

RRC Heritage Group Newsletter

October 2018

Shahina Siddiqui: Islam and Islamaphobia

This is an abridged article. See goo.gl/ab871J for the entire original post.

by Leslie Walsh

Heritage Group meeting of September 20, 2018.

A freelance writer, author, spiritual counselor, speaker and educator, Shahina Siddiqui is co-founder and President/Executive director of the Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) of Canada.

Shahina has received many awards, including the 2002 YMCA/YWCA Peace Medal, 2010 Grass Roots Women of Manitoba Award, 2012 Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal, Daw Net's 2014 Civic Courage Award, 2015 Joan Melonson Award, and 2016 Canadian Red Cross Humanitarian of the Year award.

She founded the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute and is a founding member of the Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute. She sits on the National Advisory Board for the Canadian Association for Diversity as well as on the RCMP Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Diversity, D-Division, and Manitoba. Shahina is senior board member of the National Council of Canadian Muslims and Chair of Islamic History Month, Canada.

Shahina has served on numerous boards and committees in order to build bridges between groups to help preserve human rights, develop cultural competency and mutual understanding. She has been profiled and recognized in publications such as *Courageous Crusader*, *Winnipeg Women*, Fall 2012; *Leading by Example*, *The Prime Times*, 2010; *We Chose Canada- Eleven Profiles from Manitoba's Mosaic*, Lesley Hughes; *Words to Lead By*, *Leadership Winnipeg*; and *A Place to Call Home*, Canada West Foundation, Sheila O'Brien and Shawn Stirrett.



(Taken from ISSACanada.com.)

Leslie Walsh read Shahina Siddiqui's extensive bio above as an introduction to our kick-off September meeting. Shahina's response? That the only thing we needed to know about her was that she was a Grandmother. And with a greeting from Islam, "As-Salaam-Alaikum" ("peace be upon you"), she

challenged our members to ask "everything they wanted to ask about Islam and were afraid to ask". She said she has probably heard it all and would not be offended by the questions.

Below is a summary of her talk:

- Islam is an Arabic word that consists of 2 root words: Peace and Submission.
- There are 1.6 billion followers of Islam in the world, 1.2 million in Canada, and 4 to 6 million in the U.S.A. Muslims in Canada come from 54 different cultures. There is huge diversity in the community. This adds to its richness.
- The binding force is the fundamental belief, "I bear witness that there is only one God which is Allah". Allah has no gender, is unique and can't be described in human terms, is absolute, and has no parents, children, or human characteristics. Allah means God in English.
- Islam is about an individual's relationship with the creator. Allah's 99 attributes are described in the Quran.
- Mohammed was the last and final messenger of Allah. Others who claim to be a messenger are false prophets. Abraham is the father of the faith. Once you believe and proclaim these things, then you become a Muslim.
- Muslims share six precepts:
 - Belief in all the prophets; God is Allah, the first prophet was Adam and the last prophet was Mohammed.
 - Belief that angels are the messengers of Allah.
 - Belief in the revelations of the Quran.
 - The original Quran has been preserved and not altered.
 - Belief in judgement, heaven/hell, and the creator's mercy.
 - Everything happens by the will of the creator.
- Of the thousands of prophets, the Quran names 25. Jesus was a prophet who was a "social worker par excellence".



Following her 15-minute talk on Islam and being Muslim, Shahina continued to educate us by answering our questions. Highlights are posted on our Website at goo.gl/ab871J.

Diane Clare Recognized by St. Mary's Academy

The Marian Awards For Excellence were instituted by St. Mary's Academy in 2005 to recognize distinguished alumnae who embrace and exemplify its mission and vision in the community and the world. Our own Diane Clare is one of four 2018 recipients recognized for outstanding service in the areas of Education, Training and Mentorship, Leadership, Marketing and Justice.



Dr. Diane Clare '69

from the St. Mary's Academy Website

Dr. Diane Clare has over thirty years of nursing experience as a labour and delivery nurse, educator, and faculty member with a special interest in educational technologies. She has a committed interest in professional health care education, and maximizing the well-being of women and children.

In addition to teaching theory, clinical practice and post degree advanced nursing programs at college, university,

and a northern First Nation community, Dr. Clare's doctoral research demonstrated the effectiveness of an interactive web-based program to enhance skill development.

Of major interest to Diane is the use of innovative technological strategies to deliver quality programs and critical education to health care professionals in isolated communities, thereby minimizing the barriers of time and distance.

