



BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

We had a successful **Leadership Team meeting** on September 12. **Bob Hastedt** reported our treasury is in good shape following the Chiang Mai conference. All agreed the conference went very well. We discussed the goals of doubling the fund-raising for **Secours Speciaux** and continuing the **Global Retirement Initiative**. Final goals will be set at the December meeting.



Secours Speciaux Fund is an important way YMCA career staff assist our colleagues who need financial assistance for both emergency crisis situations, as well as support due to unsecured retirement. I am happy to report that the USA, Germany, Latin America and the Caribbean (LACA), and Japan have agreed to raise more (double or higher in some cases) funds than in prior periods. Canada, England, India and Africa are discussing what they can do.

The amount of money currently being raised does not come close to meeting the true need, and thus a goal of raising 180,000 Swiss francs from 2018 - 2022, is essential. I thank **Norris Lineweaver** who is working on updating the "Case for Support" of this important charity.

Work on the **Global Retirement Initiative** (GRI) continues to move forward. Our Latin America and Caribbean (LACA) colleagues have expanded the initial pilot to include an additional staff person. YMCA Alumni is fiduciary of the **World Brotherhood Fund** (money raised in the USA to support colleagues around the world who face an unsecured retirement). It approved the pilot program. In addition, a coaching team has been established, and its first conference-call meeting held to move forward on a GRI pilot agreement for the Sri Lanka federation and one of its local YMCAs. We also hope to start projects in Africa.

We need Globalists. I continue to be impressed by the work of Fellowship of YMCA Retirees chapters with their work in maintaining strong relationships among YMCA friends and colleagues. At times like these with nativist sentiment evident around the world, its negative impact on the immigrant community and groups that lie outside limited ideas of who belongs, we need all the YMCA globalists that we can muster. The world has gone through periods like this in the past and has eventually grown stronger and better. I pray that will be the case now!

We have two holidays in November in the United States that cause all Americans to pause and give thanks.

Veteran's Day celebrates the armed forces who serve, and have served, during war and peace time. We are joined in this annual celebration by some other countries. For most it started 100 years ago as Armistice Day after WW I. As chairman of our local public school Board of Education, I celebrated this special holiday attending a high school Veterans Concert. Present were 210 students, USA citizens who trace their immigrant, ancestral heritage from Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Oceania. They performed to honor all who served. Chamber singers, orchestra and wind ensemble, a treble choir and jazz ensemble gathered so Fairfield citizens could remind themselves of the debt we owe to those who come to our rescue during times of natural disasters and who have fought to protect our democratic principles.

Thanksgiving Day is a holiday unique to the United States and Canada, although some other countries have adopted such a celebration. In the US, this special day began in 1619 when the charter of the Pilgrims stated they should celebrate a day of thanksgiving. Today's modern celebrations include football games, parades and family dinners. We have a 100-year-old Aunt, the last of the "older" generation. We will travel to New York City and have a small dinner celebration with her, thanking her and our extended family for the joys and caring that we share. We will watch the traditional Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and many football games, as well. But, during our family gathering, we will remember those eleven families in Pennsylvania whose loved ones were gunned down at a synagogue and the twelve families in California whose relatives (seniors and children alike) were killed in the two most recent, senseless mass shootings in my country. Like generations before us, we must go through life with one happy eye and one sad eye. Sad that we think of, and mourn for, families whose lives have been disrupted by tragedy. But, one of my other roles in Fairfield is serving as a Justice of the Peace and officiating at weddings. Thus, my happy eye on Thanksgiving weekend will be officiating at the marriage of a member of my community, **Faisuly Heredy**, on the town green in Fairfield. Life goes on.

Phil Dwyer



BRIDGES



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

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

Memories from Chiang Mai continue to provide your editors with reasons to expand our communication avenues and keep our friendships active despite the distances between WFYR members around the world.

We are delighted to open a new channel of communication with highlights from recent meetings and plans of our WFYR members in Hong Kong and China. Readers will be interested in learning more about our friends in India as they recently concluded their annual meeting where they provided highlights from Chiang Mai and released the First IFYR Directory of members. Also, exciting news from our friends in Latin America and the Caribbean areas. They have distributed what is now their official newsletter, *ARCA DE NOE'NEWS* for *Bridges* and other retirees to enjoy.

We encourage you to consider joining retired Y friends from the USA as they travel to other parts of the world. A new concept of forming a worldwide network of YMCA Ambassadors is described with a personal example in this edition. The concept was endorsed in Chiang Mai and is being formalized by YMCA Alumni in the US.

Readers of *Bridges* are again encouraged to submit photos of family and WFYR friends celebrating Christmas and New Year for an upcoming Holiday edition. Predictions for the coming year will also be welcome from any and all readers. Send directly to len.wilson@comcast.net or mail to 1101 Washington Ave. #307 Philadelphia PA 19147.

