



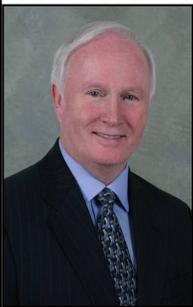
# BRIDGES

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF YMCA RETIREES



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

### When and where did the idea behind WFYR begin?



The official history of the World Federation of YMCA Retires (WFYR) states it started at Geneva Park in Canada in 1994. But the concept behind WFYR started more than 100 years earlier. Let me explain:

In 1877 the first national organization of Christian college student groups was formed in Louisville, KY. Then, during a meeting of the National Board of the YMCA of the USA, **Luther Wishard**, a student at Princeton

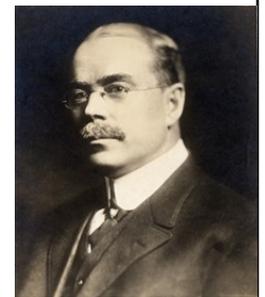
University, invited students from other associations to meet separately from the adults. Twenty-five students representing twenty-one colleges – three of them black – met and formed the Intercollegiate YMCA.

Although Wishard was a missionary candidate, the YMCA asked him to be a full-time staff member assigned to work with students in US colleges. By 1888 he had spent four years travelling overseas, helping more than 2,100 men and women student volunteer missionaries. He returned and helped form the “Foreign” department of the YMCA, today’s International Division.

What is the connection you ask? – the YMCA of the USA has worked closely with YMCAs around the world to strengthen their work, and our own, in partnership with one another. The concept and purpose of WFYR was in the minds of YMCA

leaders, world-wide, well before 1994!

What is my personal connection to **Luther**? Well, a relation of his, **Glenn P. Wishard**, also served the YMCA movement overseas, and married a woman, **Leonette**, who traveled with him, as YMCA missionaries, spending some time as a WW II Prisoner of War when they served the YMCA in China. While attending a supper at my local church, I sat across the table from a very old lady and said hello. It was **Leonette Wishard**. It was an interesting, and inspiring, supper hour listening to her talk about the important work the Wishard family did for the YMCA. I was always a “YMCA internationalist”, but my conversation with Leonette, who lived to 109 years young, just strengthened my commitment.



Luther Wishard

Is the international dimension of the YMCA movement important? Is our partnership with various movements around the world important for all? Is the Christian heritage of the YMCA vital? The answer is yes to all three. In the next edition of **Bridges**, I will ask **Norris Lineweaver** to use my space, and more (if the editors will allow it!) to describe his recent trip to Jerusalem and the efforts to create *onPrinciple*, with the help of the **Harold Smith** Trust Fund.

*Phil Dwyer*  
**WFYR Chair**

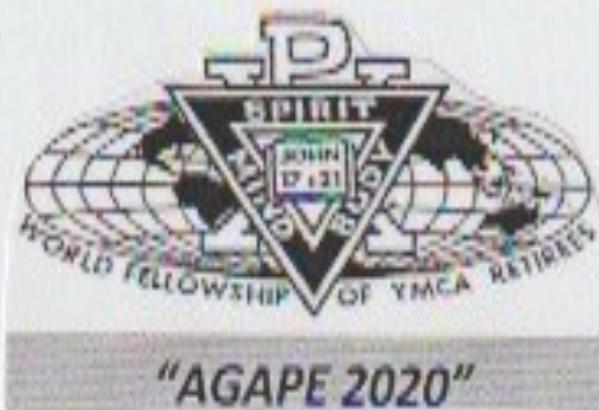
### Status of 79th Executive Committee Meeting

In light of concerns about and implications of the current international spread of COVID-19, the coronavirus, the officers have decided not to hold an in-person Executive Committee Meeting currently slated for 19-23 March in the Netherlands. World YMCA and its officers have decided to operate two virtual meetings 20-21 March.



Patricia Pelton  
President

Carlos Madjri Sanvee  
General Secretary





# BRIDGES



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

## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORS

This first edition of *Bridges* provides an opportunity for your editors to wish all readers of *Bridges*, A VERY HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR. The coming year and decade are full of challenges and opportunities for the world, our communities and our retired YMCA friends. Retirees in the U.S. are embracing the themes of “connect, travel and serve.” This issue of *Bridges* illustrates how those themes are woven into the goals of our fellow WFYR members in other countries.

U.S. and Canada are seeking ways to keep members involved with service and fellowship opportunities. The YMCA Alumni Travel club in the U.S. is gathering momentum and support and is open to all YMCA retirees.

