



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

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In this Issue

Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

YURA Student Award Recipients express appreciation

YURA Café Pensions and Benefits with Shayne Dunkley

The Taliesin Saga

[Ian Greene](#)

Climate Change on Steroids: The desperate case of Bangladesh

[Anne-Marie Ambert](#)

On the 2024 solar eclipse

[Tony Szeto](#)

A French shocker: Say Cheese

[Anne-Marie Ambert](#)

Mail is not what it used to be

[Vivienne Monty](#)

And now the funnies

[presented by Vivienne Monty](#)

Just one more thing

[From the editors](#)

[Parking update](#)

[For the benefit of members](#)

YURA Executive

York University Retirees' Association

Message from the YURA Co-Presidents

At the start of this new year, we wish YURA members a good measure of optimism and healthy doses of patience. These will help us cope with the return of true wintry weather this year and with the daily news reports on the general state of world affairs. And may you find that there are some left-over treats from the holidays ---maybe some shortbread cookies or peppermint ice cream—to bring you enjoyment and pleasure without bringing on ill health effects! It is our hope that you are all looking forward to a busy year ahead, with some tried-and-true routines along with some new activities and adventures.

As is traditional with the start of a new year, we take the opportunity to reflect on the year that has ended. We offer our heartfelt thanks to Jane Grant, Donna Smith, and David Leyton-Brown who have completed their (six-year) terms on the YURA Executive. We thank them for their numerous contributions, their dedication and their enthusiasm, and we appreciate that Donna and David are staying on as ex-officio members, and that Jane continues to advise us on the planning of events and to assist in the YURA office. At the same time, we welcome three new members to the Executive Board: Cathy Boyd-Withers, Harvey Skinner and Marc Wilchesky. We are delighted to have them as part of our hard-working team.

An anchor event for YURA is, of course, our Annual General Meeting, held on November 1st, 2024. We were very pleased that Laina Bay-Cheng, Vice-President Equity, People and Culture joined us to deliver a message of welcome on behalf of York University. Our guest speaker, Dr.



Dr. Glen Jones

Glen Jones, gave an engaging and thought-provoking talk on the challenges facing higher education in Canada, noting that our vision of the future has shifted very significantly since the early 1990's. A summary of his talk and photos of the AGM are found on the YURA website at <https://www.yorku.ca/yura/annual-general-meeting/>.

As noted at the AGM, YURA has devoted considerable effort to “giving back” to the University in support of its students, and there is much of which YURA members can justifiably be proud. There are now several fully endowed YURA-sponsored awards; these have been possible because of the extraordinary generosity of our members and the exemplary leadership of those who led YURA before us. In 2023-24, a total of eight awards were made: 2 William Small

awards, 3 Mature Student bursaries, and 3 Graduate Student awards. These awards make a tremendous difference in the lives of the recipients, not just for the financial support but also for the confidence boost. Elsewhere in this newsletter, we share with you the letter of thanks received from a grateful awardee. In addition to the awards, YURA continues



2024 YURA Charity Challenge team

with its much- appreciated Presentation Skills Workshops for graduate students – the next one to be held later this Spring. Finally, for the past two years (2023 and 2024), YURA has dedicated its fund-raising energies to the alleviation of food insecurity among York University students. We were delighted that both *Y-File* and *Excalibur* reported on our Charity Challenge walk of last October; in the words of the *Excalibur* writer, “With each passing year, [...] YURA’s fundraising efforts continue to grow, driven by the collective passion of retirees dedicated to making a lasting difference in the lives of students.” We feel that this is a fitting tribute to YOU – the members of YURA! See <https://www.yorku.ca/yura/events-and-programs/2024-charity-challenge-update/> .

We have also been very busy within the YURA Café, expertly hosted by Fran Wilkinson. A session last October featured as a special guest, Shayne Dunkley, Pension and Benefits Administration Specialist at York University. We thank him for engaging with retirees and for providing detailed and thoughtful answers to the many questions posed by retirees. During this session, we learned that it can be helpful for all of us to be reminded of where to find various documents such as the post-retirement benefits booklets, the frequently used Sunlife claims forms, and the Retirement Planner online tool. For that reason, we have provided elsewhere in this newsletter a summary of the October Café session.

