



# Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

December 2016

www.myerta.org



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## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our Christmas luncheon at the

### Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 7, 2016

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast turkey buffet

Cost: \$25.00 (includes GST and gratuity)

Entertainment: Music by the ESSOTONES

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.



### Luncheon Registration Deadline



Please mark the **deadline** for luncheon registration on your calendar. It is **November 30**.

If a member of the Telephone Committee has not called you by 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 30, please contact Pam Roy at 780.473.5598 immediately.

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

### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:**

Joan Harrison, 780.467.3885

**Past President:**

Sherry Robbins, 780.437.0566

**Vice-President:**

Ray Roy, 780.473.5598

**Treasurer:**

Mike Mort, 780.761.5027

**Secretaries:**

Carol Loewen, 780.435.6832

Vi Oke, 780.459.8013

**Membership Coordinator:**

Cliff Otto, 780.476.9264

**Webmaster:**

Ray Roy, 780.473.5598

**Directors:**

Lynn Arnold, 780.919.5848

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**

Christmas, to me, is a delightful time of year with bright snow, glittering lights, joyful music, festive food and the laughter of friends and family who gather to celebrate. It's the social activities that foster warm feelings and a sense of belonging—a feeling I wish for all.

A priority for the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) is to provide opportunities for social engagement which, research tells us, promotes physical and emotional well-being. In short, fun is good for your health and contributes to longevity. It follows then, that getting together with friends and participating in group activities is a gift not only to those with whom you enjoy time shared but to yourself as well.

Gifts are a part of the Christmas season so it seems appropriate to mention another gift that rewards both the giver and the recipient. I refer to volunteering—giving of one's time, energy, talent, skills and knowledge, which in turn generates positive feelings and brings us all closer together.

Retired teachers are tremendous volunteers as exemplified by those individuals who contribute to the association by planning theatre outings, local tours, workshops and luncheons, as well as arranging to have interesting, informative guest speakers. A small gift of your time in filling out the interest survey, copies of which will be available at the luncheon, would assist in that planning by providing ideas and direction for future events. Your help with this endeavour would be very much appreciated.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Luncheon Registration Deadline	November 30, 2016
Christmas Luncheon	December 7, 2016
Board of Directors Meeting	February 15, 2017
Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention	March 2 & 3, 2017
Spring Luncheon	March 22, 2017
Retiree Brunch	April 8, 2017
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	May 17, 2017
Second Wind Conference	September 7, 2017

**LUNCHEON REGISTRATION DEADLINE**

Please mark both the **deadline** for registration and the luncheon date on your calendar.

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
Nov	Nov	Nov	★Nov 30	Dec 1	Dec 2	Dec 3
Dec 4	Dec 5	Dec 6	★Dec 7	Dec 8	Dec 9	Dec 10

For the fall luncheon, twenty-one people called to register after the numbers had been finalized with the Chateau Louis. Event organizers need your help to make the planning go smoothly. If you have not had a volunteer caller contact you by 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 30, at the latest, please telephone Pam Roy at once to confirm your registration. Late registrants may have to be placed on a cancellation list.

**CHRISTMAS CHARITY**

Edmonton is very fortunate that the Edmonton Seniors Centre (ESC) provides a wide variety of programs and services for adults forty-five years of age and up. Activities offered are designed to improve the quality of life and promote the health and well-being for those they serve. The outreach program assists isolated or less-able seniors to meet their needs. Donations to this worthwhile charity will be gratefully received at the Christmas luncheon.



*As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.*

*~Audrey Hepburn*

**YOUR INTERESTS MATTER**

The most effective way to find out what a friend's interests, wishes, wants and needs are is to ask them directly. Guesses and assumptions often result in a waste of time and energy. The ERTA Board of Directors has therefore developed an interest survey so the Program Committee can plan events centered on member preferences. Very few surveys were returned so efforts to get

your input are being renewed. Please respond to the survey at the Christmas luncheon.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Current total membership .....	<b>418</b>
<i>Regular</i> .....	357
<i>Complimentary</i> .....	41
<i>Nonagenarian life</i> .....	11
<i>Honorary</i> .....	9
Memberships renewed since June 30 .....	<b>44</b>
Memberships still due .....	<b>37</b>
New members due to sponsorship .....	<b>7</b>
Members with ARTA memberships .....	<b>239</b>
Letter distribution	
<i>Canada Post</i> .....	142
<i>Email</i> .....	274
<i>Not receiving by request</i> .....	2

