



# the CHURCHILLIAN

VOL. 16 ISSUE 1

[www.churchillsocietyofedmonton.com](http://www.churchillsocietyofedmonton.com)

APRIL 2024

Published by The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society, established 1964.

*The Sir Winston Churchill Society isn't all about the things Winston Churchill did in the past (however profound they may be.) It's about his convictions, his wit, his power to inspire and how those qualities are necessary in the world today. We want to incorporate his values and spread his ways. We want to share what we have learnt and discovered from him, with you.*

## 58TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL BANQUET



*Randy Otto as Winston Churchill*

The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society is pleased to announce that our 58th Annual Memorial Banquet will take place Wednesday, May 8, in the Winspear Dining Room at the University Club on the campus of the University of Alberta.

Our first Memorial Banquet was held in 1965 at the Hotel Macdonald, with Field Marshal Lord Harding of Petherton delivering the keynote address. This long tradition of consecutive banquets has been interrupted only by the recent COVID pandemic and restrictions, which prevented these events in 2020 and 2021.

The banquet and its program will be preceded by a student awards ceremony in the Papaschase Room to honour the winners of our 2024 Speech and Debate competitions.

Mr. Randy Otto will join us as keynote speaker. He is a noted actor and inspiring leadership speaker, based in the United States. In his keynotes and sessions, Mr. Otto portrays Sir Winston with enthusiasm and historical accuracy.

This promises to be a thought-provoking and entertaining evening. Our website [www.churchillsocietyofedmonton.com](http://www.churchillsocietyofedmonton.com) is now set up as our mechanism for ticket sales.

Preferred dress is formal: mess kit for military, evening wear for ladies, and black tie for gentlemen. Guests wishing to attend the awards ceremony should arrive by 6:00 pm. Guests arriving after 6:05 will be invited to enjoy a beverage at the bar in the Upper Lounge. Dinner will be served at 7:00 pm. The evening's program will end around 9:15, while the bar will remain open until 10:00 pm.

We look forward to seeing you there.



*University Club*

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# CHURCHILL SPEECH AND DEBATE COMPETITIONS 2024

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Our annual high school competitions were held on March 16 in the Education Centre at the University of Alberta. The University of Alberta Debate and Speech Society (UADS) promoted and ran the tournament as part of their High School outreach program.

Speech contestants were asked to prepare two presentations:

- *“Studying the history of the causes and outcomes of 20th century world wars has no relevance to current world events.”* and
- *“Studying the history of the causes and outcomes of 20th century world wars is important for today’s world leaders.”*

An impromptu speech round was held with a short notice assigned topic and some time to prepare. The topic for this round was:

*“Rich countries should open their borders to refugees as a result of humanitarian challenges posed by mass displacement, conflict, and climate change induced migration.”*

Speech medalists were: Katherine Cai in first place, Emily Yang in second place, and Mingxi Cai in third place.

The debate topic was:

*“Be it resolved that studying the history of the causes and outcomes of 20th century world wars has no relevance to current world events.”*

Debate results were: Bella Jiao and Wesley Deng in first place, Iris Wang and Sabrina Liu in second place, and Michelle Han and Julianna Huang in third place.

Our sincere thanks go to all contestants and to the University of Alberta Debate Society, with special thanks and recognition to Mr. Nathan Thiessen. We also thank and congratulate Mr. James Kosowan, who coached the winning students. Our society president, Mr. Will Randall II, and director Michael Gibson led our team of volunteer judges for the speech competition. Debate was judged by members of UADS.

The medalists, all students at Old Scona Academic, will receive cash scholarships, a copy of The Heroic Memory,

and a Churchill commemorative sovereign coin. The names of the gold medalists will be placed on the Arthur O Cload trophy for speech, and the Basil Dean trophy for debate. They, their parents, and Mr. Kosowan, have been invited to attend our May 8 student awards ceremony and memorial banquet.

## HISTORICAL EVENTS

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**1874** Lord Randolph Churchill marries Jennie Jerome April 15.



Lord Randolph Churchill



Jennie Jerome

**1885** Clementine Hozier is born April 1.

**1900** Winston receives a commission in the South African Light Horse regiment in January.

**1916** Winston takes command of 6th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers January 5.

**1918** Franklin Delano Roosevelt meets Winston for the first time July 29. The future President is not impressed, later describing Churchill as a “stinker.”



