



# Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Spring Newsletter

March 2017

www.myerta.org



Canada 150 tulip

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Spring Luncheon
- 2 President's Message
- 2 Mark Your Calendar
- 2 Luncheon News
- 2 Board Meeting Summary
- 3 Membership Report
- 3 Jean Dempsey
- 3 Faculty Club Brunch
- 4 Second Wind Conference
- 4 Can't Open a PDR File?
- 4 ARTA Walking Challenge
- 5 The Battle of Vimy Ridge
- 5 The Truth Matters
- 6 ATA Centenary
- 6 Annual Golf Tournament
- 6 Canada 150
- 6 ARTA Has a New Home
- 6 ARTA Photography Contest
- 6 Employment Opportunities

## 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

# SPRING LUNCHEON

Join us for our spring luncheon at the

## Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: March 22, 2017

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Baked ham buffet

Cost: \$25.00 (includes GST and gratuity)

Speaker: Dr. Martin Moran

Topic: "Caring for the Elderly—Educating Tomorrow's Doctors in Edmonton"

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

A member of the Telephone Committee will contact you prior to March 15<sup>th</sup> in order to provide an accurate account for our caterer. If you have not received a phone call by 6:00 p.m. that evening and would like to attend the luncheon, please contact Pam Roy at 780-473-5598.

**Donations to the Food Bank are appreciated.**



**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

'Fantastic' best describes the response to the Membership Interest Survey circulated last year. Positive comments and encouragement from the sixty-eight responders is very much appreciated as are the numerous suggestions that will provide direction in planning future activities.

A request to have a few copies of the newsletter printed on white paper and made available at the luncheons so it can be recopied and shared with prospective members is easy to accommodate. Remember that the newsletter can also be downloaded from [www.myerta.org](http://www.myerta.org) and printed at home, saved on your computer or forwarded to retired colleagues and friends.

Suggestions for physical activities such as cross-country skiing, pole walking or city walking tours are great ideas that fit well with the association's focus on health.

The possibility of chartering a bus for excursions to attractions outside of Edmonton is dependent on having confirmed participation in sufficient numbers to fill that bus. Charter costs added to admission fees at the destination will exclude a number of interested attendees. The possibility, however, will be investigated.

The suggestion to 'get more members involved' is intriguing and one I would like to discuss more fully with the author. Involvement is important so please phone Joan Harrison at 780.467.3885, or any other board member, so that your ideas can be explored.

Thank you for taking part in the survey. If other ideas or comments have occurred to you since then or if you missed the survey, please phone a board member or chat with them at the luncheon.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Spring Luncheon	March 22, 2017
ARTA Walking Challenge	April 1 – June 30
Faculty Club Brunch	April 8, 2017
Board of Directors Meeting	May 3, 2017
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	May 17, 2017
Summer Luncheon and AGM	June 7, 2017
Second Wind Conference	September 7, 2017

**LUNCHEON NEWS**

Despite the rise in food costs and an increase in the minimum wage, good news does prevail. The Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) will be able to maintain a luncheon fee of \$25.00 for the remainder of this year.

A big thank you to luncheon attendees is in order for helping the event organizers by registering on or before the stated deadline.

However, the association is requesting another favour of you. With almost 170 registrants for the Christmas luncheon, cancellations are inevitable and taken into consideration when the booking is made. What is not anticipated and is impossible to plan for is receiving nine cancellations after the attendance numbers have been guaranteed along with a further nine people absent without notice. The notification of a cancellation, even after the deadline, although appreciated, does not release ERTA from its obligation to the caterer. Carefully checking your calendar to avoid any conflicts will be a great help and the likelihood of the need to cancel will be minimized.

ERTA extends a sincere thank you to the two members who, due to illness, were not able to attend the luncheon but forwarded their luncheon fee to the treasurer.

Wednesday, March 15 is the spring luncheon registration deadline.

**BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

The following key issues were addressed at the ERTA board meeting held on February 14 at the Central Lions Seniors Recreational Centre:

- Telephone calls to lapsed members generated only four renewals.
- A detailed report on the previous Second Wind Conference was presented and a request was made for funding for the conference scheduled for this fall.
- The time, place and facilitator for the development of a vision and mission statement will be determined prior to the next board meeting.
- The current ERTA website is in the process of being transferred from a designated platform to a WordPress management system.

