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Epilogue

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Editor's note

During Fall term there was much more life observable on campus. With the return of in-class teaching, the hallways are now full during class change. HUB is now humming, although several popular food sources and services have closed. On my twice-a-week visits to my office on the 13th floor of the Tory building, I find more colleagues around the Department than formerly. I miss my old friends, though –almost all have now retired to Vancouver Island.

This past year, major changes have occurred to our Association – a name change, a move from our vintage Garneau house to an office complex on the sixth floor of a University building, a reduction (hopefully temporary) in the number of interest groups, and adjustments in our usual scheduled events. Still, participation in our activities remains strong. I certainly intend to keep *Epilogue* up and going. In this issue are the Winter term Lunch With ... dates, the President's Report to the AGM, a summary of Fall term Lunch With... presentations, the In Memoriam box, and the *Mousing Around* column.

Ruth Gruhn

Notices

Winter Lunch With... events

Here are the dates for the Winter term Lunch With ... events, speakers and topics to be announced. We expect that the events will be held as usual in the University Club, with the same arrangements and costs as the Fall Lunch With ... events. Watch the e-mail newsletter for more information.

January 23
February 22
March 22

Please also plan to attend this year's Christmas Brunch at the University Club on 17 December 2022, beginning at 10:45 am. We expect that the arrangements will be the same as last year, with a modified buffet. There will be more information in the e-mail newsletter.

Reports

ARAS President's Report 2021-22 to the AGM

The past year has been a busy one for your Executive Committee. As you know, a year ago we were informed by the U of A's space planners that we were to be decanted from Emeritus House in January; but we were assured that a suitable office space would be found for us somewhere on campus. In February we were asked to check out an office suite in University Terrace. It looked to be adequate; and after much sorting of files and other accumulations during 30 plus years in Emeritus House, in early April we were moved expeditiously by the University movers into 6-30 University Terrace, a suite of three small rooms and an atrium. One room has become a small meeting room, just large enough for our monthly Executive meetings but not suitable for any groups larger than 10 to 12 people.

Settling into the new office required numerous contacts with various administrative groups, procedures that were made more difficult than usual as Service Excellence Transformation (SET for short) was in full swing and personnel were changing from week to week. Obtaining a working phone took two months, for example; but I'll spare you the gory details of navigating this changing landscape. In June we learned that we needed to sign a lease with the University for use of the office, and that required that we acquire liability insurance. That has been even more frustrating for our Treasurer, David Cooper, who has taken on that task. I hope we will soon have this wrapped up.

Membership

Meanwhile we have made some progress in identifying new retirees. The University continues to refuse to provide a list of retirees, even though both the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge do that for their retiree associations. However, Human Resources has agreed to distribute a consent form with their retirement packages that retirees can sign to allow HR to give us their name and email address. I have also been able to say a few words about our Association at the Zoom meetings that retirees attend to find out about pension matters.

We also have a new Membership Committee that has been active in bringing forth ideas for raising our profile in the University, and increasing memberships. Thanks to Marion Allen, June Panteluk, and David Cooper for that and for arranging the Open House we held in our new office last May.

Hopefully, these activities will bear fruit in the next year or so.

Interest Groups and Lunch with...

Three of our interest groups remained active through last winter, thanks to the efforts of their convenors: Peggy Allegretto for the Dining Out group, Gordon Rostoker for the Current Affairs Salon, and Judith Hibberd for the Book Club. Thanks also to Beverley O'Brien and Don Carmichael for providing Zoom support for the Book Club and Current Affairs, respectively.

Last spring Judith retired as the Book Club convenor after 22 years of service. Thanks and best wishes to Judith. And thanks to Vivien Bosley for stepping up to serve as the new

convenor of the book club and arrange for hybrid meetings, both in person at a classroom in University Terrace and via Zoom.

We have yet to find convenors for the Travel and Arts Groups, both of which became inactive during COVID, and their convenors retired at the same time. Thanks to Don Bellow and Vivien Bosley for their many years of heading those groups. We welcome volunteers if anyone has an interest in reviving those groups, or for any other topics for a new group. Over the last decade several other groups have also become moribund. I think having a few additional groups would be helpful in recruiting new members.

Lunch with... was also suspended during COVID until earlier this year, when Bente Roed arranged several presentations via Zoom. This fall we have returned to in-person lunches in September. Unfortunately, there is no longer a buffet at the University Club; and the option of soup and sandwiches and squares is pretty pricey, with no graded prices as the buffet offered formerly. The Executive discussed the possibility of moving the venue to a variety of places where food might be less expensive, and Bente did a great job of getting information for a variety of options from Lister Hall to community halls and churches. However, our assessment ended in deciding to remain at the University Club.

Office Assistant

Our office assistant of several years, Luke Panteluk, graduates after the fall term. We attracted more than 30 applicants to our job advertisement, and interviewed a short list of three of them. David Raagas is our new assistant, and will be overlapping with Luke for a few weeks to learn the ropes. Thanks to Luke for agreeing to stay on for awhile to smooth the transition, and for his years of service to the Association.

