



Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Fall Newsletter

www.edmontonrta.org

September 2013



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Fall Luncheon
- 2 President's Message
- 2 Summary of Board Meeting
- 3 Dates to Remember
- 3 Membership Report
- 3 50th Anniversary Celebration
- 4 Second Wind Conference 2013
- 4 Mayfield Dinner Theatre
- 5 Retiree Brunch
- 5 ARTA Annual General Meeting
- 5 ERTA/ARTA Membership
- 6 ERTA's Early Days

GALA LUNCHEON

Join us for our gala luncheon at the

Chateau Louis 11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: September 18, 2013

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast chicken buffet

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

Program: ARTA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Activities

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

PLEASE NOTE

A member of the Telephone Committee will contact you prior to September 11th 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 Food Bank are appreciated.

MEET OUR 2013-2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Sherry Robbins, 780-437-0566

Past President

Vi Oko, 780-459-8013

Vice-President:

Joan Harrison, 780-467-3885

Secretaries:

Carol Loewen, 780-435-6832

TBA

Treasurer:

Mike Mort, 780-761-5027

Membership Co-ordinator:

Cliff Otto, 780-476-9264

Webmaster:

Ray Roy, 780-473-5598

Benefits Representatives:

Daphne Price, 780-475-1543

Sherry Robbins, 780-437-0566

Pension Representative:

Veronica Hellweg, 780-456-7640

Directors:

Fred Laux, 780-444-6386

Ingrid Neitsch, 780-435-3221

Esther Oaks, 780-437-7499

Beth Robinson, 780-486-5230

Shirley Strembitsky, 780-988-9195

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings my dear colleagues from a new president at the start of a new school year.

Autumn, with its beautiful colours, cooling nights, and crisp mornings is my favourite time of year. I have always loved back-to-school sales and stationery shops and bookstores and school calendars and new pens and, best of all, smelly felts! I loved going into the pristine empty classroom and putting up inspirational posters and arranging neon Post-its and new accessories on my uncluttered desk—the last time it would be clear until the end of the year.

Do you miss a new opportunity to motivate, to challenge, to inspire? Do you long for those monthly staff meetings? Do you mourn the thrill of those lively bodies in your classroom? If this is your first or second year of retirement, you probably do. But the further I get from that first pension cheque, the more thankful I am for taking back my own life and my own timetable.

But we must remember to challenge ourselves as we enjoy retirement. One thing about teaching, one was never bored. For every single one of those 525,600 minutes of every school year we had something to do and at least ten things we should do. I know that your retirement days are not boring. But are you really challenged like you were when you were teaching? If you are like me, the true new year begins after Labour Day, the day for new beginnings.

He who dares to teach must never cease to learn. —Richard Henry Dana, 1815

We have a myriad of prospects to learn and challenge ourselves, beginning with our Second Wind Conference on September 25. We have a forthcoming civic election with a number of opportunities in which to participate. We can advocate on behalf of Alberta seniors regarding issues that affect them now or will in the future. We have an opportunity to do volunteer work with revered organizations that have a positive impact in the community. And we have family, both human and non-human, who need our love and attention.

You have places to go and people to meet.... Best wishes to you on your journey down

Mulberry Street this year. We hope to see you at the conferences, the brunches, the lunches, the field trips and the travel adventures.

SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING

Members of the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) Board of Directors discussed the following matters and made the following decisions at a board meeting held at the Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre on Wednesday, August 14, 2013:

- Ray Roy circulated copies of a record of monthly visits to the branch website for the current calendar year. Increased website activity in March and May corresponded with the distribution of the ERTA newsletter.
- Revenue of \$4,994.04 for the new fiscal year consists of \$2,754.00 in membership fees, \$2,240.00 in lunch receipts and \$0.04 in bank interest while disbursements for luncheon expenses and office supplies totalled \$2,515.02, resulting in a bank balance of \$2,479.02.
- A \$200.00 honorarium in the form of a Mayfield Inn & Suites gift card will be presented to Brian Jordan for auditing ERTA's financial records.
- Luncheon dates for the 2013–2014 year were determined (see Dates to Remember).
- Two retiree brunch dates at the University of Alberta Faculty Club were established (see Dates to Remember).
- Dinner theatre tickets have been purchased for the theatrical presentation of *A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline* (see Mayfield Dinner Theatre).
- Details of the arrangements for the Second Wind Conference are being finalized (see Second Wind Conference 2013).
- Gala luncheon plans commemorating the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) have almost been completed (see 50th Anniversary Celebration).
- Joan Harrison, Mike Mort, Vi Oko, Sherry Robbins, Beth Robinson and Ray Roy were named as the ERTA delegates to officially represent the branch at the ARTA Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Calgary on October 1 and 2.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Gala Luncheon	September 18, 2013
Second Wind Conference	September 25, 2013
ARTA AGM	October 1 & 2, 2013
Board of Directors Meeting	October 23, 2013
Retiree Brunch	October 26, 2013
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	October 30, 2013
Christmas Luncheon	December 4, 2013
Spring Luncheon	March 19, 2014
Retiree Brunch	April 12, 2014
Summer Luncheon	June 4, 2014

