



Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

www.edmontonrta.org

December 2008



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THE EXECUTIVE

President:
Vi Oka, (780) 459-8013

1st Vice Pres:
Joan Harrison, (780) 467-3885
2nd Vice Pres:
Joyce Liska, (780) 487-3029

Treasurer:
Bernie Lemay, (780) 469-5031
Membership:
Maurine Maslen, (780) 418-8032

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our Christmas luncheon at the

Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 10, 2008

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Full Turkey Dinner with Stuffing

Cost: \$19 per person (includes GST and gratuity)

Entertainment: The Essotones

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize. To reduce the amount of time required to count the cash, we will be happy to give you change for \$20.00.



PLEASE NOTE

The phoning committee will be contacting you prior to December 5th so that we can have an accurate count for our caterer.

Please note that ERTA has to pay for lunches that have been booked even if the individuals do not attend.

Remember our "Adopt A Teen" Charity.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The continuing daily volatility of the stock markets and financial systems around the world has commanded the focus of everyone. In the midst of all this turmoil, the economic health of private pension plans is of fundamental concern to all of us.

With the global economy on the brink of a recession, hefty monetary bailouts of the banking sector have been instituted in all major markets throughout the world. Very quickly the geopolitical community expanded from a G8 to a G20 with the emerging market economies included in discussions to invoke a comprehensive effort to restore the solvency of financial institutions worldwide. There is no short term solution! What began with the fallout from sub-prime mortgages will result in the restructuring of a number of primary manufacturing industries. In the aftermath of the financial meltdown, government leaders are seeking assurances that an aggressive stimulus package involving taxpayer handouts will result in almost immediate economic recovery. There seems to be a consensus that in tough economic times non-partisan co-operation is essential.

In the midst of all this doom and gloom we are about to celebrate the season of gift-giving and goodwill. There is an underlying sense of hope emerging throughout the world with the historic election in the United States. May this festive season truly be blessed with renewed efforts to achieve peace throughout the world in the new year.

On a lighter note, our December luncheon will be a traditional Christmas buffet that includes roast turkey, stuffing and festive desserts. The luncheon will be held in the Grand Ballroom located on the first level at the Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre. It will accommodate more guests quite comfortably. You are encouraged to bring a spouse, or better still, organize a table of colleagues and friends. Bernie Lemay and the Essotones will lead us in a carol sing along. In the spirit of the season,

please consider making a financial contribution to the Edmonton Sun Adopt-A-Teen Program.

Merry Christmas to all!

Vi Oko

SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE MEETING

The following issues were discussed and decisions made at the ERTA executive meeting held on November 12, 2008 at Barnett House:

- A motion was passed authorizing a contribution of \$500.00 to the ARTA University of Alberta Endowment Award (scholarship fund).
- The price of the buffet for the Christmas luncheon was set at \$19.00.
- Two dates (January 24 and May 2) were selected for the Retiree Brunches hosted by Irl Miller at the Faculty Club.
- ERTA will rent a table at a cost of \$250.00 at the 2009 Teachers' Convention February 26 and 27. ARTA will reimburse ERTA for half of this expense.
- The proposed Wellness Conference was put on hold.
- As a follow-up to the survey, an effort will be made to organize a few activities or tours in the near future.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Christmas Luncheon	December 10, 2008
Executive Meeting	February 25, 2009
Retiree Brunches	January 24, 2009 May 2, 2009
Spring Luncheon	March 25, 2009

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

ERTA has 374 members including 6 lifetime members and 16 new retirees who receive complimentary memberships. Joyce Lukasiewicz e-mails the newsletter to 138 of our members.

Once again volunteers will be telephoning all of the members living in the local calling

area to determine the attendance at the December luncheon. Please respond promptly if you were not home and a message was left. Likewise, if your plans do happen to change, please call Joan Harrison at (780) 467-3885 to let her know. Thank you to all those individuals who are making the telephone calls. If you are willing to assist, please contact Joan as well because we sometimes need substitute callers.

I will be volunteer teaching in Bujumbura, Burundi, Africa for three months from January 12 to April 12, 2009. If you have any concerns about membership during that time, please call Bernie Lemay at (780) 469-5031. Changes to e-mail addresses can be sent to Joyce Lukasiewich at ertanewsletter@edmontonrta.org

Maurine Maslen

RETIREE BRUNCHES

Irl Miller will host two ERTA brunches for new as well as current Edmonton and area retirees after Christmas at the University of Alberta Faculty Club.

The first one is planned for Saturday, January 24, 2009. The brunch costs \$18.00 per person. We usually meet between 11:15 and 11:30 a.m. in the lounge on the lower floor. Courtesy parking is available in the parking lot located on the corner of 114 Street and Saskatchewan Drive (entry located on 114 Street) immediately west of the Faculty Club. Please telephone Vi Oko at (780) 459-8013 or Ed Friss at (780) 476-5924 if you plan to attend. Retirees are encouraged to bring a spouse, a colleague or a friend.

