



# BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Mayor of New York City, Ed Koch, was famous for his frequent question...."How am I doing?" When it comes to evaluating the recent World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the answer to that question is best summed up by one participant, *"I want to express my gratitude for this great opportunity. I was very happy and I will keep forever in my heart every minute I lived and shared with colleagues and friends."* That says it all. But as professional YMCA directors, we measure our

performance through formal evaluations that help us plan for future conferences. So, here are some preliminary results of the evaluation conducted via email through Survey Monkey.

Before viewing the photos from Chiang Mai which show WFYR participants of the 6<sup>th</sup> World Conference of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees fully engaged in the meeting you must read the heartfelt comments from our delegates. It was a success in many, many ways. I only

share some of the comments:

"Excellent event and most enjoyable", "Hotel technical support was excellent" and "Great conference! and Great resource material."

"I learned a lot about WYFR and expect to share with colleagues back home. thanks to **Jerry Prado Shaw** for all his support will never be enough"

"Thanks for the great conference" and, "On the whole it was a wonderful overseas Post Retirement YMCA Professional Experience and I am very much enriched by attending this Conference. Thanks a lot."

"Sorry I could not attend but ...I have received brief reports from participants, both very positive."

**Five Main Workshop and Discussion Group topics were scheduled.** All received high marks. The highest score went to the Peace, Reconciliation and Human Rights, with Consul General, **Tim Scherer** who key noted the discussion. This was followed closely by the Communications and Fellowship workshop led by **Len Wilson** and **Phil Dwyer**. Right behind that was the discussion time and reports on the Global Retirement Initiative and Secours Speciaux led by **Don Anderson and Bonnie Mairs**. The Christian Emphasis of the YMCA in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century segment led by **Norris Lineweaver** and the report on YMCA Community Service led by

**Cris Caporosa** generated lively discussion.

**Standard program segments.** It is often said we are a "fellowship of faith," so it is no surprise that a special time to remember the lives of colleagues who are in eternal rest received the highest evaluation of our standard activities. Also of importance were the visits and presentations by individual members of the Global Staff Team. Starting the meetings with a devotional and ending with "My Favorite Story" were also considered important. Something we need to plan for 2022 is more preparation and guidance for presenting the "My Favorite Story" segments.

**Logistics.** The registration and greeting process, the materials and the hotel and meeting room accommodations, must create a positive experience. Printed Materials and the Registration process were both rated 86% excellent. The hotel and meeting room accommodations (except for the column in the middle of our meeting room!) and our T Shirt received high ratings.

**Suggestions that will be remembered for future planning.** (among others) "It is recommended to have lighter sessions for community singing, jokes, fun etc." and "Meetings in English do not impact me, but if there was some translation I think other colleagues would be able to also participate." None of the participants favored the expense of a translation service, but only 45% of the participants stated conducting the meeting in English had no impact. So, this is an important discussion point for the future.

Also suggested were: "Try to have some breakfasts scheduled in a private room to enable sustained connections." There is no doubt that opportunities for fellowship among WFYR participants is job one!

"We must continue interactive, communications with each other just to keep our WFYR Fellowship alive." We did talk about how to foster ongoing fellowship activities between the quadrennial meetings. This will be a topic for your Leadership Team, including whether to encourage participation in "YMCA 175" scheduled for London, England in 2019.

Overall, a great time was had by all!

*Phil Dwyer*  
**WFYR Chair**



# BRIDGES



## 2018 WFYR LEADERSHIP TEAM

## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

CHAIR: Phil Dwyer (USA); [dwyer\\_philip@yahoo.com](mailto:dwyer_philip@yahoo.com)

TREASURER: Bob Hastedt; (USA) [rhastedt@aol.com](mailto:rhastedt@aol.com)

VICE CHAIR/USA: Len Wilson (USA); [len.wilson@comcast.net](mailto:len.wilson@comcast.net)

VICE CHAIR/AFRICA: Samuel Anim, (Ghana);  
[samuelheanim@](mailto:samuelheanim@)

VICE CHAIR/EAST ASIA: Kohei Yamada (Japan);  
[kyamada246@gmail.com](mailto:kyamada246@gmail.com)

VICE CHAIR/EUROPE: Albrecht Kaul (Germany); [albe.kaul@web.de](mailto:albe.kaul@web.de)

VICE CHAIR/LATIN AMERICA-CARIBBEAN: Roberto Uria  
Mendez (Brazil); [uria@uol.com.br](mailto:uria@uol.com.br)