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

ERTA membership now stands at 350. Of these, 169 members receive their newsletter via Canada Post and the remaining 181 get theirs early by email. One hundred thirty-six memberships expired as of June 30. Ninety-three of those have already been renewed. Reminder notices have been sent to the remaining forty-three encouraging them to continue their membership with ERTA.

Only eight of the eighteen complementary one-year memberships that were issued to newly retired teachers at the end of June 2012 have been renewed. Thirteen complementary memberships have been issued thus far to teachers who retired as of June 30, 2013.

Thirteen is a token number in relation to the number of potential members who retired at the end of June. However, because of Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), ERTA is not able to obtain information from school boards or from other related agencies about retiring teachers and so ERTA is unable to initiate any contact with them to facilitate the issuance of a complementary membership. Therefore, if you know of any teachers who have retired during or at the end of the last school year, please forward their contact information (name, home address, telephone number, email address or any combination of these) to Cliff Otto, Membership Co-ordinator, at cliffcon@telus.net or by telephoning 780-476-9264. These retirees will then be contacted and a complementary year of membership issued to them. Through your efforts in this regard, ERTA will continue to build its membership.

Cliff Otto

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association is hosting a special celebration on Wednesday, September 18, 2013. Fifty years ago, ERTA executive members played a key role in the formation of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association. Current board members have planned a number of activities with which to commemorate the occasion.

Gala luncheon attendees will encounter a festive atmosphere soon after their arrival in the St. Michael Room at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre.

Project display boards featuring educational milestones and historical highlights along with an exhibit of books written by Alberta retired teachers will be set up on display tables at the back of the room.

Member participation will be instrumental to the success of this function. All branch members will be requested to record the year their teaching career began followed by the year they retired on special Post-it notes. These notes will then be affixed to the appropriate decade board.

The membership is also being asked to jot down their recollection of where they were and what they were doing in 1963. Personal anecdotes can be recorded on pages explicitly designed for that purpose by emailing Joan Harrison at joanh1@telusplanet.net or phoning her at 780-467-3885. Hopefully, these personal reminiscences can be compiled in a memory book for safekeeping. Your story has vital historical significance!

Special guests who have made significant contributions to ARTA will reflect on aspects of ARTA's history and video presentations specially developed for this affair will be shown. A toast to the future success of the association will follow the serving of delectable anniversary cake. The three recipients of the Outstanding Volunteer Award, initiated by the provincial association to mark the 50th anniversary, will be recognized at this time as well.

Plan to attend this special celebratory event and bring a new retiree, a colleague or a friend who is not, as yet, a branch member.

SECOND WIND CONFERENCE 2013

Time is running out! Less than three weeks remain until the 2013 version of the Second Wind Conference!

The conference takes place at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre on Wednesday, September 25.

The animated Laurie Greenwood of Greenwoods' Bookshoppe Ltd., will tantalize conference registrants with her spirited keynote offering of "Speaking Volumes: Adventures in Bookselling."

This wellness conference allows attendees to explore new ideas, participate in new activities, and find new ways to achieve inner peace and harmony while increasing energy level and zest for life.

- Albert Arntson will tell about his valiant journey from asbestos contamination to recovery from double lung transplant surgery.
- Janice Baker, a travel consultant with Expedia CruiseShipCenters, will share tips on how to make the most of your travel adventure.
- Caitlyn Cranwell, with the ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen, will talk about how to make meals both delicious and healthy—and share some great Blue Flame Kitchen recipes!
- Bill Drake, owner and operator of Golden Greenhouses, will provide ideas for small-space gardening and recommend new plants for the 2014 growing season.
- Ingrid Neitsch, a licensed Sage-ing® International facilitator, will focus on enhancing life's journey through exploring, validating and embracing life experiences.
- Lloyd Quinlan will discuss the many features and options available in current mobile technology.
- Sandy Vradenburgh, a specialized kinesiologist, will teach Brain Gym® movements that can help to restore brain function and enhance well-being.

