



Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

www.edmontonrta.org

December 2011



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CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our Christmas luncheon at the

Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 7, 2011

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast turkey buffet

Cost: \$20 per person (includes GST and gratuity)

Entertainment: Music by the ESSOTONES

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

PLEASE NOTE

A member of the Telephone Committee will contact you prior to December 1st in order to provide an accurate count for our caterer.

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

Donations to the Youth Emergency Shelter Society are appreciated.

THE EXECUTIVE

President:
Vi Oko,
780-459-8013

Vice-President:
Mike Mort,
780-761-5027

Treasurer:
Bernie Lemay,
780-469-5031

Membership Co-ordinator:
Maurine Maslen,
780-418-8032

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Change is in the air!

Elections in several provinces and territories resulted in a change of government or, at least, a change in leadership, as was the case in Alberta.

Tyrants were violently overthrown or met their demise as the desire for change swept through North Africa and the Middle East. Protesters are demanding power for the people; they are defiant in the face of military violence because change has not been effected expeditiously.

Demands for change in the way governments respond to the need for debt reduction and the implementation of fiscal austerity measures in the eurozone nations were met with some hesitation and even the threat of default. Those most directly affected demonstrated—sometimes even resorting to violence. The Greek and Italian sovereign debt woes and the demand for change led to the resignation of the former leaders and change at the helm.

The protest movement that began on Wall Street quickly went global: demonstrators denounced economic inequality worldwide. Tent cities sprang up in major cities across North America. Despite the arrival of winter, the Occupy groups have become firmly entrenched in public parks. Will they be able to effect change?

The stock market fluctuates dramatically at the mere hint of change.

As we look forward in anticipation of yet another festive season, we yearn for change: a change in the weather, a change of scenery, a change in the cost of commodities, and a change in the level of hurt and violence in the world.

May the hope for peace in this world be the gift we give each other this Christmas season.

May the spirit of Christmas that forever endures,

Leave its richest blessings in the heart of you and yours.

—Anonymous

DATES TO REMEMBER

Christmas Luncheon	December 7, 2012
Executive Meeting	February 15, 2012
Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention	March 1 & 2, 2012
Spring Luncheon	March 21, 2012
Second Wind Conference	April 11, 2012
Retiree Brunch	April 21, 2012
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	May 23, 2012

SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE MEETING

On November 2, 2011, the following topics were discussed and decisions made at the ERTA executive meeting held at the Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre:

- A rebate of prepaid membership fees will be issued to retired teachers who are granted a life membership.
- An attempt will be made to arrange for rides for members who otherwise are unable to attend ERTA functions (see Volunteer Drivers).
- The ARTA Health and Wellness Benefit Plan is a 'white hat' insurance plan; services increase instead of premiums decrease whenever a surplus in the reserve occurs.
- A traditional turkey dinner will be served at the luncheon on December 7. Monetary donations will be forwarded to the Youth Emergency Shelter Society.
- A specialist from the Legal Resource Centre of Alberta will be the guest speaker at the spring luncheon.
- Tickets are reserved for the Wednesday, May 23, 2012 theatrical production of *Chicago* (see Mayfield Dinner Theatre).
- An ARTA retreat is planned for midwinter.
- A \$500 donation to the ARTA University of Alberta Endowment Award was approved.
- Joan Harrison, Mike Mort and Sherry Robbins offered to man the display table at the Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention.
- The contribution of \$25 was authorized for prizes at the ARTA Memorial Golf Tournament to be hosted by the St. Albert and Area Retired Teachers' Association on June 18, 2012.
- Plans for the Second Wind Conference are being finalized (see Second Wind Conference 2012).

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

ERTA has 311 paid members—160 of which have indicated that they wish to have their newsletters delivered by regular mail and 151 who prefer to receive them electronically. The total includes five honorary life, seven life and three complimentary memberships, which were granted to this year's new retirees.

If anyone knows of a new retiree, please bring them to an ERTA event or give them my contact information (found on the front page of this newsletter) so that they, too, can be accorded a one-year complimentary membership. New members help to maintain the viability of this organization by replacing members who move, become ill or pass away. They may eventually even assume an active role on the Executive and plan events for the membership.

A former honorary life member, Isabel Margaret Elizabeth Smith, succumbed to illness on January 4, 2011. Born in Tofield to English immigrants, Isabel attended the Vermilion School of Agriculture and the University of Alberta, graduating with a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Household Economics degree. During the early years of her chosen profession, Isabel introduced the Home Economics program to schools in five rural towns in central Alberta. Following the untimely death of her professional engineer husband, Captain Jack Smith, early in their marriage, she worked for the Correspondence Branch and the Edmonton Public School Board. She concluded her teaching career as a Home Economics consultant. Isabel, as an active teacher, served as president of the Home Economics Association for several years and, in retirement, at the helm of the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association for many, many years.

Patricia McHonick, a Telephone Committee member, and Everett Hunt, a long-time member, passed away recently as well.

Ray Roy has graciously agreed to design a new Association website and will, hopefully, have it operational for the next mail-out. This time, however, the postal service was utilized to send each member a newsletter.