Fran was also the organizer of a special three-part series on “Health Care Planning as We Age”. The first session, on Nov. 5th, was devoted to Advance Care Planning, with Denyse Burns as presenter. The third session on End-of-Life decisions featured Dr. Leith Drury was held on Dec. 3rd. The second session (originally scheduled for Nov. 20th), focusing on Seven Keys to Navigating a Life-changing Diagnosis, and featuring Bina Feldman, has now been re-scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 15th at 2:00 p.m. These sessions nudge us gently in the direction of confronting difficult situations and thinking lucidly about hard decisions. While these make us uncomfortable at times, they are part of being “resilient” as older adults. We hope that you will join us as we discuss different dimensions of “resilience” in upcoming sessions of the YURA café, scheduled for January 14th, February 11th, March 11th and April 8th, at 10:00 a.m. (with a Zoom link sent by e-mail to members ahead of each event).

In addition, the Executive committee has endorsed a number of upcoming in-person events; details for registering and reserving your tickets will be forthcoming via e-mail communication to our members. Here are some dates to keep in mind: Sunday, February 23rd for a matinee outing to Roy Thomson Hall for the National Geographic Live Photography event on the Great Barrier Reef; Thursday, March 13th for an afternoon concert by a String Quartet with the Women’s Musical Club or Toronto; and Saturday, April 5th for an evening concert by the York Alumni Gospel Choir. Planning for many other events, including for our next AGM, is underway and information will be shared as plans get finalized.

As announced at the last AGM, YURA’s 40th anniversary is coming up in 2026. That makes this year – 2025 -- our “dress rehearsal” year! We plan to mark it with events that bring us together for shared experiences both on campus and on outings. Milestone moments have a way of prompting reflection that helps us take stock and connect the dots between the past and the present. As in our individual lives, our collective experience in YURA has taught us a great many important lessons, perhaps even some wisdom that ought to be shared. We are all forced to look back on our careers and our lives when we retire. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will have the opportunity to read Ian Greene’s winsome excerpt from his memoirs. We invite all of you who may be writing memoirs, or who have become family archivists, to share your experience and your reflections by contributing to future newsletters. Submissions can be made directly by email to our capable editors who have thoughtfully provided their contact information in this newsletter.

We remind you all to regularly check the YURA website (www.yorku.ca/yura/) for up-to-date information on YURA activities and on research projects for which participants are being sought -- this is one important way YURA members make very valuable contributions to the York Community.

With our warmest wishes for the New Year,

Diane Beelen Woody and Steve Dranitsaris, YURA co-presidents

YURA Student Award Recipients express appreciation

During the 2023-2024 academic year, eight awards funded from endowments created through donations and fundraising activities of YURA members were awarded to promising and deserving York University students.

Two William W. Small Awards of \$1,700 each were given to mature undergraduate students who sustained, after at least nine credits, a grade point average of 7.00 or above; with preference given to students showing a clear focus on their program of study and their selection of courses. The award was named in honour of the former York Vice-President and founding President of YURA, who was the second employee hired at York University after its first President, Dr. Murray Ross, in 1960.

Three YURA Mature Student Awards of \$1,200 each were given to mature students of any undergraduate Faculty, including Osgoode with demonstrated financial need.

Three YURA Graduate Student Awards of \$1,500 each were provided to full-time master's students in either the first or second year of their master's program who had a minimum academic standing of B+, showed financial need, and demonstrated either a strong commitment to volunteerism in the community or active engagement in a student leadership role while in the Master's program.

Here are three notes of appreciation received from recipients of the YURA sponsored awards.

Recipient Name: Mohamad, Faculty of Health, B.Sc., Global Health
Award Received: William W. Small Award, Nov 23, 2023

Dear YURA members,

My name is Mohammed, an undergraduate mature student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Global Health at York University. I am writing to express my deep gratitude for receiving the William W. Small Award. This award has not only provided invaluable financial support but has also served as a significant source of encouragement for me.

