



Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

December 2015

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CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our Christmas luncheon at the

Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 2, 2015

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 25 in order to provide an accurate count for our caterer.

Donations to the Edmonton Seniors Centre are appreciated.

The Edmonton Seniors Centre is a not-for-profit organization that offers programs and services aimed at improving the quality of life and promoting the health and well-being of adults aged forty-five years and up. In addition to providing a variety of activities for members, it has 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

Nadine Lung, 780-416-1312

Sheila MacKay, 780-466-8697

Ingrid Neitsch, 780-435-3221

Beth Robinson, 780-486-5230

Shirley Strembitsky, 780-988-9195

Carol Williamson, 780-436-9684

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Often, the December president's message in the newsletter focuses on Christmas and the season of gift giving, good wishes and holiday cheer. The message, however, is typically written around Remembrance Day, as it was in this case.

In watching the ceremonies and listening to the touching stories about the veterans who fought for us, it seems that their incredible gifts should be acknowledged—especially at Christmas time.

Theirs is the gift of peace allowing us to live life without fear and conflict. It is the gift of freedom to worship and celebrate in any way we choose. Governor General David Johnson emphasized, in a Remembrance Day message given in 2014, that freedom without peace is agony, and peace without freedom is slavery. Peace and freedom are precious gifts indeed. How can we thank them?

Gratitude is expressed at ceremonies around the country for the high price paid by so many soldiers who are not here to enjoy the benefits of their gifts to us. We can thank them by ensuring their legacy continues. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

Working at it we are. Daily, people are speaking out against intolerance, advocating acceptance, extending the hand of friendship, helping those in need and trying to right the wrong done by those who do not recognize the value of peace. Together we can make a difference.

The Board of Directors of the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association wishes you a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Christmas Luncheon	December 2, 2015
Board of Directors Meeting	February 10, 2016
Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention	February 25 & 26, 2016
Spring Luncheon	March 16, 2016
Technology Workshop	April 6, 2016
Writer's Workshop	April 18, 2016
Retiree Brunch	April 23, 2016
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	May 18, 2016

CHRISTMAS CAROL BOOKLET

Carol singing with music by the ESSOTONES is one of the highlights at the Christmas luncheon. Everyone can add their voice to the sing-a-long by using the booklets provided. Of course we ask that you leave the books with us for next year but a booklet in PDF format is available from www.myerta.org for download in either full colour or black and white. In it are the words to forty-five traditional Christmas carols.



SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) made the following decisions at the board meeting held on Tuesday, October 27, 2015, at the Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreational Centre:

- A technology workshop has been scheduled for the ERTA membership (see Technology Workshop).
- A writer's workshop is being planned as well (see Writer's Workshop).
- Tickets have been purchased for a second Mayfield Dinner Theatre production (see Mayfield Dinner Theatre).
- A \$ 500.00 contribution to the University of Alberta Endowment Award was authorized.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Current total membership	409
<i>Regular</i>	386
<i>Complimentary</i>	23
Newsletter delivery method	
<i>Canada Post</i>	152
<i>Email</i>	256
<i>No newsletter (by request)</i>	1
Memberships due June 30, 2015	129
<i>Regular</i>	115
<i>Complimentary</i>	14
Outstanding memberships	51
<i>Regular</i>	43
<i>Complimentary</i>	8
Life members.....	21
<i>Nonagenarian</i>	13
<i>Honorary</i>	8

Another ERTA member will be granted a life membership at the December luncheon.

Marie Anne Irene Demers was born in Mallaig, Alberta, on October 16, 1925, the youngest of seven children of French Canadian parents.

She went to the school in town for the first four grades then attended the Grassy Island School outside of town for Grade Five to Grade Nine. Since her father was on the local school board, some Grade Ten then Grade Eleven subjects were added. Irene took additional courses by correspondence, subsequently staying at the convent in St. Paul in order to take her Grade Twelve. She completed the remaining credits required by correspondence the following year in order to qualify for post-secondary education.

Irene attended Normal School in Edmonton for three months in the fall of 1944 before being assigned to teach all eight grades in a one-room school at St. Edouard near St. Paul.

She began teaching Grade Three in St. Paul in September of 1946 and taught Grade Four in her third term in St. Paul before getting married in 1948. She taught for one more year before her son was born in October 1949. Irene was back in the classroom in September 1950 teaching Grade Seven before she had two more children. She replaced a teacher on pregnancy leave in March of 1952 and continued to teach until June 1955 when her family moved to Edmonton.

Irene was offered a job teaching the three upper elementary grades in a classroom at the convent early in September. She taught French in three different elementary schools for the Edmonton Catholic School Board the following two years before her husband moved the family to Camrose in 1959.

She became the principal of a three-room school at Ferintosh, forty kilometers south of Camrose, where she taught the junior high class.