WFYR leaders in India, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the U.S. are planning for large assemblies this year and in 2021.

Past presidents of WFYR are staying active for our fellowship. **Jerry Prado Shaw** is helping coordinate arrangements for AGAPE. Both Jerry and **Don Anderson** are active advisors to WFYR’s support of YMCA retirement initiatives in several countries. **Norris Lineweaver** is working with retirees and active Y leaders to initiate “onPrinciple”, a training program valuing Christian tenets inherent in the YMCA and important to future Y leaders and their associations.

A service project in the Dominican Republic supported by Y retirees expands its outreach in a local community.

A personal glimpse of **Raymond S. Hall**, a World Service worker in China inspired by **John R. Mott**, as related by Hall’s great grandson and current WFYR follower.

Y retirees and WFYR members around the world are collectively willing to meet the challenges and opportunities of this coming year and decade.

*Len and Joyce Wilson*

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[len.wilson@comcast.net](mailto:len.wilson@comcast.net)



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS



*by Dale Packer, President*

Dear friends in WFYR, I am pleased to report on events and plans for retirees in the U.S. We are planning two “Zoom” meetings to connect with chapter representatives assigned the task of retaining members. We will keep you informed of our progress in this area, but last year we continued to increase our membership numbers and finished the year with a budget surplus. Good news to all YMCA managers.

The East Region of our organization is planning an exciting reunion in 2021. More details to follow, but hopefully some of you will be in the area and able to attend.

We are serious about our goal of providing and encouraging local chapters to become engaged in service projects. Lou Falk, one of the chief forces behind the successful funding and services provided in the Dominican Republic, has been appointed National Chair Services Projects for this important task.

Chapters across the country are being urged to contact all members that have not renewed and remind them that they will be put on the inactive list and no longer receive communications or newsletter from our organization.

Our new triennium starts in 2021 and incoming President Jean Carmichael is starting to seek persons interested in several opening on the executive Board.

Y retirees in the U.S. and around the world are encouraged and invited to become members of our YMCA Alumni Travel Club and receive a new regular feature, the “Going Places” newsletter. More information can be found on our website: [ymcaalumni.org](http://ymcaalumni.org).

Best wishes in 2020.



Visit Travel Club Info Center - [www.ymcaalumnitravel.org](http://www.ymcaalumnitravel.org)

### Aloha from Hawaii

Y retirees from Hawaii and two chapters on the US West Coast recently gathered in Oahu for fellowship and island activities. Don Anderson, a tremendous Y Ambassador, and former WFYR Chair, helped with arrangements. The group listened to a moving presentation of YMCA youth and adult leaders partnering with volunteers from Japan to accomplish significant service projects in the Philippines. Honolulu Y CEO, Mike Broderick, provided updates and details about youth volunteering to take lunches to persons finding shelter in forests outside Honolulu and finding out how much each of them gained from the experience. The retirees presented the Honolulu YMCA \$1,000 to continue its work with youth development service projects.



**Above: Western Regional Y Alumni chapter gathering included current staff of Honolulu YMCA.**



**Attending the gathering were former President, Y USA, Dave Mercer, Bridges editor Len Wilson, former Y USA World Service Director Bob Masuda, and former WFYR chair Don Anderson.**

## Best Wishes for Blessings in 2020 from WFYR Friends in Japan



**Sunrise on New Years Day**



**Friends from Chaing Mai and APAY**



**JFYR at Tozanso in September**



**May the lord be with you, Yayo and Yukio Yamasaki**

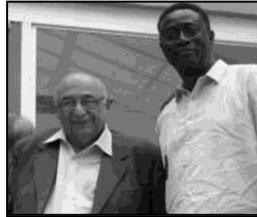


## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### ABRASA—Brazilian YMCA Retired Secretaries Association

#### ABRASA Regular Meeting.

On November 12, 2019 ABRASA—Brazilian YMCA Retired Secretaries Association had its lunch meeting at YMCA Sao Paulo. In this meeting, colleague **Luiz Carlos Gonzaga** took office as chairman. The agenda items were: (1) a report by **Marisa Donatelli** of the visit of **Carlos Sanvee**, the General Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs, (2) **Roberto Uria Mendez Mendez** brought information on the mail provisions and inscriptions of AGAPE 2020, (3) **Luiz Carlos Gonzaga** nominated **Wilton Mazzini** to be the contact with **Bridges’** YMCA Ambassador program, (4) and presented the impact of **Arca de Noe News** to other countries, and (5) Executive Y Secretary **Esmeraldino Jose Goncalves Pereira** presented information from the first meeting of ABS—Brazilian YMCA of Secretaries Association