As someone deeply passionate about health advocacy and global health, receiving this award has reinforced my commitment to making a meaningful difference in the world. It has given me the opportunity to focus not only on my academic studies but also on

pursuing extracurricular activities that align with my personal values. I have been able to actively engage in community health initiatives, particularly assisting newcomer communities in navigating the complex healthcare system. Through this work, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that vulnerable populations face, which has fueled my desire to advocate for better access to health resources and improved health outcomes.

In addition, receiving the William W. Small Award has provided me the opportunity to dedicate more time to raising awareness about critical health issues, particularly those affecting marginalized communities. I have been actively involved in educational outreach programs that aim to inform individuals about preventive healthcare measures, mental health awareness, and the importance of accessible health services. Through workshops, seminars, and community events, I have worked to help bridge the gap in health literacy, especially among newcomers and vulnerable populations. These initiatives are crucial in empowering individuals to take charge of their own health and make informed decisions.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to the donor and the YURA for this recognition. Thank you again for supporting my journey, and for the lasting impact this award will have on my academic and professional future.

Sincerely,

Mohamad

Recipient Name: Angelica, Faculty of Graduate Studies, M.A., Sociology
Award Received: YURA Graduate Student Award, March 13, 2024

To the York University Retirees' Association,

I am Angelica, a recent MA Sociology graduate at York University. I am writing to thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the YURA Graduate Student Award.

The YURA Award has made a positive impact on my education and life as a graduate student. Firstly, applying for this award allowed me to consider the ways in which my research interests align with the field of law. It also inspired me to continue striving for academic excellence, as my efforts and hard work were recognized. As a recipient of

this award, I continue to feel a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment, reinforcing how extremely worthwhile it can be to apply for scholarships and awards.

Thank you so much for this incredibly generous award. Your willingness to invest in students is very inspiring and selfless. Receiving this award ultimately serves as a reminder that hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed.

Sincerely,

Angelica

Recipient Name: Ilena, Faculty of Graduate Studies, M.A., Socio-Legal Studies
Award Received: YURA Graduate Student Award, March 13, 2024

I am so humbly grateful to be the recipient of this award. It relieved a substantial amount of financial stress and inspired me to keep learning, leading and trying new things every day. Thank you to the donors who make awards like these possible, allowing adventurous students to keep pursuing their dreams of new discoveries.

Thank you!
Ilena

YURA Café Pensions and Benefits with Shayne Dunkley

On October 8th, Shayne Dunkley, Pension Administration Specialist with Pensions and Benefits at York University, was our invited guest at our monthly YURA Café. It was a lively and informative session and YURA thanks Shayne for his thoughtful and informative replies to the questions posed by members in attendance from various employment groups at York. At the end of the session, it was observed that it would be helpful for YURA to summarize for its members, some information points and reminders about where key documents can be found.

The Pension and Benefits Home page is found at <https://www.yorku.ca/universityservices/usc-people-services/pension-benefits/>

From that main page you will have access to various documents:

- The post-retirement Benefits booklets for different employee groups. These are found under the heading “Benefit booklets”; scroll down the page to find the relevant booklets for retirees.
- Frequently used claims forms (e.g. from Sun Life). These are the found under the heading “Resources”.
- The Retirement Planner Online Tool, which is found under the heading “Retirement planning”. Instructions for logging in and re-setting your password (if needed) are provided. Use your employee number beginning with the digit “1” to log in to the planner. From the main page, click on “Pensioner Statements” and select the most recent year posted, then click on “next page” which will show your “Retired Member Pension Statement”.

It is recommended that retirees log in to the Retirement Planner once each year and that they print the most recent version of their “Retired Member Pension Statement”. The new annual statement is available by April 1st of each year. This statement indicates the survivor pension form that the retiree selected and shows any guaranteed years if that option was selected at the time of retirement. The printed form should be stored in the retiree’s binder of important papers and its location should be known to one’s executor.