Irene was back in Edmonton in 1960 teaching at St. Matthew School. When St. Cecilia Junior High was built three years later, she taught there until 1969 when she took a sabbatical leave to become a full-time student at the University of Alberta. She received her Bachelor of Education Degree in 1972 after two more years at summer school.

She taught French at Archbishop O'Leary High School from 1970 to 1974.

Irene was the assistant supervisor of French for the Catholic School Board before becoming the vice-principal at J.H. Picard School for four years. Throughout that time she enrolled in night school courses, earning an Educational Administration certificate in 1980.

Following her retirement in 1985, Irene and her husband travelled to Australia twice to visit their daughter who was living there. They toured New Zealand, Hawaii and Fiji on those trips. She has also been on two cruises to the Caribbean and recently toured the east coast of Canada.

She began knitting sweaters after her retirement before taking up cross-stitching.

She became the first female administrator of a Catholic church in Edmonton two years after her retirement. She stayed on to work for her parish in other capacities for a further nine years.

A year ago macular degeneration robbed her of her ability to drive and to cross-stitch. She is an avid reader and continues to read on her iPad.

Jean Mucha, who was awarded an honorary life membership in 2005, passed away November 5.

Jean was a proud sixth-generation descendant of one of Lord Selkirk's Red River settlers. She was born in Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1930 but received her early schooling in Cold Lake and her high school education in Jasper Place where her father was the first magistrate.

Jean was a principal for sixteen of her thirty-eight year teaching career. She received her bachelor's degree in 1965 after many years of night school and summer school. She completed her master's degree in 1979 and earned an Early Childhood Diploma in 1980. Jean held various positions in the ATA local and also served as a staff officer for a year.

Upon retirement in 1986, she was active in an incredible number of organizations and received numerous honours and awards in recognition of her outstanding service to the community.

Jean spent most of her last five years in long-term care.

Cliff Otto

ARTA AGM REPORT

- On October 6 and 7, sixty-nine representatives of the eighteen branches of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA), eleven staff members and some special guests gathered at the Chateau Nova on the Yellowhead for the association's Annual General Meeting. Committee and branch reports were shared and officer and committee elections were held.
- Both Juanita Knight and Marilyn Bossert were re-elected by acclamation to their respective positions of president and vice-president. The new treasurer is Dolaine Koch from Sherwood Park.
- The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART) advocated on behalf of seniors throughout Canada during the recent federal election campaign by providing a pamphlet as an insert in the *news&views* magazine, to be used to open a discussion with political candidates across the country.
- The ARTA website was redeveloped this year. Branch website in-services are planned for this fall and again in the spring.
- ARTA, in conjunction with the Ontario Retired Teachers' Association, was invited to take part in a federal government research project involving seniors in Canada.
- ARTA, along with ASEBP (the administrator of the benefit plan) and in partnership with Dr. Jeff Johnson (from the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta and Chair of the ACHORD Group), has commenced a three-year diabetes research project.
- A dramatic increase in travel insurance claims this past year can be attributed in part to the differential between the Canadian and US dollar.
- As of June 30, 2015, the market value of the joint education and public sector Benefit Plan Trust Fund accounts was \$12,314,152, an overall increase of 5.35%.
- Revenue for the last fiscal year amounted to \$2,187,882 while expenses were \$1,797,998, resulting in a year-end balance of \$389,884. A projected budget for \$2,425,698 for the upcoming year was ratified.
- A restructuring recommendation will be put into effect this year creating an Executive Committee as well as reducing the number of standing committees from nine to six.

- ARTA is planning to fund a half-time ASEBP health resource person who will serve as a body composition clinician and tend to other health-related matters for the membership.
- Since the Alberta Retired Teachers Charity Foundation has finally received a registered charitable number from the Canada Revenue Agency, receipts can be issued for income tax purposes.
- Long-term care for seniors continues to be a major concern for the Seniors Task Force for Public Interest Alberta. Sarah Hoffman, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Seniors has indicated that her goal is to work toward improving the seniors care system.
- The ATA Educational Trust has named their bursary fund the Dr. B.T. Keeler Continuing Education Bursary in Bernie's memory.
- Adreinne Coull, Ingrid Neitsch, Esther Oaks, Vi Oko and Ray Roy are ERTA members who currently serve on an ARTA committee. A sixth branch member, Robin Carson, is the editor of the *news&views* magazine.
- The Alberta Retired Teachers' Association is a thriving organization focussed on providing services for its members.

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

So you have decided to update to Windows 10 and now you are struggling with how to use its many features. Help is at hand. You are invited to attend a full-day workshop with Kevin Moffatt on April 6, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the University of Alberta Technology Training Centre in the Cameron Library. This workshop will include file management tips (how to create folders and move files to organize your work). The capacity of the lab is 23, so register early.

The cost for the day is \$20.00, which includes refreshments and a catered lunch. Phone Veronica Hellweg at 780-456-7640 or you can email her at hellwegv@telus.net to sign up or to obtain more information. Registration forms will be available at the December luncheon.



MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE

Revisit the 1970s and the Age of Aquarius at the brunch presentation of the rock musical, *Hair*, at the Mayfield Dinner Theatre on May 18, 2016.

Set in an East Village park in New York City, *Hair* is the musical story about a group of hippies who celebrate peace and love and use sex and drugs to evade reality. When one of them is drafted, their free spirit is challenged.

Even though the original Broadway production was rather risqué, the theatre audience can be assured that the performance at the Mayfield will be suggestive without being provocative.

Availability is limited despite the fact the show does not open until mid-April. Forward Vi Oko a cheque for \$71.40, payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, at 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5. Seating will be reserved on a first come, first served basis.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Do you have that special story to write? Are you thinking about committing your family history to paper but do not know how to begin? Or perhaps you have a classroom episode to share but you are wary about your creative talent. Fear not because help is on the way.

Robin Carson, the editor of the ARTA magazine, has offered to share his expertise at a one-hour writer's workshop on Monday, April 18, 2016, at the Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Telephone Vi Oko at 780-459-8013 to register or sign up at the luncheon on December 2. Early registration is encouraged so that arrangements for the appropriate-sized room can be made to accommodate workshop participants.

The workshop fee has been set at \$20.00. A high registration could result in a fee reduction.



IN FLANDERS FIELDS

The year 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the writing of *In Flanders Fields*, a poem written by a Canadian that is recited during Remembrance Day ceremonies in Canada and around the world.

The author, John McCrae, was born in Guelph, Ontario, on November 30, 1872. Described as warm and sensitive, he was also a man of high principles and strong spiritual values who had compassion for both people and animals.

He was interested in the military as a young boy, joining a cadet corps at fourteen and enlisting in a militia field battery commanded by his father at seventeen.

John began writing poetry while he was a student at the local collegiate. He graduated at sixteen and was the first Guelph student to win a scholarship to the University of Toronto.

A veteran of the South African War (1899-1902), John began World War 1 as a brigade-surgeon with the rank of Major and second-in-command at Neuve Chapelle in France.

The Canadians moved to Flanders, taking up a position in the trenches around the Belgian town of Ypres. On April 22, the Germans used deadly chlorine gas against the Allied troops. Canadian soldiers distinguished themselves by holding the line for another sixteen days. John was in charge of a medical aid post in a dugout cut into the bank of the Yser Canal where he attended to hundreds of wounded soldiers daily, surrounded by the dead and dying.

On May 2, John's good friend was blown apart by enemy artillery fire. He completed the poem the following day while sitting on the back step of an ambulance. Poppies were beginning to bloom between the crosses in the fields around him and birds were singing despite the noise of the battle.

John did not work on the poem again until he was transferred to the hospital at Boulogne where he was the chief of medical services. After his poem was rejected by *Spectator*, a British magazine, he submitted it to *Punch* where it was published anonymously in its December 8, 1915 issue.

John McCrae died of pneumonia and meningitis on January 28, 1918, and was buried in the field near Flanders.

ARTA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Who knew how much photographic talent there was among ARTA members! Entries for the last photography contest were fabulous so contest organizers are eagerly looking forward to the 2016 submissions. Detailed information about the current contest can be accessed online at www.arta.net/arta-2016-photo-contest/ or can be found in the fall edition of *news&views*. Submissions must be received by May 31.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

University Research Committee Work

The Research Ethics Office at the University of Alberta is looking for volunteers to work on ethics review committees. The committees review staff and student research projects that involve living human participants and all research, teaching and testing that make use of animals.

Volunteers should neither be researchers nor be affiliated with the university. Those individuals who understand scientific terminology and have computer skills are preferred. They should also be willing to do the following:

- Make a three-year commitment;
- Attend monthly meetings; and
- Review written materials online prior to meetings.

The university provides an orientation, training, parking permits, coffee and cookies (on meeting days) and offers its sincere gratitude.

If you are interested in this opportunity to get an inside perspective on university research, please contact Susan Babcock, the Executive Director (Acting), at the Research Ethics Office.

Email: susan.babcock@ualberta.ca
 Telephone: 780-492-6561
 Website: www.reo.ualberta.ca

MAGNA CARTA TOUR

The Magna Carta and Charter of the Forest are on display in the Borealis Gallery of the Federal Building located on the corner of 107 Street and 99 Avenue from Monday to Friday at 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on November 23 to December 29. The display is open on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 8:00 p.m.

For more information about this free event or to book a time for a group larger than ten, telephone 780-427-7362.

JUST A THOUGHT

And what I've learned is not to believe in magical leaders anymore; that character and compassion are more important than ideology; and that even if it's absurd to think that you can change things, it's even more absurd to think that it's foolish and unimportant to try.

—Peter C. Newman

Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me.

—Jill Jackson Miller and Sy Miller

CHRISTMAS WISHES