Meet the team from Bridges:



When **Joyce** (left) and **Len Wilson** (right) returned from Chiang Mai, they brought appreciation shirts for **Cathy Fromm** (proofreader), **Vicki Childs** (production manager), and Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA CEO **Shaun Elliott**. Shaun hosted a lunch that **Ken White**, our WFYR communications chair, was unable to attend. But his spirit was very much with us, and thanks to Photoshop, Ken is everywhere in Shaun's office, wearing his shirt.

Len and Joyce Wilson



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Lisbon Is an Insider's Tip! *by Albrecht Kaul*



The Seniors of CSI

After we - the seniors of CSI - have already been to eleven different capitals of Europe, it was time to push forward to the southern border of Europe. Lisbon, the capital of Portugal was our destination for six days. We have not only been very far in the south, we have also



Western-most point of Europe

been to the westernmost point of the European mainland, to Capo de Roca Estroil. But Lisbon as the metropolis of the former sailor's nation had enough to offer on its own, which actually

surprised us and made our feet sore. Of course we had a city tour and did not have to walk every distance, but the narrow streets of the Alfama and the business streets, that were build up after the Great Earthquake of 1755 needed to be experienced by foot.

Even though we traveled during the end September, we saw the city of the seven hills with spectacular summer weather. The old tram, the Sailor's Monument and the reasonably re-used modern buildings of the World Fare of 1998 impressed us a lot.

Obviously part of our trip included a visit to the Christians in the cities where we traveled. In Lisbon there is a German-protestant parish, with whom we

celebrated a refreshing Sunday service. Afterwards we found plenty of opportunities to talk to fellow countrymen, who worked or studied in Lisbon, or had found a new home there

A special highlight was our visit at YMCA Setubal. We were very warmly welcomed and amazed by the huge Social Work the YMCA is doing among migrants and socially underprivileged people of this city close to Lisbon.

Eventually Secretary General Luis Sebastiao and his team took us to the mountains, where they operate a guest house. The drive through the nature reserve up to the heights of the Atlantic has been a extraordinary experience.

In the YMCA camp we had a hearty lunch and also the chance to buy regional wine to help financing a swimming pool for the camp -- which will be filled with water not wine though!

All together it has been an intense week, which as well empowered the fellowship in our senior's association CSI. In the upcoming year we will head to Strasbourg and the Alsace.



The Tower "Beselem"



YMCA Camp Situbal



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

India by Swaraj Sircar, Secretary/Treasurer, IFYR

Dear Friends,

I hope and pray that this finds you all in good health by His Grace. It was very nice meeting you in Chiangmai, Thailand in mid July, 2018 during the 19th World YMCA Council meeting as well as for the 6th WFYR Conference. Immediately after my return we organized our Annual India Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (IFYR) Conference in Goa from August 16-18.

Altogether 18 Retired YMCA Professionals along with some of their wives kindly attended. Many Retired YMCA professionals, including our President **Mr. T. Thomas**, could not attend due to devastating floods in Kerala, in spite of their best efforts. The Annual Conference was kindly inaugurated by **Mr. Jacob Koshy**, President of Bombay YMCA, who was the chief guest for the inaugural IFYR programme. **Mr. Alvito DeSilva**, Vice President of Panjim YMCA, Goa, also kindly attended as the Guest of Honour. The First IFYR Directory was released by **Mr. Jacob Koshy** (President, Bombay YMCA). For the publication of the first IFYR Directory we all sincerely thanked **Mr. T. Thomas**, President of IFYR who single-handedly did all the work for the printing and publication. **Mr. Swaraj Sircar**, Secretary/Treasurer proposed the vote of thanks.



Mr. Jacob Koshy, (President of Bombay YMCA) releasing the first IFYR directory. On his right is Mr. Alvito DeSilva and Mr. Swaraj Sircar. On his left is Mr. Soccorro.

The following day the keynote address was kindly delivered by **Mr. Emmanuel Sanga** (Former General Secretary of Ranchi YMCA) Executive Committee member of IFYR. For the Annual Business Session **M/s Jeeva Kumar and Bernard Raj Kumar** were



appointed as recording secretaries. Both are former Gen. Secretaries of Madras YMCA. We deeply appreciated the presence of **Mr. & Mrs. Keith Jordan**, who kindly attended on behalf of the UK Chapter. We offer

our sincere thanks to Bombay YMCA for sponsoring the entire programme. It was jointly hosted by the Bombay YMCA and the Panjim YMCA, Goa. During the Conference we all visited places of interests in Goa and all went back with pleasant memories.

News from Australia Have Toys, Will Travel

Len and Phil,

My, my, we meet again! Being on the complete opposite side of the world, I've had no contact with any past YMCA staff. Len, I see you live very close to my mother, and just before we returned last week we spent three nights in the area at friend's second home.