Cliff Otto

**MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE DRAW**

Many retirees who reside in Edmonton and the surrounding area qualify for membership in ERTA but have never joined. Please extend an invitation to friends, former colleagues and acquaintances for the Christmas luncheon or any other ERTA-sponsored activity. For each referral you make that results in a new membership, your name will be entered into a draw for a \$60.00 gift card to a



restaurant of your choice. The draw will be made at the summer luncheon in June 2017.

**BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

The ERTA Board of Directors considered the following matters at the board meeting held at the Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre on October 26, 2016:

- A donation of \$500.00 to the ARTA University of Alberta Endowment Award was approved.

- Seats have been reserved for the May 17<sup>th</sup> performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (see Mayfield Dinner Theatre).
- A request will be made for nominations of ERTA members who have made significant volunteer contributions to their community (see ARTA Volunteer Awards).

**ARTA AGM REPORT**

- The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) was held at the Chateau Nova on the Yellowhead on October 4 and 5, 2016.
- Juanita Knight, Marilyn Bossert and Dolaine Kosh were re-elected by acclamation to their positions of president, vice-president and treasurer, respectively.
- Officer, committee and branch reports were shared with the delegates in attendance.
- The Communications Committee continued its sponsorship of a photography and a writing contest for all ARTA members. Training in the use of Joomla website development software was offered to those branch webmasters who expressed an interest.
- The Health Benefits Committee engaged Cubic Health to monitor and maintain the benefit plan's drug formulary in an effort to effectively manage drug costs. The Drug Enquiry Tool was launched this year, giving members access to medication coverage information. Allianz Global Assistance has been contracted to provide emergency travel insurance, effective November 1, 2016. Trip cancellation coverage has been increased from \$6000 to \$10,000. As of September 14, 2016, 15,085 of the 18,184 ARTA members were enrolled in the ARTA Retiree Benefits Plan.
- The market value of the ARTA Benefit Plan Trust Fund was \$12,559,793.28 at the end of June with investments of \$9,270,327.93 in the Education Sector Account and \$3,289,465.35 in the Public Sector Account. The Trust will also manage funds allocated to a Travel Plan Reserve Fund that was established to offset spikes in emergency travel claims.
- The Governance Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the ARTA bylaws.

Revisions were approved and have been sent to Corporate Registry for acceptance. The committee initiated a strategic review of ARTA grants, revised some new committee responsibilities, processed the scholarship applications and determined the recipients.

- Branch level workshops were encouraged and financial wellness information was made public by the Pension and Financial Advisory Committee.
- The responsibility for advocacy has been added to the specifically defined role of the Strategic Planning and Advocacy Committee. The committee has continued to organize orientations for new board and committee members, facilitate joint chair meetings to share business plans and make arrangements for an annual retreat that involves both board and invited members.
- The Wellness Committee organized five body composition clinics, promoted the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual walking challenge and launched a wellness section that will be a feature in each issue of the *news&views* magazine in the future.
- Revenue for the year ending June 30, 2016, was \$2,575,912 and expenditures amounted to \$2,125,641, leaving a year-end balance of \$450,271. A proposed budget for \$2,717,738 for the 2016–2017 year was ratified.
- The Alberta Teacher's Retirement Fund office reported that 26,308 retirees received a total of \$780 million in pension payments in 2014–2015. There are 240 retired members who are ninety-five years of age or older, thirty-nine of which are centenarians.
- The ARTA administrative office will relocate to 11835 149 Street early in the new year.
- ARTA continues to grow and actively serve the membership.

**MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE**



Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's rock musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, tells the story of the last seven days of the life of

Jesus. This compelling classic, which has moved

audiences since its inception in 1971, returns to the stage at the Mayfield Dinner Theatre after a twenty-three year absence.