VICE CHAIR/MIDDLE EAST: Ghassan Sayah; (Lebanon);  
[ghassayah@hotmail.com](mailto:ghassayah@hotmail.com)

VICE CHAIR/CANADA: Rich Bailey (Canada);  
[RichBailey@gmail.com](mailto:RichBailey@gmail.com)

VICE CHAIR/OCEANIA: Vacant

VICE CHAIR/SOUTH ASIA: Thomas Thomas (India);  
[tthomasymca@yahoo.com](mailto:tthomasymca@yahoo.com)

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR: Ken White (USA)  
[wfyrmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wfyrmembership@gmail.com)

BRIDGES EDITORS: Len and Joyce Wilson (USA) ;  
SECOURS SPECIALE FUND: Bonnie Mairs (USA);  
[bonnie1673@earthlink.net](mailto:bonnie1673@earthlink.net)

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR: Norris Lineweaver (USA);  
[lineweavernmd@gmail.com](mailto:lineweavernmd@gmail.com)

ADVISORS: Prescott Johnson, Edgar Machado, Reg Wake

CHAIRS OF ORGANIZED NATIONAL GROUPS:

BANGLEDESH: Sudip Arinda; [sudinparinda@gmail.com](mailto:sudinparinda@gmail.com)

BRAZIL: Jayme Araujo; [jaymejarauijo@uol.com.br](mailto:jaymejarauijo@uol.com.br)

CANADA: Franco Savoia; [fsavoia@shaw.ca](mailto:fsavoia@shaw.ca)

CHILE Eduardo Clavero; [claveroviajes@gmail.com](mailto:claveroviajes@gmail.com)

FRANCE: Denis Mangado; [mangadocrespin@wanadoo.fr](mailto:mangadocrespin@wanadoo.fr)

GERMANY: Klaus Juergen Diehl; [Klaus.j.diehl@gmx.de](mailto:Klaus.j.diehl@gmx.de)

HONG KONG: K.F. Lau; [peterkflau@yahoo.com.hk](mailto:peterkflau@yahoo.com.hk),

INDIA: Thomas Thomas: [thomasymca@yahoo.com](mailto:thomasymca@yahoo.com)

JAPAN: Sogo Hoshino; [sogo-h.4-18@s2.dion.ne.jp](mailto:sogo-h.4-18@s2.dion.ne.jp)

KOREA: Kwang Jin Rhim; [kjrhim@hanmail.net](mailto:kjrhim@hanmail.net)

NIGERIA: Cornelius Olaomo; [ctolaomo@yahoo.com](mailto:ctolaomo@yahoo.com)

PERU: Carlos Quinteros; [cquinc48@hotmail.com](mailto:cquinc48@hotmail.com)

PHILIPPINES: Cris Caparoso; [ymca\\_cebu@yahoo.com](mailto:ymca_cebu@yahoo.com)

SRI LANKA: Huxley Siriwardene; [ymcaamp@sltnet.lk](mailto:ymcaamp@sltnet.lk)

SWEDEN: Anita Andersson; [anita.andersson40@gmail.com](mailto:anita.andersson40@gmail.com)

TAIWAN: Kevin Liu; [kevinliu886@yahoo.com.tw](mailto:kevinliu886@yahoo.com.tw)

UK: Jim Lamb; [j.lamb22@outlook.com](mailto:j.lamb22@outlook.com)

URUGUAY: Julio Cesar Lagomarsino;

USA: Dale Packer, [gdalepacker@gmail.com](mailto:gdalepacker@gmail.com)

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

Your editors journeyed to Thailand to be with more than 60 WFYR retirees meeting concurrently with more than 1300 YMCA staff and volunteers from around the world. The 19<sup>th</sup> YMCA World Council in Chiang Mai, July 8 -14 was an inspirational event, highlighted by over 400 Change Agents, volunteers and staff under the age of 30 who were being groomed for leadership in tomorrow's YMCAs, certain to face environmental and social challenges. Their presence was felt in the devotionals each morning along with their positive input during daily discussions.

Daily WFYR meetings were informative and productive. Pictures and descriptions in this edition demonstrate the extent of discussions and deliberations that took place. **Phil Dwyer**, our new chair has provided a detailed overview based on a comprehensive feedback process he conducted following the meeting. The pictures you'll see on these pages also convey the sense of "new best friends" and fellowship that highlight most WFYR events. Several YMCA leaders visited our sessions and voiced support and encouragement for the current activities and potential for WFYR to work with local YMCAs, and particularly aid retirees experiencing financial difficulties after ending long careers.