A special thank you is extended to the executive members who help to insert

newsletters into envelopes and the phoning committee members who contact every member prior to each luncheon. Please inform these phoners of any pertinent changes to your personal contact information. Out-of-town members or members who prefer not to be called are asked to telephone Joan Harrison at 780-467-3585 if they wish to attend the event.

Maurine Maslen

NEW ARTA STAFF

Daniel Mulloy assumed his duties as the new ARTA executive director on September 26, 2011, replacing Don Mock who resigned last May after serving the Association in that capacity for five years.

Daniel earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion from the North American Baptist College, then went on to study Communication and Business Management at the University of Alberta.

He was previously employed at ATB Financial where he was responsible for budget development analysis. As the Director of Corporate Performance for the past five years, Daniel integrated budget, planning and performance in order to make strategic decisions on behalf of the City of Edmonton. Outside of the office, Daniel is very active in his community. The Kinsmen Club of Edmonton reaps the benefit of his remarkable leadership skills.

Although he has only been employed by the Association for a couple of months, Daniel is already familiar with most aspects of the organization. He is looking forward to helping the retired teachers develop an instrument to objectively measure how successfully long- and short-range goals have been achieved. Daniel intends to ensure that policies and procedures are in place that will assure the integrity of ARTA's income stream as well as enhance the management of its affairs.

A new telephone system was installed in the ARTA office once the extensive renovations were completed because ATA protocols no longer allowed ARTA to operate as a subsidiary of the ATA system. Calls to the switchboard are redirected. Dial 780-822-2400 locally or 1-855-212-2400 toll-free.

ARTA AGM REPORT

- Delegates from seventeen branches, including the satellite branch in the Okanagan, attended ARTA's 48th Annual General Meeting at Barnett House on October 4 and 5, 2011.
- Gordon Cumming, Juanita Knight and Paul Demers were elected to the positions of president, vice-president and treasurer, respectively for the upcoming year.
- Emilian Groch, Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund CEO, reported that the Fund paid \$625 million to 22,989 recipients last year—986 of which were new, down from the record high of over 1,400 that began during the 2006–2007 year. There are 219 pensioners who are ninety-five years of age or older, the oldest of which is 105. Poor returns from the world's equity markets over the past eleven years have resulted in a 3.4% shortfall. Funding deficiencies must be covered by additional contributions. As a result, active teachers can expect a contribution rate increase effective September 1, 2012. As of September 1, 2011, substitute service has been removed from the plan rules relating to re-employment of pensioners.
- Officers and committee chairs reported on their ongoing work on behalf of ARTA over the past year.
- The Visioning Committee, a sub-committee of the Benefits Committee, has completed a review of the plan administrator. A survey of Benefit Plan policyholders is currently underway.
- The Communications/Technology Committee presented a two-day computer in-service for board and branch members in both Edmonton and Calgary.
- Seven degree program students shared the sum of \$5,000 in scholarship money and six recipients of the certificate/diploma program scholarship were awarded a total of \$5,000 as well.
- The Human Resources Committee was busy staffing two key positions—that of the ARTA executive director and the *News and Views* editor.
- The Membership/Marketing Committee was a visible entity at all teachers' conventions and has launched a Branch Initiatives Grant.
- The Pension Committee continues to play an educational role, dealing with pension problems that retired teachers have encountered.
- A new initiative of the Strategic Planning Committee this year was to review all committee business plans with the goal of preparing a three-year business plan for ARTA.
- The Wellness Ad Hoc Committee has been working on identifying possible activities, strategies and resources with a pro-active focus on wellness.
- Before application for incorporation of the Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation as a society is made to Corporate Registry, the Charitable Foundation Ad Hoc Committee needs to ratify minor changes to the seventeen pages of bylaws. Further work is required before charitable status can be achieved.
- A budget projecting total revenues of \$1,108,000 and expenses of \$1,067,440 with a closing balance of \$40,560 was approved. The point was made regarding the fact that by the time the current budget is approved nearly a third of the year has gone by. The Board of Directors was instructed to bring forward a recommendation regarding the timing of the AGM.
- Some changes of a housekeeping nature were made to the existing bylaws. A notice of motion was made to change the bylaws to provide for a second vice-president to lighten the officer workload somewhat.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Several ERTA members do not attend ERTA social events simply because they are no longer able to drive. If you would like to attend a function but require transportation, please indicate so to your telephone contact person, or call Vi Oko at 780-459-8013 or Mike Mort at 780-761-5027. Individuals who are willing to pick up someone in their neighbourhood are asked to phone Vi or Mike as well.

SECOND WIND CONFERENCE 2012

Planning for the Second Wind Conference at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre on Wednesday, April 11, 2012, is progressing well. Representatives of the Edmonton, Parkland, and St. Albert and Area Retired Teachers' Associations are working together to create a fascinating day just for you and your friends to nurture your body, mind and spirit.

