YMCA Alumni

TIELINES

The Newsletter of the Canadian YMCA Alumni



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

October 2026

October always reminds me that the seasons are changing — and soon we'll have another big change with plummeting temperatures and different forms of precipitation.

I'm hoping you've now found time to read your copy of The YMCA in Canada: A Force for Social Change and the rest of our Storytelling project package. It was quite the project for us to undertake and a huge learning curve for those of us who were collecting and editing the stories. I only wish we could have included other areas of the YMCA in the book, especially overnight camping, but we had to contend with World Council time constraints.

I'd like to update you on the Executive Committee's current priorities. We're seeking new members following recent changes within the committee. If you're interested in exploring how you might get involved, please call one of us.

I recently sent our annual appeal for the Secours Spéciaux fund and hope you will consider contributing. Administered by World YMCA, the fund provides short-term financial assistance to former staff and volunteers who lack pensions or medical coverage or face exceptional circumstances. A committee appointed by World YMCA General Secretary Carlos Sanvee oversees the fund, while representatives from the five supporting countries—Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and Wales, the United States, and Scotland—serve in an advisory role. For the past five years, John Haddock has represented us on the committee and led our fundraising efforts, and I want to thank him for his dedication. Last year, 50 alumni and two HUBS contributed $14,000. Because CRA regulations prevent us from issuing tax receipts, these contributions are genuine gifts. Few actions reflect YMCA values more clearly than supporting fellow YMCA leaders around the world. Thank you to everyone who donated and to John for his leadership.

After the very successful hosting of the World Council in July, there will now be a change in leadership at YMCA Canada. Peter Dinsdale is leaving the YMCA and moving onto other pursuits. Peter has led the YMCA nationally for the last 10 years and has expanded the YMCA's focus on how we serve communities. We are grateful for his leadership and wish him the best in his next adventure.

As is often said, the only constant in life is change.

Until next time...

janet.giles@shaw.ca

Canadian YMCA **Alumni News**

Welcome to New Members!

A hearty welcome to Al Burpee (formerly of the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg) and Narmin Ismail-Teja from Calgary

Celebrating Birthdays!

