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Epilogue

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Association of Retired Academic Staff – U Alberta

Editor's note

Slowly our organization is coming back to life. The Book Club and the Current Affairs Salon have met on Zoom this fall, the Dining Out group is now meeting in person for their feasts, and we have had two Lunch With... presentations by Zoom. Best of all, the University Club is allowing our traditional Christmas Brunch buffet, where we will all have the chance to get together again.

Big changes are coming for the Association over the next few months. Henceforth the Association will be known as the Association of Retired Academic Staff (ARAS:UA), with membership open to retired professors of all ranks as well as retired Librarians, APOs, and FSOs. This change should increase our membership.

As sadly indicated in the President's Report to the AGM, the University plans to reclaim our base in Emeritus House on 89th Ave, although in exchange we are promised adequate space elsewhere on campus. Presumably, like other historic buildings on campus (Alumni House and the Ring Houses), the little old house is to be demolished, perhaps to put in yet another parking lot.

Ruth Gruhn

Notices

Our traditional Christmas Brunch buffet will be held in the Papaschase Room on Saturday 18 December. The cost per person has been set at \$32.50 plus GST, and there will be a service charge of 18%. The Club will require proof of full vaccination with QR; and masks must be worn, so bring your most colourful. Details will follow in the weekly online newsletter.

Reports

President's Report to the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Professors Emeriti 2021

Once again it has been a trying year for all of us, dealing with the ups and downs of the pandemic and with the ongoing need for risk assessment. Our association has carried on without much of our regular programming, but we have managed to continue with monthly meetings of the Book Club and the Current Affairs Salon via Zoom. Thanks to Judith Hibberd and Gordon Rostoker for their stewardship of these interest groups, and to Beverly O'Brien and Don Carmichael for providing Zoom support. Both these groups are continuing this year, and the Dining Out Group currently organized by Peggy Allegretto plans to carry on as COVID restrictions permit.

Last year ended sadly with the deaths of outgoing Secretary Peter Murphy and our President Doug Dale. Both did yeoman work on the Executive Committee, and are sorely missed. The Executive was renewed thanks to Marion Allen, David Cooper, and Louise Jensen, who stepped up to join the executive as members-at-large. We had another change recently when Walter Allegretto stepped down from his position of Treasurer at the end of August. We are grateful to David Cooper for stepping in as interim Treasurer and agreeing to stand for election at this meeting. Thanks to Walter for his years of looking after our funds and assisting David in his transition as his replacement.

Despite COVID the Executive Committee has had a fairly busy year. Much of our time was taken up with drafting the two Special Resolutions that we are presenting to the membership to vote on today. I'll say a little more about them later. I thank all members of the Executive for their perseverance and patience throughout our deliberations concerning the proposed changes in the name and bylaws of the Association. It has been quite a team effort. And thanks to Don Carmichael for continuing to be the Zoom host for our meetings, and providing succinct minutes of sometimes rambling discussions. Special thanks are due to Gordon Rostoker for his continued dedication to the operation of the Association. He is our primary liaison with Luke Panteluk, our capable office assistant who has agreed to continue on this year; and with the IT people at the University of Alberta while looking after our website. Gordon has looked in on Emeritus House on a regular basis during its disuse, monitors our mail (both snail and e), and answers most of it. On top of all this, he hosts the Current Affairs Salon, which provided a number of excellent guest speakers this past year.

A word on membership. As we didn't collect membership dues last year, we have only a rough estimate of around 80 members. We will be collecting dues this year, as we do have continuing activities and remain hopeful that we can move from virtual to actual in the not too far future. We made a step forward by having our first Lunch with... speaker, I guess more properly called Without Lunch Speaker, via Zoom last month. Bente Roed, chair of the Lunch With... committee, is actively working on additional programs for the

months ahead. The fate of our popular Christmas Brunch is still unknown—we are in regular contact with the University Club about what may be possible, and soon will be asking members about their interest in attending this year if it can be held.

Ruth Gruhn has carried on producing *Epilogue* every three months. She has done a great job of soliciting contributions and providing interesting stories of her own foreign travels. Ruth continues as our eye on the professoriate at the University of Alberta by attending AASUA meetings, although they eject her for some of the juicier parts that are held *in camera*. Thanks, Ruth, for regaling us with the latest from the ivory tower.

