



# Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Fall Newsletter

September 2023

www.myerta.org



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Fall Luncheon
- 2 President's Message
- 2 Mark Your Calendar
- 2 Luncheon News
- 2 Board Meeting Summary
- 2 Membership Report
- 3 Alice Halvorsen
- 3 Travel Preferences
- 4 Mayfield Dinner Theatre
- 4 A Successful e-Bike Session
- 4 ARTA Writing Contest
- 4 A Great Second Wind Conference
- 5 Sixty Years of History

## GALA LUNCHEON

Join us for our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at the

### Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: September 20, 2023

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast pork buffet

Cost: \$35.00 (includes GST and gratuity)

Speaker: Deb Gerow—President of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA)

Topic: "Happy Anniversary to ERTA and ARTA"

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

### Luncheon Registration Deadline

Please mark the **September 13** 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 Food Bank 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**

2023 is a milestone year for both the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) and the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) as both organizations celebrate sixty years of serving retired teachers.

As the new school year begins, many teachers are celebrating a special milestone—some celebrating their first year of retirement, others starting their last year of teaching and still others just launching their careers.

What milestones are you celebrating? Whatever they are, celebrate them all! Bring some much-needed joy into your life and that of those around you. Celebrate new teachers, new administrators and new students. Celebrate our freedom, our right to free speech and our democracy! A loving family, close friends and helpful neighbours are other reasons to rejoice. Celebrate not only what is new but our history as well! Find reasons to celebrate every day! Happiness keeps you young!

You will not want to miss the festivities at the fall luncheon where we will celebrate ERTA’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, welcome new members, recognize honorary life recipients, and so much more!

For those who are new to retirement, welcome to ERTA; to experienced retirees, welcome back. It is going to be a great year!

**Retirement Wisdom:**

All endings are a chance to rest, to breathe, to reflect on the conclusion of a journey in preparation for a new one.

~Unknown



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Luncheon Registration	September 13, 2023
Fall Luncheon	September 20, 2023
ARTA AGM	October 3 & 4, 2023
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	October 25, 2023
Board of Directors Meeting	November 1, 2023
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	November 22, 2023
Christmas Luncheon	December 6, 2023
Spring Luncheon	March 20, 2024
Summer Luncheon	June 12, 2024

**LUNCHEON NEWS**

Roast pork with apple compote, roasted potatoes, seasonal vegetables and three salads are on the menu for the ERTA luncheon on September 20.

At that time, a special carrot cake will be served to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both ERTA and ARTA. As well, a non-alcoholic sparkling juice will be poured to commemorate the event. Since the anniversary cake will be delivered to each table separately at the end of the meal, remember to save some room for the extra dessert. Each table will also be set with two bottles of sparkling juice to be opened prior to the toast.

Join retired colleagues and friends to celebrate this special occasion. Please ensure that Pam Roy, Telephone Committee Coordinator, is aware of your intent to attend since the purchase of cake and juice will be based on reported numbers.



**BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

The ERTA Board of Directors made the following decisions at a meeting on August 14, 2023, at the Central Lions Seniors Recreation Centre:

- The 2024 luncheon dates were determined (see Mark Your Calendar).
- Reservations have been made for the first two of the five Mayfield Dinner Theatre productions for the upcoming theatrical year (see Mayfield Dinner Theatre).
- Janice Aubry, Ed Butler, Joan Harrison, Vi Oko, Lyndi Karbonik and Ray Roy will represent the branch at the 2023 ARTA annual general meeting (AGM) on October 3 and 4.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Current total membership .....	516
<i>Regular</i> .....	377
<i>Complimentary</i> .....	116
<i>Honorary</i> .....	5
<i>Nonagenarian</i> .....	18
Newsletter distribution	
<i>Canada Post</i> .....	131
<i>Email</i> .....	382
<i>Not receiving by request</i> .....	3

Another ERTA member is about to qualify for a life membership in the association.

**Elizabeth Alice Halvorsen**, the second child of parents of Ukrainian descent, was born on a farm almost five kilometres southwest of the village of Myrnam, Alberta, on September 25, 1933.

She began her schooling at the local Four Hills School a month late in 1939. Alice completed all her elementary grades there prior to enrolling in St. Paul School in 1945 when her family bought a livery stable in town.

She graduated from high school in St. Paul then enrolled in the two-year teacher training program at the University of Alberta in September of 1952.

