



# Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

December 2023

[www.myerta.org](http://www.myerta.org)



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## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our Christmas luncheon at the

### Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 6, 2023

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast turkey buffet

Cost: \$35.00 (includes GST and gratuity)



Entertainment: James Rostad—James returns to provide pre-luncheon music and a musical presentation followed by a Christmas carol singalong.

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

### Luncheon Registration Deadline

Please mark the **November 29** deadline for luncheon registration on your calendar. If you have not received a telephone call by 6:00 p.m. that evening and would like to attend the luncheon, contact Pam Roy at **780-473-5598** immediately.

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

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **President**

Ed Butler, 780-461-0261

### **Past President**

Joan Harrison, 780-467-3885

### **Vice-President**

Lyndi Karbonik, 780-932-7314

### **Treasurer**

Bonnie Zack, 780-717-8775

### **Secretaries**

Janice Aubry, 780-868-9269

Vi Oko, 780-459-8013

### **Acting Membership Coordinator**

Cliff Otto, 780-476-9264

### **Webmaster**

Ray Roy, 780-473-5598

### **Directors**

Lynn Arnold, 780-919-5848

Mary Dunnigan, 780-451-0705

Joyce Liska, 780-487-3029

Lily Ma, 780-438-4032

Mike Mort, 780-761-5027

Carol Williamson, 780-436-9684

Greg Wilson, 780-487-5218

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

Time flies when you are having fun! Earlier this year, both ERTA and ARTA celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary! (My wife and I each celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> year of retirement and our 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays—she got a new hip for her birthday.)

This is the time of year when we reflect on changes we want to make and goals we want to set. One goal, for which the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) Board of Directors continues to strive, is the increased engagement of branch members in the planning of and participation in association activities.

Communication is an essential tool, for both ERTA and the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA), for keeping members well-informed and offering opportunities to serve fellow members.

Presidents of the local branches of ARTA meet periodically to talk about successful events, share imaginative ways to achieve common goals, and discuss methods of effectively enhancing engagement and improving services to members.

How can the board better serve ERTA members? Suggestions for activities or workshops that you would like to see hosted are greatly appreciated as are recommendations for topics and speakers for the seasonal luncheons. Contact any member of the board to share your ideas or perhaps to help organize an event. Member involvement is always welcome.

It may be getting cooler, but we are just warming up. You are encouraged to consider how you can make a difference. ERTA is about and for all of us.

*Wishing you love, joy and peace ...  
today, tomorrow and always.*



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Christmas Luncheon	December 6, 2023
Board of Directors Meeting	February 14, 2024
Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention	February 29 and March 1, 2024
Spring Luncheon	March 20, 2024
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	March 27, 2024

**LUNCHEON NEWS**

The ERTA Board of Directors has again selected the Edmonton Seniors Centre (ESC) as the charity to support at the Christmas luncheon. ESC is a non-profit group that aims to further the well-being of seniors who are 55 years of age and over. The centre assists members with access to information and offers programs and services to isolated and less able seniors that enable them to connect with their community.



More information about this non-profit charity and the services it provides to seniors can be found online at [edmontonseniorscentre.ca](http://edmontonseniorscentre.ca).

**IMPORTANT:** Some attendees have asked about alternate methods of payment for the luncheon. ERTA is only able to accept cash or cheques for the luncheon as no system has been put in place for payment by credit card. The use of e-transfers is being looked into. If that system is feasible, a notice to that effect will be placed in an appropriate newsletter.

**Acknowledgement and appreciation**

Over many years, TW Insurance Inc. (now Orbit Insurance Services) has generously donated door prizes for each of the seasonal ERTA luncheons. Since the fall of 2022, Paul Doucette, co-owner of the Sawmill Banquet & Catering Centre, has given a very generous door prize at each of the luncheons. Both parties have also contributed to the Second Wind Conferences.

The ERTA Board of Directors would like to thank Orbit and Paul for their kind support. Their gifts have added an element of excitement and helped to make each event a success.

**BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

The following decisions were made and information shared at the ERTA board meeting held at the Central Lions Recreation Centre on Wednesday, November 1, 2023:

- The annual donation to the ARTA University of Alberta Endowment Award was increased to \$1,000.00 to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inception of the award.
- Preliminary planning is already underway for the eleventh Second Wind Conference at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre (see Second Wind Conference).

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Current total membership.....	515
<i>Regular</i> .....	382
<i>Complimentary</i> .....	108
<i>Honorary life</i> .....	7
<i>Nonagenarian life</i> .....	18
Newsletter distribution	
<i>Canada Post</i> .....	128
<i>Email</i> .....	384
<i>Not receiving by request</i> .....	3

A second nonagenarian is eligible for an ERTA life membership this year.