The small group setting provides a relaxed environment in which to meet members of the ERTA executive, connect with old friends and acquaintances, and become better informed regarding retiree issues.

BURUNDI CALLING

Several ERTA members belong to a group called Friendship Force. Groups of people from other countries travel to Canada and

we host them; groups of people from Edmonton and district travel to other countries and are hosted. Last year some of our members visited Burundi, one of the ten poorest countries in the world.

In order to advance the economy of the country, Burundi has joined the East African Economic Union. To become a member, English had to be adopted as an official language. By learning English and attending English-speaking universities, trade with other countries will increase and more advanced education can be achieved.

While members of the Edmonton Friendship Force (EFF) were in Burundi, they saw the work the Burundi Friendship Force (BFF) is doing to improve and advance education in Bujumbura, the capital city. An abandoned seminary is being refurbished for the set up of an English immersion school with a day care, Kindergarten and Grade One already in place and Grade Two being developed next year. In the evening, two classes of adults are working on basic English skills. Apparently, a program has been set up to feed a meal to, and work with, street students.

Last July, five members of the BFF visited Edmonton. One of their members, with the help of EFF members Diana McIntyre and Norma Davis, met with some teachers who were interested in going to Burundi to assist with developing curriculum, teaching English, and setting up the school. Barb Olynyk, who is an ERTA member and Carol Bahry are returning after working there for three months. Maurine Maslen, the ERTA Membership Co-ordinator, will be gone January 12 to April 12 to work in the school. These volunteers have paid for their flights, all immunization and other associated costs. Once there, food and accommodation is supplied. Diana has arranged for two containers of school supplies, including books, papers and desks to be shipped. She took out a personal loan to cover the expenses and is still fundraising to pay it back.

For more information you can contact Maurine Maslen at (780) 418-8032 or Diana McIntyre at (780) 469-4140.

AGM REPORT

- Representatives of the fourteen branches in Alberta and the satellite branch in the Okanagan were present at the ARTA Annual General Meeting held at Barnett House on Wednesday, October 2, 2008.
- The next issue of the ARTA *News & Views* will be printed in colour.
- David Flower, *News & Views* editor, needs a bank of stories that he can use for future issues. Front page photographs will be gratefully accepted as well.
- Receipts for the year ending June 30, 2008 amounted to \$455,776.00, while disbursements totalled \$381,509.00 leaving a net income of \$74,267.00.
- ARTA has net assets of \$353,353.00.
- Projected income for 2008-2009 is \$587,244.00. Budgeted expenses are expected to reach \$564,390.00 resulting in an excess of \$39,429.00.
- Emilian Groch, ARTF CEO, reported that the 20,796 pensions paid in the past year totalled approximately \$530 million.
- New bylaws relating to the ARTA Health and Wellness Trust were approved.
- Paul Boisvert of St. Paul is the new ARTA president.
- ERTA members Irl Miller and Esther Oaks were elected to the Strategic Planning Committee to two- and three-year terms respectively.
- A new member, Frances Tallon was elected to the Representative Committee.

SURVEY RESULTS

The 38 responses to the questionnaire in the September newsletter represented the

points of view of slightly over 10% of the 365 ERTA newsletter recipients. Your comprehensive remarks provided the ERTA Executive with pertinent feedback. Thank you very much for taking the time to record your thoughts. The supplemental suggestions were genuinely appreciated.

A trip to the Rosebud Theatre was the most popular choice followed closely by a tour of the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute, the Devonian Botanic Garden, the National Institute for Nanotechnology, the Mayfield or Jubilations Theatre and a Hutterite colony as well as the retiree branches and a steam train ride to Stettler.

The least popular activities included a trip to the Legal or Stony Plain murals, a corn maze and the Multicultural Heritage Centre.

The ERTA Executive is currently planning a couple of outings for the membership.

PENSION REPORT

While the recent Memorandum of Agreement (January 31, 2008) that was negotiated between the government and the ATA removes a major hurdle facing active teachers today, it does not take into account any of the concerns of retired teachers. Although the Alberta government has assumed responsibility for the post 1992 unfunded liability, it has not as yet paid it off. The debt is still growing!

The Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) has identified four major areas that need to be addressed as soon as possible:

- Representation – Presently the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta Government negotiate pension issues that affect retired teachers. ARTA, representing 19,000 retired teachers, feels it best understands our needs and concerns. ARTA needs to have a voice at the negotiating table when pension matters are discussed. The Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund does not make policy; it only administers the fund.