Dr. Clare has operationalized a streaming video strategy to successfully deliver university nursing education from Winnipeg to multiple remote locations resulting in the education and retention of registered nurses to fill vital positions in rural Manitoba.

Her passion for personal growth, development, and life-long learning facilitates the promotion of the same attributes in students and in building strong rapport with community members.

Diane was a recipient of the YMCA/YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the Education, Training & Mentoring category in 2017.

Thank You for Your Help!



[Pixabay Image](#) by [geralt](#)

The Heritage Group occasionally receives notes of thanks from its student awards recipients. It is heart-warming to read how our HG Endowment Fund is inspiring Red River College students and helping them to achieve their goals. Below is one that we received in April.

Visit rrc-hg.ca/thank-you-for-your-help to read other letters of thanks to see how your generous donations make a difference, and consider giving today.

To whom it may concern:

I am giving thanks for the RRC Heritage Group Award I received recently. My studies are in the Medical Radiologic Technology program. I do not have the greatest penmanship, so I had to type this out. I am currently studying for exams, but I had to send my appreciation for the support that has been given to me. I will keep it as short and simple as I can. This award will literally help me for my tuition and living expenses for the upcoming term. It is because of these generous donations that students have an opportunity to achieve a career in something meaningful to them. I cannot express enough thanks. My only hopes are that someday, once have completed my studies, that I can give back to the college so that future students can continue to have support in their own goals.

RRC Wins National CIGan Award

Colleges and Institutes Canada (CIGan) announced the recipients of its 2018 Awards of Excellence during the association's annual conference this past spring in Victoria, BC.

The CIGan Awards of Excellence recognize best practices from institutions across the country, as well as individual leadership and achievements. The awards were distributed in partnership with TD Insurance, the exclusive sponsor of CIGan's Awards of Excellence.



[IrinaUzv](#) / Pixabay

research. Red River College has engaged in 543 applied partnerships with SMEs, large companies, and community organizations between 2012 and 2017, resulting in nearly 543 new or improved products, processes, services, and insights. These initiatives are coordinated through the College's Research Partnership & Innovation (RPI) office, which generated more research revenue than any college in Western Canada in 2017.

Silver: Niagara College

Bronze: Lambton College

"It is because of dedicated people working hard every day, to improve educational programs and campus life, that colleges and institutes are able to offer such remarkable student-experiences and training opportunities", says Denise Amyot, President and CEO of CIGan. "We are thrilled to honour these leaders and innovators who make the entire system stronger, more inclusive, and more responsive to the needs of students as well as employers."

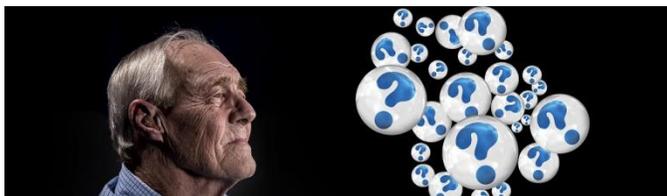
Read the full release at goo.gl/KJpcJe.

Red River College is proud to receive Gold in the category of **Applied Research and Innovation Excellence**

Gold: Red River College

Red River College celebrated a marquee year of expansion in 2017 after having attracted over \$200 million in infrastructure funding going toward 111,000-square feet in new facilities. This will help the college build on years of growth and success in applied

Phew! Our Pensions are Safe... For Now



[geralt](#) / Pixabay

Don't know if you noticed the June 6th Staff News. It pointed to a link that eventually leads to this [MGEU memorandum from May 31](#), which in turn points to a copy of [this note](#) sent by email to the Office of the Superintendent, Pension Commission, by Jody Gillis, Chairperson, Superannuation and Insurance Liaison Committee.

That note states,

"The government has communicated that there are no plans for changes to Manitoba's public sector pension plans."

So it looks like the government's proposed target benefit/shared risk plan, which was opposed by the Liaison

Committee, will not be applied to our CSSB defined benefits plan after all.

For those of you still confused about our defined benefits plan and the proposed changes, the MGEU provides a good Q&A page at goo.gl/hpMr9p.

RRC's HR micro site, blogs.rrc.ca/hr/information/pension/, also provides some good information, in particular, the CSSB pre-retirement presentation posted at goo.gl/uXtNSW.