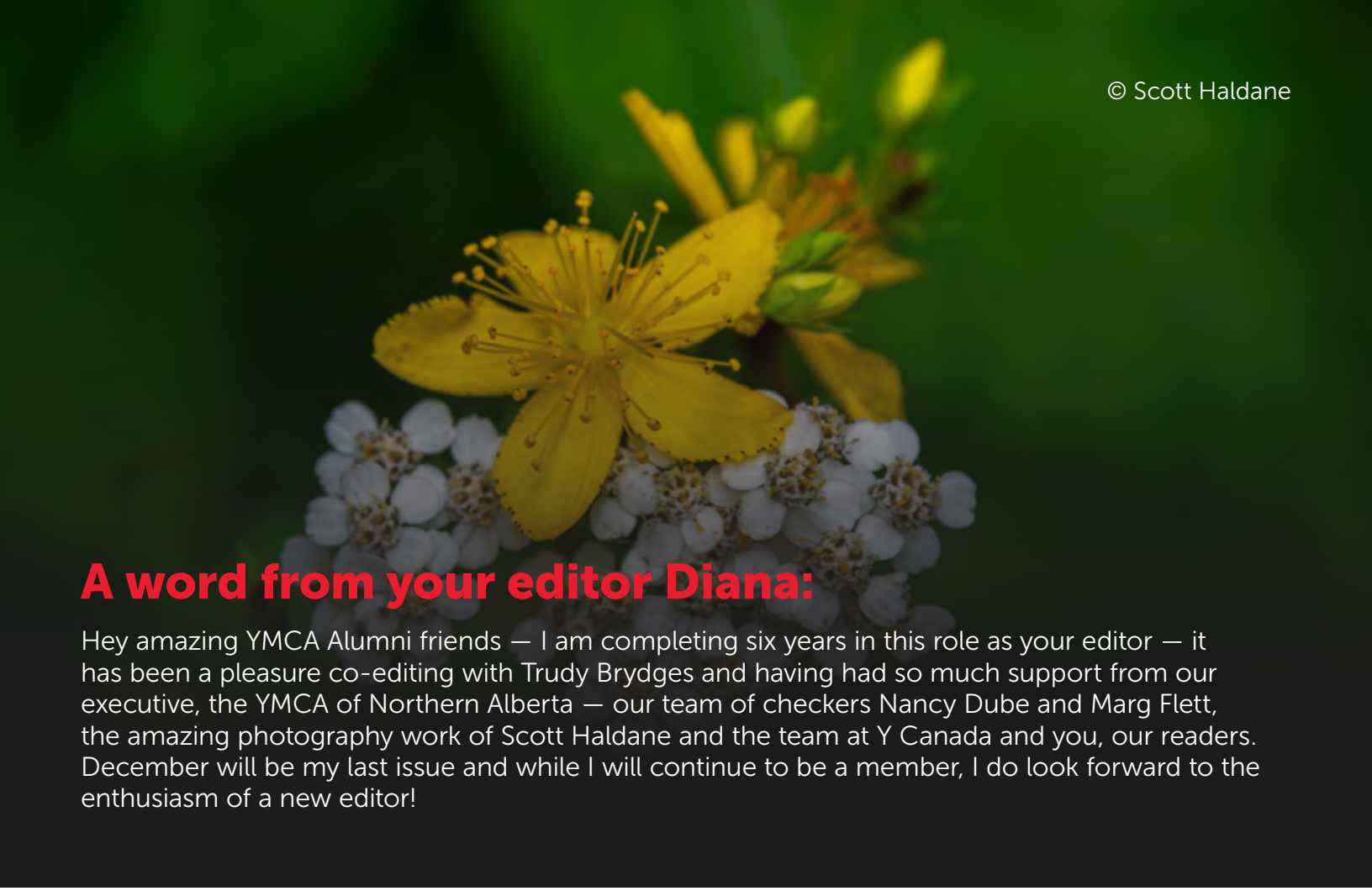
Happy Birthday to:

September
Gilda Evely, Ed Fox, Tom Hirst, Sol Kasimer, Amelie Koloska, Heather Patterson, Patricia Pelton, Ron Watson.

October
Susan Fortino, Lee Fraser, Agnes Lamb, Barrie MacGregor.

About TieLines

TieLines is the newsletter of the Canadian YMCA Alumni published bi-monthly at the end of February, April, June, August, October, and mid-December. Please forward articles for inclusion, any corrections/comments to Diana Deakin-Thomas and Trudy Brydges indicating TieLines in the subject line at geegeenb48@gmail.com and dianadeakinthomas@gmail.com. Don't want to receive TieLines anymore? You can unsubscribe by emailing editor.cdnyalumni@gmail.com. To find back issues of TieLines, click here!



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A word from your editor Diana:

Hey amazing YMCA Alumni friends — I am completing six years in this role as your editor — it has been a pleasure co-editing with Trudy Brydges and having had so much support from our executive, the YMCA of Northern Alberta — our team of checkers Nancy Dube and Marg Flett, the amazing photography work of Scott Haldane and the team at Y Canada and you, our readers. December will be my last issue and while I will continue to be a member, I do look forward to the enthusiasm of a new editor!

What's the big deal about National YMCA Alumni?

The Canadian YMCA Alumni is a network of former YMCA and YMCA-YWCA volunteers and staff who share a common thread of values and work. People who have left their previous roles with a YMCA in Canada can join the Canadian YMCA Alumni to stay connected to the Y while maintaining and expanding Y relationships locally, nationally, and internationally.

Alumni activities allow for personal and professional growth, fellowship, and support of YMCA people and programs around the world.