In 1954, Alice accepted a Grade Four teaching position in Bentley, Alberta. The following year, she assumed a combined fourth-and-fifth grade placement at Crestwood, the new elementary and junior high school in the west end of Edmonton.

In the spring of 1956, Alice married a vocational education teacher she met at summer school.

In the autumn of 1956, she transferred to Mount Pleasant School, which was closer to her south side home, where she taught Grade Four and accelerated Grade Five students. Alice taught at Mount Pleasant for two and one-half years prior to the birth of her daughter in May of 1958. She accepted some substitute teaching assignments before her son was born in the fall of 1959.

Alice returned to the classroom full-time at Crestwood in September 1961, teaching fifth graders until she was granted a sabbatical in 1966.

After taking summer and night school classes and enrolling for a full year at the University of Alberta, she earned her Bachelor of Education degree, convocating in June of 1967.

That fall, Alice was assigned to teach Grade Six at Richard Secord, an open-area school, where she enjoyed the team-teaching environment there until 1979. During her time at Richard Secord School, Alice collaborated on the development of an integrated language arts curriculum, conducted in-services on children's literature, created novel studies, and presented at International Reading Association conferences. She was also enrolled in post-graduate classes, receiving a Diploma in Educational Administration in 1979.

A second sabbatical enabled her to take courses toward a Master of Education degree for a year before being placed in a sixth-grade classroom at Satoo School.

After a thirty-five-year career dedicated to Alberta students, Alice retired in 1992.

Throughout the years she has enjoyed gardening, reading, writing and doing jigsaw puzzles. She sews, loves to play the piano and hopes to resume painting with oils one day.

Alice has edited papers and books for professional organizations and is currently writing an historical novel and a history of the Ukrainian diaspora.

Her family traversed Canada three times—once in a small van and twice in a motor home—when the children were young. They also travelled along the east and west coasts of the United States. Alice and her husband toured the Scandinavian countries several times, especially Norway, and travelled throughout western Europe.

Alice still lives in the house she shared with her husband for almost sixty-seven years.

Cliff Otto

## TRAVEL PREFERENCES

### **Input needed for a travel information session**



Retirement presents an ideal opportunity to fulfill long-held travel dreams. Whether you want to travel locally, nationally or internationally; travel solo or in a group; take a bus tour, road trip, walking tour, cruise or an overseas excursion, a great deal of planning is required.

Novice travellers, and even seasoned ones, are faced with so many decisions and choices, it is hard to know where to begin.

The ERTA Program Committee would like to offer an information session focused on travel planning, but travel interests vary widely. For that reason, a survey will be posted on the myerta.org website to determine what travel experiences are of interest to members. Please fill out the survey. A strong response will provide direction for session content and could result in the organization of some group travel experiences. Watch for additional travel information in the December newsletter.

**MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE**

The California Sound of the 1960s is featured in the first production of the new theatrical year, *Musicians Gone Wild: Rock the Canyon*, which runs from September 5 to November 5. Listen to the music of groups like The Byrds, The Beach Boys, The Mamas and Papas and artists like Joni Mitchell, David Crosby, Neil Young, Steven Stills and Graham Nash. These musicians inspired a new wave of musical artists like Linda Ronstadt, Carole King and The Eagles.

A minimum number of seats have been reserved for Wednesday, October 25. Section C tickets are \$85.47 each, which includes the 15% discounted price of \$71.40, a \$5.00 gratuity, a \$5.00 administration fee and GST. Seats in the larger booths in Section B are \$96.18 apiece. Tickets for tables in Section A (\$100.65) could be booked if they are requested early.



Some tickets have also been reserved for *Canada Rocks: The Reboot*, which will be playing on the Mayfield Dinner Theatre stage from November 14, 2023, to January 28, 2024.

The music of Canadian performers such as Anne Murray, Bryan Adams, Alanis Morissette, Celine Dion, Shania Twain, and The Guess Who as well as The Tragically Hip is celebrated.

Tickets for \$88.15 and \$97.08, respectively, are available for Wednesday, November 22.

Telephone Vi Oko at 780-459-8013 to indicate your preferences, then mail your cheques, payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association, to 20 Glenhaven Crescent, St. Albert, Alberta T8N 1A5.

**A SUCCESSFUL E-BIKE SESSION**

All participants enjoyed the Introduction to e-Bikes session presented by Pedego Electric Bikes on May 16. It was a great opportunity to test ride the bikes and gain valuable information to determine if an e-bike is for you and, if so, how to make an appropriate selection.