These topics are just a few being offered in seventy-five minute interactive sessions at this one-day conference, a joint initiative of Edmonton and area retired teacher branches.

The duo of Jim Montney and Robin Stuart will provide conference attendees with a musical interlude during the noon-hour lunch break.

An art show and sale featuring local artists will be held in conjunction with the conference.

Renew acquaintances with former colleagues and reconnect with friends old and new at the 'wine down' following the day's sessions.

The registration fee for the conference is \$75.00. Complete program and registration information is available by going online at www.gertasecondwind.org or by telephoning Maurine Maslen at 780-418-8032.

Register now for a great day of rejuvenating and re-energizing body, mind and spirit. Enhance your conference experience by bringing along a family member or a friend.

*Renew*Reconnect*Re-energize*

MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE

Brunch tickets for the Mayfield Dinner Theatre performance of *A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline* have been purchased in the Broadway section for Wednesday, October 30, 2013.

Although renovations of the Mayfield Inn, soon to be transformed into the DoubleTree by Hilton West Edmonton, will not be completed until early in 2013, the 2013–2014 live dinner theatre season opens with a tribute to one of the greatest icons in country music. This intimate story of a powerful woman with an unforgettable voice portrays her climb to stardom, from humble beginnings in small town Virginia to the bright lights of Carnegie Hall. The theatrical presentation features twenty of her hit sensations including "Crazy," "Walking After Midnight," "Sweet Dreams," and "I Fall to Pieces."

The doors open for brunch at 10:00 a.m. and the show begins at noon.

A limited number of tickets are available for this foot-stomping, hand-clapping, heartwarming musical. To reserve your seat, please post a cheque for \$73.50 (GST included), payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, to Vi Oko at 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5.

RETIREE BRUNCH

Invite a friend and join members of the ERTA Board of Directors on Saturday, October 26, 2013, to discuss pertinent retiree issues at the Faculty Club located along Saskatchewan Drive on the University of Alberta campus. The reserved seating area for the buffet brunch opens at 11:30 a.m. The per-person fee is \$23.00 but parking at the Faculty Club parking lot is free. To reserve your seat, please email Sherry Robbins at sherry.robbins@shaw.ca or telephone her at 780-437-0566.

ARTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ARTA is a dynamic organization that supports an engaged lifestyle after retirement through member-centred services, wellness, advocacy, communication and leadership.

Members of the Board of Directors along with delegates representing all eighteen ARTA branches will convene at the Greenwood Inn & Suites in Calgary on October 1 and 2 for the first ARTA Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held outside of Edmonton.

The strength of the association is in the level of commitment and passion that members of ARTA committees and the Board of Directors bring to the organization. Elections will be held to fill the three officer positions; one position on the Benefits, Communications/Technology, Governance, Human Resources, Membership/Marketing and Strategic Planning committees; two on the Pension and four on the Wellness Standing Committee(new). Officer positions are all one-year terms while committee members are elected to serve three-to six-year terms depending upon the number of members on a committee.

If you are interested in nominating someone or are willing to let your name stand for election to any officer or standing committee position, please contact Daniel Mulloy, ARTA Executive Director, at dmulloy@arta.net or 780-822-2401 or Sherry Robbins at sherry.robbins@shaw.ca or 780-437-0566. Candidates who are not branch delegates are eligible for up to \$250 to subsidize costs to speak to their candidacy at the AGM. Election candidates must be ARTA members. Your participation in the decision-making at the provincial level is encouraged.

ERTA/ARTA MEMBERSHIP

New retirees as well as long-time members continue to be confused regarding membership in either group.

The Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) and the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) are two closely related, but distinct, organizations requiring two separate memberships. ARTA is the provincial entity; ERTA is the local branch.

Membership in the provincial association (ARTA) is required in order to be eligible to participate in the ARTA benefit plan as well serve as an ARTA officer or on one or more ARTA committee. Members also receive four issues of the ARTA newsmagazine each year. The organization serves retired teachers province-wide and has addressed issues pertinent to seniors throughout the province.

