



YALE CLUB of THE SUNCOAST

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Newly Elected Officers for 2015-2016

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[THEATRE BUFFS ONE AND ALL - Hear Ye, Hear Ye!](#)

Your YCS is considering offering a new venture in conjunction with Yale's Professor Murray Biggs. You may recall his entertaining and informative presentation to our members in January 2015 during which he compared various screen treatments over the years of the Taming of the Shrew. Based on Yale's strong theatre and drama programs and in coordination with Professor Biggs's very successful and fully subscribed "Yale Theatre Week-ends" around the world, we are tentatively planning our very own next season. For now, please HOLD THE DATES of February 5-6-7, 2016.

We know this is a busy time of year in Sarasota, and we are just in the preliminary stage of possibly offering a three- show package over that weekend, with a reception and discussions as well. Specific productions and event details will be sent at a later date, pending logistics and arrangements with local theatres and Yale colleagues.

Stay Tuned!

[SPEECH ON CUBA, APRIL 14, 2015](#)



At a moment when Cuba and Cuban-American relations are in the headlines, Domingo Amuchastegui provided members of the Yale Club

of the Suncoast and their guests with a provocative perspective on the topic. As a young man living in Havana, Amuchastegui participated in the 26th of July Movement which supported the revolution led by Fidel Castro against the regime of Fulgencio Batista. Following the ouster of Batista in 1959, Amuchastegui served the revolutionary government in various capacities for the next 35 years. After working as an analyst in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was sent to Guatemala as chargé d'affaires in 1960. Subsequently, he went to Angola as an advisor to the Minister of Education. He then worked as a department head in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Directorate in the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, from 1978 through 1993 he taught at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana as a specialist on regional conflicts. The Institute educated young members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1994, he defected to the United States because his criticism of the failure of the Cuban Government to carry out what he regarded as urgently needed reforms made it increasingly difficult for him to remain in Cuba. After defecting, he could not return to Cuba for seven years. Like many Cuban exiles, he took up residence in Miami, where he became the author and coauthor of several books and articles on aspects of the Cuban Revolution. He also earned a Master of Arts in Education from Florida International University and a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Miami. He was a teacher in the Miami-Dade Public School District from 1998 to 2011. He is currently working as a journalist for the *Cuba Standard*, a publication that covers business in Cuba. In this capacity he travels to Cuba regularly.

Mr. Amuchastegui began his talk by expressing his satisfaction that the governments of the United States and Cuba are taking meaningful steps to normalize relations after 56 years of hostility. The achievement of normal relations will not be an easy task because decades of lack of trust and hostility cannot be overcome quickly. He discussed the recent meeting at the Summit of the Americas in Panama between presidents Obama and Raul Castro. He asserted that Obama's statement that the goal of the United States is no longer regime change is of the greatest importance to Cuban officials. It opens the door to the possibility of improved bilateral relations. He said Cuban authorities have been ready for better relations for many years. He claimed, however, that they always refused to pay the price demanded by the United States, which he said was the abandonment of the principles of the Cuban Revolution. Normalization now depends on flexibility on both sides and the slow building of trust.

Mr. Amuchastegui then turned to the topic of the changes taking place in Cuba. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 meant that the subsidies that had helped keep the Cuban economy afloat would not continue. Inside the leadership of the Cuban government a debate began. Despite the reluctance of some, the inescapable conclusion was that the existing economic system was no longer viable and that reform was necessary. Change began but at a very slow pace because of the fears of some leaders, including Fidel Castro, that a more rapid pace would risk the destabilization of the regime. Some officials, apparently including Amuchastegui, wanted more rapid change. Nevertheless, the reforms

that have occurred over the past quarter of a century have been significant.

Today, a growing part of the island's economy is no longer controlled by the government. For example, 30 percent of the tourist industry is privately controlled, and 85 percent of agricultural land is either in private hands or owned by private cooperatives. Most of the food Cubans buy is now sold at market prices. People can now buy and sell homes and motor vehicles. Thousands of small and medium size enterprises are in private hands. The door is now much more open to foreign investors. The banking system has been transformed to accommodate these changes. All of these reforms would have been considered heresy in the 1980s. Cuba is becoming a different country as the role of the state is downsized. With half of the labor force already no longer employed by the state, the political system will inevitably change. Already more publically expressed dissent is tolerated than in the past. Amuchastegui foresees a new constitution and electoral law. He is convinced that the old Soviet model, with its command economy and centralized political control, is almost dead. He expects that 2018 will be decisive in this respect because Raul Castro and much of the old guard of the Cuban Revolution have pledged to retire then. While not democratically elected in the American sense, the younger generation of Cuban political leaders is not wedded to the failed dogmas of the past and will continue the changes already being made. In this environment Amuchastegui is optimistic about the future United States-Cuban relations. He thinks that if both countries work to settle their

differences with skill, patience, and understanding, bilateral relations will improve with benefits to both sides.