So it IS a big deal. And we need you to help recruit new members and to consider joining the National Alumni Executive.

What can you do? So happy you asked! Message Mimi Price (mimi.price@hotmail.com) from Membership if you have ideas for who might join us. Call Janet Giles (780-991-4262) if you're able to contribute on our Executive, or if you're interested in helping out on Secours Spéciaux (see Janet's Secours description in her President's message).

And as a reminder, you can check and share our web page on the YMCA Canada site (Click Here!)

Janet Giles (President) and Marilyn Kapitany (incoming President)

THOUGHT *for the* MONTH

You may not always see the results of your kindness but every bit of positive energy you contribute to the world makes it a better place for all of us.

BE HAPPY...
ENJOY LIFE.



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We encourage you to write to your editors — whatever is on your mind (well, within reason)!

Please send to **dianadeakinthomas@gmail.com** or **geegeenb48@gmail.com** anytime!



MEMBER CONNECTION

A very pleasant visit...

After nearly 40 years since my last visit to the Maritimes, we spent a delightful two weeks on a driving tour of Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick from August 25 to September 9. My partner, Rosie, has never been, and it was on her bucket list. We enjoyed the sights, sounds and warm and generous hospitality.

One of the highlights was a visit with Trudy Brydges in Moncton. We have been serving on the Canadian Y Alumni Executive for the past several years—all of it on ZOOM screens. It was pure delight to see Trudy in 3-D.

We toured the YMCA, got a good background on the Moncton community, experienced the Magnetic Hill and enjoyed a delicious lobster roll.

Another memorable event was a local production of *Come from Away* at Moncton's Capital Theatre. The energy, music and lyrics resonated with the 800 attendees, the week prior to the September 11th anniversary.

Our visit reaffirmed the power of YMCA relationships and engagement. Thank you, Trudy, for your time with us. You are a dynamic ambassador for your YMCA and for your community.



Save the date!!

The last ALUMNI GATHERING of the year and ANNUAL MEETING. Scheduled Thursday, December 3, 2026

Watch for additional details in early November!

WORLD YMCA NEWS

Interested in knowing more about what is happening internationally?

Here you will find the latest **World YMCA news**. If you haven't already, we invite you to subscribe to our **monthly e-newsletter** to stay updated on YMCA news and upcoming events.

World YMCA LinkedIn

World YMCA Secretary-General Carlos Madjri Sanvee addressed the Y USA General Assembly in New Orleans on 17 September, marking its 175th anniversary. The first YMCA in the USA was opened in Boston in December 1851.

As Carlos said,

"Y USA is not just 'part' of the worldwide YMCA Movement. It is 'part-ner' ... and 'pioneer'. I see local associations across this country carrying our global YMCA work. Meanwhile so much of the early history of the YMCA in this country defined the history of the worldwide YMCA Movement. And whenever I meet leaders in this country, so many of them tell me how their lives were somehow touched by the Y. What an incredible legacy!"

"Recalling Michelangelo, I urge you: We are carving from a block of marble called YMCA Vision 2030. In carving, we release angels, allowing young people to be what they dream of being. Carve in your communities, in your own marble, with your own hands. Carve with the rest of your global family. Continue to put your scale, your expertise and your imagination into work that reaches far beyond what any one Movement can achieve alone.'.

... Find it on LinkedIn!



News from our RDCs and our Hubs
Canada East

Message from
Darcy Doyle, Chair, YMCA of Greater Moncton

I am incredibly excited to announce that Ryan Johnston has been appointed as incoming Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the YMCA of Greater Moncton, joining us this summer.

Ryan is a respected community leader, committed to building strong community connections and supporting those around him. Most recently he established the province's first Essential Skills school, serving as Principal for the reimagined Hillcrest school. Within this and other settings Ryan has skillfully developed partnerships that meet the needs of individuals and families in our community.

