

## Memorable AGM and Dinner

Roy Christensen

The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society was held on 17 October 2019 at the Saint Anthony Soccer Club, Ottawa. It was attended by 41 members, including Valerie Mascarennas and Nicolas Orvoine-Couvrette, two new immigration foreign service development program (FSDP) officers. It was a very successful meeting that included an inspiring presentation by guest speaker [Yasir Naqvi](#). It has been a busy year and the Annual Report below lists a host of impressive achievements over the past year.

Prior to the dinner CIHS President Michael Molloy called the meeting to order and asked the assembled participants for a minute of silence to recall friends and colleagues who had passed away since the last AGM. They included Murray Vines, Remo Caldato, Stan Noble, Garnet Quigley, Raymond Yelle, and Hercule Raymond. Molloy said a few words about each of them.

After the Italian buffet dinner, President Molloy introduced the guest speaker, Yasir Naqvi, Chief Executive Officer, [Institute for Canadian Citizenship](#). In introducing the speaker, Molloy said that for much of our history, the Government of Canada has chosen to house the immigration and citizenship functions and programs in the same department. During his career, he thought that the main function of immigration was to recruit future citizens. In a time when immigration and the nature of membership in Canadian society are being examined, debated and frequently challenged, the Board thought it would be useful to hear from someone whose job it is to think about membership in the Canadian family.

Naqvi has had a distinguished career as a lawyer, academic and politician, serving at one point as Ontario's Attorney General, Government House Leader, Minister of Labour and Minister of Community Safety and Corrections. He was voted one of the "[Top 50 People in the Capital](#)" by *Ottawa Life* magazine. In 2018, he was named on *Canadian Lawyer's* "[Top 25 Most Influential](#)" list for advancing technological modernization in Ontario's justice system. Most recently, Naqvi received the [Lincoln Alexander Award](#) by the Law Society of Ontario.

The upbeat Naqvi quickly took the floor with a smile, and told the meeting about himself, his family and his current job as Chief Executive Officer of the [Institute for Canadian Citizenship](#) (ICC), a leading voice in Canada on citizenship and inclusion. He recounted why his family had come to Canada, and focussed on his history of involvement with the local community and his desire to give back the positive opportunities that Canada had given him and his family. Prior to joining the ICC, Naqvi served as an Ontario Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) for almost eleven years, representing Ottawa Centre, a diverse, urban riding. He then talked of his experience in working with The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul's Institute for Canadian Citizenship, and more specifically about his involvement in making citizenship ceremonies into vibrant celebrations. His presentation was well received and he took many questions from the floor.

### President's Report

President Molloy began his annual report to the membership by saying that the *Bulletin* remains our most visible manifestation. Under the leadership of our new editor, Diane Burrows, the Society continues to produce high-quality material on aspects of our immigration history that have been overlooked or forgotten. Valerie de Montigny, the *Bulletin's* former editor, and Burrows, the incoming editor, with support of Gerry Maffre and Anne Arnott, produced an extraordinary special edition (B88) marking the 30th anniversary of the Immigration and Refugee Board. That edition included original and unique articles by the people involved, including Peter Harder, Peter Showler, David Vinokur and Susan Brown as well as our own Raph Girard, Gail Devlin and Anne Arnott.

The subsequent issue (B89) celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Private Sponsorship Program, the moving musical theatre production about Pier 21 and the Global Compact on Migration. Molloy said his favorite *Bulletin*, for sheer diversity and punch, was B90 which began with Holly Edwards' powerful account of how the Immigration Department responded to the Rwanda Crisis; Kurt Jensen and Joseph Zakour's article on the hostage incident at the Embassy in Beirut; as well as Charlene Elgee's wistful recollection of our Society's relations with the late lamented Citizenship and Immigration Canada library.

Molloy mentioned a number of smaller ongoing projects, including research led by Kurt Jensen on the Lebanese Special Movement. Jensen spoke to IRCC employees about the project during Public Service Week. The Board hopes that Carleton's History Department will assign a graduate student in the new year to help the Society sort through the collected documentation. CIHS has been exchanging information with Caroline Guimond and the staff of the visa section in Paris France as they try to research the movement of "Pagoda People" through the office in 1980. Susan Burrows will do research and write a future article on the Karen refugee movement in the coming year, filling in the gaps in the historical record. Finally, Randy Orr is leading an initiative that could lead to a future "Immigration History" day or week at IRCC.

### The Web Site

The CIHS website continues to be a key tool to reach the wider world. The Society regularly receives enquiries from researchers and students. Sometimes board members provide direct assistance. At other times the Society facilitates contact with colleagues and academics whom it knows can help answer the questions. This past year, a student from the Maritimes who was researching the Indochinese movement was introduced by the board to the Carleton University Archives to consult archival material found in researching *Running on Empty*.

The major website development in 2019 was the launch of a more comprehensive Bulletin search [tool](#). Webmaster Winnerjit Rathor was able to convert the thorough *Bulletin* indexing document prepared by the former CIC Library and the IRCC's Knowledge Management–Research and Evaluation team, to a format that is appropriate to our site. The department has undertaken to continue this indexing work for us. This work is very much appreciated, as it gives us an excellent *Bulletin* research tool.

