



BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

I like to read books dealing with the social and political life. My children gave me for Christmas *The Fifth Risk* by Michael Lewis. From the Obama to the Trump presidency, based on being ready for the five greatest risks to world society in the author's view, were the threat of a nuclear accident (more than war), risks posed by two rogue states - North Korea and Iran, and safety of the electrical grid worldwide. After food and water a threat to this grid would disrupt society in every country.



The fifth risk captured my attention: Project Management, and **the risk run when it falls into the habit of responding to long term risks with short term solutions.** I immediately thought of WHYR's number two and three goals for the 2018 – 2022 – doubling the funds for *Secours Speciaux* and reaffirming WFYR's *Global Retirement Initiative*. These two goals relate to the risks faced by our colleagues due to an unsecured retirement.

The short term problem is addressed by *Secours*, which provides support due to health and other emergency needs.

However, the long term problem of unsecured retirement is the bigger risk. We will never be able to raise enough funds or learn of the true needs of all of our colleagues to meet their short term financial needs – as important as that is. This is why the *Global Retirement Initiative* is so important.

Predictions, Plans and Hopes for 2019

Predictions: The world seems to be preparing for an economic slowdown in 2019. Civil unrest and war will continue to play a role in destabilizing countries around the world. My third prediction is that the rising tide of refugees and anti-immigration will continue with poorer countries trying to absorb the 65 million refugees around the world. The YMCA has lived by *John 17 – 21*, “that they all may be one.”. Now more than ever the world will need the YMCA movement.

Plans: I will attend my 50th class reunion at Springfield College and thank the college for changing the trajectory of my life, for the privilege of working for an international movement – the YMCA – and enabling me to do as much good as I could for as long (and still working at it!) as I have.

Hopes: I hope that the Sri Lanka YMCA, with help and encouragement from WFYR, will create a YMCA retirement plan that addresses unsecured retirement for all 38 YMCAs in the

country. Strong leadership (staff and volunteer) leads to a strong YMCA.

Goals of WFYR for 2018 - 2022

WFYR conducted a survey to prepare for the Chiang Mai, Thailand WFYR conference. Followup by the Leadership Team created this set of goals:

Fellowship: Reaffirm our foundational mission of building and maintaining fellowship among YMCA retirees both as individuals and organized retiree groups, and improving communications where possible. We will **A.** Create one new retiree chapter in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe and the Latin America and Caribbean Alliance. **B.** Encourage area and country annual YMCA meetings to invite WFYR chapters to actively participate

Secours Speciaux: Reaffirm our commitment to *Secours Speciaux* as our charity of choice. **A.** Double the amount of funds raised during the 2014 – 2017 period to 180,000 CHF in our 2018 – 2021 period. **B.** Increase the number of active and retired YMCA staff who submit applications so we double recipients from 18 in 2014-17 to 36 in 2018-21. **C.** Develop a revised case for support and promotional materials needed to support the above goals. **D.** Improve the transparency and working relationship between the *Secours Speciaux* committee, WFYR and World Alliance of YMCAs.

Global Retirement Initiative (GRI): Reaffirm WFYR's commitment to serve as an advocate to the YMCA movement on the issue of unsecured retirement with a particular focus on Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. We will do this by: **A.** Develop and/or expand GRI pilot agreements serving the needs of three federation YMCA staffs. **B.** Develop GRI pilot agreements serving the needs of three local YMCAs. **C.** Raise the additional funds needed to bridge the gap between funds available through the World Brotherhood Fund (approximately 35,000 USD/year and the actual cost of the above six GRI pilots.

World Alliance: Consider *NEW* goals emanating from discussions with, and in support of, **Carlos Sanvee**, the newly elected Secretary General of WAY.

It is my hope that each chapter of WFYR will find a way to help advance each of these goals over the next four years.

Best wishes in 2019 to all.

Phil Dwyer
WFYR Chair



BRIDGES



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

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

This edition of *Bridges* seems to resonate with the optimism that was created during the WFYR gathering in Chiang Mai last summer. Y retiree groups around the world are finding ways to reach out for new members and provide linkages to local YMCAs and community organizations. When you read the reports from the chairs of organized groups you will understand the sense of optimism as memberships are growing and plans are developing for programs that are meaningful and creative.