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## LET US REMEMBER

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It was a balmy November 11, 2023. Fellow Churchill Society board members Elisebeth Checkel, Bob Chaffee, and I had the honour of laying a wreath at the City Hall Cenotaph during the service. In my 31 years as a civil servant, 23 of which were spent at City Hall, I had never seen a larger attendance nor a more moving ceremony. “Why was that?” I wondered. There was something more afoot in our collective conscious than just the mild weather.

My thoughts moved to the international crises.

Before discussing the beautiful Remembrance Day Ceremony, I’d like to share some reflections on the current global situation. I am by no means an expert, but like you, a concerned citizen. These reflections are just that – reflections from various sources. I believe they provide context as to why the last Remembrance Day Service was so well attended and so moving.

Although we may not be in a world war, our world is at war.

The Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, will go down as one of the worst terrorist attacks in history.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 sent shock waves round the world, and several other crises loom as well.

Aris Roussinos, a British Journalist and writer writes:

*When asked in 2020 to envisage the world after COVID, Michel Houellebecq (a French writer) proclaimed, accurately enough, that “it will be the same, just a bit worse.” It does not take a soothsayer to foresee that the same will hold true for this coming year. The year 2023 saw the greatest global resurgence of armed conflict since 1945; 2024 will be worse. We are living, if not through a World War, then a world at war, the great post-globalization jostling to divide up the spoils of what was once America’s unipolar imperium. This will be as epoch-defining a period as the late Forties were for Britain, or 1991 for Russia.*

Never has there been a greater need for global leadership, civil discourse, and respect for international law. I can’t help but wonder how Winston Churchill would have approached the current global crises.

For its part, thankfully, Canada is increasing its military spending. In December 2023, Minister of National Defense Bill Blair highlighted that Canada is more than doubling its military presence on Operation REASSURANCE – from about 1,000 troops currently to up to 2,200 by 2026, as Canada committed in the July 2023 Roadmap on scaling the enhanced Foreign Presence (eFP) Latvia Battle Group to a Brigade.

Minister Blair announced several measures to strengthen Canada’s military presence in Latvia, bolstering the security of NATO’s eastern flank. This increase in funding is much needed.

The Canadian Armed Forces has been underfunded for years. And yet they play an important role in peacekeeping and military operations around the world. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment Remembrance Day Service at City Hall last November detailed specific contributions. The Honourable Randy Boissonnault spoke about how close to home these conflicts feel. Councilor Jennifer Rice, herself



City Hall Cenotaph 2023

*continued on page 4*

## LET US REMEMBER

an immigrant, spoke about the role immigrants have played in the Canadian Armed Forces. But it was LCol C.B. Barr's Commanding Officer's remarks that I found most profound. He detailed the significance of the contribution the loyal Eddies have made in various battles in both World Wars, and Afghanistan.

He also talked of the ultimate sacrifice so many Loyal Eddies have paid for our freedom. The regiment received Battle Honours for 15 battles fought in WWI and paid a heavy price. Of the 4,050 soldiers who served in the battalion during the war, 977 of them were killed or missing and 2,282 were wounded. In WWII over 5,000 soldiers served with the Battalion and 391 died. The Battalion was awarded 23 Battle Honours in WWII. More recently, three Loyal Eddie soldiers lost their lives in Afghanistan.

In addition to speeches, there were beautiful musical performances throughout the indoor and outdoor ceremony. The musical participants included the **Vancouver Youth Choir** with participants aged five to 24. They were joined by a choir of youth and young adults from Nelson B.C., named **Corazon**, and an Edmonton based community choir, **Korora**. The **Pipes and Drums of the Edmonton Police Service** played beautifully as did the **Loyal Edmonton Regiment Band**.

As the last of our World War Veterans leave us, let us remember the brave men and women who continue to serve our country, and their families who also pay a price. Let us always remember them.

Jill Wright

*Vice-President*

*The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society*



*Jill Wright, Bob Chaffee, and Elisebeth Checkel at City Hall Remembrance Service 2023*

### OUR VISION

The leaders we inspire today will rise to meet tomorrow's challenges.

### OUR MISSION

The Sir Winston Churchill Society promotes leadership, citizenship, and strengthened communities through civil discourse, connecting to history, and encouraging critical thinking.