Membership in the local branch (ERTA) offers members an opportunity to participate in gatherings that involve other local retired teachers, their spouses and friends. These functions include four luncheons a year, two retiree brunches at the Faculty Club, two Mayfield Dinner Theatre productions, tours and field trips, and a wellness conference. The association offers local retired teachers an occasion to associate with colleagues in a social or educational environment.

Membership in one organization does not constitute membership in the other; each organization has its own membership fee. The ARTA membership fee is \$25.00 a year, while the ERTA membership fee is \$15.00 annually or \$60.00 for five years. Memberships in both organizations become due every June 30. Fees may be paid for more than one year.

Retired teachers are offered a complementary membership in both groups for the first year immediately following retirement. Membership, however, is not automatic. New retirees must contact Member Services in the ARTA office at 780-822-2400 for a complementary ARTA membership and Cliff Otto, ERTA Membership Co-ordinator, at 780-476-9264 for a one-year complementary ERTA membership. Hopefully local retired teachers will become members of both associations.

ERTA'S EARLY DAYS

In the late 1950s, a group of retired teachers living in Edmonton, interested in art, music, bridge and bowling, began meeting socially. Subsequently, they held meetings to address concerns regarding low pensions, medical insurance needs and hospital care. By the fall of 1960, the Retired Teachers of Edmonton was formally organized with Ben Hager acting as President and Lillian Parnell as the Secretary-Treasurer.

A formal meeting was held on November 14, 1960, at which time a letter from James Laing was an item of discussion. Mr. Laing had indicated that the Calgary retired teachers were thinking of forming a group. A major conviction the two groups shared was the need to ensure that retired teachers spoke with one voice. Mr. Larue Smith was elected as the President, Mr. J. Gordon Sinclair the Vice-President, and Miss Lillian Parnell the Secretary at that meeting.

Soon after, a committee of Edmonton retired teachers was formed to begin lobbying the provincial government, seeking an increase in the pensions received by those teachers who had retired prior to 1948. Lillian began sending letters to all retired teachers in the province in early 1961 (contact information was difficult to acquire in those early days too), encouraging them to join, for a one-dollar membership fee, the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association. The initial postage costs were covered by the Edmonton committee. After Mr. Frank McCoy placed a resolution before the Annual Representative Assembly (ARA), the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) agreed to assess all active teachers (some of us were just beginning our teaching careers at that time) an additional fifty cents per month. As a result retirees before 1948 began receiving a pension of \$110 a month—the original \$65 was supplemented by an additional \$30 from the ATA and \$15 from the government. The pursuit of an increase in pensions for those who had retired previous to 1959 continued.

In letters exchanged between James Laing and Lillian, she expressed the Edmonton group's belief that the Retired Teachers Organization should be a permanent body whose main

purpose was the welfare of all retired teachers.

Reduced rates for a hospitalization plan through Medical Services Incorporated (MSI) could only be achieved if 75% of the retired teachers in the province joined as a group. A notice was placed in the June *ATA Magazine* with only 52% of the retired teachers who responded willing to participate. In September 1961, Lillian contacted 288 retired teachers hoping to convince the required number; however, she only received replies from 59% of them. She later received the names of the 1961 retirees. Of the 461 letters she sent only 60% accepted. By 1962, the necessary quota was reached and the retired teachers medical plan was finally achieved, primarily as a result of James Laing's encouragement and Lillian Parnell's letter-writing campaign. (Her letters were written without the benefit of a typewriter or a copy machine.)

On March 12, 1963, representatives from the Retired Teachers of Edmonton, the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association—Calgary Branch, the Retired Teachers Association (Lethbridge) and Medicine Hat met to establish the Retired Teachers of Alberta, later changed to the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association.

On September 3, 1963, an application was made to incorporate the association under the Societies Act. The charter incorporating the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) as an official non-profit society was issued on November 14, 1963. The branch name Retired Teachers of Edmonton was changed to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) at that time.

Arthur G. Skitch of Edmonton was elected President and Milton W. Brock of Calgary became the first Secretary-Treasurer.

ERTA has been at the forefront determining ARTA's course since its inception over fifty years ago. A number of ERTA members have made an invaluable contribution to establishing the strength and direction of the association over the years.

ERTA members will continue to make many significant contributions to ARTA's success in the future.