- The obsolete computer, formerly used by the treasurer, will be disposed of safely.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

<b>Current total membership .....</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>Regular .....</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>Complimentary .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Honorary life .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nonagenarian life .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Non-renewals from 2016.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Regular .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Complimentary .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>New members through sponsorship.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Number of sponsors.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Newsletter Distribution</b>	
<b>Canada Post.....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Email.....</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>Not receiving by request.....</b>	<b>2</b>

Cliff Otto

Another member is eligible for a life membership in ERTA.

Jean Dempsey was born near Clairmont, six miles from Grande Prairie, on January 17, 1927. The second youngest in a farm family of six children, she attended the local school for the first eleven grades. She took a number of correspondence courses before going to Grande Prairie for Grade Twelve.

Due to the teacher shortage that existed at that time, the Department of Education appealed to prospective graduates to consider becoming a teacher. Following her graduation in June 1946, Jean enrolled in the one-year teacher training program at Corbett Hall in Edmonton.

She taught Grade One in High Prairie during the 1947–1948 school year before getting married in the fall of 1948. She had three children before the family moved to Grimshaw in 1956.

Jean returned to the Grade One classroom for three years before taking a short hiatus to give birth to her fourth child in the spring of 1959. She was back in the classroom in the fall.

Jean was enrolled in summer school courses for many years before earning her B Ed degree in 1979.

She moved to Westlock in 1972 where she taught Grade One for another nine years before being 'promoted' to Grade Two for the final six years of her lengthy teaching career.

Jean moved to Edmonton upon her retirement in 1987 where she volunteered in the gift shop at the University Hospital and with the Society for the Retired and Semi-retired (now called Sage).

She has travelled extensively. Her journeys have taken her across Canada, into the western states of the United States, and to Britain, China, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, and Mexico. She vacationed in Hawaii several times and went on six cruises, mostly in the Caribbean.

Jean was remarried in 1991 and has remained active in retirement. She joined several choirs, square danced and even learned to clog after her husband's death in 2003.

She moved into an independent living facility a year ago.

**MEMBERSHIP DRAW**

In an effort to include colleagues who have been retired for more than one year and have never joined ERTA, an incentive in the form of a \$60.00 gift card to any restaurant of your choice is being offered to any current member who enrolls a new member. The membership draw will be held at the summer luncheon in June. Spread the word and let your friends know about ERTA.

**FACULTY CLUB BRUNCH**



Let's do brunch! This well attended event is being held once again on Saturday, April 8, at 11:30 a.m. at the Faculty Club on 116 Street and Saskatchewan Drive.

Enjoy a delicious brunch buffet in the company of fellow retirees and friends for a \$25.00 per person levy. All are welcome!

There are two ways to register. Telephone Shirley Strembitsky at 780.988.9195 or add your name to the sign-up sheet that will be circulated at the luncheon. Please remember that the deadline for registering is Wednesday, April 5.

**Note:** The University of Alberta has contracted a company to oversee the parking, resulting in a \$2.00 flat rate that is charged on Saturdays in the outdoor V-lot parking space. Machines on site accept coins and credit cards before issuing a ticket that has to be left on the dash of your car.

### **2017 SECOND WIND CONFERENCE**

The sixth annual Second Wind Conference will be held at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre on Thursday, September 7, 2017.

The keynote speaker for this one-day wellness conference is Peter Brown, the well-known CBC radio host, as well as the writer and producer of "The Irrelevant Show." Following the keynote address, a variety of breakout sessions related to the conference theme, "Expanding Horizons," will run concurrently with an art show and sale. A 'wine down' with a draw for a number of prizes is scheduled for the end of the day.



Early bird registrations, postmarked on or before July 15, will result in a \$15.00 reduction off of the regular \$85.00 fee. Early bird registrants will have their name entered into a draw for a refund of one registration fee. Seating may be limited for some sessions. Once all of the session presenters have been confirmed, the choice of sessions will be offered to early registrants first.

The conference is open to all retired teachers their spouses, friends and acquaintances. Visit [www.secondwindconference.ca](http://www.secondwindconference.ca) for additional information or to download a registration form.