Go online to [myerta.org](http://myerta.org) to read Nadine Lung's article describing the event.



**ARTA WRITING CONTEST**

ARTA members have an opportunity to reach an audience of over 30,000 readers by becoming a contributor to the annual ARTA Writing Contest. Eager authors can enter this year's contest in one, or all, of the following categories for 2023:



Flash Fiction—a story of up to 800 words using the prompt, "Dreams of the Future"

Poetry—a composition of up to forty lines using any form and any subject

Travel Vignette—a brief, vivid word picture of a memorable, meaningful travel moment that has left a lasting impression on the writer

Jot down your ideas and start drafting your entry to be ready for submission by the November 17, 2023, deadline. Winners will be announced in the spring issue of *news&views*.

Detailed contest rules and guidelines along with instructions for submitting your work and a link to download the official entry form can be accessed online at [arta.net](http://arta.net) by clicking on the 'Wellness' tab and selecting 'Writing Contest.'

**A GREAT SECOND WIND CONFERENCE**

The 2023 Second Wind health and wellness conference for retirees was a resounding success! There were no cancelled flights, crowded waits or lost luggage and no need to recover from a vacation!



Registrants enjoyed a most memorable keynote address, attended a variety of speaker sessions, visited informative displays, purchased local crafts, relished a sumptuous luncheon and relaxed at the end-of-conference 'wine down' featuring numerous door prizes ...and the parking was free! The 2024 conference will be held Thursday, September 12. Mark that date on your calendar and plan to enjoy a mini-vacation to restore your body, mind and spirit!

Celebrate what you have accomplished, but raise the bar a little higher each time you succeed.

~Mia Hamm

## **SIXTY YEARS OF HISTORY**

John F. Kennedy was assassinated, Pope John XXIII passed away, Lester B. Pearson became Prime Minister, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, “Littlest Hobo” and “The Fugitive” were on television, and Beatlemania was launched with the release of “I Want to Hold Your Hand” in 1963. The Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) and the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA) were formally organized in 1963. The histories of both associations are closely interwoven.

In the early 1950s, retired teachers in Edmonton met informally to pursue their interest in art, music, bridge and bowling. By the end of the 1950s, similar groups were meeting socially in Calgary and Lethbridge as well.

Ben Hager presided at a meeting of the Retired Teachers of Edmonton on November 14, 1960, to discuss the contents of a letter received from James Laing, president of the fledgling group in Calgary, advising his colleagues in Edmonton of the intent of retired teachers residing in Calgary to formally organize to address the pension and medical insurance concerns the two groups shared. Larue Smith was elected to the position of president at that meeting with Lillian Parnell agreeing to continue to serve as secretary of the organization.

Soon after, a committee of retired teachers living in Edmonton began to lobby the provincial government, seeking an increase in pension income for those teachers who retired before 1948.

A Teachers' Pension Plan had been established in 1939 with equal contributions to the plan made by active teachers and the provincial government. The first pension cheque was received by a retired teacher in 1940.

The first formal meeting of the Retired Teachers Association of Alberta—Calgary Branch was held at Western Canada High School on January 23, 1961. A one-dollar fee was set at that meeting.

In a 1956 amendment to the *Teachers' Retirement Fund Act*, the government agreed to guarantee all pensions, but it stopped setting aside money to prefund the benefits. At this point the government took out half of the pool of money that had accrued and used it to pay its share of pension payments, quickly depleting the small reserve.

Lillian Parnell began writing letters to all of the retired teachers in the province, encouraging them to join, for a dollar membership fee, the Retired Teachers of Alberta. The Edmonton committee paid the initial postage costs.

Following a presentation by Frank G. McCoy to the Annual Representative Assembly in 1962, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) agreed to assess all active teachers an additional fifty cents a month. As a result, teachers who had retired prior to 1948 began to receive a \$110.00 pension (the original \$65.00 pension supplemented by an additional \$30.00 from the ATA and \$15.00 from the government).

The committee began to advocate in earnest for an increase in pensions for those teachers who had retired as recently as 1959.

In an exchange of letters with James Laing, Lillian, on behalf of her committee, pursued the idea of a permanent retired teachers' organization with the primary objective being the overall welfare of all retired teachers and the need to speak with one voice on behalf of all retired teachers in Alberta.