The summary sheet also lists the updates that retirees are required to submit to Pensions and Benefits, including a change of postal address or email address, and notification of the death of a spouse.

Enquiries from retirees are welcome and can be made by telephone at 416-736-5853 or by email: askpb@yorku.ca .

YURA members should note that the Post Retirement Benefits booklets and the Sun Life medical expense claim form are also available on the YURA website under Retiring at York > Pension and Benefits: <https://www.yorku.ca/yura/retiring-at-york/pensions-and-benefits/>

The Taliesin Saga

Ian Greene

I had an important decision to make. It was a summer evening in 1977 and I was enjoying a soak in the hot pool at Radium Hot Springs, B.C., steam rising from the water and steep mountainsides up to the edge. Should I purchase the most stunningly beautiful parcel of land that I had ever seen for sale in the Rocky Mountains? Or not.

I had fallen in love with the Rockies when working at Lake O'Hara Lodge during the summers of 1968 – 1972 when an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta. O'Hara Lodge is a small but much sought-after resort located a few miles west of Lake Louise. In 1977, I was back at O'Hara in more rustic accommodation as custodian of the Elizabeth Parker Hut, the Alpine Club of Canada cabin at Lake O'Hara that provided a roof over heads, bunks with foam mattresses, a wood stove and a fireplace. One of my friends at the Alpine Club wanted my advice about whether to buy the property I was now contemplating. When I looked at it, I said to her that you'll never find a more beautiful view to the south overlooking the Columbia River with the towering Bugaboo mountain range behind. The view to the north of the Vermillion range is also to die for. And it has two creeks running through it. And there's an old timber frame settler's cabin there that can be restored. But after several months, my friend decided to pursue other dreams, so the property was still for sale.

My mom's death in 1972 followed by my Dad's in 1975 left me with an inheritance large enough to cover the cost of the 160 acres. But if I bought it, what would I do with it? To complicate matters, there was friction in my relationship with Sheila, whom I had married in 1973 less than a year after Mom died. Like me, Sheila was an outdoors person, was of partial Scottish descent like my parents, so I thought we were a good match. We had enjoyed mountain climbing and hiking together in New Zealand, Australia and Nepal a few years earlier, as well as in the Rockies. We were renting an apartment in Winnipeg where Sheila was doing a Master's degree in anthropology. I was pursuing my PhD program on delays in Canadian courts at the University of Toronto. I had finished the assignments I needed to do in Toronto so could carry on my research in Winnipeg.

While contemplating the land purchase in Radium Hot Springs, it seemed to me that owning the land might bring Sheila and I closer together. We could fix up the old settler's cabin and use it as a retreat for ourselves and our friends. Sheila didn't want children, and so developing the land could be a life project together. Radium's warm

water made me feel positive about purchasing the land, so I phoned Winnipeg and told Sheila I wanted to make an offer, and she agreed.

If my current self could have spoken to my 1977 self, I would have said that the purchase would be a catalyst for life-changing events for the next half century. It would be a good decision to purchase the land, but not to save my relationship with Sheila. Quite the opposite. The acquisition would make possible a relatively quick separation and divorce and allow me to get on with life. It would provide a place for me to stay while pursuing my first college teaching job with university-level courses. It would transform me from an agnostic into a person of faith. It would give the opportunity to heal from my divorce by building a log house. In turn the log house would introduce me to Eilonwy, the love of my life, and we would name the house Taliesin (Welsh for shining brow). The log house would provide a destination for summer visits with our children. And in 2021, when I subdivided the land and sold the log house, the parcel I kept would provide me with a retirement project: setting up a new wilderness retreat much smaller than the log house – a trailer and a shed – but suitable for a retiree working on his memoirs.