**Anne Strack** was the older of two children born to an accountant and a schoolteacher in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on October 13, 1933. The family moved to Edmonton in 1938.

She began her schooling at Parkdale in 1940 and completed her elementary school grades there before moving to Grande Prairie in 1946. Soon after Anne graduated from Grande Prairie High School in 1952, the family returned to Edmonton.

She was enrolled in a nursing program for one year prior to transferring, for health reasons, to the faculty of education at the University of Alberta in the fall of 1953.

After completing three years toward a Bachelor of Education program, Anne accepted a position at Cromdale School in 1956, instructing a combined class of third and fourth graders. The following year, she was assigned to teach in a Grade Three classroom. In 1958, Anne moved to Prince Rupert School, which was closer to her home, to teach a third-grade class.

She registered in both winter and summer school courses, earning her degree in June of 1960.

Anne accepted a two-year appointment in 1961 to teach kindergarten youngsters the first year and second graders the following year at the Department of National Defence School in Zweibrucken, Germany. While there, she took advantage of the opportunity to visit relatives.

Upon her return to Canada, she was placed in a second and third grade classroom in Crestwood School.

Anne was given a vice-principal position at the new Northmount School in 1976. She moved to Thorncliffe Community School in the early 1980s,

then accompanied the principal to Aldergrove in 1986, teaching in either a Grade Two or Grade Three classroom throughout those years. She retired in 1990 after thirty-four years in the classroom.

Although Anne enjoyed reading, travel was her passion. She spent many summers travelling with friends and colleagues throughout Canada as well as various parts of Europe. Following retirement, Anne continued to travel in Europe and toured in China, Japan, Thailand and the Holy Land. She also drove across Canada on her own, taking the time to visit friends and relatives in Philadelphia and New York as well.

She moved into a condominium in the Westmount area four years ago. Anne still attends exercise classes three times a week.

Vi Oko

**SECOND WIND CONFERENCE** 

The eleventh annual  
**Second Wind Conference**  
 (a health and wellness conference for all retirees)  
 will be held in Edmonton on  
**September 12, 2024,**  
 at the lovely Chateau Louis Conference Centre.

The conference features a keynote speaker followed by a wide variety of breakout sessions, a delicious buffet lunch, and refreshments complete with a 'wine down' and door prizes.

Watch for a list of session topics and speakers that will be posted on the conference website, [secondwindconference.ca](http://secondwindconference.ca), by mid-April 2024.

Plan to enjoy this informative and uplifting event with friends and former colleagues!

**Mark the date, invite a friend and spread the word.**

Commit yourself to lifelong learning. The most valuable asset you will ever have is your mind and what you put into it.

**~Albert Einstein**

## ARTA AGM REPORT

- Sixty-four board members and delegates attended the 2023 ARTA annual general meeting at the Holiday Inn Edmonton South on October 3 and 4 to celebrate the association's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to elect three officers and six standing committee members, and to receive reports from officers, committees, branch presidents and affiliated groups.
- The Communications Committee oversees the publication of four issues of *news&views* annually, the monthly editions of ARTAfacts, ARTAcles—the quarterly digital newsletter for ARTA 101 members and ARTAscripts, which was specifically created for ARTARx subscribers and also administers the photography and writing contests. The ARTA website ARTA.net has been redesigned to make it more user-friendly.
- The Governance Committee awarded \$40,000 in degree and certificate/diploma scholarships. An ARTA 101 member (active teacher) was the recipient of the \$2,500 ARTA 101 Continuing Education Scholarship and a direct relative of an ARTA 101 member was granted a scholarship of equal value. A Branch Project Grant for \$5,000 was approved for the Second Wind Conference and one for \$7,500 was awarded to the branch in Calgary for the Steppin' Out Conference.
- The Health Benefits Committee made changes in benefit provisions and premium rates to ensure that competitive benefits are maintained. A change was implemented in the emergency travel insurance provider to improve services to policyholders. A total of 28,281 members from forty-eight organizations currently participate in ARTA's benefit plans.
- As of August 31, the market value of the three reserves of the ARTA Benefit Plan Trust Fund amounted to \$27,023,735—\$14,168,143 in the Education Sector account, \$5,056,536 in the Public/Private Sector fund and \$7,799,056 in the Emergency Travel one.
- After finally receiving a Community Pharmacy Licence, ARTARx, the first member-owned pharmacy in Canada, began to offer services to ARTA members in the extended Greater Edmonton Area as well as the general public early in the new year.