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# SCOTT ELGERSMA, CHURCHILL SCHOLAR

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Scott Elgersma was the 2019 Cambridge scholar, chosen by the Churchill Scholarships Foundation of Alberta to receive an engineering scholarship to Churchill College, Cambridge University. Scott is now working for Shell in England and expects to return to North America (Houston, TX) at the end of the year. We wish Scott continuing success in his work. He sent the following to us on March 19th:

Dear Churchill Society &  
Churchill Scholarships Foundation,

I was awarded the Churchill Cambridge Scholarship in 2019, and recently completed my PhD. I am writing to express my gratitude for the incredible opportunity the Scholarship provided me with. Cambridge has been an extraordinary place for me on both an academic and personal level. The rich history and the vibrant atmosphere have all contributed to an unforgettable journey. The research I have undertaken during my time here (where I developed and applied magnetic resonance imaging techniques to study chemical reactors) has been immensely fulfilling. None of this would have been remotely possible without the generous funding from the Churchill Society. Thank you very much for funding this incredible award!

With heartfelt thanks,

Scott Elgersma



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# SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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An interesting bit of recent news is the appointment of Professor Randy Boyagoda to the new post of Provostial Advisor on Civil Discourse at the University of Toronto. Prof. Boyagoda will lead efforts at the University to foster gentler dialogue by finding shared context in controversy, and promoting a will to understand when there is disagreement in a mutual search for truth.

This is of course a reaction to recent factional clashes on campuses, and a recognition that civil discourse is at the centre of what universities are meant to be. While making bad press, campus clashes and angry demonstrations reflect serious issues and influence the larger society.

Civil discourse is at the heart of what the Sir Winston Churchill Society aims for in our High School competitions. The communication skills – the mastery of language and ideas – which we promote with our speech and essay-writing competitions are the machinery of

discourse. The debate competitions we sponsor use that machinery while promoting the listening, respect, dignity, and composure that inform the “civil” part.

The students who begin to develop these skills in high school are likely to use and hone them in post-secondary life, whatever their paths may be. These abilities are important components of effective leadership: a quality perpetually in high demand and limited supply.

Why not join our Sir Winston Churchill Society and with us support the development of these core leadership skills in our wonderful high school students? Membership is affordable, carries no obligation, and confers voting privileges at our General Meetings. Members also enjoy reduced admission prices to our events. The world is a better place when we speak with care and clarity and listen to each other.

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We offer two tiers of membership. You can purchase your membership by visiting our website and following the instructions there:

<https://www.churchillsocietyofedmonton.com/shop>

Or send the form below, with payment, to our Executive Secretary. Memberships are valid for one year from date of purchase.

**Regular membership:** Annual fee \$30  
*Confers voting privileges at members' meetings and reduced ticket prices for Churchill Society events*

**Student membership:** Annual fee \$10  
*Regular members' privileges for registered students*

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## 2024 SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Salutation: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First

Middle

Last

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City

Prov

Postal Code

Type of Membership:       Regular \$30       Student \$10

**Privacy and Consent:** By including your E-mail address, you agree to receive future notifications regarding Society activities. Please note, all E-mail messages sent to the membership are sent under the use of the Blind carbon copy (Bcc) tool which means that individual recipients do not see the entire list of addressees. There is no fear of being added to additional mailing lists, etc.

# Letters for the Ages

## The Private and Personal Letters of Sir Winston Churchill

*Edited by James Drake and Allen Packwood*  
230 pp. Bloomsbury Continuum 2023

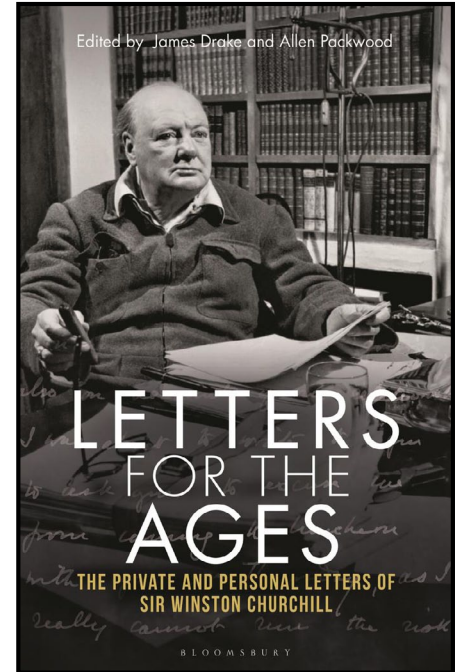
This is a curated collection of 100 items of Winston Churchill's personal correspondence. Of these, 85 were written by Churchill, and 15 were written to him. The correspondents include Churchill's parents, FDR, Admiral Jackie Fisher, Clement Atlee, Harry Truman, daughter Mary Soames, Clementine, King George VI, Pamela Plowden, Louis de Souza, and others. Photocopies of the handwritten letters are included, but each text is also printed. (the reduced copies of the originals are hard to read in our advance reading copy).

