



# Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

December 2014

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Christmas Luncheon
- 2 President's Message
- 2 Mark Your Calendar
- 2 Important Luncheon News
- 2 Christmas Carols
- 2 Summary of Board Meeting
- 3 Membership Report
- 3 Stella Gamber
- 4 Irene Snatynchuk
- 4 ARTA AGM Report
- 5 Mayfield Dinner Theatre
- 5 Technology Workshop Report
- 6 ARTA Photography Contest
- 6 Employment Opportunities
- 6 Volunteer Opportunity

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our fall luncheon at the

### Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 3, 2014

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast turkey buffet

Cost: \$22.00 (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 November 26<sup>th</sup> in order to provide an accurate count for our caterer.

### **Donations to the Edmonton Seniors Centre are appreciated.**

The Edmonton Seniors Centre is a non-profit organization that offers programs and services aimed at improving quality of life and promoting the health and well-being of adults aged forty-five years and up. In addition to providing a wide variety of activities for members, they have an outreach service that works with isolated or less-able seniors in the community to help meet their respective needs.

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **President:**

Joan Harrison, 780-467-3885

### **Past President:**

Sherry Robbins, 780-437-0566

### **Vice-President:**

Eva Nolan, 780-473-9251

### **Treasurer:**

Mike Mort, 780-761-5027

### **Secretaries:**

Carol Loewen, 780-435-6832

Vi Oko, 780-459-8013

### **Membership Coordinator:**

Cliff Otto, 780-476-9264

### **Webmaster:**

Ray Roy, 780-473-5598

### **Directors:**

Veronica Hellweg, 780-456-7640

Fred Laux, 780-444-6386

Sheila MacKay, 780-466-8697

Ingrid Neitsch, 780-435-3221

Daphne Price, 780-475-1543

Beth Robinson, 780-486-5230

Shirley Strembitsky, 780-988-9195

Carol Williamson, 780-436-9684

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

A problem was once described to me as a discrepancy between what one wants to have happen and what they perceive to be happening. The wider the gap between the two perceptions and an inability to close that gap determines the degree of stress an individual feels.

As we approach the Christmas season, good wishes abound. Everywhere we hear family, friends, neighbours and colleagues warmly greeting one another with messages for peace, health, happiness and prosperity. Though sincerely meant, those greetings often belie an underlying level of stress created by the vast difference between the kind of Christmas that advertising has defined for our society over the years and what an individual sees as their own reality. Mass media paints an unrealistic picture.

What aspects of Christmas give you, and those around you, a feeling of joy and contentment? Those feelings are not derived from frantically searching for the perfect gift. Instead they are fostered by a quieter, more peaceful type of generosity on our part.

May we give to one another the gifts of our time, friendship, patience, acceptance and love. These precious gifts, which alleviate loneliness, provide comfort and lift spirits are worth more to both the recipient and giver than any object could ever be. In the words of Norman W. Brooks,

Christmas is forever, not for just one day,  
for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away  
like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf.  
The good you do for others is good you do yourself.

The Board of Directors of the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) wishes you a joyous Christmas and loving companionship throughout the new year.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Christmas Luncheon	December 3, 2014
Board of Directors Meeting	February 11, 2015
Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention	February 26 & 27, 2015
Spring Luncheon	March 18, 2015
Retiree Brunch	April 18, 2015
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	May 20, 2015

**IMPORTANT LUNCHEON NEWS**

Luncheon costs are going up. ERTA has been very fortunate in that, over the past four and a half years, the Chateau Louis has maintained the same luncheon price despite a continual rise in food costs. **The fee for future luncheons will increase to \$22.00 per person commencing with our Christmas luncheon on December 3.**

Registration for the luncheon starts twelve days before the event when our Phoning Committee begins to call all of the members. The Chateau Louis is informed of the number of registered guests the week before the luncheon, the meals are booked and ERTA is invoiced accordingly. Once booked, numbers cannot be changed so registrations after the deadline pose a problem.

**Please Note:** This year the Christmas luncheon is in the St. Michael Room which is the smaller of the two banquet rooms at the Chateau Louis. It has a capacity of 160 so registrations will have to be capped at that number.

**CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

Get ready to sing! At every Christmas luncheon, carolling booklets are distributed so we can enjoy a sing-along with the ESSOTONES. The booklets are collected after each luncheon for reuse the following year.



Now you can have your own booklet with the lyrics to even more carols by visiting [myerta.org](http://myerta.org) and downloading the PDF file which can be printed in colour or black and white.

**SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING**

The following decisions were made after much consideration at the ERTA board meeting at the Central Lions Seniors Citizens Recreational Centre on Wednesday, October 22:

- The purchase of a medium-priced computer and a back-up disk drive to store ERTA's financial records was approved.
- A \$500.00 donation to the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) University of Alberta Endowment Award was authorized.
- Brunch tickets have been purchased for the musical, *Cabaret* (see Mayfield Dinner Theatre).

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

The ERTA membership currently stands at 391, with 153 having their newsletters delivered by Canada Post and the remaining 238 via email. At the end of June this year, 118 memberships were due to be renewed. Of those, eighty-nine have renewed, leaving twenty-nine memberships yet outstanding.

Nineteen complementary memberships were issued to newly retired teachers this past year. Fifteen of them have chosen to renew their ERTA memberships. At this point, thirteen complementary memberships, which will expire on June 30, 2015, have been issued.

To assist in coordinating both ERTA and ARTA services to members, membership records are being updated to include information regarding ERTA members' current membership status with ARTA. If you have not already stated your ARTA status, email Cliff Otto at [cliffcon@telus.net](mailto:cliffcon@telus.net) or telephone him at 780-476-9264 to tell him whether or not you are a current ARTA member.

Please advise Cliff of any retired teachers who are not ERTA members and may wish to take out a membership.

Presently, ERTA has a total of twenty-one life members. Twelve of them were granted a life membership after they became nonagenarians, while nine have been awarded for outstanding service to the association.

Two more ERTA members recently celebrated their ninetieth birthdays and thus qualify for a life membership.

**Stella Gamber**, the youngest of three children, was born in Holden to a French Canadian family from Quebec on October 26, 1924. The family lived in a cabin on a farm about 100 kilometres east of Edmonton.

She rode her palomino horse to school each day for Grade One and Grade Two at East Bruce School, where her older brother was teaching.

In the summer of 1932, Stella's parents traded the family farm for a rooming house in Edmonton. They enrolled her in a French convent school in September so she would learn to read and write in French. Stella took piano and violin lessons as well. She was not at all happy at the school because the school boarded a number of tough

girls from Morinville and Legal who often stole her lunch along with her bus ticket.

Her parents transferred her to Sacred Heart School for Grade Five. Stella remained there through the junior high school grades, writing her Grade Nine departmental examinations in June 1940.

In September, she enrolled at St. Mary's High School, an all girls school, graduating in June 1943. After upgrading her English marks, Stella entered the four-month Department of Education Normal School teacher training program housed in the Garneau High School Annex because Corbett Hall was leased to the Royal Canadian Air Force during the war.

Her brother moved from Bruce to a farm northwest of Tawatinaw to teach at nearby Slough Valley School. Stella began her teaching vocation at Slough Valley in January 1945 when she took over the position he vacated to move to a farm north of Westlock so that his daughters could go to high school there.

In the fall, Stella was transferred to a country school near Colinton where she had students in all of the grades from one to nine, including eight pupils in Grade Nine who wrote the departmental examinations.

She wrote to Austin O'Brien, Superintendent of the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Board, seeking a teaching position in Edmonton.

Stella was assigned to a school at the Dunvegan Yards on St. Albert Trail. The pupils, who were the children of railroad workers, previously had a teacher who taught the same curriculum to all of the school children regardless of their age or ability. Stella was required to evaluate each of the students to determine their grade placement. A janitor was hired during the winter to heat the school and bring fresh drinking water. The pupils used outdoor bathrooms.

In 1948, she was given a Grade Four position at St. Alphonsus Catholic School where she taught Physical Education to the junior high girls and Grade Nine Oral French.

Stella married the owner of Eastwood Greenhouses in 1953 and gave birth in 1956 and again in 1957. She returned to St. Alphonsus in 1965, teaching Oral French to students in Grade Four to Grade Six until June 1981.

After retiring she and her husband purchased an acreage in Parkland County. They travelled to Alaska in a motorhome several times, crossed Canada to visit relatives in New Hampshire and went on fishing trips before he passed away in 1991.

Following a couple of hip replacements, Stella moved from the acreage into a villa in Spruce Grove. She continues to be alert, high-spirited and independent.

**Irene Snatynchuk** was born on September 27, 1924, in Chipman, Alberta, the second of nine children in a farm family. She attended Lwiw, a two-room school that housed all of the grades from one to twelve. After graduating from Hilliard High School, Irene enrolled at the Edmonton Normal School.