In short, our Civil Service Superannuation Pension is a **"defined benefit"** pension plan. Employees contribute a percentage of earnings to the plan and accrue a pension. Employers also fund a portion of the benefits earned. The pension is determined using a formula that uses service and earnings. Your pension amount does not directly depend on what you contributed.

Finally, the Financial Post article at <https://goo.gl/MS6vkZ> nicely lays out why there's no benefit in target benefit pensions, and how so-called 'shared risk' plans have nothing to do with sharing.

New Horizons for Elena

...seems like we just got started and then before you know it the times we had together were gone.
Dr. Seuss

One fond memory I will hold onto from my last five years with the Heritage Group is of the ever-smiling face of Elena Grinshteyn. Sadly, Elena is moving on from the Heritage Group to other responsibilities. In fact, she has quite a history of moving. Elena and her husband Konstantin came to Canada 13 years ago from Israel, where they lived for over 16 years after leaving the former Soviet Union. Elena graduated from University in Israel, majoring in Economics and Computer Science, and then worked at a financial department of ORT Israel. Philanthropy and fundraising were all new concepts for Elena when she accepted her first job in Canada as a Development Coordinator for Friends of Ralph Connor House, a nonprofit organization established by University Women's Club of Winnipeg. In this position, surrounded by Canadian history and amazing ladies who believed in change and generosity, Elena realized that this was a new career path she wanted to take.



Now, with over six years at RRC, Elena has moved through several different positions and currently oversees the Awards and Annual giving programs. But it was in her first year that she was assigned to work with the Heritage Group. Her task: make sure that the group feels connected and stays engaged in RRC's life. Fortunately for us, Elena considered the HG a true bonus to a busy workload: both a joy and an amazing opportunity to learn about the College, Winnipeg, and Canada. Of course, we thought she was amazing too. Not only did she succeed in keeping us connected and engaged, she did so in a joyful way that made us feel valued and respected.

Outside of work Elena is a busy mother of two amazing young girls, Anastacia (13) and Alesia (8), whom she is helping to become successful, passionate young ladies. Elena loves nature, sea, summer and dance.

Elena is very happy to welcome Laura Sinclair as a part of the development team. The HG will now be Laura's responsibility, and Elena had an opportunity to mentor her to share the same joy in working with the group.

"Thank you so much for making me always feel welcomed and a part of your family, it was an amazing experience. I had an opportunity to learn so much history of RRC, your shared experience and knowledge often helped to manoeuvre delicate situations. I know you will keep generating more interest with all retirees and will keep helping RRC to move towards success."

Elena

"Elena you have been more to us than the RRC liaison. You have become our friend. I will miss you terribly but know that I will still be able to see you at RRC functions. Elena, you definitely kept us all connected and feeling that we still belong at RRC. Your support to the Heritage Group has been invaluable. I so appreciate your sense of professionalism and at the same time your sense of mischief and fun. You are a true, caring human being who has immersed herself in her job and shows that she enjoys it. Hope to see you soon, my friend!"

Leslie



Call for Volunteers!

Would you like to get to know someone new who is from another culture and country?

Are you proud of where you used to work?

If your answer is yes to both questions then please consider volunteering as a RRC ambassador to be a welcoming face when our new international students arrive in Winnipeg.



Three students of RRC's Student Refugee Program at YWG

Since RRC piloted the program for international students in August 2013, its **Airport Pickup Service** has welcomed many international students at YWG.

We would like to continue to offer this service. However, International Education needs your help. The service is made possible by volunteers from RRC's staff, faculty and student communities.

Please visit rrc-hg.ca/call-for-volunteers/ for more details on the program and how you can help.

Please Mr. Eby, Save us from a Ford Nation!

by Guy Dugas

What kind of electoral system allows a Doug Ford, who's PCs captured 61% of the seats in the Ontario legislature with only 41% of the votes? Or, more recently, François Legault's CAQ to capture 59% of the seats in Quebec with only 37% of the votes? Well, the same electoral system that put Trump in the White House: [first past the post \(FPP\)](#). Most democracies in the world actually have turned thumbs down on FPP (e.g. New Zealand in 1996) in favour some form of [proportional representation](#); that is, where seats in parliament are allocated in proportion to the votes cast. What a novel idea...

So why am I writing this? Simple. My wife and I retired to BC in 2016. And, guess what's happening here this fall? BC's Attorney General, David Eby, has promised a provincial referendum on electoral reform. Some claim it's not clear that voters will understand why it's needed.

