAUSE IT'S 2015**'. Bridges will strive to highlight women leaders in WFYR in coming editions. Perhaps we will all have cause to note a significant trend in WYFY, '**BECAUSE IT'S 2016**'.

Best wishes for a happy New Year, good health and blessings throughout the year ahead.

Len and Joyce Wilson

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WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

John Flynn Joins the Ranks of AYR and WFYR

WFYR sends congratulations and appreciation to **John Flynn**. A framed letter from WFYR Chairman, **Norris Lineweaver**, describes the appreciation for nearly a decade of support for WFYR and *Bridges*. “Dear John, It is a special privilege, on behalf of the WFYR Leadership Team to extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to you and your colleagues of the Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA, for your generous contribution of support for the publication and distribution of *Bridges*, the global newsletter for WFYR.”

John was recently honored and applauded for his outstanding contributions to the YMCA and greater Philadelphia community by scores of friends and family attending his retirement ceremony. **Len Wilson** was there to personally thank John for his support.

WFYR members will be interested in the support given the Madras, India YMCA during John’s time with the former Philadelphia YMCA

(Freedom Valley Y) that recently culminated in a trip to India and a subsequent \$40,000 gift for a new school building for the Madras Y. John and representatives from the Philadelphia Y and Madras Y are pictured below. The two YMCAs have been connected since 1890, after initial funding was developed by Director General **David**



McCaunaghy and the YMCA’s first paid “Secretary”, **John**

Wanamaker who went on to become a wealthy Y supporter after he entered into the mercantile business in Philadelphia.



Len Wilson (L) congratulates John Flynn, CEO of the Freedom Valley YMCA at his recent retirement celebration

Agape 2016 in Full Swing: Reported by Jerry Prado Shaw

The countdown has begun and **Agape 2016**, the YMCA retirees gathering of the Americas, is in full swing! The original target of 50 participants has been surpassed, with pre-registrations reaching 61 attendees. Among them, WFYR Chairman and his wife, along with retirees from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, USA, Uruguay and Venezuela.

This historic event will take place in Uruguay from April 6-9, 2016 at the Kolping Hotel School in Montevideo. The program will include a city tour, special visits to YMCA programs, a Uruguayan welcome dinner, a cultural “Africana” evening, five interactive workshops and ample spaces to gather and share our favorite YMCA stories - after all, we said “Retired, but not tired!”

So far our “youngest” active participant will be 65 years old and the “wisest” a mere 90. But no ocean nor mountain, aches or pains will keep our fearless retirees away. One by one they bravely sign in, and with a bit of wit and wisdom, they chime-in: — “I don’t know how well I will be next April, but sign me in!” — “I will be there regardless of any setback, even if I have to

travel on crutches or in a wheel chair!”
 — “Great, sign me in! I still have a few months to persuade my children. Since my last fall they are still very concerned about me traveling, but if necessary, I will plan my escape. See you there!”
 — “If I am interested to attend you ask? I am ready man! I’ve been oiling my Harley Davidson daily!” (Harley Davidson is the nickname for his wheel chair!)
 — “It is a long trip and very expensive for me, but I will ask all my relatives not to send Christmas presents this year, but a check to get my ticket. So, sign me in! I don’t know how, but I will be in Montevideo with you all!”
 — “Yep, I got my ticket! It will be a long journey, but I am set and ready to go! Three stops in the way down and 36 hours flying, plus four stops on the return... plenty of time to read during layovers. Cheers!”

We are looking forward to seeing you all! We give special thanks to the WFYR Leadership Team for their solidarity and support to make this gathering a reality.



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Y's Retired of the UK

News from CanaFYR

Jim Lamb, President of Y's Retired of the UK, echoes the thoughts of concerned souls around the world. "Mixed messages by the media have brought chaos to a worldwide movement of refugees and asylum seekers by whatever means they could find and seek shelter and food." Jim does not know of any action taken by the YMCA Movement to address the growing crisis. He reminds us all that the current refugee problem is the greatest calamity and upheaval of humanity since WWII.

The end of every year brings us to the realization that many of our beloved and respected Y retiree leaders will no longer be with us. The tributes and memorials in the UK's newsletter are heartfelt with the loss, but coupled with the lasting memories of those who have gone on before. "As their lives are celebrated, may we thank God for all their contributions to our Movement".

AND NOW IT IS WINTER: You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life, so live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember. Hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things you have done in the years past. LIFE IS A GIFT TO YOU. The way that you live your life is a gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one.

