



# Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Christmas Newsletter

December 2024

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Please note the *Important Luncheon News* notice on page two.

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Join us for our Christmas luncheon at the

### Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: December 4, 2024

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast turkey buffet

Cost: \$35.00 (includes GST and gratuity)

Entertainment: A choral presentation of traditional Christmas carols by **Chance**, a ladies' barbershop quartet, followed by a group sing-along.

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

### Luncheon Registration Deadline

Please mark the **November 27** deadline for luncheon registration on your calendar. If you have not received a phone call or registered online by 6:00 p.m. that evening and would like to attend the luncheon, contact Pam Roy at **780-473-5598** immediately.

**Monetary donations to Santa's Anonymous are appreciated.**



## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **President**

Ed Butler, [presidenterta@gmail.com](mailto:presidenterta@gmail.com)

### **Past President**

Joan Harrison

### **Vice-President**

Lyndi Karbonik

### **Treasurer**

Bonnie Zack

### **Secretaries**

Janice Aubry

Marlene Kirwin

### **Membership Coordinator**

Cam Coville

### **Webmaster**

Ray Roy

### **Directors**

Mary Dunnigan

Lily Ma

Cliff Otto

Sue Stephenson

Carol Williamson

Greg Wilson

Gail Wozny

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

Change is in the air. It is that time of year! The weather is changing! Leaves are falling! Winter is coming! These are realities which we cannot control.

However, other changes we can initiate, experiment, talk about and ultimately make choices. What am I talking about? The Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA) is looking at all things ERTA. We are finding many things good – but we are also hearing calls to be more efficient and to try more options for engaging our members.

The real positive is that more people are offering help if they are given meaningful input. We have added a highly successful travel symposium, that is leading us to host a travel club. We have now held several tasting events (wine and beer so far with more to come). Numerous suggestions for one-time activities are being shared with our board and with our program committee. While we will not be able to do all these things at once it is good to see what interests people.

On the organizational front we are also hearing suggestions for alternative payment methods, different ways for signing up for events and for renewing membership. In addition, we are looking at our policies and procedures. Look for changes to come with a new mission and vision statement (now in the drafting stage), a new budget plan and so much more. We know Rome was not built in a year and the same thing can be said of ERTA—now 60 years old.

Stay tuned—it will be exciting to see what the future holds. In the meantime, dress for the weather and stay warm!



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Christmas Luncheon	December 4, 2024
Wine Tasting (California)	January 21, 2025
Wine Tasting (California)	January 27, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting	February 13, 2025
Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention	February 27 & 28, 2025
Spring Luncheon	March 19, 2025
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	March 26, 2025

**LUNCHEON NEWS**

This year the ERTA Board of Directors selected **Santa’s Anonymous** as the charity to support at the Christmas luncheon. Monetary donations by cash or cheque to the charity (rather than items) can be made at the luncheon registration table on December 4.

➔ **Another way to register for the luncheon**

Some members have expressed a preference to register online for the luncheons instead of getting a phone call. That option is now available starting with the upcoming Christmas luncheon.

Our members fall into two groups—those who get newsletters delivered by post and those who are on the email list and receive an electronic copy. The first group will continue to get a friendly call from one of our volunteers asking if they would like to register for the luncheon.

The second group, who chose in an online survey to take advantage of electronic registration, will receive a follow up email with a link to the luncheon registration form. After submission, an email will be sent confirming receipt of the registration.

Call Pam Roy if you have not registered or have not been called by 6:00 p.m. on November 27.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Current total membership .....	498
<i>Regular</i> .....	379
<i>Complimentary</i> .....	98
<i>Nonagenarian life</i> .....	18
<i>Honorary life</i> .....	7
Renewals currently due .....	70
<i>Regular</i> .....	38
<i>Complimentary</i> .....	32
Newsletter distribution	
<i>Canada Post</i> .....	122
<i>Email</i> .....	380
<i>Not receiving by request</i> .....	4

It was grand to see many of you attending ERTA events over this past year!

Tell your friends about ERTA! Newly retired teachers, and colleagues who have not previously been ERTA members, are offered a first-year complimentary membership. Have your friends contact me at [membershipperta@gmail.com](mailto:membershipperta@gmail.com) for more information.