Over the past year, of the approximately 2,880 people who visited the website ([www.cihs-shic.ca](http://www.cihs-shic.ca)), the most website traffic came from Canada, the United States, France, China and the United Kingdom. Slightly more people found our site through a general web search than the number of people who went directly to the site. The *Bulletin* generates the most visits although our pages on the Indochinese Movement and book, and information posted about the British Home Children, also figured in most-visited pages. Visitor traffic peaked between March and June 2019 as several articles and a *Bulletin* were posted in that period. Thanks to Winnerjit for his website work. Et à Michel Sleiman qui se charge de la traduction d'une partie du contenu du site. Merci!

### *Running on Empty*

Promotion of our book, *Running on Empty*, absorbed a great deal of time this past year with book promotion events in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, thanks to the support of Ambassador Donica Pottie. The authors, Michael Molloy, Kurt Jensen, Peter Duschinsky and Robert Shalka, promoted the book at events in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Ottawa. The Board also promoted the book and our participation in the Hearts of Freedom project in several venues, specifically at IRCC through a “Research Matters” talk, at the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO) Personal Development Day (organized by our own Randy Orr), and at a World Refugee Day event that involved all four of the Ottawa and Gatineau universities called “Humanizing Migration”, and at the “Pathways to Prosperity” and “International Metropolis” Conferences in Ottawa. These events helped to raise the profile of the Society and to reach out to Canadian and international academics, students and advocates. These promotional events were reported in detail in recent *Bulletins*. Moreover, Molloy made mention of the moving story of Captain Bryan Brown, which was told in B89. In sum, McGill-Queens University Press estimates that over 1,400 copies of *Running on Empty* have been sold and the Board is now working with Vietnamese partners on a project to publish an abridged version of the book in Vietnamese.

### Carleton University Archives

The Society has an excellent relationship with the Carleton University Archives which have done wonders with our Ugandan document collection. In June we also donated our Indochinese collection to Carleton. The research that underpinned *Running on Empty* left us with a collection of over 1,000 documents and artifacts. Cataloguing of the collection will start in November 2019.

### Hearts of Freedom

As reported last year, CIHS is part of [Hearts of Freedom](#), a project that includes retired professors from the Carleton Social Work Faculty, Menno Simons College in Winnipeg, the Canadian Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian Communities, with input from Pier 21 and the Canadian Museum of History. With funding from Canadian Heritage, IRCC and a private donor in Winnipeg, the Board has overseen three-person interview teams from the three communities who have now collected 125 oral histories from Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, ethnic Chinese and Hmong refugees who came to Canada between 1975 and 1985. Some of the interviews are already online at [heartsoffreedom.org](http://heartsoffreedom.org). In the coming year, material from the interviews will feed into a documentary, a book and a collection of curriculum materials. This is a big project and we are looking for volunteers to help us review and correct the transcripts of the interviews. Please contact Michael Molloy if you are interested in helping.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Raph Girard gave a brief report of the Society's finances for the year 2018-2019. The Treasurer's report was in the package on the tables and included a narrative and a table presenting income and expenditure. The CIHS has \$10,050 in our investment account and \$12,000 in savings. Detailed information of \$17,255.18 in revenue and \$14,899.83 in expenditures as of September 24, 2019 were published in B90.

Raph Girard emphasized that with over 1,400 copies sold *Running on Empty* is and will remain a monument to the achievement of the Society and its authors. The publication is now into its fourth printing. Unfortunately, royalties paid to the Society continue to remain very low, as is the case with many academic publications.

### Membership Report

Our secretary, Gail Devlin, is currently recovering from a health challenge. We wish her a speedy recovery. Molloy reported that the 2019 membership report will appear in the next bulletin (however, following the AGM, the secretary's health challenges continue, so the membership report will be compiled when she is feeling better).

### The Gunn Prize

Kurt Jensen reported that the Gunn Prize Panel had received ten submissions for the 2019 Prize. The Gunn Prize Panel consisted of Rob Vineberg (Chair), Dr. Laura Madokoro, Dr. Christopher Anderson, Dr. Robert Shalka, Dr. Kurt Jensen and Dr. Sean Lockwood. The winner of the 2019 Gunn Prize was Lianne Robin Koren, an MA student in History at McGill University, for her paper "Europeanized Moroccans: North African Jewish Immigration to Canada 1955-1960". The author is presently in Australia and we are looking for an opportunity to present the prize to her. Her paper on a little-remembered refugee movement fills an important gap in the historical record. The prize's runner-up was Nick Scott, University of Prince Edward Island, for his history undergraduate honours program paper, "Radicalism and state surveillance in the interactions between Taraknath Das and William Charles Hopkinson, 1908-1914". Nick Scott graduated in May 2019.

### Election of Officers

Vice-President Anne Arnott conducted the election. This year the Society instituted proxy voting for the election. Two members exercised this option. Elected by acclamation for the coming year were the following people:

#### EXECUTIVE

Michael Molloy, President; Anne Arnott, Vice President; Raphael Girard, Treasurer; Gail Devlin Secretary; and Diane Burrows, Editor.

#### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Brian Casey, Roy Christensen, Valerie de Montigny, Peter Duschinsky, Dawn Edlund, Charlene Elgee, Kurt Jensen, Gerry Maffre, Randy Orr, Robert Orr, Ian Rankin, Robert Shalka and Member Emeritus Joe Bissett.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that is your Board for the coming year.