Submitted by Frank Samponaro

Record 52 YCS Sailors Aboard LeBarge Sunset Cruise

A record setting 52 Eli sailors boarded the SS LeBarge for a Sunset Cruise on a balmy evening at Sarasota's Bayfront Dock. The water was quite calm and the Yale Club of the Suncoast mariners were in a most festive mood. As LeBarge departed from the dock, a Jimmy Buffett style singer, complete with straw hat, beard and twangy voice, took his position in the prow of the ship and began a steady presentation of Caribbean songs and sea ditties. Beneath him, the ship's bar was immediately staffed by two attractive mates who dutifully served the queue of parched Eli sailors.

The two hour cruise is noted for its close haul to some of the most spectacular views of not only the Sarasota skyline but many impressive "McMansions." Many were impressed to note the presence of some 7 heavy construction cranes, which underlined the spurt of building activity of hotels and condominiums – not seen in many a year. The cry of "dolphins off to starboard" occurred at the sighting of several representatives of Sarasota Bay's approximate 150 member dolphin family, and foretold the good fortune of the remainder of the Eli LeBarge cruise.

After the Elis enjoyed a bit of grog, and after song sheets had been dispersed, a small but hardy group of singers led the singing of “The Whiffenpoof Song” followed by a sterling rendition of “Bright College Years”. Brother Baskey, a former Whiff, was instrumental in maintaining the group’s proper pitch. He did, however, take note of Cap’n Brian’s final thrust of the word “Yale” which had shot up an octave.

A final highlight of the cruise was the appearance before the ship’s singer of a bevy of young ladies and a bride-to-be, graduates of Emory University, bedecked in black gowns, as they danced in joyous anticipation of the future wedding. This added a proper dash of youth to a glorious evening sail on Sarasota Bay.

Submitted by Cap’n Brian T. Kelly Y’61





Enjoying LaBarge Cruise

YASA – Yale Alumni Schools Ambassadors



Suzanne and I recently travelled to the Balkans on the newest AYA international venture, Yale Alumni Schools Ambassadors (YASA). For ten days in early May we met with students and teachers in Skopje the capital of Macedonia, Struga on Lake Ohrid in Macedonia, Tirana, the capital of Albania, Mostar in Herzegovina, and Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia Herzegovina.

The trip was a joint effort of AYA and Education USA, an agency of the U.S. State Department (formerly known as US Information Service) that provides information to foreign students on education in the U.S. The focus of our mission was to explain what is a liberal arts education and why it provides many more opportunities than job-focused training.

Our group numbered 40, and most of us had a connection to Yale. With graduate schools included, we were able to discuss or at least

answer questions about over 40 colleges and universities. The ages ranged from a couple of undergraduates, to a few graduates from the past ten years and many who have been alumni for over 20 years.

We participated in panels on such topics as liberal arts education, why employers like graduates of liberal arts colleges, how to complete applications and how to write essays. At the end of some of the sessions we hosted college fairs with tables devoted to particular topics. Many of the students were in International Baccalaureate programs aimed to prepare them for education in the U.S. We also spoke with a number of students in Sarajevo who are in technical training programs but could benefit from the breadth of a liberal arts education.

Most of the students we met were among the top ten percent in their class, spoke English, and were eager to study abroad. In a couple of cities we also had lunch with the students, which gave us opportunities for more intense discussions.

While we spent a lot of time on the programs, we also had a chance to do sightseeing in a very beautiful part of the world. Throughout our trip we could see or were in very high mountains. Snow capped the taller summits, yet spring was far advanced on the ground with cherry trees and plum trees in full bloom. Skopje combined a Turkish bazaar with an extensive modernization effort showcasing a tremendous number of statues and new buildings along the river. We visited several beautiful old and new Orthodox churches in Ohrid, Macedonia, where Saints Klement and Methodius adapted Cyrillic script to the Orthodox Church services. Between Albania and

Bosnia Herzegovina we drove up the Dalmatian Coast, visiting Tivat and Kotor, Montenegro, the walled city of Dubrovnik in Croatia, and Mostar in Herzegovina. (Yes, we saw the reconstructed bridge, which had been demolished by Serbs!) In the five countries we visited, the three main religions - Catholic Christianity, the Orthodox Church and Islam - have flourished side-by-side for centuries, although in many areas the Balkan War of the 1990s left strains, bloodshed and extensive destruction. Many buildings in Sarajevo still bear the bullet holes and gutting left from the efforts of Serbs to destroy the city in the longest city siege in modern warfare (nearly four years: 1992-1996).