Ryan's appointment is the result of a 6-month process undertaken by the Board with support from the YMCA Federation. I would like to extend my thanks to members of the Board's Selection Committee: Anna Barnes, Beverly Somers, Lise Caissie, Marilou Savoie, and Michael Mann. The Committee dedicated significant time and effort in considering the large number of high-quality applications for this role, with a focus on the needs of the YMCA and the community.

Ryan will take leadership of the YMCA as serving CEO Zane Korytko moved into retirement. Zane has led the YMCA for almost 20 years. Serving with heart, humility and unwavering purpose, Zane's leadership positions the YMCA to increase its impact in the future.

As a registered charity, with deep roots in Greater Moncton, the YMCA delivers essential programs and services across aquatics, childcare, youth engagement, community health, support and outreach for vulnerable populations, and more. In his new role Ryan will lead the YMCA in this work, leveraging the talented and passionate staff and volunteer team.

"I am honoured to join the YMCA of Greater Moncton as Chief Executive Officer and to build on the strong foundation established by Zane Korytko over the past 20 years. My work has always focused on building stronger communities by connecting people, systems, and opportunities. I look forward to working with staff, volunteers, and partners to expand the YMCA's impact and ensure it continues to be a place where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to succeed."

Ryan will join the YMCA on July 13 for onboarding ahead of Zane's final day on July 31.

Yours,
Darcy Doyle,
Chair, YMCA of Greater Moncton



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News from Y Canada our RDCs and our Hubs

YMCA Canada – CEO Transition Announcement

Monday, August 31, 2026

Dear YMCA Colleagues,

On behalf of the National Board of Directors, I am sharing, with very mixed emotions, that after 10 years of stellar national leadership, Peter Dinsdale, President & CEO, will be leaving YMCA Canada for another national leadership opportunity.

Peter first joined YMCA Canada as a National Board Director in 2014 and became President & CEO in June 2016. Over the past decade, Peter and the team have advanced the YMCA in ways that will have lasting impact. He successfully led the adoption of the YMCA's Statement on Truth and Reconciliation and consistently championed the YMCA's role as a partner in Canada's reconciliation journey. He often reminded us that learning the truth is not enough; it is the ongoing work of building relationships and finding new ways of working with Indigenous communities that ultimately make the greatest difference.

Peter also brought federal government relations into a new era for the YMCA. At a time when there was skepticism about YMCA Canada engaging directly with federal MPs and public policy leaders, he demonstrated how a different approach could strengthen relationships between the federal government and the YMCA at local and national levels. Today, the YMCA is sought out for its expertise and invited to policy conversations and funding opportunities in new and important ways.

Whether rebuilding trust within the Federation, navigating the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, challenging the YMCA to live up to our values of inclusion and belonging, representing Canada in global YMCA conversations, or proposing new approaches to strategy development and resourcing our work, Peter consistently demonstrated respect, thoughtful leadership, and an unparalleled ability to navigate difficult conversations and complex challenges.

These qualities were on full display during YMCA World Council this summer, where Peter brought together teams, talent, and vision to Toronto to showcase the very best of the Canadian YMCA movement for 1,400 leaders from our global YMCA community, a very fitting closing chapter to his time at the YMCA.

The work of the YMCA has never been more important for Canada. That work will continue through the incredible talent and capability across this remarkable movement. The National Board will soon begin a national search for YMCA Canada's next leader and will provide updates on the process as they become available.

Peter's last day with YMCA Canada will be Friday, November 6, 2026. The National Board will share additional information about leadership transition plans in the coming weeks. Details about Peter's next role will be shared once it has been publicly announced.

On behalf of the YMCA movement here in Canada and around the world, the YMCA Canada National Board of Directors sincerely thanks Peter for his remarkable contributions to the YMCA movement in Canada and beyond. We are grateful for his legacy and for the promise the movement holds going into a new chapter. On behalf of the entire YMCA community in Canada, our very best wishes to Peter in his new role.