Climate Change on Steroids: The desperate case of Bangladesh

Anne-Marie Ambert

Bangladesh is a relatively small country, about a quarter the size of France. It is bordered to the north by the Himalayas and to the south by the Bay of Bengal. Because of this location, winds are pushed in specific ways: Thus, the country generally has a fairly strong monsoon season which used to be in the months of April and May. But now the monsoon season can last several months and may off and on extend into October; it is accompanied by cyclones that may come 5 to 7 times a year compared to perhaps once or twice 15 years ago.

This means that an enormous amount of water falls on the country and the storms bring huge waves of seawater onto the land, which, in addition, has hundreds of rivers. As a result, the southern part of the country is now submerged: pastures, agricultural fields, roads and villages have disappeared while others are seriously threatened.

But above all else, in a country of 120 million citizens, 40 million are internally displaced, or internal refugees--a third of the population, in other words. This is equivalent to the population of Canada.

Many of these displaced persons live in bidonvilles or slums within the capital of Dacca, often squeezed at the bottom of residential high-rises and rivers. All along the coastline, displaced villagers live in makeshift houses, with muddy and slippery "streets," difficult access to water and electricity, and often no livelihood because they can no longer grow crops or fish.

As one displaced man was explaining, "fishing is all we know to do in order to earn our living." A well-educated and well-to-do woman who was an advocate for the internal refugees was saying that Bangladesh

is not receiving much support from the outside for their own internal refugees because the rich world focuses mainly on political refugees who live outside of their countries, especially with those who live in camps bordering their countries or other countries.

The condition of all of these displaced villagers was very sad to see, especially the women and the children. As many women were explaining to the investigative reporter, arranged marriages predominate and women are wedded very young. They do not have the time to get an education and learn skills that could provide for their families.

Some climate change researchers working with farmers or agriculturists were trying to find ways of growing plants that tolerate salination better given the fact that the Bay of Bengal has penetrated the lands so deeply that some of what is left is no longer productive because it is saturated with salt.

In addition to that, they are creating floating platforms made with barrels strapped together with ropes and bamboo on which they grow in large pots of various plants so that they can become more self-sufficient. These platforms can float when the stormy waves arrive--a very creative way of adaptation to a deregulated climatic situation.

They are also growing mangroves to try to reinforce the earth banks or dykes that protect villages that are now below sea level. In addition to serving as a protective barrier to slow the onslaught of the sea waters, mangroves constitute a refuge for fish which are rapidly disappearing in the rivers and the sea. This is another factor contributing to the impoverishment of the internal refugees and the country.

The rapidity and the severity of climate deregulation in Bangladesh, a country with a large and poor population, leads to the question: where will these people go? And how will the world absorb similar populations elsewhere throughout the globe?

(Source: Climate d'urgence, a series of environmental documentaries sponsored by Quebec, shown on TV5, October/November, 2024.)

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR: I watch at least one French documentary each evening of the week, except weekend. When I find one that is particularly meaningful and

interesting, I dictate it in English from memory on my cell phone two or three days later. Little by little, as I recall details after the main topics have been written down, I continue to develop my summary of the documentary.

On the 2024 solar eclipse

Tony Szeto

A total solar eclipse was observed in many locations in Canada in April 2024. I explained the geometry behind this celestial event to my granddaughter on the eve of her eighth birthday.

I also attempted to illustrate the situation using a scaled model. It turned out to be a bit of a challenge. Now that the whole thing is a happy memory, I am putting finger to keyboard for a brief exposé, hoping to find some interested readers among my retiree comrades.

You would appreciate that sizes and distances involved are enormous compared with what we deal with in everyday life. The fact that the moon and the sun appear to be approximately the same size to us had fascinated me as soon as I became old enough to realize that the Earth we live on is huge compared with cars, houses, mountains, and even continents, and that the sun is much larger still than Earth. This led me to thinking if my granddaughter might also find some of the relevant facts “fascinating”.

As we look at the sun (well, not directly for any length of time), we see a disc about half a degree across. (More precisely, the sun’s average angular diameter is $\sim 32.1'$ (minutes of arc), $\pm 1.7\%$ The variation arises from the fact that Earth’s orbit around the sun is slightly elliptical.) Knowing the sun’s size, its angular size allows us to figure out our distance from it. It turns out to be ~ 150 million km ($\pm 1.7\%$ of course). Incidentally, over this vast distance, light from the sun takes over 8 minutes to reach us.