WFYR delegates accepted significantly increased goals for **Bonnie Mairs** and Secours Speciaux during the next four years along with continued support for our Global Retirement Initiatives headed by **Don Anderson**. The delegates unanimously accepted a service concept that would designate Y retiree Ambassadors in selected locations. Ambassadors would be willing to meet with Y retirees traveling in their area who desire information or assistance.

Traveling to the conference was exhausting with too many airport stops along the way. Friends, who advised that Thailand in the summer would be very hot, extremely humid and subject to almost daily rainfall, were absolutely right. However, looking back, the entire trip was an exhilarating and inspirational adventure for your editors. Hopefully you will enjoy this special edition of *Bridges*.

*Len and Joyce Wilson*

Please send photos or articles to Len Wilson:  
1101 Washington Avenue, #307  
Philadelphia, PA 19147, or  
[len.wilson@comcast.net](mailto:len.wilson@comcast.net)



# WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

## Views from the 6th World Conference in Chaing Mai, Thailand



The entire WFYR delegation to the World Conference in Chaing Mai, Thailand. The walls of the meeting room were lined with flags of member delegates.

### Overview of Conference by *Norris Lineweaver Immediate Past Chair, WFYR*

With the back drop of the courageous rescue mission of the soccer team and coach trapped by flood waters in a huge cavern just miles away at nearby Chiang Rai, the WFYR 6th World

Conference convened in conjunction with the 19th YMCA World Council in Chiang Mai, Thailand, July 8-14, 2018. With 22 WFYR delegates from around the world, the conference entertained lively small group discussion. Issues focused on the role of the local YMCA

in conflict resolution, peace reconciliation, refugee and displaced families resettlement, emergency assistance for retirees without pension, and advocacy for securing pensions supporting colleagues who served for decades, often in harm's way especially in Africa, Latin America and South Asia. A special workshop focused open discussion on the question: "what does it mean to put Christian principles into practice in the 21st Century". There was devoted time for wholesome fellowship, story telling and devotions.

Both the WFYR World Conference and the YMCA World Council ended on a high note with election of new leadership and a positive vision for the future. **Phil Dwyer** was elected the new Chair for WFYR for 2018-2022. The first woman, **Patricia Pelton**, of Canada, was elected Chair for the World Council. The first African, **Carlos Sanvee**, of Togo, was elected the new Secretary General. And the most inspiring news near the end of both conferences was the announcement that the last of the boys and their coach were successfully rescued from the flooded caverns of Chiang Rai.



A panel opening group discussion on conflict resolution and refugee resettlement was led by American Consul General Timothy Scherer from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok supported by YMCA retirees, Phanomwan Yoodee, Chiang Mai YMCA of Thailand and Ghassan Sayah, Beirut, Lebanon



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### Views from the 6th World Conference

*WFYR delegates were welcomed to a land of temples, Buddha's, elephants, and very gracious people*



Front desk people were friendly and helpful



Golden Buddha in Wat Phra That Doi Suthep temple high above Chiang Mai



Bonnie Mairs washing an elephant at a camp in Chiang Mai



WFYR Chairs, past and present, from left: Prescott Johnson, Don Anderson Phil Dwyer (newly elected chair), Norris Lineweaver, and Jerry Prado Shaw



African Delegates: with U.S. leaders: Olaomo Cornelius Talwo, Jerry Prado Shaw, Charles Mashemo, Martha Prado, Mary Vwononi Asiema, Francis Asiema, Jonathan Quayefio-Mexico, Samuel Henry Edward Anim, Phil Dwyer, and Frederick Olatunji Ajiboye



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### Views from the 6th World Conference



**USA Delegates:** L - R Front: Norris Lineweaver, Martha Prado, Joyce Wilson, Bonnie Mairs, Debby Dwyer. Back: Ronald Luce, Phil Dwyer, Jerry Prado Shaw, Len Wilson, Prescott Johnson, and Don Anderson



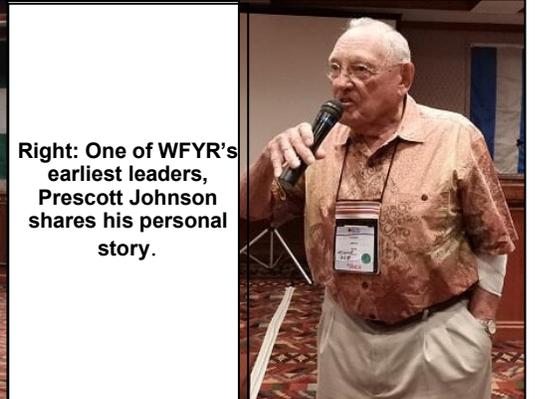
**Top:** Rows of delegates on left of meeting room.