An introduction to each letter or exchange of letters describes the familial, social, political, or military context behind the letters. The analysis is compelling, fluent, and objective. Winston is shown to be a person of his times and in some ways behind his times, driven to high ambition by the trials and triumphs of his upbringing. The letters are chosen for their personal rather than professional or political intent. They present views of Winston the person, husband, colleague, and friend. This is not to say that all the letters were strictly about personal matters, but that they demonstrate aspects of his personality: his attitudes, beliefs, and ambitions.

Here we see the young Winston pleading for his parents' approval while suffering their written displeasure for his entirely normal youthful lapses. We read the 17-year-old Winston's letter to the Harrow school newspaper deploring the physical condition of the classrooms. A note to Boer President Louis de Silva left in Winston's cell when he escaped Boer custody in 1899, criticized that custody as illegal, disingenuously claiming that he was a noncombatant during the action in which he was captured. First Sea Lord Admiral "Jackie" Fisher wrote to Winston in April 1915 criticizing the latter's preoccupation with the Dardanelles, instead of a Baltic

strategy. Winston's somewhat flippant reply consisted of a quote from Shakespeare and one from Napoleon, which criticized both Fisher and Admirals in general. Neither of the quotes materially addressed Fisher's well-founded concerns. A 1944 letter from King George VI prevailed upon Winston to abandon his plan to personally witness the D-Day landings from the deck of a destroyer. The plan had originally included the King, who was brought to his senses by his personal secretary. Winston's disappointed but compliant reply displays his ardent desire to be 'on the scene', and his lack of fear of being in harm's way.

Letters for the Ages is a fine addition to any history or Churchill library collection. It sheds light on the person that was Winston Churchill, with accessible and objective commentary. It really is a "must read" for anyone interested in Churchill's life and times.





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## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Maybe you might like to help but do not want to join a board: we can still use your help. Please contact us if you are interested in helping us with our annual dinner, or with judging high school speech or essay competitions.



## Churchill Society Board and Executives

Will Randall II	<i>President</i>
Jill Wright	<i>Vice President</i>
David Checkel	<i>Treasurer</i>
Stan Guzczewski	<i>Director</i> <i>Membership</i>
Michael Gibson	<i>Director</i> <i>Student Competitions</i>
Robert Chaffee	<i>Executive Secretary</i> <i>Archives</i> <i>The Churchillian</i>

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## WOW! DID WE PRINT THAT?

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Our last issue contained a few errors. I thank the amused readers who pointed these out. It is good to know that someone is reading our newsletter! I confess to the following lapses, for which I and I alone am responsible:

Edmonton's beloved Jasper Avenue bookstore is named Audreys and not 'Audrey's' as we published.

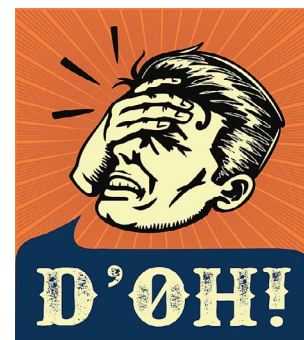
Valerie Cload's birth month was not August. My error, and my apologies and gratitude go to her children who gave generously of their time and memory.

Operation Uranus was not undertaken in 1954! It began

in November 1942. This looks like a case of cut-and-paste in holiday haste.

Winston was demoted to Chancellor of the Duchy (not "Dutchy" as we published!) of Lancaster. It will be my special care to ensure that 'dutchy' not become a fair description of this newsletter.

Robert Chaffee  
*Editor*



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## CONTACT US

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If you would like to comment on anything in our newsletter, or if you have submissions or suggestions for future articles, we would like to hear from you! Contact our editor, Robert Chaffee at 780.660.6766 or email to [edmontonchurchillsociety@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonchurchillsociety@gmail.com).

Contact our Executive Secretary at the same email address, or any member or our board if you are interested in serving as a Director or helping out with events.

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