Quite by coincidence, the moon’s angular diameter is $\sim 31.5' \pm 6\%$. As above, it is easy to infer (as well as actually measure) that Earth-Moon distance ~ 384 thousand km ($\pm 6\%$).

Earth’s orbit around the Sun is therefore on average about 390 times the Moon’s orbit around Earth. The ratio of Earth-Sun distance to Earth-Moon distance varies, depending on how far off the averages these distances are at the time of observation.

If the ratio is right on 390, the solar and lunar discs would appear identical in size to us.

[If you've made it to this point, you're doing well! You may have had a student who buried a message within the recesses of a thesis: "claim a case of whisky if you come across this." :) Along similar lines, if you persevere until the end, you will find a reward by way of an anecdote carrying some human interest. :) :)]

A solar eclipse happens when the Moon lies in between the Sun and the Earth. If the solar and lunar discs are identical in size, and if an observer on Earth is exactly aligned with these two objects, i.e. if the Sun casts a shadow of the Moon exactly on the observer, then we have a perfect total solar eclipse. If the Moon happens to be nearer, then the lunar disc would obscure the solar disc, with a little to spare. If the Moon is a little further away, then we'll end up with an annular eclipse, where a thin ring of light would be visible surrounding a perfectly dark lunar disc. And Oh! – what an opportunity that would provide for scientific observations of the solar corona, prominences, magnetic field, and so on.

Some of you would know that the Moon is receding from us — at about 4cm/year. This means that it was not always the case that the Sun and the Moon were so highly similar in apparent size. Given that the lunar and solar orbits are elliptical, the combined effect could cause the solar and lunar discs to vary by almost +/-8%. Suffice it to say that there would have been a time in the past when it was never possible for the Sun to appear larger than the Moon, and there will be a time in the future, when the Moon will never be able to completely block the Sun. It is possible to estimate how back in time and how far ahead we're talking about, by applying celestial mechanics to "orbital evolution". (My PhD research around 1980 explored how the orbits of the moons of Mars might have evolved, and how such investigation might cast light on how these moons were formed. Alas, my work has been recently superseded.) Starting from the current observed rate of lunar orbital expansion and working backwards, my guess is that dinosaurs in the Triassic Period (250Mya-200Mya) would have seen the Moon completely blocking the Sun during a total solar eclipse, with several minutes to spare before the Sun reclaimed its presence in the sky. Just think, if the age of Earth is likened to a day, then it's only in the last hour that the Sun managed to sneak a peak during totality.

I meant to describe my scaled model of the Sun-Moon-Earth configuration when I digressed above. At a scale of about 10 billion to 1, I managed to lay down a measuring tape 15m long, inside our house. A plate ~14cm in diameter represented the Sun, which my wife, Lorraine, held. My granddaughter, Adelaide, and I stood at the other end, using a 0.35mm-sized spot marked on the tip of a toothpick held at a

distance of 3.8cm from my/her eye. I let her adjust the distance until the spot just blocked the “Sun”, held by her Po-Po (maternal grandmother, in Cantonese).

Did Adelaide find the scaled model “fascinating”? For the first so many seconds as we laid down the tape, and asked Po-Po to hold her plate in place, yes. Not so much after that... And, no, of course I didn't go into any of the calculations. I did say that the dinosaurs would not have seen a ring around a total solar eclipse. And her eyes did widen for a moment. Not because she was curious how I made my deduction, I figured, but because she loves anything to do with dinosaurs!

Hope you find some amusement in this whimsical Planetary Physics/Astronomy 101 piece...Tony Szeto (retired 2016)

A French shocker: Say Cheese

Anne-Marie Ambert

A French investigative documentary asks the following question: Is the variety of French cheese diminishing? The answer is a resounding yes. The French love their cheese and there are hundreds of varieties to please their taste buds from the time they are very small. So what is going on with French cheese?