Our Past-President, June Panteluk, as chair of the Nominating Committee, has used her powers of persuasion to produce the report we will consider later. June is also our representative to CURAC, which has initiated several meetings with their affiliated Associations as it works to develop a strategic plan. June attended an idea-exchange Zoom meeting last spring, and I attended a meeting of the member Association's presidents shortly after. Seems to be a lot of conflicting ideas from different Associations. We wait to see what transpires from all this.

I've left the bad news for last. We learned a couple of weeks ago that we are being decanted from Emeritus House in January. However, a space planner from the University consulted with us last week about our space needs, so we should have an office and access to meeting rooms somewhere on campus to move into in January. We will find out more about what the options are later this fall.

Finally, thanks to members who have participated in virtual meetings of Interest Groups and contributing to some lively discussions, and to those of you here attending this AGM.

Jan Murie

Lunch With...

On 24 November a virtual Lunch With... program was produced by Vivien Bosley and Gordon Rostoker, presenting a YouTube performance by the Raging Grannies, a singing group of older ladies, attired in shawls and fancy old hats, who often appear at public demonstrations with their songs of social protest, new words set to the tunes of old familiar songs. The group came to fame during the Ralph Klein era, but is still making up derisive songs on contemporary issues with the UCP government policies. Carry on, ladies.

Ruth Gruhn

Book Club Fall 2021—a brief synopsis.

The book club began the season in September with a Booker Prize winner, *Shuggie Bain*, by Douglas Stuart, his first novel. It has been described as a “dark, depressing, gritty novel” by one reviewer, and I think that is fitting. The story of a boy's childhood living with his alcoholic mother in Glasgow is difficult to read about, but it was a sometimes eloquent description of the tawdry behavior of the characters. It evoked considerable empathy for

Shuggie as he coped with difficult circumstances, as well as for his mother as she struggled with life. A difficult read for most of us, but a very well-written book.

The discussion of our second book, *The Diamond House*, by Dianne Warren, was graced by the author's presence, via Zoom of course, thanks to Anne-Marie Stacey, who invited her. After Richard Young's usual erudite assessment of the novel, we peppered Dianne with questions and learned a lot about a writer's *modus operandi*. The book was set in Saskatchewan, as were her earlier two novels that the club had read in previous years. It describes the story of the founder of a brick factory, his first wife who died while on a trip to Europe, and his daughter from a second marriage, both of whom were strong-minded and rather unconventional women. An enjoyable read with good descriptions of lives in Saskatchewan's early days. Still, it didn't grab me as much as her first book, *Cool Water*.

In November we dealt with *Homeland Elegies*, by Ayad Akhtar, a previous Pulitzer Prize winner for drama. It is subtitled "A Novel," although it reads like an autobiography, particularly because it is written in the first person, the protagonist's name is Ayad Akhtar, and his life is described as nearly identical to the author's. So one is left wondering what content is true and what is fictional. There are some interesting reflections on the conflict experienced by immigrants between old and new cultures, and the systemic racism faced by many immigrants of color. However, the last half of the book comprises all too detailed accounts of Akhtar's sexual adventures, which is more of a distraction than a contribution to the book's main thesis; and a long section describing his father's defense of a malpractice suit, which drags a bit. Although many attendees pointed out various flaws in the book, *Homeland Elegies* generated one of our liveliest discussions, the sign it was a good choice.

We end our fall session with *The Spy and the Traitor*, by Ben Macintyre, a non-fictional spy story from the Cold War era. As always, all are welcome to attend via Zoom.

Jan Murie

In Memoriam

Audrey Ackroyd	Physical Education
Douglas Barbour	English
David Friesen	Educational Administration
Chuji Hiruki	Plant Pathology
Gwyn Hughes	Physics
Malcolm McPhee	Urology

David Miall	English
Carl Osadetz	Dentistry
John Osborne	Education
Douglas Pettigrew	Periodontics
Alfred Schmidt	Art and Design
Awatar Singh Sekhon	Medical Microbiology and Immunology
Robert Wilcocks	Modern Languages and Comparative Studies