**ERTA Membership Form QR Code**

Scan this QR code with your smartphone, tablet or digital camera. It will take you to the ERTA registration form. Follow the instructions on the form to complete your registration.

If you prefer, click on this [Membership Application](#) link to access the application.

**Membership Payment options: cheque, cash (in person at luncheons) or via etransfer.** Our membership fees are valid from June 30th of the current year to July 1st of the following year. (Memberships and fees are not prorated).

Cam Colville  
Membership Coordinator

**BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

Two highlights from the ERTA Board of Directors meeting, held at Barnett House on October 29, were as follows:

- Dolaine Koch was appointed as the new Chair of the Second Wind Conference Committee
- The Board is continuing committee work on creating its mission, vision and values statements; these will be shared with members in the near future.

**ARTA AGM REPORT**

A total of eighty-four board members and branch delegates gathered at the Holiday Inn Edmonton South on October 1 and 2 for the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association's (ARTA) annual general meeting. Elections for three officers and six standing committee members were held.

Representatives from ERTA's Board of Directors included Ed Butler (President), Joan Harrison (Past President), Janice Aubry and Marlene Kirwin (Secretaries), Cam Colville (Membership Director) and Carol Williamson (Director).

Reports were accepted for information from staff members, officers, committees, branch presidents and affiliated organizations. Highlights are as follows:

- ARTA President Deb Gerow reported that ARTA **Rx** is successful and generates profits to keep ARTA health benefits affordable and

sustainable. Calgary ARTA **Rx** will open in the new year. She thanked staff and delegates for various contributions, including acknowledging the successful Second Wind Conference. She also encouraged branches to notify her if there are members who may be interested in running for a position as school board trustee in the upcoming elections.

- ARTA Vice President Leo Richer highlighted the incredible challenges facing classroom teachers and the need for further advocacy for active teachers.
- ARTA Treasurer Lawrence Hrycan shared that the Branch ARTA Representative Program training will be January 14, 2025.
- ARTA CEO Daniel Mulloy reported that as of September 1, ARTA has 32,264 members (note: staff confirmed that as of October 2, 2024 there were 32,376 members) and 29,696 members covered by the ARTA benefits plan. He reported a 6.9% net growth in ARTA membership, and a net increase of 5% growth in health benefit plan membership.
- ARTA Health Benefits Committee Chair Leo Bruseker reported that ARTA's new travel insurance company is Beneva (changed from Alliance). He also reported that a new online health benefits claim system has been introduced.
- Governance Committee Chair Ron Thompson highlighted changes to the scholarship program.
- Wellness Committee Chair Joyce Loucks presented ERTA with the ARTA Wellness Initiative Award this year, as ERTA had the most participants in the ARTA Wellness Walk.

The ARTA election results were as follows:

- President (1-year term): Deb Gerow
- Vice President (1-year term): Ray Hoger
- Treasurer (1-year term): Lawrence Hrycan
- Communications Committee (4-year term): Cheryl Dawes
- Governance Committee (4-year term): Laurie Semler
- Health Benefits Committee (5-year term): Patricia Atkinson
- Pension and Financial Wellness Committee (4-year term): Alain Levesque
- Strategic Planning and Advocacy Committee (4 year term): Denis Espetveidt

- Wellness Committee (4 year term): M. Joyce Loucks
- Wellness Committee (1 year term): Rod Lowry

The Auditor reported that ARTA's financial statements were presented fairly, in all material respects and that ARTA's finances are in good health.

ATRF reported that for the first time in its history, the Teachers' Pension Plan is fully funded (101% funded - assets versus liabilities).

Submitted respectfully by

Janice Aubry  
ERTA Secretary

### WINE TASTING

Bring your friends, meet with former colleagues and learn about the marvelous wines of countries around the world! Thomas Coburger from Wine and Beyond will lead fun-filled evenings of wine tasting, set in the beautiful MacTaggart Ridge tasting room. Each wine participant will receive six wine samples and a small charcuterie and cheese plate from the Italian Centre Shop South, as well as a wealth of knowledge. Registration for these events is now open but register early as space is limited!