It is obvious that the goal of raising more funds for *Secours Speciaux*, although a stretch goal posed by Chairman Phil, has been accepted. WFYR groups will be learning about more of the persons aided by the fund since many of our fellow retirees live without the pensions that some associations provide as part of the employment contract. In this issue we also learn how the YMCA Alumni group in the US is working with WFYR leaders to create retirement options for those currently employed in associations without such benefits. The *Global Retirement Initiative* (GRI) will be the subject of several reports in *Bridges* this year.

Bridges congratulates our retired friends in South and Central America on the publication of their informative and upbeat newsletter. Readers of *Bridges* are encouraged to view the latest edition via their website. Our friends in Canada and the US regularly provide excellent newsletters in print and electronic editions that can be accessed via the web. (See articles in this edition for direct links).

It is affirming to receive increased photos and articles from retired groups, and your editors welcome the opportunity to share the excitement and progress. If we do not provide adequate coverage for your group, please allow us time to include updates in future issues. We do try to spread the wealth around.

In this edition you will find some biographical information on **John R. Mott** (1865-1955). His YMCA career and numerous travels around the world earned him the title of "Citizen of the World." He crossed the Atlantic over 100 times and the Pacific 14 times and delivered thousands of speeches to YMCA audiences the world over. His words continue to have validity for today's YMCAs struggling to stay relevant in a fragmented society. Readers of *Bridges* are encouraged to learn more about Mott and contribute bits and pieces of his travels that centered in your part of the world.

Thank you for your continued support of *Bridges*.

Len and Joyce Wilson

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WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

IFYR (London Chapter) *by Rupert George*

On December 10, 2018, a few members of IFYR[UK Chapter joined the staff and students of the YMCA Indian Student Hostel in London at their Christmas celebrations. The evening consisted of carols provided by the residents of



the hostel and groups connected with the Indian YMCA. **Rev. Richard Carter**, Associate Vicar, St Martin-in-the-Fields, London delivered a most challenging Christmas message. The evening concluded with a fellowship dinner." Best



BFYR *by Sudip Arinda, Chair*

New Years Greetings from the Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (BFYR).

The pre-Christmas and General Meeting of Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (BFYR) was held in November 2018, in **Dohar, Dhaka**. The meeting was presided by Mr. **Sudip Arinda**, Chairperson of BFYR. It began with a short prayer by **Mr. John Bose**, Vice Chair of Fellowship. The minutes of the previous General Meeting held in December 2016 were read and accepted.



The Executive Committee Members for the year 2019 - 2020 of Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees are: **Mr. Sudip Arinda** – Chairperson, **Mr. John Bose**, **Mr. Aldrick Biswas** & **Mrs. Alpona Anastasia Rozario** – Vice Chair, **Mr. Satya Ranjan Halder** – General Secretary, **Mr. Alex Frank Raulim** – Assistant General Secretary, **Mrs. Jui Cicilia Palma** – Treasurer, **Mr. Ananta Bairagee** – Program Director, **Mr. Victor Tonmoy Sarker** & **Mr. Alex Robinson** – District Coordinator, **Mr. Duke Sabyasachi Mazumdere**, **Mrs. Protiva Sinha Saha** & **Mr. Thomas Tapan Karmaker** – Director, **Mr. Nirendra Chisim** & **Mr. Bhibhudan Bairagee** – Advisor.

JFYR *by Kohei Yamada*

JFYR conducted a fellowship meeting in November in Kyoto, including 21 members and three members of the Japan National Council, including the General Secretary, **Mr. Kanzaki**.

Guest speaker was **Mr. Steven Leeper**, who has been active in peace-building movements in Japan. His father was a former fraternal secretary of Y-USA right after the WWII support of the YMCA of Japan. Steve was raised in Japan until his father died in a shipwreck caused by a typhoon.



Steve Leeper

Following **Mr. Leeper's** speech, three retirees reported their own local peace-building activities. Then **Mr. Kanzaki** spoke about progress in the recent branding process of the Japan YMCA.

The best part of the meeting was dinner and the following fellowship among all participants.



Front Row beginning 3rd from left: NGS Kanzaki, Mr. Steve Leeper, JFYR Chair Mr. Hoshino





WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Canada by Franco Savoia

Canadian YMCA Alumni: 136 strong and growing!

The year 2018 ended with 136 paid members and 15 complimentary members. Upon retirement, YMCA staff receive their first year as YMCA Alumni at no charge.