Look east and south! I rest my case.

Fingers, toes, and eyes crossed. I'll keep you posted



[Prawny](#) / Pixabay

Playing with a New Band

Regular Heritage Group meeting attendees have likely noticed the fresh new face of Laura Sinclair, Red River College's Development Coordinator. Working at the College for over a year now, she has thoroughly enjoyed helping out with our meetings. Elena has been a great mentor, and Laura is very excited to work more closely with the group as she formally replaces Elena as our College liaison.

Laura recently moved to Winnipeg from Ottawa where she worked as a donor relations officer with a large music festival.



At Red River College, she processes all gifts and provides plenty of organizational support for the rest of the Development team. She has a deep love of music and has taught piano for over a decade, and has played in several different bands over the years. She also loves scuba diving, meeting friends at music festivals and spending time with her husband and two cats.

Welcome aboard, Laura! Think of us as just one more band of new friends you'll be playing with for a while.

Help change the world

In August 2017, the Washington Post shared the touching story of Ayan Abdi, one of the relatively few lucky students to be accepted that year to the Student Refugee Program (SRP) by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). One year earlier, Ayan had been one of 5,000 hopefuls to take its two-hour qualifying exam in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, the largest in the world. Sixteen of those students would be offered not just a college education, but a new life, with the Canadian government providing them with citizenship and a chance to sponsor their families.

Now, in 2018, not only is RRC a proud SRP participant, we are honoured to be able to welcome Ayan to our campus. Hers is already an amazing story. But it is an unfolding narrative to which any one of us can contribute mightily. Volunteers are the heart and

soul of WUSC and the SRP. We can help them accomplish their goals by joining a SRP Local Committee. A Local Committee is a campus-based group of people who believe in the power of education to change the world. Local Committee members contribute in a wide variety of ways, from supporting events and activities, to educating and advocating for social change and global citizenship.

Won't you consider becoming a Local Committee member? To learn more, please visit rrc.ca/diversity/celebrate/student-refugee-program/, or contact Lauren Konrad, Student Integration Coordinator, at 204-631-3345 or lkonrad@rrc.ca.

You too can help change the world.



Ayan Abdi (NICHOLE SOBECKI / THE WASHINGTON POST)

Year of the Dog

This is an abridged article. See rrc-hq.ca/year-of-the-dog/ for the entire original post.

by Guy Dugas

She wasn't the first. That "dog" and "crazed, crying lowlife", former Trump political aide Omarosa Manigault Newman was [only the latest](#). Trump has variously tweeted that, among [many other dogs](#). Kristen Stewart cheated like a dog, Brent Bozell begged like a dog, Mitt Romney choked like a dog, the Rev. Wright was dumped like a dog, and on and on and on...

Could it be because 2018 is in fact a [Year of the Dog](#) according to the Chinese/Japanese zodiac? I only realized it myself because I happen to be a guide in the Vancouver's [Nitobe Memorial Garden](#), one of the most beautiful Japanese gardens outside of Japan. You see, [Dr. Inazo Nitobe](#) was born in 1862, a Year of the Dog. Out of curiosity, I looked up 1946, the year Donald Trump was born. Surprise! Also a Year of the Dog. But that's about the only thing the two men have in common.



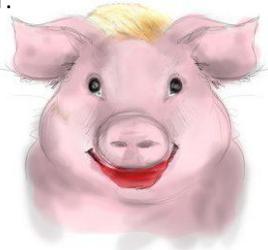
[pugmom40](#) / Pixabay



Dr. Inazo Nitobe

The first non-European Undersecretary General of the League of Nations, Nitobe as the most famous and influential Japanese of his era. Though largely forgotten today, he was both advisor to the Japanese Emperor and guest at the White House. Bushido was recommended reading by JFK, and Teddy Roosevelt had bought some 60 copies to distribute to friends. Thought we'd largely like to forget it, Trump is now arguably the most famous American of our era. His 1987 breakthrough memoir, *The Art of the Deal*, was also a best-seller.

However, not even its true author would recommend it. Though Trump likes to brag that he wrote the book, ghostwriter Tony Schwartz argues that Donald is, "[incapable of reading a book, much less writing one](#)". In fact, [Schwartz](#) likened writing the book to having "put lipstick on a pig".