Dates: Please note that if two dates are given for an event, the second one for each set is a repeat of the first session and will be used if registration permits.

- January 21 and 27: Wines of California
- March 19 and 27: Wines of Portugal
- May 22 and 26: Wines of Canada



Location: MacTaggart Ridge Wine and Beyond at 5962 Mullen Way in Edmonton

Cost: ERTA members \$34.65; non-members \$39.90 both including GST.

Time: The tasting room doors open at 6:00 p.m. for registration and social time. The presentation and tasting of wines will occur from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Food: Please note, food allergies or preferences cannot be accommodated at these events.

Payment: The registration fee will be collected by staff at the store upon arrival. Debit cards, credit cards and cash will be accepted.

Registration: Please use this link [Wine Tasting Registration](#) or email [vpresidenterta@gmail.com](mailto:vpresidenterta@gmail.com) to receive an email containing the link to register for these events or check the ERTA website at ([edmontonretiredteachers.org](http://edmontonretiredteachers.org)). Registration will close one week prior to each date listed and confirmations will be sent to participants.

### MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE



The next Mayfield Dinner Theatre event is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2025. Tickets for the brunch presentation of the musical comedy *The Full Monty* are \$87.26 for booth seating in Section C and \$96.18 for Section B seats.

The stage version of *The Full Monty* is based on the film of the same name. After spying on their wives at a 'girls' night out,' a group of jealous unemployed steelworkers from Buffalo contrive a plan to make some fast money. Their antics, which involve some instances of implied nudity, are hilarious and guaranteed to have the audience laughing right up to the end.

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

### SECOND WIND CONFERENCE



The 2024 Second Wind Conference was a great success! Registrants chatted with colleagues and friends at the morning Hava Java, enjoyed the keynote address, attended a variety of interesting speaker sessions, visited informative displays, purchased local crafts, and savored a delicious luncheon. To complete a great day, they relaxed at the end-of-conference 'wine down' featuring numerous door prizes.

Planning for the conference in 2025 is underway. Mark **Thursday, September 11**, on your calendar and plan to enjoy a relaxing, informative day to restore your body, mind and spirit!

Watch your branch newsletters, ARTAfacts, and **news&views** for additional information in the new year.

**REQUEST FROM THE SECOND WIND CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

At the 2024 conference, attendees were asked if they wanted to continue receiving the ‘gift bags’ that are given to all attendees. The response was overwhelmingly “Yes!” People love getting them but collecting items for the bags is a daunting undertaking for the person assigned to that task. Most companies are willing to give something but asking for 200 items is usually more than they can agree to. If you, or anyone you know, has a lead as to groups or businesses that would be able to contribute to the gift bags, or, if you are willing to approach these groups, please let Dolaine Koss, chair of the Second Wind Committee, know by emailing her at [dolainekoch@shaw.ca](mailto:dolainekoch@shaw.ca). Ideas as to groups that would be able to offer a door prize would also be great. All donors are acknowledged in a variety of ways at the conference.

**CHRISTMAS HUMOUR**

- People act like the North Pole and the South Pole are exactly the same, but really, there’s a whole world of difference between them.
- Two girls were getting ready for bed on Christmas Eve, Molly had a loose tooth that she wanted to pull. Addison said, “Don’t you dare pull that tooth out tonight because the Tooth Fairy wants to be with her family.” Molly waited until Christmas to pull her tooth.
- Santa knows karate? He has a black belt.
- Christmas is the time of year when everyone gets Santamental.
- You know you’re getting old when Santa starts looking younger.
- One thing I learned from drinking is that if you ever go Christmas caroling, you should go with a group of people and it should be in mid-December.
- Christmas stress slogan: Don’t get your tinsel in a tangle.
- I’m dreaming of a white Christmas but if the white runs out, I’ll drink the red.



Every day that we wake up is a good day. Every breath that we take is filled with hope for a better day. Every word that we speak is a chance to change what is bad into something good.  
 ~Walter Mosley

**HEART AND SOLE WELLNESS WALK**

ERTA was acknowledged at the ARTA AGM as the branch having the largest group participating in the ARTA spring wellness walk. Sixty-nine of us enjoyed walking and chatting along the trails and across the Tawatinâ Bridge in the beautiful river valley near the Muttart Conservatory.



