



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 6th 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 21st 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VICE CHAIR/OCEANIA: Vacant

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

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

BRIDGES EDITORS: Len and Joyce Wilson (USA);

SECOURS SPECIALE FUND: Bonnie Mairs (USA); bonnie1673@earthlink.net

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

ADVISORS: Prescott Johnson, Edgar Machado, Reg Wake

CHAIRS OF ORGANIZED NATIONAL GROUPS:

BANGLEDESH: Sudip Arinda; sudinparinda@gmail.com

BRAZIL: Jayme Araujo; jaymejaraujo@uol.com.br

CANADA: Franco Savoia; fsavoia@shaw.ca

CHILE Eduardo Clavero; claveroviajes@gmail.com

FRANCE: Denis Mangado; mangadocrespin@wanadoo.fr

GERMANY: Klaus Juergen Diehl; Klaus.j.diehl@gmx.de

HONG KONG: K.F. Lau; peterkflau@yahoo.com.hk

INDIA: Thomas Thomas: thomasymca@yahoo.com

JAPAN: Sogo Hoshino; sogo-h.4-18@s2.dion.ne.jp

KOREA: Kwang Jin Rhim; kjrhim@hanmail.net

NIGERIA: Cornelius Olaomo; ctolaomo@yahoo.com

PERU: Carlos Quinteros; cquinc48@hotmail.com

PHILIPPINES: Cris Caparoso; ymca_cebu@yahoo.com

SRI LANKA: Huxley Siriwardene; ymcaamp@sltnet.lk

SWEDEN: Anita Andersson; anita.andersson40@gmail.com

TAIWAN: Kevin Liu; kevinliu886@yahoo.com.tw

UK: Jim Lamb; j.lamb22@outlook.com

URUGUAY: Julio Cesar Lagomarsino;

USA: Dale Packer, 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 19th 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



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



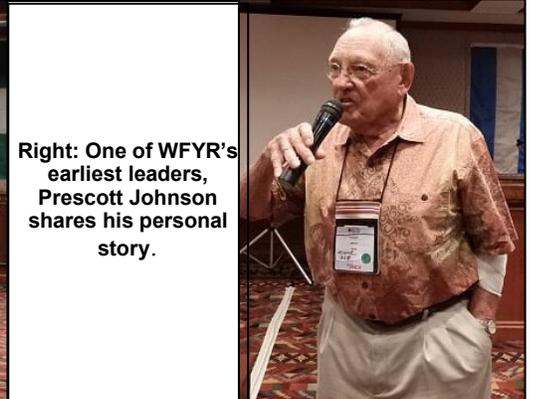
Top: Rows of delegates on left of meeting room.



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



07/13/2018
Welcome Dancer



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 .

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



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



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

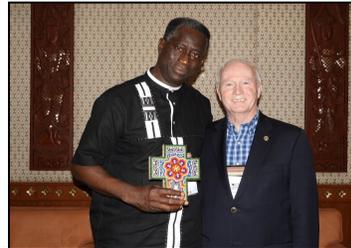
Views from the 6th WFYR World Conference



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



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



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.



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



Printing and distribution support for BRIDGES is provided by the Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA, sending a message of "Brotherly Love" to YMCA retirees around the world.



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

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