She began her teaching career at Padola, a one-room school southeast of Chipman, instructing students in Grade One to Grade Nine. After a year at Padola, she spent two years at Ranfurly, another rural one-room school. In 1946, Austin O'Brien, the superintendent of the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Board, offered Irene a Grade Five placement at St. Edmund Catholic School, where she taught for six years.

She was married in 1949 and continued to teach until June 1952, before taking some time away from the classroom to give birth to two boys and a girl.

Irene joined the staff at St. Pius X Elementary/Junior High School in the fall of 1961, where she taught Grade Six until her retirement twenty-four years later, in 1985.

Irene received her BEd degree in the early '70s by taking evening and summer school courses for several years subsequent to her return to the classroom after the birth of her children.

Beginning in 1974 and for ten years thereafter, Irene took a two-week unpaid leave so that she and her husband could spend a month in Hawaii at Christmastime. During that time, they also spent every Spring Break in Spokane, often accompanied by staff members from St. Pius X. They parked their recreation vehicle in Penticton for two weeks each summer as well.

Each winter from 1990 to 1993, Irene and her husband spent a month in the Florida sunshine.

Two of her children took oil painting lessons. Eventually Irene and her husband enrolled in the lessons too. In retirement, she enjoyed reading, oil painting, cross-stitching, and making perogies for her children and four grandchildren. She was also actively involved in a women's group in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, at one point helping with the catering at St. Basil's Cultural Centre.

Irene and her husband returned to Hawaii again in 1999 for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, just months before he passed away in January of 2000.

Irene was hospitalized for over three months when she was struck by a van in September of 2000 and she underwent critical surgery for a brain tumour in 2002.

She continued to travel, going to Las Vegas, the Carolinas and on a Via Rail trip across Canada from Vancouver to Halifax that she won through Armstrong Cheese.

Although she has been a resident of Rosedale Assisted Living since 2004, Irene continues to maintain a level of independence.

Cliff Otto

### ARTA AGM REPORT

- Delegates representing all eighteen ARTA branches, along with members of the Board of Directors, met at the Chateau Nova Yellowhead for the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on October 1 and 2.
- Officers, committees, branch presidents and liaison appointees shared their association initiatives and branch highlights. Officer and committee elections were held as well.
- Juanita Knight, Marilyn Bossert and Paul Demers were elected to their respective positions of president, vice-president and treasurer by acclamation.
- ARTA has 14,708 members with 73% of them enrolled in the ARTA Retiree Benefits Plan.
- At the end of the last fiscal year, investments in the ARTA Benefit Plan Trust Fund were valued at over eleven million dollars.
- ARTA was officially recognized as a special local of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)
- Additional staff were hired in response to increased demands on the ARTA office.

- After receiving input from ARTA members with a vested interest and conducting a comparative analysis, a consulting firm, commissioned for the purpose, proposed an optimal organizational structure for the association. Implementation of any of the recommendations requires board approval.
- A grand total of 87,436,947 steps were recorded by those ARTA members who participated in the ARTA Great Walking Challenge.
- The accounting system instituted by ARTA tracks every aspect of the organization's undertaking, making the financial operation totally transparent.
- Office expansion in the coming year will accommodate a boardroom, storage for all computer servers and records, interview rooms and more space for key personnel. The ATA has agreed to pay \$37,000 in reallocation fees. ARTA has budgeted \$55,000 to furnish the new space.
- Revenue for the past year amounted to \$1,827,393 while disbursements totalled to \$1,755,316. Additional income of \$9,412 combined with the end-of-year balance resulted in \$81,489 in receipts over expenditures. A budget of \$2,058,000 for the year ending June 30, 2015, was ratified. ARTA's balance sheet has grown tenfold over the last eight years.
- As of August 31, 2014, approximately \$752 million was paid to 25,541 Alberta retired teachers, 1214 of which retired in the past year. The assets of the post-August 1992 Teachers' Pension Plan were \$10.6 billion.
- A number of ERTA members serve ARTA in various capacities. Robin Carson is the editor of *news & views*, Irl Miller is an interim board member of the Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation, Ingrid Neitsch was re-elected to her position on the Wellness Committee, Esther Oaks and Vi Oko are members of the Governance Committee, Sherry Robbins chairs the Membership/Marketing Committee and Ray Roy is the chair of the Communications/Technology Committee.
- ARTA is experiencing exponential growth and is constantly seeking to provide more opportunities and resources for its members.