### **CAN'T OPEN A PDF FILE? HERE'S HOW**

Have you ever opened a PDF document, with the intent of filling in a form and running it off, only to find yourself at a loss as to how to proceed?

Such might be the case in attempting to register for the Second Wind Conference. The following instructions should help.

You must have either Adobe Acrobat Reader or a similar program installed on your computer. The free versions are adequate for this purpose.

Go to [www.secondwindconference.ca](http://www.secondwindconference.ca) and click on Register Now. In the dialogue box that comes up, click on PDF Format. If the document opens but there is no obvious way to fill in the form, look at the upper right-hand corner of your screen to locate a box saying Open with Different Viewer. Click that box and, in the dialogue box that opens, select Open with Adobe Acrobat Reader DC.

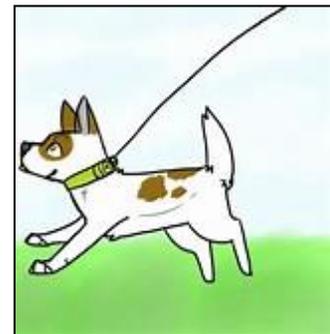
Your computer may give you different options depending on the programs you have installed so select one of them. You should now be able to enter the necessary information and run off two copies of the document—one to submit to the conference registrar and another to keep for your records. You can also save the completed form to your computer.

### **ARTA WALKING CHALLENGE**

The fifth ARTA walking challenge starts April 1 and ends June 30.

Team up with a friend or man's best friend and start walking.

It is easy, free, fun and confers wondrous health benefits on both mind and body.



ARTA is offering three awards this year so get out your competitive spirit. Having almost 400 members should put ERTA in the running for a couple of them. There is a trophy for the walker with the highest number of steps and the branch with the greatest number of steps along with an award for those branches with 33% or more of its members participating. One does not have to be an athlete to join; every step counts, so join in the fun and 'do Edmonton proud.'



## LET'S GO ERTA!



There is no limit to the number of members who can participate—the more the better. Many of you already have a tracking device that can be used but, if not, we have twenty-four new pedometers to distribute this year. They will be given out, in the order requested, when you email Veronica Hellweg at hellwegv@telus.net or telephone her at 780.456.7640.

Register for the challenge by either contacting Veronica or using the sign-up sheet at the spring luncheon.

### THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

The Battle of Vimy Ridge, during the First World War, is Canada's most celebrated military victory. April 9, 2017, marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of that symbolic event.

By 1917, the opposing armies were embedded in an impasse in the trenches on the Western Front. The Allies planned a massive offensive in the spring of 1917 that involved a French assault on the German lines at the southern end of the front, while the British launched a diversionary attack in the north.

Four divisions of soldiers from every region of Canada, who were fighting together as a single assault force, for the first time were ordered, as part of the British diversion, to capture the high, strategic point of Vimy Ridge. In a painstakingly planned and carefully executed operation, the Canadian battalions seized this very important vantage point overlooking the trenches on both sides as well as the 'no man's land' between the enemy lines.

Although more than 10,500 infantrymen were killed and wounded, the impressive victory on that Easter Monday quickly became a symbol of the birth of Canadian national pride. As a result, Canada's Prime Minister pushed for separate representation for Canada at the Paris peace talks following the war. Canada came of age with that iconic battle on Vimy Ridge.

### THE TRUTH MATTERS

Oxford Dictionaries declared 'post-truth' to be the word of the year in 2016. It is an adjective that means 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts have limited influence in shaping public opinion that appeals to emotional and personal belief.' 'Alternate facts' have the same emotional impact.

More than twenty newspapers in Canada folded last year and Postmedia has cut the equivalent of 800 full-time jobs while combining newsrooms across the country. As a result, there are fewer journalists looking out for the public interest in communities across Canada and fewer reporters checking out the information communicated by governments and businesses. Public relations professionals now outnumber journalists four to one.

Many people are indifferent to the loss of these journalists because they obtain their news from social media. The Internet is not always a good source of information, especially where news is concerned. Fake news subjects have included everything from political events, crimes, deaths and even killer clowns. There are some people, however, who believed these stories because they read them on Facebook.