Some of the past year's highlights of the Canadian YMCA Alumni include:

-Increased the frequency of our newsletter, *Tielines*, to bi-monthly publication. Previously it was quarterly. (See YMCAalumni.org/Newsletters/Tielines.)

-We presented our two annual awards. We recognized John Haddock for his contribution after retirement for his YMCA work in Africa through the Canadian YMCA. We recognized YMCA Canada for its administrative support of the Canadian YMCA Alumni: teleconferencing and mailing.

-We launched our co-sponsored YMCA Alumni Hubs. Given the large distances it is difficult and at times impossible for YMCA Alumni to meet face-to-face. The Alumni Executive developed a new structure, "local YMCA/alumni hubs" around urban Ys the country. These are co-sponsored with the local Y to assist us in reaching out to YMCA Alumni for whom we don't have contact information. The following YMCA Alumni Hubs are under development: the YMCA of Northern Alberta in Edmonton, in Calgary, Toronto, Sudbury, Barrie/Muskoka and Halifax. As they get established, alumni will convene, be informed of local Y developments and develop ways in which they can assist their local community.

-Our Executive serves for two years. The Executive completed a two-year term in October. The Nominating Committee completed its nominating process and the 2018-2020 Canadian YMCA Alumni Executive was elected and took office on November 1, 2018.

-We completed our *Secours Speciaux* Campaign through which each Alumni was invited to make a contribution. As the Canadian YMCA Alumni does not have a charitable number it is unable to issue charitable receipts for donations for income tax purposes. YMCA Canada was the Alumni's charitable sponsor and issue receipts in the past. After reviewing the regulations of charitable receipting by the Canada Revenue Agency, YMCA Canada was no longer able to issue receipts in 2018. Without receipts the number of donations and level of giving has regrettably been reduced.

As we begin 2019 our communications committee will be

surveying our members to better understand their expectations. Their needs will inform our next two-year workplan.

We are grateful for the generosity of time, leadership and ongoing commitment of our 11-member executive team who served for two years and for the new executive who assumed leadership in November 2018.

As YMCA folk, we understand the importance of relationships and of caring. What would it look like to extend the generous Christmas spirit all year round? Our communities would become more vibrant and it is likely that we would reduce the number of our neighbours who are poor and vulnerable. And our wish for us as alumni is that we reaffirm our common humanity at this wonderful time of the year, regardless of faith traditions. May our giving and sharing during this season extend year round. From our YMCA Alumni Executive, we extend to you and your families our sincerest best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and Hanukkah and a success-filled 2019.

Y's Retired of the UK

by Jim Lamb, President

Two items most relevant for retirees were discussed at the Chaing Mai conference:

The priority is the announcement that the 175th Anniversary of the birth of the YMCA Movement in London will be celebrated worldwide. Committees have been formed at the National YMCA level with the mammoth task of celebrating such an historic occasion at the Excel facilities in London.

Though primarily aimed at YOUTH, such an event demands all who have experienced the YMCA during their lifetime are invited to the Celebration to be held between 4th and 8th August. Our Y's Retired representative is Vic Hills who is already involved at a senior level and will furnish up to date information via the Newsletter together with our editor, David Smith.

More central to Retirees is the suggestion raised and duly recommended by the WFYR through their group discussions the feasibility of arranging through each National Retiree Group worldwide 'Ambassadorial Colleagues,' for want of a better title, who would be designated as contact persons welcoming visitors from other countries.



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

CVJM (Germany) YMCA and Refugees

Good friend Albrecht Kaul and fellow retirees, stay closely connected with YMCA and church missions. He provides a report on YMCA and Refugees by Project Chair **Dorothee**

Pfommer.

The YMCA supports the integration of refugees in Germany offering the platform on which the work for refugees and integration in the YMCA is networked and supported. With the "Hope Fund," the



Learning German in the CVJM

YMCA Germany has created a low-threshold opportunity for a financial injection for YMCA local clubs and their integrative projects and programs. This year, the YMCA University is organizing a second seminar on this field of YMCA work. The training of employees in the field of intercultural work has been strengthened and steadied in some regional associations.

The "new" in Germany and the YMCA challenge is to think anew about how we can fulfill our mission as the YMCA. We want to reach out to all young people. We want to speak of our faith in an understandable sense.