We found the trip an opportunity to use our skills developed in recruiting students to our colleges and to study the tragic history and experience the gorgeous geography of a part of the world we had never before seen.





Submitted by Oliver Janney

[May 12, 2015 YCS Luncheon—SYC](#)



We concluded our 2014-15 speaker season with a very energetic and informative presentation by Cathaleen Kaiyoorawongs, Associate Executive Director of UNIDOS NOW, a Sarasota-based non-profit tasked to help prepare underprivileged young people to achieve and succeed at higher education. The program educates both students and parents on the skills needed to overcome language, cultural and economic discrepancies that face immigrant and other disadvantaged youths in a college or university setting. While Spanish programs for Hispanic families are emphasized, UNIDOS NOW in fact has a multi-ethnic staff and constituency.

Cathaleen began with compelling statistics that show how various programs have succeeded in increasing the matriculation of minority college students but utterly failed in improving the graduation rate, with more than 75% not completing a degree program. Many of these students, while academically prepared, simply do not have the life skills needed to compete in a middle class-oriented college society. UNIDOS NOW begins mentoring families of college bound students in middle and high school, training them how to select the correct program, develop sufficient identity and esteem and learn the social and financial techniques necessary to complete a degree program. Partnering with most of our local colleges and many other social services agencies, UNIDOS NOW has provided a missing link in the process of making higher education work.

Cathaleen herself is a product of the Sarasota school system, a graduate of Columbia University's Barnard College, and a Peace Corps veteran,

having helped provide health and life skill services to some of the poorest areas of Latin America. With that experience, she has returned to give back to her community. She encouraged our Yale Club members to aid UNIDOS' effort by volunteering to mentor students in their program or to provide other support for their worthwhile efforts.

Submitted by Ken Schneier

[Yale Book Award Report 2015](#)

We had a total of 24 high schools in the Sarasota/Manatee/Charlotte county areas that had juniors receive the Yale Book Award. The award goes to some of the most promising students in the area as selected by their faculty, administration or counseling staff. The qualities that we specify are, "Outstanding personal character and intellectual promise," so that we can target those that represent the qualities that we see in those who attend Yale. The book that they received was the *Yale Book of Quotations*, which works especially well in this age of digital resources since its book format allows the sort of serendipitous browsing that electronic books just can't manage. On May 30th we hosted a reception for the recipients at the Stoneybrook Country Club. About half of the group was able to come. In that environment we were able to describe the special qualities of Yale in a bit more thorough manner.

One student recipient from this area is matriculating at Yale this Fall. He is from Pine View School and has a great passion for

competitive sailing. All reports indicate that he has an outstanding intellect and considerable academic interests. [Yale actually requests that we not publish the names of matriculating students.]

Submitted by Patrick Whelan

[New Publication by Yale Club of the Suncoast Member](#)

Triumph, written by Clarence Jones, a Connecticut Superior Court Judge, now retired, is inspired in part by actual cases over which he presided. The novel chronicles the story of Katie, who as an infant is rescued from death - from a mother suffering from Munchausen by proxy syndrome - and placed into foster care and later escapes death while trying to right many wrongs. Katie's journey opens the door into the cloistered world of the juvenile court - where the reader sees cases through the eyes of the Judge in a system where juveniles and their parents receive counseling, and also where juveniles are locked away in jail cells, sent to foster homes, and placed into therapeutic residential centers - all away from public view.

Through observations of the Trial Judge and the lives of several characters the novel explores how components of the child protection system and the juvenile Court System work in combination, trying to protect the most vulnerable - children.

Extrapolated from actual court records, spiced with a subtext of love, sex and murder, uncovering government corruption, as well as adventure in the heart-wrenching stories of children, *Triumph* emerges from its journey well-traveled through turmoil and eventual victory for the protagonist who advocates a new paradigm for child protection.

Available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Xlibris.

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