I'd also like to thank all the members of the Executive for their consistent contributions throughout the turbulent times of the pandemic and our move and settlement in University Terrace. A special thanks to June Panteluk for having the good sense to appoint Gordon Rostoker as "Technical Advisor"; he continues to do a bit of everything for the Association from dealing with office matters, audiovisual support for Lunch with...., convening the Current Affairs Salon, and most anything else that needs doing.

Finally, thanks to everyone here for attending the AGM.

Jan Murie

Lunch With ... events in Fall Term

On 28 September our speaker was Dr. Sarah Carter of the Department of History, Classics, and Religious Studies, who described serving with Inez Lightning as co-curator of a collection of some 300 old photographs of Indigenous people now exhibited in the Bruce Peel Special Collections of the University Library until March 2023. Some of the photographs in the collection are 120-140 years old. Consultation with Elders made possible the identification of individuals, and relation of their fascinating life stories. Of special interest were the life stories of individual Indigenous women.

On 23 November Dr. Vivian Mushahwar, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Sensory Motor Adaptive Rehabilitation Technology Network (SMART), spoke on recent developments aimed at improving functional recovery from spinal cord injuries. Specially designed exercise machines involving use of arms as well as legs improve walking ability, which aids in a number of bodily functions. Lower back spinal cord injuries, however, are more difficult. Present research involves development of spinal cord micro-implants, so far tested successfully with animals; but application in human cases is still far in the future. Various agencies, mainly Canadian, are supporting Dr. Mushahwar's research.

Ruth Gruhn

ARAS Book Club Report for Fall Term

The book club kicked off the fall season with *The Smallest Lights in the Universe* by Sara Seager. This memoir/autobiography described Seager's journey from a child entranced by the stars to her continuing research as a professor of astrophysics at MIT. Much of the book describes her childhood, her joyful first marriage and their two sons, her husband's early death, later finding love again, and finally discovering her diagnosis as being on the autism spectrum. Along the way she describes her research on exoplanets, driven in large part by her wish to find another "earth". Her descriptions of astrophysics were admired by almost all members as clear and convincing; and seemed to me rather uplifting, thus leavening the often sad moments when she encountered adversity in her personal life. It was a fine choice to begin our sessions.

In October we discussed *Transcription*, a novel by Kate Atkinson. The narrator, Juliet, was recruited early in World War II to work with MI5 in England, her task to transcribe tapes of interviews with German sympathizers by a MI5 agent masquerading as a German agent. As she is given other tasks to impersonate a German sympathizer, it becomes less clear just whom various characters were working for. The text goes back and forth between 1940 and 1951, when Juliet is working for the BBC producing children's shows. She is dragged back in to helping MI5 with a safe house for agents, and she is identified as a Communist agent. She attempts to flee to mainland Europe, is caught, and then saved and does leave England. The book seems much like a John Le Carre spy novel in which everyone's allegiance becomes rather murky. The text is brightened here and there with Juliet's wry asides during her description of conversation with others. I liked this book a lot, but some others were less enthusiastic about it.

Our book for November was *The Women of Troy* by British novelist Pat Barker, a novel based on Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and sometimes described as the retelling of the *Iliad* from a female perspective. The narrator is Briseis, a former slave of Achilles and bearing his child. After Troy has been conquered and most of their men killed, the slaves await a favorable wind to return home. Briseis is more privileged than the other slave women, so engages with them and other women such as Helen and the Trojan queen Hecuba. The book ends as the Trojan women are loading the ships for the voyage back across the Aegean Sea. Of course lots goes on before then but the issue largely chronicles the bad treatment of the women by the Greek men, and Briseis' attempt to help out the other women. A greater

knowledge of Greek mythology than I have would likely have caused me to appreciate the book more.

We have been meeting in a classroom, UT 1-46. It is not ideal but does work. The meetings have been hybrid, with most people there in person but several attending via Zoom. Beverly O'Brien has been instrumental in facilitating the process, and Vivien Bosley works with Leslie Wutzke of Radiation Therapy (the department that schedules the classroom) on the use of the camera in the room.

Our next discussion is on 14 December (the 2nd rather than the usual 3rd week of the month). The book is *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue. All are welcome, and coffee and cookies are available. If you wish to attend via Zoom, please contact Vivien (vbosley@ualberta.ca) to obtain the Zoom link.

Jan Murie

In Memoriam

Ramon Bentsen	Petroleum Engineering
Brian Burrows	Law
Wayne Davis	Computing Science
Allen Dobbs	Psychology
Ehor Gauk	Pediatrics
Jeannine Green	Library
Myer Horowitz	Education
Ian Oates	Medicine
Tom Peacocke	Drama
Kathy Polack	Pharmacy

The Association was saddened to learn of the passing of Myer Horowitz, former President of the University of Alberta from 1979 to 1989, who played a pivotal role on the formation of the Association of Professors Emeriti in 1986. Myer retained membership in the Association

from the time of his retirement even though he and his wife, Barbara, moved to Victoria in 1998. The University of Alberta grew and thrived under Myer Horowitz's leadership, and our Association (now the Association of Retired Academic Staff) mourns his loss. Our sympathy goes out to Myer's wife Barbara, who maintained her membership in the Faculty Women's Club (now the University of Alberta Women's Club) over the years. The Horowitz's will always be remembered for their contributions to the University of Alberta.