In YMCA Esslingen this happens for example in the "meeting point" every Tuesday evening. There, refugees from different countries meet, with different backgrounds of the faith; they meet with locals. Together they read the Bible. For the Christians, it is a "refueling," for the others an acquaintance with a faith which they have heard of, but which they do not know exactly. And on a regular basis the



The first new home: The CVJM House Roma

wonderful thing happens: for all it is an enrichment. *As in the meeting point, many YMCA young and elderly complete each other.* "Supplement" is the keyword that is drawn by the work in the YMCA with refugees: we complement



Camp with refugee children.

each other, learn from each other, see life with different eyes, understand that there is more than what we have experienced or known so far. We feel: integration is God's mission. Since 2015, almost one million people have come to Germany for protection. The inclusion of these people has put extreme demands on many authorities and institutions, and sometimes overwhelmed them. Many people have volunteered, and many YMCA volunteers and staff were involved. Since then, many YMCAs have opened their doors for meeting cafes, language courses and children's programs. To involve refugees as early as possible in the YMCA work, to offer them encounters, exchange and leisure time was a concern for many YMCAs. Many programs of the YMCA have been opened for refugees, e.g. sports programs and also camps. The Reformation camp was a particularly impressive camp. It took place in Wittenberg in the 500th anniversary year of reformation in 2017. More than 180 young people from 25 countries, refugees and young people from the international partner YMCA spent 10 impressive days together. They experienced "a piece of heaven on earth."



Refugees help prepare dinner

In some YMCAs, young people are especially accompanied in the phase of schooling, vocational orientation and training or studies. Even living room was provided by some YMCAs.

Affordable housing is generally tight, especially in metropolitan areas. After more than two years, it is now time for refugees to move from the communal accommodation to decentralized flats. For many, it is extremely difficult to find affordable housing.

The work of local YMCA associations is supported and accompanied in many national associations by staff in the area of "intercultural opening." Since 2015, the project group "YMCA and Refugees" has demonstrated that God's love applies to all people.



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

YMCA Alumni (USA)

by Dale Packer, President

The YMCA Alumni had a very good year in 2018 with an increase in membership and service to the 17 Chapters through our marketing Task Force. Following our successful 48 Hours in May Leadership meeting, marketing became a much more important part of our service to the chapters providing them with some tools to work with in increasing membership and newsletters capabilities.

The reactivation of the International Senior Service Corp (ISSC), now the International Service Corp (ISC) has sparked an increased interest in the service that can be provided by the YMCA Alumni members to our international partners.

Because of increased interest in fostering fellowship within our membership, the number of printed and emailed **Connections** newsletters has increased to four printed and eight electronic. Our viewing rate of the electronic newsletters is very high for a not-for-profit organization according to our mailing agent. Instituted in 2017, our Free First Year Membership has helped in making our programs available to more of our US retirees and some active employees getting close to retirement. The YMCA Alumni Travel Club has extended itself to serve the members with some very exciting international and domestic travel experiences. All trips are hosted by a YMCA Alumni member and are sponsored by travel agencies that will not cancel trips because of too few registrants. For more details see www.YMCAalumni.org/travel.

YMCA Alumni looks forward to a good year in 2019 continuing to serve our very valuable members.

and I was elected to lead our group during 2018-2022. Some proposals for our region were offered as a challenge, with all of LACA's colleagues. Among them we could mention **Secours Speciaux**, where WFYR President **Philip Dwyer** has a strategic plan for all regions in our movement. This goal suggests what we have to accomplish in the region, where our goal is to strengthen retirees' associations in Latin American and Caribbean countries. In recent months we have received the news that Colombia and Paraguay are forming retiree groups. This is excellent news that serves as an example for other movements in our region.

I am pleased to announce that another goal to be achieved is **AGAPE 2020 in Sao Paul, Brazil in August, 2020**. More information will be presented by ARCA DE Noe, official bulletin of our region which is edited in English, Portuguese and now in Spanish and emailed upon request.



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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

"ARCA DE NOÉ NEWS", OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN YMCA RETIRED SECRETARIES ASSOCIATION



Greetings! When I was invited to be the Vice president of the WFYR LACA Region, I wondered if I could accept. Many participants at the World Conference of YMCA Secretaries in Chaing Mai, Thailand motivated me to accept the nomination

We thank friends at Y's Retired of the UK for the following words of inspiration:

A PRAYER FOR TODAY

Heavenly Father,
when we're tempted to feel despondent,
when our lives seem dreary or dull,
and the world around us looks fragile
and forlorn,
surprise us with your Spirit.
Challenge us to stop, listen
and look again:
to see a world transformed by your love,
a people bearing your divine image,
and a new day, open to all the rich
possibilities of your infinite,
amazing grace. Amen.