Sincerely,

Barbara Grantham
Chair, YMCA Canada National Board of Directors

News from our RDCs and our Hubs
Canada West

YMCA of Southern Interior BC

We're proud to share that the Power Street YMCA Child Care Centre in Penticton is now open!

This new Y centre will provide licensed child care for up to 81 children, from infants and toddlers to school-age youth, helping more families access the quality, affordable care they need.

Quality child care does more than support children's learning and development. It also helps parents participate in the workforce, pursue education, build financial stability, and contribute to the local economy with confidence, knowing their children are cared for in a safe, nurturing environment.

Made possible through strong partnerships with the Province of BC, the City of Penticton, community advocates, and YMCA staff and leadership, this project is an investment in children, families, and our community's future.

As we celebrate 175 years of YMCA service in Canada and 45 years in the Southern Interior, we're proud to continue creating spaces where children can learn, grow, build friendships, and thrive.

Thank you to everyone who helped bring this vision to life. We can't wait to welcome families through our doors and be part of their journey. **... Find it on LinkedIn!**





News from our RDCs and our Hubs
Ontario

YMCA of Niagara

We're #hiring a new General Manager Social Impact in Greater St-Catharines-Niagara Metropolitan Area. Apply today or share this post with your network. **... Find it on LinkedIn!**

YMCA of Greater Toronto

Today, with the support of **RBC Foundation**, we're announcing YMCA Ignite's Early Childhood Educators Training Initiative.

This initiative is about more than training. It's about creating opportunities for early childhood educators to build new skills, grow in their careers, and continue **... Find it on LinkedIn!**



Peter Dinsdale

I spent yesterday in Sault Ste. Marie talking with YMCA staff, volunteers and community leaders about the future direction of YMCAs in Canada.

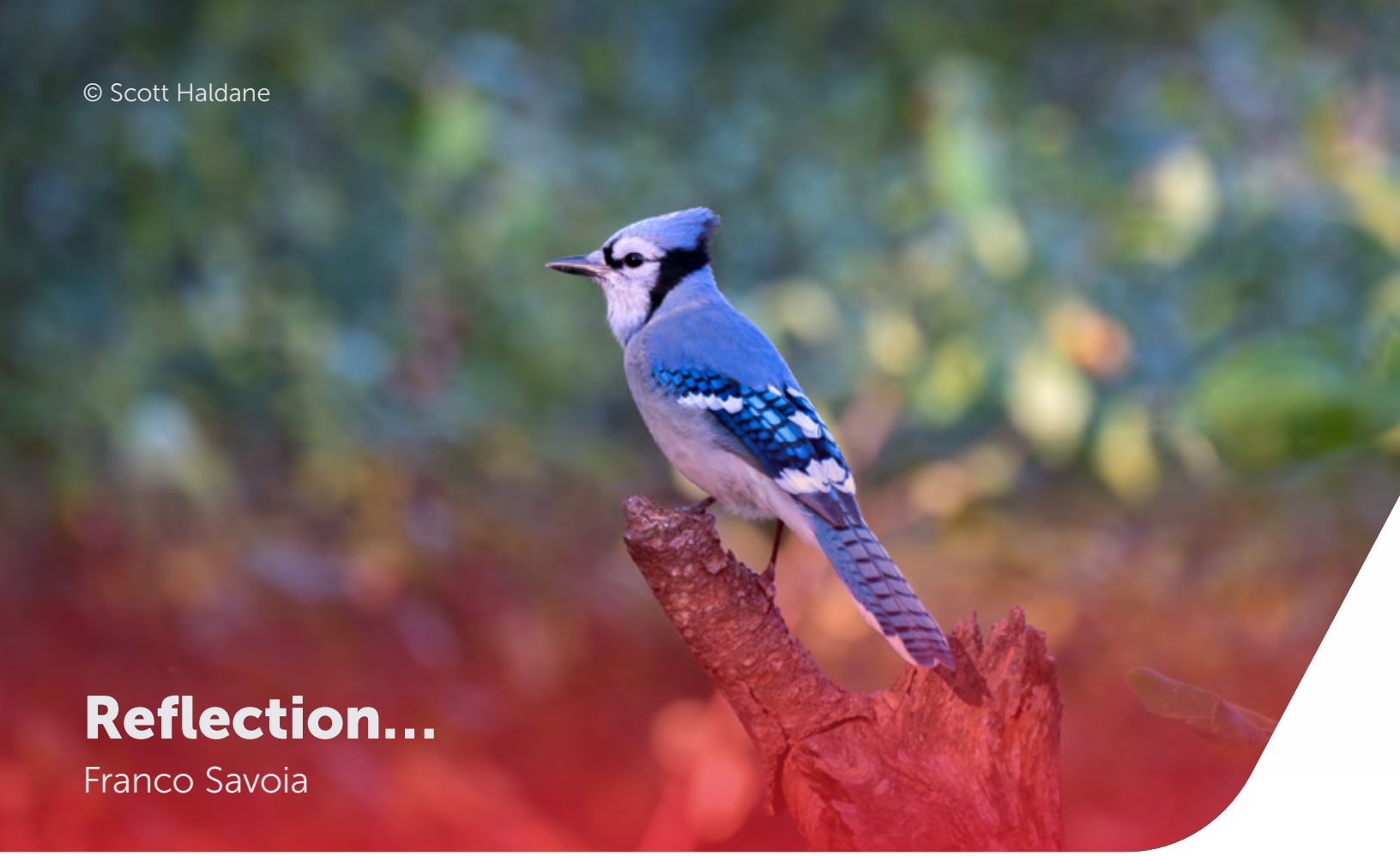
I also joined Dr. James Chan to speak with Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and City Council about the next chapter for the YMCA of Sault Ste. Marie.