### **MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE**

Mayfield Dinner Theatre tickets have been purchased in the Broadway section for the brunch performance of *Cabaret* on Wednesday, May 20, 2015. Set in the seedy Kit Kat Club in 1931 Berlin, this award-winning presentation features unforgettable characters and cheeky musical numbers.

Reserve your seat early for this daring classic by handing Vi Oko a cheque for \$71.40, payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, or by mailing it to her at 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5.

### **TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP REPORT**

Locating the computer lab in the basement of the Cameron Library on a campus, which has changed so dramatically since the last visit, was made easier by the staff at the Technology Training Centre. Signs directed thirty-one brave, curious people to the technology lab for the workshop on September 24, 2014, that many reported was fantastic.

The instruction was excellent, the information was relevant, the instructors were patient and well-organized, and appropriate skills were taught in a relaxed manner. Some participants arrived totally frustrated, confused and terrified about whether there was any hope of becoming computer literate. They left feeling confident that the machine would not break and, while there is a never-ending set of skills to learn, this first step was a great beginning. Enthusiasm for another workshop was even expressed.

In addition to the presentations by Kevin Moffatt and Sue Gordichuk, the day was a success due to the efforts of Esther Oaks who registered the workshop participants, organized the catering and responded to so many queries and to Sandy Robertson who made the on-site arrangements.

The cost of the instructional component of the workshop was subsidized by a \$1300.00 ARTA grant. A full day of training was made possible for only the cost of lunch and refreshments. Participants were even offered a sweet roll to start off the day. What a gift to our members!

We were thrilled to see so many risk coming that day to enhance their computer skills. We hope to see you at the next workshop.

## **ARTA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**

The first photography contest, sponsored by ARTA in 2013 as part of their 50th anniversary celebration, was a great success with over fifty participants submitting many excellent prints. The winner of the animal life category was Thanh Hau, an ERTA member.

With the success of the initial contest, ARTA has made the photography contest an annual event. This year congratulations again go to Thanh whose print, entitled *Blizzard*, was the winning entry in the black and white winter category.

All regular and affiliate ARTA members are encouraged to participate in the third annual photography contest. The theme for the 2015 contest is nature scenery with no man-made structures. The first three categories involve nature scenery in Alberta, Canada and in other lands, respectively. There is no limitation on the black and white subject in the fourth category.

As in prior contests, entries must be 5" x 7" or 8" x 10", mounted on rigid backing and received in the ARTA office by the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Visit the ARTA website, [www.arta.net](http://www.arta.net), for complete contest details.

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

A request has been made by the Edmonton Human Resources Cluster to place job postings on the ERTA website and in our newsletters.

Their office facilitates recruitment for the six following organizations:

- ABC Head Start
- Boyle Street Community Services
- Canadian Mental Health Association—Edmonton Region
- Edmonton John Howard Society
- Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre
- Terra Centre

As a service to our membership and community, from time to time, available positions will be posted on the ERTA website. The postings will include references to responsibilities, required qualifications, and salary as well as information about the application process and closing date.

When the timing coordinates with the mail-out of the quarterly newsletters, the position along with a short job description will be included in the

newsletter along with a link for accessing the job profile.

Please note that most positions require a current police information check, a vulnerable sector check (Edmonton Police Service) as well as an intervention record check (Edmonton Region Child and Family Services).

### **Casual Child Care Provider**

The Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre is seeking a qualified candidate for a Casual Child Care Provider position. Go online to [hr@careersforcommunity.ca](mailto:hr@careersforcommunity.ca) and click on the Norwood Centre tab to check out the position description and qualification requirements. This position will stay open until a suitable candidate is found.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

### **Volunteer Drivers**

Lifestyle Helping Hands Seniors Association (LHSA) is a registered, non-profit society that assists southwest Edmonton seniors to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. The association provides volunteer drivers to help seniors meet their transportation needs.

LHSA is in need of some drivers for the winter season. A police information check and proof of insurance coverage are required. Volunteers select times when they are available and receive an honorarium for fuel costs.

Additional information is available online at <http://www.lhhsa.org> or by calling 780-450-2113. A brochure will be on hand at the luncheon.



*Wishing you all the joys  
and wonders of Christmas...  
May this festive season fill your life  
with bright and precious moments...  
And bring you of lots of  
sweet and pleasant surprises.*

***Merry Christmas***