- COLA – Cost of Living payments are currently calculated on the following formula:
 - Pre 1992 service x .6 x Consumer Price Index (CPI) added with
 - Post 1992 service x .7 x CPI equals the amount of COLA.
 As retired teachers advance in age their pension eventually approaches or falls below the poverty line. A full COLA would help alleviate this problem.
- Rollbacks – The teachers who retired after the 5% rollback was put in effect, and who retired prior to the large settlement of 2003, need to receive some compensation for the sacrifices they made on behalf of this province. Many teachers retired prior to Premier Klein living up to his promise of paying back the 5% reduction. As a result, they have been receiving lower lifetime pension payments. For example, a teacher who retired in 1998 will sacrifice over \$90,000 of pensionable earnings over 30 years.
- Bridging – In all provinces except Alberta and Manitoba teachers retiring before age 65, with a full index of 85, receive a full 2% credit for each pensionable year. Teachers in Alberta must wait until they reach the age of 65 and receive CPP to attain the promised benefit of 2% pension. Bridging would make a difference of \$10,000 between age 55 and 65.

A brief expounding on the above issues was presented by the ARTA Pension Committee to the Honourable Dave Hancock, Minister of Alberta Education, in a face-to-face meeting last spring.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Project Adult Literacy Society (PALS)

The Project Adult Literacy Society (PALS) needs volunteers to mentor adult students who want to improve their basic mathematics, reading, writing or speaking skills in English as a second language through one-on-one tutoring, small group work in ESL conversation circles, workshops and field trips. For further information, please contact Bridget Mroczko, Volunteer Co-ordinator, at (780) 424-5514.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is recruiting for the following volunteer positions at its project in Northeast Edmonton. Tuesday to Saturday shifts are available. They are booking shifts from now until March. Groups are also welcome. Contact Kim at ksherwood@edmonton.hfh.org or (780) 479-3566 ext 232.

Construction Volunteers: General construction work – beginner to trades people welcome. Equipment, tools and hands-on training are supplied.
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. shift

Crew Leader Volunteers: Lead small groups under the supervision of their staff. Strong communication skills and some construction knowledge required.
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. shift

Site Host Volunteers: Host the volunteers on the job site. Must be friendly, hospitable and have mobility enough to be on a job site.
8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. shift.

Become a Hope Builder...

New Hands November Campaign!

Give the ultimate gift this year – your helping hands to families in need! No experience required – we will teach you how to build a home and hope!
www.hfh.org/volunteer

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Executrade currently has several temporary job opportunities that involve clerical processing of student exams for Alberta Education. Applicants require basic computer skills, keen attention to detail, enthusiasm while completing repetitive tasks and the ability to lift up to 30 lbs. A security/criminal check is required.

DATES:

Late November 2008 until mid December 2008

Middle of January 2009 for 2–3 weeks

RATE: \$13.25/hour

LOCATIONS:

November/December session –
West Edmonton

January/February 2009 session –
Downtown Edmonton.

For further details, applicants may contact Marilyn Chorney at (780) 944-0023 or e-mail your resume to marilyn.chorney@executrade.com

required in order to participate in the competitions. It is essential that you contact the activity contact person at least one week prior to the competition date. For a hundred-dollar registration fee, zone qualifiers will be provided with all meals, accommodation and transportation to all competition venues for the duration of the Games. Zone buses will transport competitors (free of charge) to the Games for those individuals who prefer not to drive. Get involved!

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contact Number</u>
Alpine Skiing	Dec 11	Bruce Foy (780) 436-7142
Carpet Bowling	Jan 6	Oréus Duquette (780) 476-7155
Cross-Country Skiing	Dec 13/Jan 10	Marshal Yarencio (780) 434-1754
Hockey	TBA	Gord Severin (780) 430-6827
Ice Curling	Jan 10 – 11	Rollie Ulmer (780) 466-4221
Snooker	Dec 5	Leo Giesinger (780) 451-2953
Table Tennis	Dec 8	Joe Zombor (780) 476-8145

2009 ALBERTA 55 PLUS WINTER GAMES

The 2009 Alberta 55 Plus Winter Games will be held in Lethbridge February 19-22. All Alberta residents 55 years of age or older by December 31, 2009 are eligible to compete in playoffs for any of the 12 activities – alpine skiing, badminton, carpet bowling, cross-country skiing, duplicate bridge, euchre, five-pin bowling, hockey, ice curling, shuffleboard, snooker and table tennis – in the zone in which they reside.

Although qualifiers in a number of activities have already been determined, the Zone 6 (Edmonton) playoffs listed below are scheduled to be held on dates following the publication of this newsletter. Age categories vary depending on the activity. A fifteen-dollar ASCSRA membership is

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

As You Prepare For Christmas
As you prepare for Christmas
May gladness fall like Christmas snow
Around you everywhere you go;
May the Christmas Star above
Shed light on you and those you love.
And may there be enough goodwill
Your stocking and your heart to fill---
And last of all, a word of cheer
To bless you through the coming year.

Dorothy Dowling