Two years ago, the SSM YMCA faced closure. The community rallied around it. The city, the Lukenda Charitable Foundation, donors, members, volunteers and staff created the opportunity to stabilize the organization and begin rebuilding.

The discussion has now shifted from survival to the kind of YMCA Sault Ste. Marie will need in the years ahead. That will require strong partnerships, a sustainable model and a clear focus on the health and well-being of the community. **... Find it on LinkedIn!**



The Sault Star covered the visit and the YMCA's plans for the future. **(Click Here!)**


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Reflection...

Franco Savoia

One of the sessions at the conference of World Fellowship Y Retirees in Toronto was a panel of young Y leaders. They shared their passion for the YMCA. They articulated their commitment to make the world a better place for all through their YMCA work. In their comments they turned their focus on their audience—Y retirees. They highlighted that they needed the knowledge, experience and wisdom of retired Y leaders.

This delightful panel of young folk brought back to mind another group of young Y leader some five decades earlier. They too were passionate, energetic and committed to bold actions to change the world through the YMCA.

However, there was a striking difference. The young leaders' passion and energy was coloured by a level of arrogance. They believed they had the solutions and "anyone over 30" had nothing to contribute. Of course, over time as these young leaders matured world realities softened their arrogance.

Given the young leaders' request, could this be a call for Y retirees to offer to assist and share their knowledge and experience. It is happening in some communities. However, could The Canadian Y Alumni become more intentional and deliberate on this journey?

Through the Storytelling Project and the distribution of "The YMCA in Canada: a Force for Social Good; Storytelling and the YMCA: Part of the Canadian YMCA Alumni Storytelling Project; A Case Study for YMCAs: Digital Archive Project" is a beginning, might there be an opportunity to continue this work by being more intentional as "YMCA Knowledge Keepers?"



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REMEMBERING OUR ALUMNI

Bill VanGorder
1943–2026

It is with profound sadness that the family announces the passing of William "Bill" VanGorder, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and one of Nova Scotia's most dedicated community advocates, who passed away at the age of 83 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, Bill spent his lifetime championing the well-being of others. He was a force to be reckoned with in the charitable and not-for-profit sectors, leaving behind an indelible mark on his province and country.