**Luiz Carlos Gonzaga, editor and Carlos Sanvee, CEO, YMCA World Alliance**



left to right: seated: Francisco Wilson Malandrino, Luiz Carlos Gonzaga and Jose Millei. Second row: Izabel Aparecida VitoLopes, Esmeraldino Joe Goncalves Pereira, Roberto Uria Mendez and Wilton Mazzini. Third row: Joao Paulo Barbosa, Marisia Donatelli, Milton Kazuo Hidaka, Flavio Roberto Arantes Rosa and Adriano de Britos

### Agape 2020

We continue to work with great enthusiasm on plans for Agape 2020. With great joy we note that the response from colleagues is phenomenal: We currently have 60 pre-registered and 90% of our financial support target. All indicators suggest that Agape 2020 will be highly successful. We look forward to the event in Sao Paulo, August 12-15, praying that you will be there as we build new friendships and strengthen those of many years.

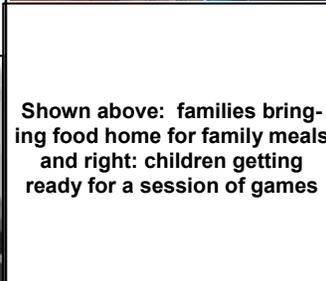
### Dominican Republic Project

#### Retirees Support Christmas Meals

Members and friends of the New England YMCA alumni chapter continue their support for Don Gregoria, Dominican Republic as part of a long-term commitment to service and involvement by members. Newly appointed Chair of National Services Projects for YMCA Alumni USA, **Lou Falk**, will continue to update readers of **Bridges** on this exciting project which captures the goal of keeping Y retirees engaged in meaningful service.



Thanks all those volunteers and donors who made it possible for members of the village of Don Gregoria to enjoy a nutritious Christmas Eve dinner



Shown above: families bringing food home for family meals and right: children getting ready for a session of games



### Canada Y Alumni *by Franco Savoia*

Canadians are working to increase and retain Y retirees and long-term volunteers. There are major challenges to enrollment and retention facing the Canadian YMCA Alumni.

There is no system to connect Y retirees after they leave the Y from our Retirement Fund. Another challenge is our “value proposition.” Some members are not renewing because they do not perceive a value in their association with the Alumni.

Through personal connections we have developed a list of retired YMCA staff and are surveying them to better understand their awareness of our organization and understand their needs. We plan to share the results with WFYR and would be pleased to hear insights and relevant reports from other WFYR groups dealing with similar issues.



# WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

## OnPrinciple Inaugural in Jerusalem by Norris Lineweaver

Friends of Jerusalem International YMCA teamed up with WFYR and Y Alumni USA to field test discernment: "What does it mean to put Christian principles into practice in the 21st Century?" Focus groups were sponsored by the Hoosier Buell Y Alumni at the Pokagon Retreat and Chiang Mai, Thailand, during the WFYR World Conference. The process was fine tuned thanks to feedback and input.



**Andy Calhoun, T.J. Joyce, Eric Ellsworth, Mike Bussey, Jorge Perez, (front) Steve Tarver and Norris Lineweaver at Jerusalem International YMCA, February 2020.**

Twelve young adult staff leaders were chosen by their respective local Association CEOs to participate in the FJIY Inaugural onPrinciple Cohort 2020. The first session was hosted by Springfield College last October. Each young adult leader is assigned a mentor who travels with them to guide and facilitate discernment. Y Retirees and elder statesmen among our colleagues serve as mentors and guide leaders.

The Graduation Symposium brings the entire group to the Global Leadership Summit scheduled for August 2020 in Chicago.

## WFYR Past President Speaks on Secours Speciaux by Tom Valentine, Director YUSA International Division

Hi everyone! Greetings from Bethlehem. **Norris Lineweaver** made a great presentation on Secours Speciaux to more than 50 global Y National CEOs.

He also met Brownson, CEO of Sri Lanka Y, who is grateful for the WYFYR support for local Y leaders to start retirement plans. Thanks to all of you for your wonderful support of the global Y mission through WYFYR and World Service.



**Left: Norris Lineweaver and Brownson, CEO of Sri Lanka YMCA**

## New President for Y's Retired of the UK

Y's retired UK announces the appointment of **Rev Graham Clarke** to succeed **Jim Lamb** as President who has been in post for 11 years.