First, let's point out that the taste, appearance, color, texture, and the nutritive value of cheese all depend, first, on the breed of cows, sheep or goats producing the milk and, second, on what the French call the terroir.

The terroir is simply a region, however small, such as a valley or a different elevation in a field, with its own soil composition, grass, flora, and altitude. This is where specific pastures feed milking cows, sheep and goats. What these animals eat in turn provides a milk that determines the variety and quality of cheese and especially its taste. In addition, the breed of animal itself on the same terroir provides an additional key ingredient to the quality of the cheese and its variety--such as Simmental or Blonde d'Aquitaine cows.

However, the breeds of cows are themselves diminishing in variety. In order to industrialize milk production, cows that are difficult to milk electrically, such as the Salers, are abandoned in favour of a particular very widespread breed easy to milk and easy to feed: the Holstein. The Holstein is the typical white cow with black designs that children tend to draw because it is so common. Other cows are also deselected because they do not produce as much milk. In contrast, the Holstein produces the most milk.

So not only is the variety of milking animals diminishing substantially, but an increasing number of cows are no longer fed within their terroir. Farmers are more and more likely to keep cows in barns and feed them with silage and generic forage which do not reflect at all the terroir they live in.

In fact, many of these cows in barns never see the light of day; with specific lighting, they lose their reproductive cycle and can be milked without interruption for 3 to 4 years. This is very advantageous for the farmers economically.

However, these Holstein cows' milk production soon diminishes, and they often develop poor health much sooner than those that would be fed naturally in a pasture and allowed to reproduce. In fact, they may be slaughtered at age four or five and--surprisingly--are then sold on the market as beef. In France, beef meat includes cow meat, and one cannot tell the difference. This approach also prevents the birth of many male calves that are no longer economically useful to farmers and are quickly sold or killed.**

It should also be noted that some terroirs are disappearing because of industrial or housing developments, as well as climate change, such as more frequent rainfalls and warming as well as invasive plants that are not native.

Despite this, many ecological farmers are dedicated to the survival of certain rare breeds of milking animals. Others try to maintain the terroirs by eradicating invasive plants thereby contributing to the return and multiplication of native plants or grasses in order to maintain biodiversity, hence also variety in cheese production.

** A personal note. While I was teaching at York, I took some agricultural classes at Guelph University, after which, in 1982, instead of buying a cottage, I bought a farm that we owned for 12 years. It was located on Highway 89 between Mount Forest and Shelbourne. I rented the fields and outbuildings to farmers in the area. Not only did they grow crops, but they also "grew" cows and beef.

One farmer used to buy newborn calves that had not even been allowed to suckle their mothers' first milk. These poor calves were trucked from Quebec all the way to my farm. They arrived in pitiful condition, dazed, shaking, totally dehydrated and hardly able to stand on their wobbly legs. The farmer used to feed them milk with baby bottles, but most of them developed acute diarrhea, and they were lying down in their own watery excrements. They were eventually abandoned by the farmer to a likely painful death, which was very upsetting to us.

My daughter and I, behind the farmer's back, used to put straw for bedding and feed a mixture of water and Pedialyte to a couple of calves we thought might survive. And,

miraculously, they did survive to the surprise of all! We thought that this practice was cruel, and I asked that farmer to cease buying these calves.

(Source: Sur le Front, a series of investigating documentaries on the French environment and agriculture, TV5, October/November 2024.)

Mail is not what it used to be

Vivienne Monty

Prior to 1920, it was possible to send children through the US Postal service. However, there were certain conditions that needed to be met. Firstly, the children had to weigh less than 50 pounds, and stamps were attached to their clothing as a form of payment. It was often more cost-effective for individuals to send their children via mail rather than opting for train transportation. During the journey, the children would travel on a train, specifically in the mail car, where they were supervised and provided with nourishment by mail clerks. One remarkable example of this unconventional practice involved a distance of over 700 miles, from Florida to Virginia, covered with a mere 15 cents worth of stamps.