- The Pension and Financial Wellness Committee facilitated three webinars and submitted book reviews and articles on financially related topics of interest to retirees for publication in the ARTA magazine.
- The Strategic Planning and Advocacy Committee organized orientations for new board and committee members, arranged joint committee chair meetings to review business plans and held a wellness retreat.
- ARTA was represented on the Seniors Task Force of Public Interest Alberta and ACER-CART, the national organization for retired teachers. Both not-for-profit organizations advocate for a national pharmacare program and a public health-care system that prioritizes seniors' care.
- The Wellness Committee addressed the six dimensions of wellness in *news&views*, on ARTAfacts and on the newly designed website. The committee continues to sponsor the Wellness and Mental Health challenges.
- Association (including ARTARx) revenue for the past fiscal year was \$10,422,830 and disbursements were \$10,062,071, leaving a year-end balance of \$629,151. An ARTA budget for \$8,725,081 as well as an ARTARx one for \$1,342,892 was ratified.
- ARTA is opening a small office in Calgary early in the new year to better serve members in the southern part of the province.
- The Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation funded three Parkinson Association of Alberta tele-support groups, supported caregiver education classes given by the Alzheimer Society of Calgary and enabled the Bethany Care Foundation to provide a music therapy program in several of its centres.
- Alberta Teachers' Association representatives are meeting with the Minister of Education to discuss implementation of the revised social studies curriculum. The ATA plans to engage its members regarding the proposed Alberta Pension Plan. The discipline process that was introduced by the provincial government still requires clarification.
- The ATRF Vice-President of Pension Services assured retirees that the pension plan is well-funded and continues to be well-managed.
- ARTA is steadfast in its ongoing efforts to meet the needs of the membership.



**MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE**

Tickets are available for the third production of the current dinner theatre season at the Mayfield on Wednesday, March 27, 2024. The multi-award-winning featured artist has portrayed Elvis in a vast array of musical tributes. Seating in the smaller booths at the back of the theatre cost \$85.47 each for the brunch performance of *One Night with the King*. More expensive seating may be retained if acquired early.



Contact Vi Oko at 780-459-8013 before sending a cheque, made payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, to her at 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5. Seats will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

**ARTA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**



The ARTA Photography Contest for 2024 is open to all regular or affiliate ARTA members. Participants can enter photos in either the Novice or the Masters class. Entries can be submitted in only one or even up to all of the four

following categories:

- Travel
- Nature
- Colour
- Detail/Macro

Check the ARTA website at [arta.net/photo-contest](http://arta.net/photo-contest) where a description of each category along with the contest rules and submission guidelines will be posted soon. The entry deadline is May 31, 2024.

**DISCOVERING DUPLICATE BRIDGE**

I knew I would love retirement. After resting for a few months and getting re-energized I began looking for activities to explore, things to learn, and ways to engage with others. I found many ways to give of my time and talents that did not demand huge commitments: learning to draw, singing in choirs, experimenting with creative sewing techniques, cycling, skiing, travelling and reconnecting with friends. However, I still needed to find ways to express my creativity, experience the

gratification inherent in learning something new and attain balance in my life.

After a year, I felt able to return to educational settings. I spent some time teaching in classrooms of correctional institutions and agreed to serve as a faculty consultant. I also held officer as well as committee positions on the local and provincial retired teachers' organizations. I loved to meet new people and use skills acquired over the course of my career. The challenges were endless and rewarding.

Then, I rediscovered bridge—an engaging and intense game that packs everything I love into one activity. It is cooperative and competitive, social and solitary; it is a never-ending learning project. Bridge demands creative solutions and precise responses to play each hand.

I joined the Edmonton Bridge Club and began to play duplicate bridge. Instruction was offered in bidding, playing and defending hands according to a particular system. A friend gently encouraged me and taught me some relevant skills. Then I entered a tournament. What a thrill! I learned to develop a system with my partner, strategies to communicate through bidding and playing cards. I learned how to play with more than one partner. I risked playing with strangers and those who are far more skilled than I am. I cannot begin to express how exciting it is to learn a new convention, to bid a slam and make it, to score points with my partner, to make a new friend at the bridge table.



Although I do not sit at the bridge table every day, I could do so at the Edmonton Bridge Club, I still like to maintain balance in my life: learning, being active, socializing. If you love playing cards, if you love meeting new people, if you love challenging yourself, I encourage you to try learning to play duplicate bridge at a bridge club near you. New members are always welcome at the Edmonton Bridge Club.

Esther Oaks

**CHRISTMAS WISHES**