Medical Services Incorporated (MSI) was a group health insurance plan that offered reduced rates for hospitalization, but only if 75% of the retired teachers in the province joined as a group. A total of 52% of the respondents to a notice in the June issue of the *ATA Magazine* stated a willingness to join. Lillian contacted 288 retired teachers, in the hope of convincing the required number to commit. Only 59% of them replied. Of the 461 letters she sent to the 1961 retirees, only 60% supported the proposal. However, with James Laing's encouragement and Lillian Parnell's letter-writing campaign, the required percentage was finally attained in 1962 and a group health insurance plan for retired teachers was achieved.

Delegates representing the Retired Teachers of Edmonton, the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association—Calgary Branch, the Retired Teachers Association (Lethbridge) and retirees in Medicine Hat met on March 12, 1963, to originate the Retired Teachers of Alberta, later changed to the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association.

Application for incorporation under the *Societies Act* was made on September 3, 1963. The charter that incorporated the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association as a non-profit society was issued on

November 14, 1963. The name of the Edmonton branch was changed to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association at that time.

Before long, the Calgary branch changed its name to the Calgary Retired Teachers' Association. The Lethbridge branch became the Southwestern Alberta Retired Teachers Association in 1987.

Six new branches were formed in the 1970s, with three more added in the 1980s. St. Albert joined in 1997, Foothills in 2002, Stettler in 2008, Parkland in 2010 and Heartland in 2012.

On October 3, 2007, the Okanagan Alberta Retired Teachers' Association became a satellite branch. Formation of a branch of Alberta retired teachers in British Columbia was inspired by Irl Miller, who provided the names, and facilitated by Ron Rhine, who made the contacts from his new home in Westbank, British Columbia. Both of them were previous ERTA presidents and both made a significant contribution to the growth and advancement of services provided by ARTA and ERTA.

Arthur G. Skitch of Edmonton was elected to the position of president of the new association and Milton W. Brock of Calgary became the secretary-treasurer. Representatives of the Edmonton and Calgary branches alternated in serving in a leadership role for the next ten years until J. A. McDonald of Medicine Hat was elected president of ARTA at the AGM on October 3, 1973.

Numerous ERTA members served the association in various executive capacities over the following twenty years and were instrumental in ensuring the viability of the organization over the years.

On October 22, 1980, an executive secretary was appointed to work (without pay) in the ARTA office (Room 408 was a small office in Barnett House courtesy of the ATA) and acted as the treasurer as well.

Joe Durand (ERTA) served as the executive secretary until October 1983 and again from October 1986 to October 1993. He alternated in the role of president and executive secretary with Ron Rhine who served in that position until 1997.

Ron assumed the role a second time in October 1992 with increased membership as his primary focus. He added some furnishings, an answering machine, a filing cabinet and some shelving to give the small office a professional appearance.

A benevolent ATA staff member applied her creative expertise to Ron's initial attempt at an informative newsletter and the first iteration of *news&views* was launched.

A conversation with an ARTA member regarding health insurance benefits available to Ontario retired teachers prompted Ron to investigate the possibility of arranging for a similar plan for retired teachers in Alberta. Johnson Inc., the insurance agent for Maritime Life, would only agree to provide health insurance benefits in Alberta if over 1500 letters were received requesting such coverage. A formal letter was included in a retirement fund mailing. Terms discussed with Johnson Inc. and Maritime Life included a 1% rebate. After a motion was passed at an executive meeting, the ARTA Benefit Plan became operational on September 5, 1995, with an open enrolment.

Ron left the position in 1997 with the expectation that the job description of the role would be prescribed by the ARTA Board of Directors instead of being a self-directed one and that the executive secretary would be paid a small stipend.

Gerry Smith served as the executive secretary for the next ten years. When Don Mock was hired, the association was on the cusp of major expansion. He resigned from the redefined position of executive director, now a full-time position, effective August 31, 2011.

Daniel Mulloy, the current executive director, is the first non-teacher to oversee office operations and guide the expansion of the organization.

ARTA became self-insured on April 8, 2008, self-administration went into effect on January 1, 2021, and ARTARx, ARTA's member-owned pharmacy, opened on February 1, 2023.

Visionaries played a pivotal role in the establishment of ARTA. Their commitment to the original concept has had a significant impact on how the association has evolved. The welfare of retired teachers was the primary concern as was providing an influential voice locally and provincially along with the promotion of fellowship with other retired teachers.

Leadership is not being the loudest voice drawing the most attention; it is getting positive action achieved.

~Mia Hamm