**Right:** Tuk Tuk is a common means of transportation in Chaing Mai



**Top:** Delegates . Review program materials.



**Right:** One of WFYR's earliest leaders, Prescott Johnson shares his personal story.



**Nam Boo Wan** (Asia & Pacific Alliance of YMCAs Secretary General) and **Kohei Yamada**



**Samuel Henry Edward Anim**, Ghana, **Patchrawan Srisilapana**, Thailand, and **Guenter Ozdyk**, Germany



**Change Agents** are in the future of the YMCA . More than 400 volunteers and staff in their teens and 20's fulfilled significant leadership roles at the World Alliance conference, as they do in their home countries.



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Views from

the 6th WFYR World Conference



Welcome Dancer  
07/13/2018



Frederick Olatunji Ajiboye, Nigeria



WFYR guest, Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltviik, outgoing Secretary General, World Alliance of YMCA's



Marykuty Nalamvelil Chacko, Martha Prado, Bonnie Mairs, Joyce Wilson and Marlene Yamada enjoy refreshments at a local restaurant.



Don Anderson, Yukio Yamasaki, James Thompson, John Naylor and Margery Naylor



Top: Jonathan Quayefio-Mexico and Debby Dwyer display his gift .



L: Oscar Escalada Hernandez of Mexico led one of the WFYR sessions

R: Marykuty Nalamvelil Chacko and Thomas Thomas, India. Thomas was elected vice chair of South Asia



Left: Gregorio Fernandez and Cris Caparoso with Joyce and Len Wilson



WFYR leaders Norris Lineweaver, Don Anderson Len Wilson and Jerry Prado Shaw were given a gift of distinctive purple shirts by Ghana delegate Jonathan Quayefio-Mexico. New chair Phil Dwyer and Jonathan are shown in center.

Delegates from Japan:  
Yukio Yamasaki, Elji Ohsawa, Kohei Yamada, Shigeru Shimada, Mike Will, volunteer President of YMCA Europe, and Yukio Miyazaki





# WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

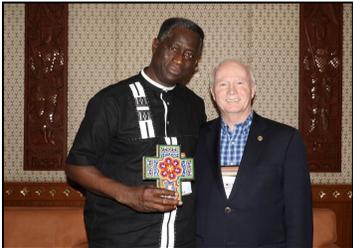
## Views from the 6th WFYR World Conference



WFYR delegates paused to remember the 41 persons deceased between 2014-18, men and women who dedicated their lives to service of the YMCA



At the closing ceremony, Jerry Prado Shaw offered a prayer for the World Alliance leadership. Standing with him is newly elected World Alliance President, Patricia Pelton, of Canada.



Top: New Secretary General of the World Alliance, Carlos Sanvee, with WFYR chair, Phil Dwyer  
Below: Cris Caparoso, Philippines shares his story.



Mary Tikalsky, Director, World Service, YUSA expresses her appreciation for the work and generosity of WFYR delegates.



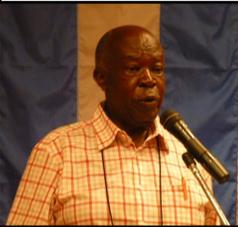
Swaraj Sircar, India, Slameh Elham Sari, Palestine and Ai Lian Tan, Malaysia



Above: Members of a study group shares their interpretations of "Christian Emphasis of the YMCA in the 21st Century." This discussion topic garnered enthusiastic sharing.



Right: Motor scooters are a common form of everyday transportation in Chaing Mai



Francis Asiema, Kenya, led one of our opening devotionals



John and Margery Naylor, Scotland



Eiji Ohsawa, Japan



On grounds of a local temple: Len and Joyce Wilson, Jerry and Martha Prado and Margret and Guenter Ozdyk

September 2018  
**BRIDGES**



C/O Ken White  
46 Squirrel Road  
Doylestown, PA 18901  
USA

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**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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