Graham served as a Y Staff Member in Liverpool, Leeds, the South and South East Region and YMCA England from 1977 before becoming a Baptist Minister in 2000, after which he was a Treasurer and Board member at two YMCAs. He continues to be a member of the National Archives Group and gives presentations on the history of the YMCA. As a staff member Graham was President of the APS (the UK Staff Association) and involved in the APS/APD exchange programme, the planning and management of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Youth Event in 1994 as well as European Secretaries Conferences in Germany and Ireland.



**Second from left: Rev. Graham Clarke, at Y's Retired Cambridge gathering, July, 2019**

He is currently Minister of Marshalswick Baptist Free Church in St Albans, the home of Britain's first Saint where he is also involved in Christian Youth Work in Schools.

Graham says 'You can take the man out of the Y but not the Y out of the man'! He looks forward to developing relationships with other retirees around the UK and the world

He can be contacted at [julia-graham@talk21.com](mailto:julia-graham@talk21.com)

## IFYR (India) by T. Thomas, President

2020 is the Silver Jubilee year of IFYR. It is a time to magnify and exalt His (God's) name together. So let us all work together to make our Jubilee celebrations a grand success and glorify His name.



**Left: Planning Group for IFYR 2020 Silver Jubilee**



## WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

### A Personal Glimpse of John R. Mott's Legacy *by John Schmiechen*

Many YMCA retirees know me, from my work with the Chicago and Philadelphia Associations, as a member of the East Field and National Financial Development staffs, and now with the Central Atlantic Chapter of YMCA Alumni.

Some of you know my husband, **Theodore Hall Schmiechen, (ne' Lewis)**. I am eager to share with you how Ted is connected to the great YMCA leader, **John R. Mott**. This came as a great surprise as I got to know the Lewis/Hall family. As most of you know, Mott was a major YMCA leader, "Father of the Modern Ecumenical Movement," and recipient of the Noble Peace Prize.

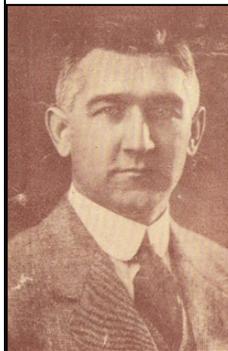
Ted's great-grandfather, **Raymond S. Hall**, graduated with an engineering degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. During those college years, he was involved in the student Christian movement. Certainly, the young men who, like Ray, enlisted in the Movement lived up to the famous directive, "Expect great things *from* God. Attempt great things *for* God!"

Upon his graduation, Mott approached Ray with a request that would impact three generations of the Hall family. Although Ray had no formal theological training, that was not a problem. Mott needed an engineer to do the Lord's work. Mott asked Ray to go to China where the Tientsin YMCA needed a teacher of math and physics. So, with the divine care and direction of God, Raymond began an amazing lifetime career as a YMCA General Secretary.

At Tientsin, he enrolled nearly 600 students in bible study and led many students to baptism. His teaching career led him to larger callings. After a six-year stint as General Secretary of the Tientsin YMCA, he was appointed as administrator of the famine relief program after disastrous floods in North China. For this, he was decorated by the Chinese Government. He was then appointed to administer a nationwide building program in China, and during the course of six years, utilizing his engineering skills, oversaw the design and construction of ten new YMCAs. Ray then received orders from Mott (working at the YMCA headquarters in New York), to travel to remote parts of China to report on the feasibility of organizing YMCAs there. During these years, Ray and Great-grandmother **Margaret** became close personal friends of Chiang Kai Shek.

After the invasion of the Japanese military, Ray escaped to Calcutta and eventually joined a 72 ship naval convoy on a slow freighter through the sub-infested Atlantic to Maine.

After 37 years of service with the YMCA, Ray did not settle down but, due to his intimate knowledge of China, his photographic memory for people and places, and his fluency in writing and speaking the Chinese language, took a position with the UN Relief Agency and then the CIA. In these capacities, he was able to continue to help solve the relief problems of people in China as he had done while living amongst them.



**Mr. R.S. Hall  
Fraternal Secretary  
Tientsin 1903-  
1921, 1926-1920  
Nanking 1926-1929**

Ray lived a full life and raised a family, including Ted's grandmother **Christine** who married his grandfather **Ardron Lewis** in Nanking. Christine later returned to China with Ardron who was serving as an agricultural economist for the US State Department. (It was then that he and Christine became close friends with **Pearl Buck**.) Indeed, Mott was proud of his young missionary Ray. Certainly God "preserved his going out and coming in," to quote the familiar words of the 121<sup>st</sup> Psalm. He was a true servant of the Lord.