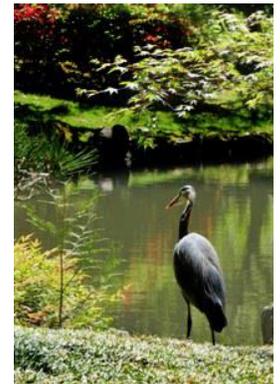


Sadly, history has a way of repeating itself. While Nitobe was advocating for peace in 1924, anti-Chinese/Japanese sentiment had gained such strength in North America that the U.S. passed an Asian Exclusion Act, ostensibly "to preserve the ideal of American homogeneity". Nitobe vowed to not return to the U.S. until it was repealed. [Canada was not immune](#). Already in 1897, the BC provincial legislature unanimously asked the federal government to prevent immigration of Japanese, citing concern about "the lower class Jap". In 1899, BC minister Carter-Cotton pushed for "Asian" exclusion

arguing that British Columbia "should be occupied by a large and thoroughly British population".



So, back to my beautiful Vancouver Japanese garden. Funded in large part by the local Japanese community in Nitobe's memory, it is a tangible expression of reconciliation. The Japanese had suffered generations of discrimination in western Canada, culminating in their forced removal in 1942 from the coast to internment camps further east. In fact, the garden's first chief gardener had himself only returned to Vancouver in 1954, five years before the garden's construction. Like Nitobe the man, the garden is meant to be a bridge between cultures. An oasis of peace and calm in an otherwise busy city, it has come to be a special place for me to appreciate the richness of our cultural diversity and to remember that fighting nativism, and bullies, is a [never-ending struggle](#).



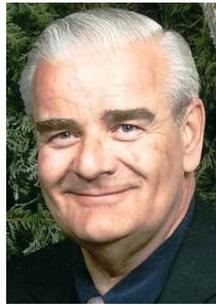
Passages

Axel Truderung

We sadly announce the passing of **Axel Truderung**, former instructor and Co-op Co-ordinator in the Civil Engineering Department.

If friends so desire, donations in Axel's memory can be made to **L'Arche Winnipeg** or the **Winnipeg No Kill Pet Shelter**.

(Obituary at goo.gl/H9z4hW)



1946 - 2018

Don Zorniak

It is with profound sadness that the family announces the passing of Donald Peter Zorniak. Don taught Math and Sciences for a number of years at RRC before retiring in 2011.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Don's memory may be made to **CancerCare Manitoba**, 675 McDermot Ave., Winnipeg MB, R3E 0V9.

(Obituary at goo.gl/qajLaU)



1950 - 2018

George H. Smith

We sadly mark the passing of George Henry Smith, who retired from RRCC in 1988 after many years as a masonry instructor. George fabricated the Iron Man statue (The Surveyor) that now stands on the east side of the Notre Dame Campus facing the intersection of Route 90 and Notre Dame Avenue.



1926 - 2018

(Obituary at goo.gl/1wKAp)

Donnie Ludwig

We are saddened to report that Donnie Ludwig, a key part of our Food Services family, passed away suddenly in early July while celebrating his birthday, dancing in Vegas with friends and colleagues.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael Blahuta at mblahuta@rrc.ca.

(Obituary at goo.gl/D9nGkz)



1951-2018

Lloyd Simonson

We sadly note the sudden passing on September 9th of Lloyd Raymond Gerald Simonson, who taught in the Drafting/CAD Technology Department for many years.

(Obituary at goo.gl/sKjzZo)



No photo

RRC Heritage Group

Chair

Leslie Walsh, ljoywalsh@gmail.com

Vice- Chair

Gail Shimonek

Secretary

Mary Hayes

Assistant Secretary

Liz Omeniuk

Social Committee Lead

Karen Wall

Past Chair

John Graeb

Founding Members

Bob Barr, Ken Campbell, Dan Demedash, Eugene Gladys, Horace Hackett, Don Kennedy, Harry Reese

Red River College Group Liaison

Laura Sinclair, lsinclair@rrc.ca
204-631-3324

Editor

Guy Dugas, HG-Editor@rrc.ca

Published by

Red River College
2055 Notre Dame Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0J9

Heritage Group Blog: rrc-hg.ca

Responsibility for articles rests upon the authors, not Red River College, and do not represent official positions of Red River College. Letters and articles submitted for inclusion in the newsletter may be edited for content and/or length.