If you love gardening and want to know about the newest varieties of plants available; if you would like to try laughter yoga; if you are intrigued with how to keep your memory and power of concentration sharp; if you love to sing; or if you are a grandparent who is raising your grandchildren—this conference is for you. These breakout sessions are just a few of the topics being offered at the one-day convention.

The keynote speaker, Wendy Edey, from the Hope Foundation will offer a humorous and uplifting presentation about the role hope plays in our lives. An art show and sale will feature local artists. A delicious, nutritious lunch will be served at noon with entertainment provided by the Raging Grannies. In addition, there will be an opportunity to 'wine down' at the end of the conference, to relax and share the experiences of the day with colleagues and friends.

Registration forms will be available at the Christmas luncheon. More information can be obtained on the conference website <http://sites.google.com/site/edmontonsecondwind/> or by calling Lynne Duigou at 780-458-6640.

MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE

Tickets in the Broadway section at the Mayfield Dinner Theatre have been reserved for the brunch performance of the Tony, Olivier and Grammy Award-winning musical, *Chicago*, on Wednesday, May 23, 2012.

Murder, greed, exploitation and corruption are all part of the show-stopping musical numbers. The theatrical production is set in Chicago during the Roaring Twenties. Roxie Hart, an ambitious chorus girl, murders a faithless lover and convinces Amos, her hapless husband, to take the rap until he finds out that he has been duped and turns on Roxie, who is ultimately convicted and sent to death row. Roxie and another murderess, Velma Kelly, vie for the

spotlight and the headlines before joining forces in search of the American Dream and an acquittal.

Telephone Vi Oko at 780-459-8013 to reserve your seat for this popular theatrical hit, then forward a cheque for \$58 (includes GST), payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, to Vi at 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

By 1963 some retired teachers deemed that there was a need for an organization to speak with one voice for retired teachers throughout the province and thus the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) was formed. Now, almost fifty years later, the organization they envisioned continues to thrive and to change to meet the requirements of retired teachers in a fast-paced society. As the Association looks forward, the membership is appreciative of those individuals who devoted countless hours over the years to make ARTA what it is today.

ARTA will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2013. An ad hoc committee composed of a few noteworthy past presidents has been established to plan some commemorative events to mark this significant milestone.

To assist in this regard the committee members are seeking input from the membership. Anyone who has a suggestion that might be incorporated into this celebration is asked to submit it to the committee by sending an email to info@albertarta.org or calling the ARTA office at 780-822-2400 or 1-855-212-2400 (toll-free).

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Teachers Media

- Correlate international educational videos with Canadian and Nigerian curriculum
- Work from home
- Enjoy flexible hours
- Receive a three-month contract
- Attend a training session
- Earn a \$25/hour starting wage

Betty Morris can be reached at 780-719-6097 or at betty.morris@teachersmedia.ca for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**Centre for Race and Culture**

The Centre for Race and Culture is seeking volunteers to tutor refugee and immigrant junior high students in the Killarney area on Thursday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The Centre's program, the Bamboo Shield, is an intensive adolescent intervention program modelled after the Lions Quest program that provides social and life skills coaching to help participants that have grown up in challenging circumstances increase their confidence and self-esteem.

The youth and their families have specifically asked for assistance with homework, in addition to the Bamboo Shield curriculum that the Centre provides.

For more information, contact Roxanne Felix-Mah at rfelixmah@cfrac.com or 780-425-4644 ext. 6.

Strathcona County New Year's Eve Festival

Be transported to a magical world where you can share a smile with a child, create special memories that will last a lifetime and enjoy some amazing performances.

Strathcona County is looking for 200 fun-loving, enthusiastic individuals to join the festival team to make this celebration possible. If you enjoy working with children, volunteer to lead or assist with an activity at either an indoor or outdoor location on December 31, 2011, between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

You are encouraged to sign up early to ensure that you are assigned to your preferred activity. Volunteers in key positions will be required to attend an orientation; others will be invited to an orientation / walk through scheduled for approximately one week prior to the festival. A complimentary supper and beverages will be provided to the volunteers.

Share in the excitement while making a positive impact in the community.

Contact Tracy Gravelle, Event Specialist with the department of Recreation, Parks and Culture for Strathcona County, by emailing gravelle@strathcona.ab.ca or telephoning 780-464-8013.

GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT

Be generous with your time ...

Stay fully present with each encounter, as if this moment is the most important and nothing else exists.

Be generous with your words ...

Never miss an opportunity to tell someone how you feel about them or something they have done. A word of encouragement, a note of appreciation, a sincere compliment can brighten someone's day and even change a life.

Be generous with your thoughts ...

Think the best of others and see them as they would like to be and not as they are now.

Be generous with your money ...

Find an occasion to share what you have with others. Money is like love, the more you give away, the more returns to you.

Be generous with your heart ...

Keep it open, no matter how frightening that may be sometimes. An open heart will heal every ailment and restore peace to your soul.

Be generous with your smile ...

Give it away to everyone you meet and see the world reflected back to you in joyous celebration.

Be generous with your love ...

It is who you really are and why you came here and in the end, it is all that really matters anyway.

—Veronica M. Hay
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Website: <http://www.insightsandinspirations.com>