Bill will be missed dearly by his wife of 28 years, Esther VanGorder; his daughters Elizabeth VanGorder (Allan) and Tamara Cox (Stephen); his extra special grandchildren, Megan and Owen; his sister Margo VanGorder (Valerie); and a wide circle of friends, colleagues and community members whose lives were made richer by his presence.

Dinners with family, and perhaps a glass of fine wine, were among Bill's greatest delights. He cheered in the stands for as many of his grandkid's games as possible, whether it was ringette, hockey, lacrosse or baseball. Perhaps we won't mention the time he was ejected from the stands at a baseball game for his overenthusiastic critique of the umpire's calls. Bill will be remembered for his big garden packed into a small space, his inability to keep a musical beat, and for inventing Kermit the Easter Frog for his kids, because the bunny just wasn't exciting enough.

For nearly three decades, Bill dedicated himself to the YMCA, serving as the Atlantic Area Director. He later spent 16 years as the President and CEO of the Lung Association of Nova Scotia. In his later years, Bill became an advocate for senior citizens across the Maritimes. As the Advocacy and Education Director and past Chair of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) Nova Scotia, he fought tirelessly against ageism, working to secure healthcare equity and financial security for older adults.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Bill was a man of diverse passions and infectious energy. Alongside his wife, Esther, he co-founded Nordic Walking Nova Scotia, sharing his love for fitness and the outdoors with hundreds of people. He was a fixture of the "Wednesday Crew" at the Theatre Arts Guild where he served on the board of directors and as producer, director or lighting designer for many, many shows.

Bill was also a lifelong magician, bringing joy and confusion to audiences as a member of local magic club Conjuror's Court Ring 316 (International Brotherhood of Magicians) and the International Psychic Entertainers Association. He put himself through university in the 1970s at Waterloo Lutheran (now known as Wilfrid Laurier) working as a magician and running summer camps for the YMCA in Hamilton and Kitchener.

In keeping with Bill's vibrant and sometimes silly spirit, and his explicit wishes, there will be no formal or somber funeral service. A party in honour of a life well-lived will take place later this year. Details for this gathering will be announced at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Bill's memory to the Theatre Arts Guild, Spay Day House, the Bide Awhile Animal Shelter, or Special Olympics Nova Scotia.

Finally, the family would like to thank the staff at the Halifax Infirmary, especially the nurses of units 4.1 and 5.2.

Read the tribute to Bill on CARP (Click Here!)



THE LAST LAUGH

Contrary to popular belief, pancakes made with popcorn kernels in the batter do NOT flip themselves; just saying!

BE HAPPY
ENJOY LIFE



© Scott Haldane

Thank You!

I would like to start off by saying thank you to Trudy Brydges (Executive member and AWESOME Atlantic Hub member) who has graciously agreed to help me with the preparation and development of our TieLines. We will be co-editors—so now you have two of us searching for stories to keep you engaged!

And, as always, a hearty thanks to staff at YMCA of Northern Alberta for laying out and preparing TieLines for production. This incredible team makes us look good every issue!! The team to thank Darryl McKenzie (Interim CEO), Amber Niemeier (Chief Community Engagement Officer), Curtis Shurvell for copy editing and Abdullah Al-Nono for designing.

Alexandra Mooney (Y Canada) distributes TieLines for us. To Gayle Graham who scours LinkedIn for us! And of course, thanks to Nancy Dube and Marg Flett who check the work of your editors! To Scott Haldane for his beautiful photography used in our TieLines. And to those of you who have contributed this month — thank YOU!

A very special thank you to Franca D'Angelo (VP National Events and Administration, YMCA Canada) for so many years of support, who we understand has moved on from Y Canada.



Canadian YMCA Alumni

TieLines • October 2026

Photo credit: Scott Haldane