The **Raymond S. Hall** collection at the YMCA Archives in Minneapolis is extensive, and according to the staff, among the most visited. Ted has contributed several documents to these archives.

As was said at Ray's memorial service, we are reminded of the words of St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing." It was in this same triumphant vein that Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi, "For me to live is Christ; to die is gain." It was thus, likewise, with Ray.

John and Ted Schmiechen  
Members ...Central Atlantic Chapter of YMCA Alumni



# WORLD FELLOWSHIP AFFILIATE NEWS

## CVJM (Germany) YMCA

### Love and Understand the Bible

"We had a moving week with many spiritual impulses, inspiring experiences and encounters in fraternal spirit behind us." With these words **Klaus Jürgen Diehl**



summarized his impressions at the farewell of the CSI meeting week in the town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber. There were 117 men and women who met in the Evangelical Wildbad Conference Center, a historic building in the lovely Tauber valley, built in 1903 as a first class. health resort.

Professor **Johannes Berthold** gave the Bible studies in the Rococo Hall. He taught at the University of Applied Sciences for Religious Education and Community social welfare work in the town of Moritzburg and was chairman of the Saxon Community Association until his retirement last year. He got to the bottom of passages and put Jesus Christ at the center of his reflections, because the theme of the week was: "For no one can lay any foundation other than

the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

"It is not enough to love the Bible, you also have to understand it," Faith must also take



intellectual responsibility. The Bible studies not only the addressed the mind but also the heart. Berthold said: "I need God like the air that I breath". He invited us to trust God and to open our hearts using the words of the psalms.

**Pastor Peter Siemens**, member of Open Doors, an organization in service for persecuted Christians worldwide, reported on life-threatening challenges for Christians. According to Peter Siemens, 200 million Christians cannot live their faith freely. As an example, in Bangladesh, only 0.3 percent of the population are Christians and they are placed at a disadvantage by the vast majority. "Christians in persecution need encouragement," pastor Siemens said, asking for intercessory prayers for them.

There were guided tours in the city of Nuremberg

including churches and as well a visit to the former Reichsparteitagsgelände (site of the Nazi Party rallies). During a half-day excursion to the town of Creglingen, the Herrgottskirche was visited. That marvelous church is known for the Altar of Mary, considered the masterpiece of Würzburg artist Tilman Riemenschneider. The medieval town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber was also explored, including the St. James' Church. The Altar of Sacred Blood in St James church is another excellent example of the work of Riemenschneider.

All in all, it was again an encounter week with a packed program. *By Udo Waschelitz*

## 2019 Secours Speciaux Report

*By Bonnie Mairs, Chair*

**Persons served in 2019:** 9 retirees from Ghana, India, Mexico, Nigera and Venezuela.

### Financial Details:

Income 40,962.80 Swiss Francs, **Donor Countries;** Canada, Germany, Japan, the Philippines, United Kingdom, USA

Expenses 31,235.32 Swiss Francs. All donated money is used for grants. Operational expenses are covered by the World Alliance of YMCAs

The World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees, at its 2018 meeting in Thailand, agreed on a 4-year goal: to double the total amount contributed in the previous 4 years and to increase the number of requests for assistance. Many delegates committed to these goals. Secours Speciaux is WFYR's main charity.

### Stories

Two very elderly retirees are receiving small grants for life. One, with no source of income, is in an assisted living facility; Secours Speciaux contributes to his monthly fee there. The other saw his pension fund eaten up by national inflation. The Fund is providing him a small annual stipend.

2019 donors include individuals, Y retiree associations and National Movements. Your gifts have improved the lives of colleagues in need. On behalf of all persons who received help, thank you for your generosity. Emergencies happen. Please assist us in making the Fund better known. If you know a YMCA staff member or retiree facing an emergency, encourage them to apply for help. Because of your support, we can respond when needed. This is the YMCA at its best.



BRIDGES  
March 2020

C/O Ken White  
46 Squirrel Rd.  
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USA



Printing and distribution support for BRIDGES is provided by the Greater Philadelphia YMCA 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*

I would be willing to become a YMCA Ambassador.\*

**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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Send *Bridges* via my e-mail address

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Save WFYR global postage. Keep **BRIDGES** toll free.

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