Tickets for the Wednesday, May 17, 2017, brunch theatrical production are available in the Broadway section for \$71.40. To ensure a reservation for this almost sold-out show, telephone Vi Oko at 780.459.8013 as soon as possible, then mail a cheque, made payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, to 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5.

**ARTA VOLUNTEER AWARD**

Behind the scenes in every community you will find people who provide exceptional service on a volunteer basis. They see a need and step in to help without the expectation of any reward. Going quietly about their business, they are often the invisible dynamos bettering life in their respective neighbourhoods and cities. Such warm-hearted individuals deserve to be recognized for their invaluable contributions.

If you know an ERTA member whose service is exemplary, nominate them for a volunteer award. Submit a description, in 500 words or less, of your nominee's community service along with a one-page summary of their personal background and teacher-related history.

Completed nominations may be submitted to Ray Roy at rayroy@shaw.ca or to 9108 152 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5E 5W1. They can also be sent to Sheila MacKay at smackay1@telus.net or to 9343 96 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T6C 3Y6.

**ARTA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**



The forthcoming holiday season will provide ardent shutterbugs with countless occasions to capture those precious moments that may in turn be submitted in the 'Joy,' 'Hope' and 'Love' categories of the ARTA

Photography Contest. Photos can also be entered in the 'Black and White' category for which there is no restriction on the subject. Although only one

entry is permitted per category, participants may submit a photograph in each category.

Entries must be mounted on a rigid backing but may not be matted or framed. Images cannot be smaller than 5" x 7" or exceed 8" x 12" in size. Square photos must not be smaller than 7" x 7" or bigger than 12" x 12". An official entry form must be attached, but not glued to the back of each submission.

Go to [www.arta.net/contests](http://www.arta.net/contests) to download the entry form or to access more detailed contest rules. All submissions must be delivered to the ARTA office at 11835 149 Street no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 31, 2017.

**THE FACULTY CLUB**

**A Successful Event.**

The brunch held on November 5 at the Faculty Club was a great success with thirty-three people in attendance who enjoyed a delicious buffet and cheerful conversation with friends. It was splendid to see you all there. Please note that the spring brunch is scheduled for April 8, 2017.

**Alumni Membership**

The University of Alberta Faculty Club has several categories of membership, including that of an associate member, designed for those alumni who would like to join. Learn more about Faculty Club membership by emailing [facclub@ualberta.ca](mailto:facclub@ualberta.ca), going to [www.uofafacultyclub.ca/membership](http://www.uofafacultyclub.ca/membership) or phoning 780.492.4231 for additional information.

**GOLF TOURNAMENT HOST**



Do you love golf? Are you a great organizer? If so, you may want to consider the possibility of being part of a committee to organize the ARTA Annual Golf Tournament in June of 2017 or 2018. The Wolf Creek Retired Teachers' Association and the

Calgary Retired Teachers' Association hosted the provincial event in June of 2015 and 2016, respectively.

A binder containing documentation to help with the planning is available and previous hosts will happily offer assistance to the next host branch.

If you are interested in coordinating the event at one of the beautiful Edmonton golf courses, call Joan Harrison at 780.467.3885.

**CHRISTMAS CAROL BOOKLET**

Bring your singing voices to the Christmas luncheon. Carolling booklets will be on hand so we can enjoy a sing-along with the ESSOTONES.



The booklets are collected after each luncheon for reuse at future functions.

As in other years, a carolling booklet is posted online for you to download. Visit [myerta.org](http://myerta.org) for your copy.

**THE DRUG ENQUIRY TOOL**

The ARTA Retiree Benefits Plan has launched the Drug Enquiry Tool, which allows policyholders to search for any prescription drug they are taking or one that their health care professional may be considering. The tool specifies if a drug is covered by the benefit plan, whether a generic alternative is available or if step therapy rules apply, as well as general information about a drug's common uses and possible side effects. It also indicates whether a specific medication is on the Alberta Drug Benefit List or if it requires special authorization for coverage.

The Drug Enquiry Tool can be accessed through the benefit plan's ARTA Member Health Care Account. As of January 1, 2017, the tool can be found under the claims tab.