Retirees in the South of England got together for a very happy reunion in Milford-on-Sea, a pleasing village in Hampshire. The site was a Victorian mansion built in 1897 with excellent views of the Isle of Wight and the Needles. They plan another gathering in the coming year.



South of England Y's Retired, Linda Voysey, Geoff and Margaret Havers, Maureen and Sam Johnston, Derek and Margaret Shepherd, Norman Owen, Janet Hopkings, Vic and Mary Hills, Blair Crawford, Brian Rowcliffe and Fred Daldry.

The Winter 2015 edition of *Tielines* arrived just in time for this edition of *Bridges*. WYFR members are once more encouraged to access this informative newsletter via AYR's website: www.Yretiree.org

The current edition provides a great deal of information on the developing objective to "Brand the YMCA Canada", and in October members of the South Central Ontario Region of CanaFYR met to renew acquaintance and keep up with YMCA events at the local and national levels. They received a very thorough briefing on how YMCA Canada intends to Ensure the YMCA brand remains current with the times, while being true and authentic to what George Williams was trying to achieve in the 1800s.

YMCA Canada has also announced that Scott Haldane, President and CEO, will be retiring at the end of this year. Scott has been a YMCA professional for 39 years and has provided exemplary service for YMCA Canada since 2010. Like many YMCA retirees, Scott is not finished with his role as a leader. He has accepted a full-time, prestigious position as first President and CEO of the Rideau Hall Foundation.

Tielines does an excellent job of remembering those leaders in its fellowship that have passed on. The tributes to Marlene Rose McPherson (April 3, 1936 – October 14, 2015) are very touching and appropriate. She was a member of the Executive Committee as CanaFYR's first treasurer.

CanaFYR President, Gary Schofield indicated that the organization continues to respond to experiences and thoughts expressed in a survey directed at its members. He expects more developments and reactions in the coming year, but was encouraged by the loyalty to the Y and its retiree fellowship as expressed by a 97 year "young" responder to the survey. More of *Mildred's Memories* will be featured in upcoming editions of **Tielines**.

Our friends from Canada provide WFYR members with an excellent Christmas (year-round) suggestion that expresses the fellowship of our organization.

Look through the Roster, find the name of an old friend or acquaintance with whom you have not had any communication for a while. Send them a card, or note, or email wishing them the best of the season. Let them know you still think of them.



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

EUROPE RETIREES : Reported by Albrecht Kaul

For some of us a journey into the past

A group of YMCA seniors started a big journey. This year's destination was North Poland. We visited well-known cities of the Hanseatic League like Szczecin and Gdansk as well as cities and historic sites of the once German territories in Pomerania and East Prussia. These territories became Polish after the Second World War and as a result of the peaceful revolution in Europe it was confirmed that they will stay within the national territory of Poland and not be given back to Germany to end the spiral of displacement and guilt. Nowadays the Polish and Germans stay in a rather relaxed relationship and welcome each other as tourists. Nevertheless it has been an emotional experience for some of us to visit the places of our childhood or our parents' childhood again. In Szczecin we visited a church in which a member of our group had been baptized and even her home was still there. Everybody was moved.

It was amazing to see how well the Polish have rebuilt the old historic cities. Through the retreat of German troops and advance of Sowjet (Russian) troops these cities had been destroyed up to 80%. With much artistic craftsmanship the rebuilding of churches, business buildings or castles to their old splendor succeeded.

Of course we also visited Christians, the YMCA and a Sunday Service – this is always a fixed element in our city tours. In one of the rare services in German language – for a minority of German speaking people there – we found only two members of the congregation but a very enthusiastic preacher. Perhaps the presence of our group in the church made the preacher talk with so much enthusiasm.

There is a Dietrich Bonhoeffer memorial in Szczecin where he lived for some time as leader of an illegal theological training

institute. It was later tracked and destroyed by the Gestapo. On this site, a garden for meditation is dedicated to Bonhoeffer and his theological thoughts by which we as well were invited to think about his fate.

One of the 18 YMCAs of Poland is in Gdynia. They own a house in the center of the city where they provide many programs. The young General Secretary, **Grzegorz Arabczyk** welcomed us and explained the work of his YMCA. We were surprised to learn that they work intensely with seniors in sports and in community college programs. We immediately got the contact addresses of this group to invite them to become part of the WFYR.