The news, however it is consumed, reinforces emotions. At one time there were consequences for lying: a lie could destroy a reputation, end a career or ruin an enterprise. Fact-checking may call out the liars, but it no longer comes at a cost to the perpetrator. The motto of the University of Alberta is *Quaecumque vera*, "Whatever things are true." We have now entered into an era of far more 'whatsoever' than 'things are true.'

A study on online news literacy released late last year, involving 7000 students from twelve states, showed that students often have difficulty judging the trustworthiness of online information, do not recognize the bias of social messages and have trouble distinguishing between advertising and news. The authors of this research at Stanford suggested that democracy is at risk because of how easily untruths can be disseminated online. Even more disturbing is the indication that, to so many people, the truth no longer matters.

This attitude makes the loss of journalists even more critical. Journalists are curious folk who ask the tough questions. They report on what really happens and explain why it matters. Reporters keep the populace informed about things and events that citizens are too occupied to verify for themselves and put political, social, scientific and economic developments into perspective. They evaluate the credibility of news sources, analyze the impact of information and convey it in a way that grasps the attention of the general public.

A common perception nowadays is that media outlets have alternate agendas when the 'news' is reported. Companies like Google are currently meeting with journalists in an effort to figure out how to handle the issue of fake news. The more sources a journalist has consulted for a news article, the more reliable that information usually is; the more news outlets that report a particular news item, the more likely the information is true. The truth really does matter!

### **ATA CENTENARY**

Although an attempt was made to establish a provincial teachers' organization in 1916, the school inspector and president of the Alberta Education Association (AEA), George Gorman, reneged on the direction he had been given.

The teachers, however, were well prepared with a strategy that they implemented at the 1917 AEA convention. Just as the meeting was coming to an end George D. Misener, an Edmonton principal, quickly introduced three resolutions. He proposed that a provisional teachers' organization be set up, named himself and Charlie E. Leppard, a Calgary teacher, as acting president and vice-president respectively, with formal authorization to name a secretary-treasurer and asked for adequate funds to cover the start-up expenses of the teachers' organization. Since the majority of the members at the 1917 convention were teachers, the three resolutions were passed.

George D. Misener and Charlie E. Leppard were tasked with drafting a constitution for the newly created Alberta Teachers' Alliance. They chose John W. Barnett, a teacher at Strathcona High School who had extensive knowledge about the British National Union of Teachers, to function as the secretary-treasurer. Upon his arrival from

England in 1911, John perceived the teaching conditions in Alberta to be appalling and vowed to do something about it.

A number of association artifacts are on display in the Barnett House foyer and cafeteria. Various archival items will be exhibited throughout 2017 and 2018 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).

### **ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT**



The ARTA Annual Golf Tournament will be hosted by the Northeast Retired Teachers' Association (NEARTA) in St. Paul on June 24 this year. Look for more details in the summer newsletter.

### **CANADA 150**

The beautiful tulip seen on the front page of this newsletter is the official tulip of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In the spring of 2017, 300,000 red and white Canada 150 tulips will blossom in the nation's capital, most of them in Commissioners Park.

### **ARTA HAS A NEW HOME**

Moving day has finally arrived! As of March 1, 2017, the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) office will be located at 11835 149 Street. By the time you receive this newsletter ARTA will be well settled in its new home. The telephone number, 780.822.2400, will remain the same.

## ARTA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

### Basic English Instruction to Adults

In any country a functional understanding of the language is essential to settling in and adjusting.

The Edmonton Catholic School District is seeking teachers, on a part-time/full-time basis, to provide basic English language instruction to assist with the social, cultural and economic integration of adult immigrants and refugees into their new lives in Canada.

Positions may be available for morning, afternoon or evening classes. These are contract positions paying an hourly wage. Hiring will begin in the summer but résumés are welcomed now. Please contact Kristen Moser at [kristen.moser@ecsd.net](mailto:kristen.moser@ecsd.net) to obtain a job description or to submit a résumé and become part of this rewarding program.

For more information about the LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) programs being offered, go to [www.ecsd.net/Programs](http://www.ecsd.net/Programs) and click on LINC Programs.

*Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.*

– Albert Einstein