**CITY OF EDMONTON REUSE CENTRE**

**Don't throw it away! Check this out first.**



The City of Edmonton Reuse Centre, located at 6835 83 Street, accepts an incredible variety of items that most people discard thinking that they are not reuseable or recyclable.

A huge quantity of waste is generated during the Christmas season. Realizing that one person's 'garbage' is another's treasure, the Reuse Centre was created with the following goals in mind:

- To promote the idea and benefits of reuse;
- To provide affordable items to organizations and individuals; and
- To divert waste from the landfill.

They seek to have people reuse as they did in days gone past—remember our frugal parents? With a list of over 200 items that are accepted by the Centre, we have a great opportunity to help with waste reduction and, in the process, benefit others. Reuseable items include carpet samples, paint swatches, video cartridges, new and used cards, feathers, string, chalk, spools, frozen-juice lids, beer-bottle caps...and the list goes on.

If you would like to know more, an online search for 'reuse centre' will bring up a link to the City of Edmonton Reuse Centre website where you will find a detailed list of accepted items. A printable list can also be obtained by emailing Joan Harrison at [cornerstone@telus.net](mailto:cornerstone@telus.net). In addition, the website provides information about adult and children's programs and presents volunteer opportunities for those who wish to support this worthwhile service.

### **NOW IT'S FAKE NEWS**

Last time it was fake foods—now it is fake news. It seems that some people derive a great deal of enjoyment (not to mention a lucrative income) from producing totally fictitious articles and then posting them on social media as factual news items. The articles present plausible scenarios and are designed to have shock value to invoke outrage or disgust. Published under attention grabbing headlines (known as click bait) they maximize readership and almost guarantee that social media enthusiasts will pass on the drivel thousands, even millions of times.

Greater attention generates greater pleasure, more money and a huge sense of satisfaction for the authors who think it is 'funny' that people don't check either the source or the facts before forwarding the articles to everyone in their cyber sphere.

There are reasons for not fact checking. Articles appear to be bona fide news items—sometimes being lent solid credibility when a newspaper runs it before catching the error. Also, people often want to believe stories that justify and support their beliefs. Another major reason for failing to check is the time, energy and know-how required to do so.

Fake news creators perhaps don't care or don't realize that generating false news is not only 'not funny' but is actually dangerous when deceived people base their actions and (sometimes very important) decisions on lies.

Hoaxes and bogus stories have been around for eons but the modern social media network allows for the almost instantaneous spread of fictitious stories. Some websites specialize in debunking false or misleading stories and rumors. One such site is [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) which rates stories as true, false or partially true. The recommendation from fact-checking sites is for Internet users to exercise caution and common sense before distributing potentially inaccurate information.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **Ice on Whyte Festival**

The 14th annual Ice on Whyte Festival runs from January 26 to 29 and February 2 to 5, 2017. This festival celebrates art and culture in an outdoor setting that includes an international ice carving competition along with ice slides and mazes and live music by Alberta artists. Food vendors will also be located on site.



About 1200 Kindergarten to Grade Nine children from schools in the greater Edmonton area take part in the L'il Chipper Ice Carving program. The students enjoy a forty-five minute carving lesson inside a heated igloo. Lessons run on Thursdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Festival organizers are seeking retired teachers who would be interested in being instructors for the ice carving program. A training session with a group of Queen Alexander School students will be held for volunteers on January 25. Instructors are asked to make a four-hour commitment for one or more days.

Phone the festival producer, Wanda Bornn, at 780.758.5878 or 780.446.8382 to learn more about the festival or to volunteer. The website, [www.iceonwhyte.ca](http://www.iceonwhyte.ca), has additional information.

### **Sage Seniors Association**

The Sage Seniors Association currently requires food preparation assistants for the Sunshine Café, Café cashiers, cards and games leaders and a Happy Travellers coordinator. If this opportunity interests you or you would like further information, please contact Barb Carroll, the Sage Volunteer Coordinator, at [bcarroll@mysage.ca](mailto:bcarroll@mysage.ca) or telephone 780.701.9014.

### **CHRISTMAS WISHES**