Another highlight of the travel was a meeting with the trade union Solidarnosc in Gdansk. We were welcomed in the party headquarters and learned a lot about the history of the labor movement and the victims at the beginning of Solidarnosc in the early 1980s. Unfortunately there was not much time left for our questions afterwards.

The castle Marienburg left a lasting impression with us. It was the center of the Teutonic Order in the 12th and 13th centuries. This castle was only a heap of rubble after the war and is now an impressive building and the largest castle built with bricks in all the world. It is overwhelming to walk through the many old vaults and festive halls and to know every detail was rebuilt exactly to the old style.



Castle Marienburg

We shared seven days with many impressions, wonderful landscapes and strong companionship. Everyday began with devotions in one of the many churches and many good talks helped to keep up and even strengthen our friendships.

EAST ASIA Reported by Yukio Yamasaki



Kohei Yamada (Left) was recognized and supported by the JFYR to become the WFYR Vice Chair for East Asia and a committee member of the Secours Speciaux Fund during the Annual Meeting held on November 20-21. He also accepted the International Chair of JYR.

MALAYSIA WFYR ESTABLISHED

Leong Yew Kee attended the WFYR sessions in Colorado last year and was inspired to bring together Y retirees in his country. *Bridges* is happy to report that a small group under Leong's leadership met recently, has established some objectives for 2016, and plans to reach out to other Y retirees in the country.



YMCA of Poland in Gdynia



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

AYR (USA YMCA Retirees)

The following is a message to WFYR members from AYR president, Mary Carol Fish:

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

As I look out my windows here in the rural heartland of the USA, I see that the trees have gone from their gorgeous fall color display to stark sticks of tree branch outlines. The temperature gets colder from one week to the next. No snow yet, but it will come. All this tells me that the Christmas holidays are just around the corner. Can it be? As the days of our lives get shorter, one season blends into another more rapidly than it used to.

Holiday time brings us pause for reflection. At a time when there are frightful happenings across the globe: an airplane carrying so many people being blown up, refugees streaming across borders to leave unbearable circumstances, and now the horror from Paris and San Bernardino, news stories that make us all feel sad and uneasy, I am reminded that there is one tie that binds us all. That is our common thread of love for each other. I don't know very many of you personally, but because of that common thread, I do know you. I know you are one, with me, standing shoulder to shoulder for the good things in life, because of the YMCA. Don't underestimate it. It's bigger than all the hard things. Blest be the tie that binds.

I wish you a holiday season filled with love and a blessed 2016.

Mary Carol Fish

AYR reports outstanding attendance and positive feedback for its 2015 National Reunion. More than 200 US Y retirees enjoyed the activities and fellowship of the five-day event in Reno, NV.



At left: Reunion planners Bea Halk, Jerry James and Dee Bright



WYR leaders Don Anderson, Prescott Johnson, Stew Brown and **Bridges** cc-editor Joyce Wilson enjoy "Western" hospitality.



Above: National Reunion participants gathered for a meal, fellowship and lively entertainment on the grounds of the Nevada governor's mansion.

INDIA: Reported by Xavier Rodriguez

The 20th Annual Conference of India Fellowship of YMCA Retirees was held in the new premises of the National Council of YMCAs of India in New Delhi during 6 to 8, August 2015. It was hosted by the latter as promised at the last year's Conference. All facilities were at the disposal of IFYR, the members of which enjoyed them thoroughly. This was one of the best attended events, 27 in number, from various parts of the country.

The inaugural event was held in the new hall, which had just been opened by the President of the National Council a couple of days ago. On the dais were distinguished personalities: an honorable Member of Parliament who had had long association with the YMCA, **Mr. V.P.Rao.**, **Mr. Peter Prem**, President of the New Delhi YMCA and Chairperson of the Northern India Regional Council, and **Mr. Ch P. Manikumar**, National General Secretary of National Council of YMCAs. The traditional oil lamp was lit by the guests of honor and the office bearers of IFYR.

Mr. Xavier Rodriguez, Vice Chair, South Asia brought greetings from the President of World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees, and also from the South Asia Fellowship. He also spoke on the Global Retirement Initiative.

The incoming office bearers for the biennium are..