And now the funnies

presented by Vivienne Monty

the correct place for the phone is below and slightly to the left of the bread plate



The father of this little girl says he brought her a cat to forget about the phone, but this is what happened.



Just one more thing....

From the editors

The film and television actor Peter Falk is best known for his role as Columbo on the long running TV show. His character, Lt. Columbo, wearing a rumpled raincoat and wearing the façade of an absent-minded detective, would leave suspects only to return with a zinger of a follow up question, starting with: “Oh, just one more thing...”. Allow us to name our YURA mailbag “Just one more thing”.

Parking update

Dear editors of the YURA newsletter,

The following information is very important for Glendon retirees, who might be parking at the campus for whatever reason. I therefore hope that you will be able to include my information in the next YURA newsletter.

I am a Glendon retiree since 2011 and have been attending the LLIR (Living and Learning in Retirement) seniors' courses for a number of years. As a retiree and a member of YURA, we are entitled to a maximum of 12 (2x6) free parking passes at the upper lot of the Glendon campus each year. Unlike those at the Keele campus, Glendon does not have electronic equipment to scan the unique individual password which allows us to use up these passes.

Until now, the staff member running the parking office at Glendon could be contacted in person or by telephone to validate each pass for a particular date. However, the Glendon parking office will be permanently closed sometime in mid-November and from now on we have to contact the parking office at Keele to enable us to use each pass.

This has not been easy in my experience, as it is often the case that there is no answer to phone calls or voicemail messages. However, the head of the parking office at Keele has now returned my calls and informed me that what we need to do is to send an email to parking@yorku.ca, including the word "urgent" in the subject heading,

requesting a parking pass for a specific date. They will then provide this information electronically to the security officers, who check whether you are authorized to park for the day free of charge. *Please note that if you do not receive this authorization, you may receive a penalty of \$75, which is a City of Toronto parking enforcement penalty. The university has no power to cancel this, no matter what your reason is for not having a valid pass.*

It has taken me many tries to come up with a solution and I am grateful to the head of the York Parking Authority for providing me with a working method to receive my parking pass. I have now been successful, using this method, and my intention with this article is to make it easier for other Glendon retirees to go through this process.

Marika Kemeny

For more info, consult our website [Parking for YURA Members | York University Retirees' Association](#). Next issue: Parking at the Markham campus. (eds.)

Note from YURA Co-Presidents:

The University's Parking Services has indeed consolidated its Glendon and Keele operations at its Keele campus location in the William Small Centre. YURA members who wish to use their YURA "promo" code to park at the Glendon campus should phone Parking Services at 416.736.5335 to make arrangements. You will need to provide your name, licence plate number, date of your visit, parking location and your YURA "promo" code. This is a quick and easy process: the Parking Services staff enter the information into the HONK system and they are always very helpful. You can actually call and make arrangements before coming to campus. You may also contact Parking Services during business hours using their online chat function at:

<https://www.yorku.ca/parking/>

For the benefit of members

Our very active member, Grace Chui, noticed that the CURAC link on our website was broken and got it fixed, so you can go from our YURA website to [Member Benefits — CURAC](#). Remember that YURA membership gives us full rights to CURAC's benefits and discounts. While membership benefits were top of mind, Grace contacted another member, Amina Hussain, who reported on significant savings that YURA members can

enjoy. Amina already had her car insured with BelAir Direct, and called them, to enquire about rates and discounts. She enjoyed an \$188.44 savings on the annual policy. **WOW.**

Old premium- \$ 1,072.00

New premium- \$ 883.56.

Steve Dranitsaris always used RBC Insurance for travel but started shopping when they jacked up their rates. He switched to Johnson (CURAC's affinity partner) and it was 1/3 the cost. Travel insurance is priced based on each person's circumstances; Steve was happy with Johnson's price which was \$800 cheaper a year than RBC Insurance. **WOW. It pays to be a member of YURA!**

There are other benefits and discounts available to us- check out [Membership Privileges | York University Retirees' Association](#) website.

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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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Richard Weisman, Editor