Back home after six weeks in the USA which included my 50th high school reunion...50th! Audrey and I figured out it's the eleventh roundtrip we've made to the States over the years. My 94-year-old mother is in a retirement complex in Philadelphia so we always base ourselves there. Attached is a photo of Audrey and me and my latest retirement "toys."



Gary and Audrey Williams

It was nice to hear from you. After leaving the Armed Services YMCA, I began the last phase of my career involved in retirement communities, initially in New Hampshire. After returning to Australia with Audrey in 2004,



Gary's "Toys"

I managed a number of communities around Perth, Western Australia until I retired in late 2013. In 2014, we moved into a retirement community in Mandurah, Western Australia about an hour south of Perth along the Indian ocean. Since

then we've been doing extensive world traveling. In addition to the USA trips we've been to Scotland, the Scandinavia countries, China, Canadian Rockies, Greek Islands, New Zealand, France, Germany plus numerous Australian locations. Gotta do it while we can.

I see you are both still doing Y things which I'm sure you enjoy. Thanks for reaching out.

Best wishes,

Gary Williams



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

The Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong Association of Retirees has entered into its 10th year. The committee members of 2018 are **President Mak Mei Kuen, Vice-President Peter Lau, Treasury Ching Lai Hing, Secretary Kwok Yuen Ping and Member Liao Kok Che.** In the meantime, we have a



membership base of 68 members. All of them are retired Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong staff from different sections, including Programme, Business, Central Administration, Education, Camping and Hotel. As they are coming from all different sections of the YMCA family, the club really provides them a chance to know each other and share their working experience in the YMCA as well as the happy moments during the time of working. In order to give the members an excellent opportunity to chat, we meet once a month for lunch at a tea-house and twice a year for a dinner party for those who are not able to come in the daytime. Besides, committee members have visited some retirees who have illnesses with our regards.

We organized outing activities such as three-day short



2018 Committee Inauguration

trips and five-day long trips to China or other Asian countries this year. We also organized the Thanksgiving *Ceremony Dinner* on Thursday night, June 14, 2018 to celebrate our 10th Anniversary. There are 26 members attending shared the joy of the dinner.

To celebrate the Club's 10th Anniversary, as a gift to the Chinese YMCA, the Association of Retirees will donate a mosaic wall to Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village, where an opening ceremony will be organized in December to showcase the artwork.

Y's Retired of the UK

In a recent newsletter, President **Jim Lamb** laments the lack of personal contributions and articles from the membership. He suggests that one form of contribution could be "personal profiles," sharing experiences post-retirement: He asks the following questions to stimulate responses: "What kind of social life do you pursue? Did full-time paid or voluntary service with a Christian Movement influence your life? Do you give service in the local community?"

Having shared these points, he also recalled colleagues who on retirement shared their pleasure on retirement and leaving behind the YMCA as a release from a meaningful career!

He turned to emphasize the value of Area Reunions and the unique experience of meeting up with colleagues.



Southern Y's Retired Group: Stephen and Hannah Milner, Linda Voysey, Blair Crawford, Brian Rowcliffe, Mary and Viv Hills



Cambridge Reunion Annual Lunch, July 2018



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Canada YMCA Alumni

Our fellow retirees in Canada have two excellent sources of information. Each month they receive an *E-Clips from Alumni Executive Vice President Rich Bailey* and they also the newsletter *Tielines*.

In his October report, Rich provides the following specifics: Membership is on target at 131, and 52 members have joined the Facebook page. In addition:

1. The new constitution has been approved,
2. The new slate of officers for 2018-2020 is approved,
3. Revisions to the 2018-2020 work plan are under way,
4. Secours Speciaux has been named as their charity, and
5. A communications committee is working to store historical items on the web.

In the latest edition of the Canada YMCA Alumni newsletter, *Tielines*, President Franco Savoia shares some thoughts on “The Power of Visions,” by Joel Barker. Franco relates the impact on staff of the Toronto Y in 1975 when they were asked to take five days off without pay. Most continued to work, creating a rebirth of that Y.

He also relates how his sister in grade 5 focused for the next 15 years on becoming a family physician. Now, 30 years later, she has a practice with more than 3000 patients. He concludes that regardless of age, we need a vision and asks readers, “What is your vision?”

Bridges often shares the homespun and humorous philosophy of Hal Studholme, a frequent contributor to *Tielines*. In the current newsletter, Hal embraces the concept of *belonging*. “I was eight years old when my big brother bought me a membership to the Toronto Y, along with a T-shirt with the Y crest, running shoes and gym shorts. (I wondered at the time why I didn’t get a bathing suit as well. That was a later and disconcerting discovery.) The best thing I got, however, was the very first of 70 membership cards. That to me said in concrete terms:
I belong.”

Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees

Our colleagues in Bangladesh provide regular information about their Fellowship on Facebook. To visit their site go to Facebook and look for: Bangladesh Fellowship of YMCA Retirees.

Fellowship of YMCA Retirees of Colombia

By Mary Rose Becerra



Gloria Cifuentes, Elsa Castellanos, Beatriz Duque Botero, Rose Mary Becerra Fadul (Coordinator) and Clara Ines Lopez

Above is the planning committee that is organizing the Fellowship of Retirees of Colombia, a new initiative, coordinated under the leadership of Colombian retirees Rose Mary Becerra and Josias Arteaga Arias. These two colleagues attended the WFYR Sixth World Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This initiative is part of the strategic direction approved in September by the Executive Committee of Latin America & Caribbean YMCA Retirees, under the leadership of Roberto Uria Mendes, WFYR VP for that region. The first official meeting will be held in the YMCA of Bogota, Colombia in December..



LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN YMCA RETIRED SECRETARIES ASSOCIATION
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NOTE:
THIS ISSUE WAS FORWARDED, FREE OF CHARGE, TO THE VOLUNTEERS, PROFESSIONALS AND RETIRED AND ACTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE YMCA OF LATIN AMERICA, UNITED STATES, CANADA, EUROPE, AFRICA, ASIA AND OCEANIA. •



WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

Ambassador Program

WFYR and YMCA Alumni (USA) are developing plans to extend a network of Y Retired Ambassadors who are willing to meet and aid fellow Y retirees as they travel to many distant locations. Ralph and Ronnie Christian, Y Retirees from New York City are an early example of what can be an exciting program for WFYR members. The following is their report.

Summer 2018:

“Following an exciting family time in Paris we travelled to England via the Eurostar Train that took us under the English Channel. While there, we had the opportunity to fellowship with YMCA staff and retirees in both London and Cambridge.

“**Jim Lamb** (President –Y Retired of the UK) arranged a visit for us to the Cambridge/Peterborough YMCA. We met with staff and took an ‘on-site’ tour of their resident facility. This facility and Y program focus on ‘Detached Youth Work’ for at risk youth.

“Jim took us to lunch then joined us on the ‘Hop-On Hop-Off Cambridge Tour Bus.’ During a heavy rainstorm, as part of this tour, we visited the American War Memorial located in Cambridge. The memorial wall and cemetery and museum exhibit are a reflective tribute to those

Americans who fought with the British and gave their lives during World War II. More than 3,900 American men and

women were lost in the Battle of the Atlantic.

“When we were back in London we met with **Neil Sherringham** also a Y retiree. He is a current Board Member of the YMCA George Williams College and Trustee of the YMCA Metropolitan Region Trust Fund.

A visit, arranged by Neil, took us to a program facility Y in London. “With both Jim and Neil, we shared YMCA work experiences

as well as family histories and we continue to remain in touch with these new friends via e-mail and snail mail. Having contact with Jim and Neil, during our time in England, made us feel ‘connected’ and at home even though we were across the ocean and far from the USA. We are all part of the world-wide YMCA family. So, we thank these two generous Y retirees and so appreciate the outreach shown to us in England. Based on our very positive experience, we say ‘YES’ to lunch with a ‘Y Ambassador’ or ‘Connector.’”



President **Dale Packer** wishes it to be known that WFYR Members are welcome on YMCA Alumni Travel Club Trips, **Patrick Murphy**, chair of the U.S. YMCA Alumni Travel Club, and his committee of travelers have organized some new Travel Club excursions for 2019.

The Travel Club will be enjoying “*British & Irish Grandeur*” May 12-25, 2019 on a 14-day motor coach tour that begins and ends in London. All hotels along the way are at least 4-Star, The 21 meals and all attraction entrance fees on the itinerary are included. For complete details: visit <https://www.ymcaalumni.org/british-irish-grandeur>.

Next up will be “*Alaska Medley*,” a land and sea adventure to Alaska, May 26-June 7, 2019 conducted by Celebrity Cruises. Join with YMCA Alumni on this 13-day combined motor coach land tour and cruise.

The trip is hosted by YMCA Alumni members **Patrick and Jan Murphy** and Chuck and **Johnnie Mae Dandridge**. For details, visit <https://www.ymcaalumni.org/alaska-medley>.

“We would be delighted to include WFYR members from all over the world and sincerely hope you’ll consider joining us on a YMCA Alumni Travel Club excursion,” adds Murphy.



Jim Lamb, with Ronnie and Ralph Christian at the American War Memorial in Cambridge



Big Ben, London



Jim Lamb, Residence Director Neil Porter, and Deputy CEO Rowena Kerslake with Ralph and Ronnie Christian

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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 WYFR. Any who wish to make such a contribution may use this remittance form. Check should be made payable to WYFR

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