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Thomas Thomas | President |
| Mr. R. Thyagarajan | Vice President |
| Mr. Swaraj Sircar | Secretary Treasurer |



The 20th Annual Conference of the India Fellowship of YMCA Retirees was held in New Delhi in August



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

A TRIBUTE TO FRED HOSHIYAMA: YMCA HERO

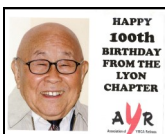
YMCA retirees across America mourn the loss and celebrate the long life of **Fred Hoshiyama**, who passed away one week shy of his 101st birthday. Fred, or Hoshi, to the thousands he led or influenced was an active member of his retiree Lyon Chapter.



Pictured left with friends **Jack Tillman** and **Phyliss Murphy**, Hoshi was celebrating his 100th birthday with a special cake.

At that event,

Fred was asked to summarize some of his life story. *Bridges* shares part of that summary as a tribute to this YMCA Hero. There are many great lessons to be learned from his story:



Fred was the first-born of six siblings in 1914, at Yamato Colony, founded in 1906 in Livingston, CA, the first successful Japanese immigrant settlement in the USA. His parents were **Yajuro and Fusako Tani Hoshiyama** from the Niigata Prefecture (Ken) of Japan. Fred remembers a harsh childhood with unfriendly neighbors who attacked and torched their horse stables and barn when Fred was 5 years old. His father died at age 46, when Fred was 7 years old, "leaving Mother, age 37, who spoke no English, with 6 kids on a dirt farm shack, without a man to work the 40 acres of newly planted vineyard and orchard. After starving and struggling for 7 years, during which time we lost a sister and a brother, Niigata Ken-based immigrant friends rescued and moved us to San Francisco in 1929, including a new husband and a stepfather for the 4 remaining boys. New life in San Francisco was a 180 degrees change for us."

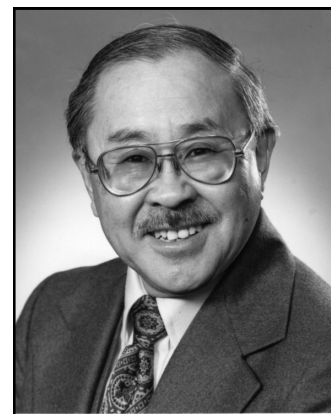
Fred's education includes San Francisco College and University of California at Berkeley, Springfield College, and Yale Divinity School, where he earned a BA, an M.Ed, an MA, and an honorary

Dr. of Humanities.

He was happily married to **Irene** for more than 60 years and his two grown children are **Bella Donna Sudura Sweet** and **Matthew Roy**.

Fred started his YMCA career in 1941 at the segregated Japanese YMCA in San Francisco, and ended it with the YMCA of the USA in 1980. He claimed 39 years of excitement, fun and satisfying ministry for people in developing relationships, except for a short time of incarceration in US concentration camps.

Fred claimed among the highlights of his career the development and implementation of Y-NYPUM (National Youth Program Using Mini-bikes). This program kept 450,000 youth out of the Juvenile Justice System and out of youth gangs. Other significant associations for him included NADY (National Association of Student YMCA's); First Sister City, "Home to Home" Youth Exchange Program with Japan and USA; California High School Christian Leadership Camp, and San Francisco YMCA Camp Jones Gulch in 1965.



Hoshi was the first recipient of the Association of YMCA Professionals highest and most prestigious Hall-Kuenzli Award. Additional recognition includes the Japanese Government Award, the Fifth Order of the Sacred Treasure with gold and silver rays (known as the Emperor's Kunsho; and induction into the YMCA Hall of Fame.

His name is honored with The Fred Hoshiyama Asian Leadership Fund from the Asian Leadership Network and AYP's Chapter 81's Fred Hoshiyama Leadership Award.

Global Initiative Report : Reported by Don Anderson

We are making progress on our goal established in Estes Park to establish models of secured retirement for career YMCA staff that would otherwise be vulnerable in retirement.

Our first step is to identify appropriate early or mid-career candidates in Africa, South Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean. **James Gomez** and African Alliance Secretary General **Carlos Sanvee**, have identified three African candidates and the German YMCA has suggested another. **Jerry Prado Shaw** and **Oscar Escalada**, working with the Latin American and Caribbean Alliance, have developed an application and

evaluation process. **Xavier Rodriguez** is working with National General Secretary in India, and **Don Anderson** has secured the promise of **Nam Boo Won**, incoming Secretary General of the Asia Alliance to identify candidates after he takes office.

We should be well on our way to exploring Individual cases and designing models in the first half of 2016. Progress will most likely occur at different rates in our three target areas, but our commitment is to move as soon as we can in each specific area.

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BRIDGES



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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 WFYR.**

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