Gordon Rostoker

Editor's remembrance: The last time I saw Myer Horowitz was at an inauguration ceremony for a new President (whose name I have forgotten). He was in the platform party; and as the recession proceeded up the aisle through the faculty seating, I hoped to catch his eye as I silently applauded him. I hope he realized how highly we rank-and-file professors thought of him.

Mousing Around

Keith Smillie

54. Computers Then and Now

Recently I came across a copy of *Time* magazine dated May 3, 1982, with the cover story entitled "COMPUTER GENERATION A New Breed of Whiz Kids". This issue marked the debut of a new department on computers, which, according to the publisher, "constitute yet another quantum leap in the ability to cope with the world". The whole issue presented an interesting glimpse of the world thirty years ago, so before looking at the state of computers and computing then, we might mention a few events that were making news.

Internationally, the British fleet was approaching the Falkland Islands, Helmut Schmidt's Social Democratic Party agreed to support NATO's decision to install nuclear missiles in five Western European countries, and in the United States questions were being asked if President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander Haig really did have a foreign policy. The obituary of Archibald MacLeish occupied over half of the obituaries page, and even the recent introduction of fancy shoelaces imprinted with "rainbows, hearts and whole menageries" merited a news item of about 30 lines and an illustration. There was no Canadian news.

To me the advertisements were at least as interesting as the news. There were about half a dozen ads for cars, most of them very large by today's standards' although the Volkswagen Rabbit received a full-page ad emphasizing its "CIS Fuel Injection" system. There were even more liquor ads, all of them touting the advantages of their particular brand. However, for me the most interesting ad was one by TransCanada Telephone System promoting its free booklet "35 Ways to Become More Effective with Long Distance," which included opening new accounts, collecting overdue accounts, and even "conversation starters". How things have changed with the Internet and the World Wide Web! However, before we become too smug we should ask ourselves how today's technology will look thirty years hence.

The *Time* cover shows a computer-generated image of a young schoolboy which is reproduced on a small scale on the index page with the following caption: “With an ease and enthusiasm few adults can fathom, a new breed of youngsters, some no more than toddlers, is mastering a machine that is sparking a revolution in the classroom and the world”. This statement, I believe, sets the tone for the present content of the magazine’s new Computer department.

The lead article, which is about seven-and-a-half pages in length – about half a page is taken up with a liquor advertisement – describes in enthusiastic terms the experience of schoolchildren with computers both in school and at home. The many illustrations show children with rapt looks on their faces, either alone or in groups, using computers. There are no teachers present in any of the pictures, although one of them does show a mother seated at a computer receiving a lesson from her 12-year-old son who has a very patient look, and has the caption “If you were born before 1965, boy, you’re going to be out of it”.

The accompanying text gives interesting examples of what these children are doing with computers, and we can mention only a few of them here: A 14-year-old is finishing a long program which constructs a detailed image of a human heart, another 14-year-old is working on a simulation of a nuclear reactor, and a 15-year-old is working on a verb-testing program for Spanish classes. There are stories of children becoming addicted to computers, including one in which the only way a father could get his son’s attention at home was to “go down to the cellar and throw the house’s main power switch”.

Unfortunately there are stories of the improper or illegal use of computer facilities. Pirating of software is an example which one teenager justifies with the words: “This is illegal, but we are basically honest people. I don’t know anyone who doesn’t pirate software”. Another student was able to break into the Department of Defense’s Arpanet, the predecessor of the Internet; and use it for a pen pal club, dating service, and electronic magazine.

There is a two-page essay on the nature of thinking, and whether computers can think or will ever be able to think. For me the most interesting part of the essay was a brief discussion of the ELIZA project of Joseph Weizenbaum at M.I.T., in which an IBM computer was programmed to simulate a psychoanalyst carrying on a conversation with a “patient” in natural language. The following example of such a conversation is given:

Patient: You are like my father in some ways.

ELIZA: What resemblance do you see?

Patient: You are not very aggressive, but I think you don’t want me to notice that.

ELIZA: What makes you think I am not very aggressive?

Patient: You don’t argue with me.

ELIZA: Why do you think I don’t argue with you?

Patient: You are afraid of me.

Eliza: Does it please you to believe that I am afraid of you?

Today ELIZA may be compared with the IBM computer “Watson,” which appeared not too long ago with much fanfare on the television show *Jeopardy*.

Although much has changed in the world of computers, and in the world at large, since this issue of *Time* appeared, many of the computer questions mentioned are still with us. These include attracting more women into what many see as a male preserve, what programming language should students be taught, when should students be introduced to computers, and should computers be introduced at all as a separate subject in the schools.

Have a good holiday season, everyone!