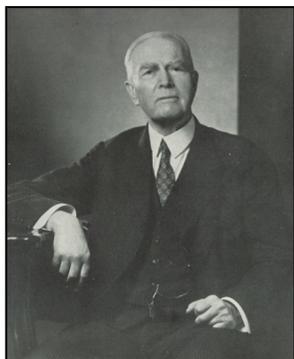
WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

John R. Mott

Getting to know Mr. Mott

John R. (Raleigh) Mott, 1865 -1955 is considered one of the YMCA's legendary if not its foremost leader. He traveled the world and gave speeches and inspiration to thousands. Bridges intends to showcase some slices of his life and invites readers to provide accounts and results of when Mott was in their country during his lifetime.

Mott's work to establish and strengthen the international Christian student organizations that worked to promote peace, earned him the Nobel Peace prize in 1946. His work in the United States, while still a student in college, created a movement that grew to have an impact at over 500 campuses in the U.S. and Canada and propelled him into a career of travel and inspirational gatherings. With the aid of the British and more than 100 Atlantic crossings the World Student Christian Federation was organized in 1895. By 1897, ten national member organizations were established in China, Japan, Australia, and India/Ceylon.



There must be historical accounts of Mott working with YMCAs in many of the countries represented in WFYR. He was presented with honors by the following countries... the U.S., France, Italy, Japan, Poland, Greece, Jerusalem, Siam, Sweden, China, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Hungary, Estonia, and Finland. It is estimated that Mott traveled over two million miles as an "ambassador for Christ".

More of Mott's life will unfold in subsequent issues of Bridges, but two items of note for now. Because of his fame and respect from wealthy friends, Mott was given an opportunity to travel across the Atlantic on the maiden voyage of the Titanic. He turned down the offer, explaining that he preferred simpler surroundings and the company of some longtime associates. Upon learning of the tragedy, he remarked to friends that the Lord must have other plans for him.

Early in his career, Mott composed an essay "The Morning Watch" which reflected his faith and value in meditation, celebration and prayer. Mott placed high regard on finding peace and contemplation in a private conversation with his Lord by using the quiet of the dawn to prepare for the work of the day ahead. It was his way of staying focused on the core values of the YMCA. It is hoped that readers of Bridges will share their own accounts of the works and testimony of this remarkable "citizen of the world".

Secours Speciaux

Bonnie Mairs reports that *Secours Speciaux* files contain letters of appreciation from recipients. An example is from an African Y retiree who had to have an operation for prostate cancer and was unable to pay the costs. His bills of \$1,845 were paid by *Secours Speciaux*. He worked for the YMCA for 34 years, first as an instructor and then as principal in the YMCA's training school. He received a small pension that could not cover his medical bills.

"At a time when all hopes were dashed, and living became financial constraints, a big relief was given to me when I was assured that my medical bill would be paid by *Secours Speciaux*."

Raising Funds for Secours Speciaux

Veronica Elias and Cathy Fromm, both officers of the YMCA Alumni Central Atlantic Chapter, Philadelphia, USA, beam with pride after being part of a successful Christmas luncheon auction to raise funds for *Secours Speciaux*. Just some of the many wonderful, donated gifts are displayed here. Attendees at the luncheon raised more than \$2000 in spirited, generous bidding.



Greetings

It was very nice meeting many of you at Chiangmai Thailand during World YMCA Conference and 6th WFYR Conference. On behalf of our family we wish all of you a prosperous New Year. God Almighty bless WFYR leaders for their wonderful work. Enclosed please find our family picture taken on Christmas day after Service at historic St Paul's Cathedral campus, Kolkata, India.

Warm personal regards,
Swaraj Sircar Secretary
Treasurer India Fellowship of YMCA



The year 2018 was blessed in travel: July in Thailand, October to December in Sweden, where my youngest daughter lives, married with three children. The last one was born a week after my arriving in Stockholm. It was a wonderful time.

Eduardo Clavero
Chile



BRIDGES
February 2019



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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!

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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