Ed Butler receives the trophy on behalf of ERTA for the most people participating in the walk.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

**ERTA invites members to Wrap and Roll**

Would you like to volunteer your time to wrap Christmas gifts for a great cause, with other ERTA members?



In support of the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation, you are invited to join ERTA volunteers for the Wrap and Roll event at Kingsway Mall! This fundraiser is a tradition for the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation and takes place beginning December 6. Volunteers at Wrap and Roll provide gift wrapping services to mall shoppers in exchange for donations to the Foundation.

Kingsway Mall graciously donates the facilities, and all wrapping supplies, so that 100% of the donations received come directly to the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation, benefiting students across the Division.

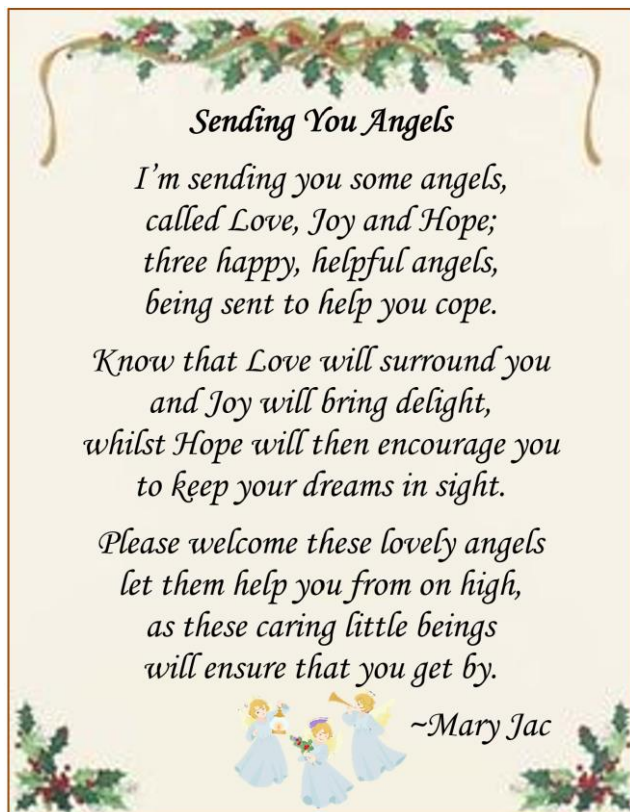
Established in 2010, the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation raises funds and awareness to level the educational playing field for children who come to the classroom at a disadvantage by supporting Division programs that exist outside of the Government of Alberta’s public funding.

Wrap and Roll dates for ERTA are scheduled on December 16, and 23 with two shifts available each day from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Members may register to bring a group of friends (maximum 4–5 people per shift) to volunteer or come alone and meet other ERTA members! If all time slots become full, additional dates may become available.

Please note that in addition, the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation is also seeking several Lead Volunteers to lead all of their volunteer shifts. The responsibilities would include opening and closing the gift-wrapping station, managing the donations and supervising the student/staff volunteers.

For details or to sign up as a volunteer, please email Janice Aubry at [secretary1erta@gmail.com](mailto:secretary1erta@gmail.com).



## HOPE

Hope is the expectation that something desirable can be achieved.

In the aftermath of a world pandemic, uncertainty continues to prevail as numerous wars, severe climate events, unceasing migration for political or

economic reasons, increasing incidence of homelessness and the rising cost of living are an ever-present reality confronting millions of people on a daily basis around the globe. Added to these conditions impervious to personal control, uncertainty, in the form of unexpected loss of good health, financial security, special relationships or status in the community can deplete a personal sense of hope.

Hope is about possibility, not probability, and does not emanate from ill will.

It is that small voice in a person's heart that says "yes" to life. If nurtured, it invites, encourages, drives us forward and enables us to envision a future in which we are willing to participate. If that little voice is silenced, hope wanes or dies.

A person can intentionally choose hope as a way to address life circumstances. Firstly, health conditions, unhealthy relationships and any other personal affairs that are threats to hope must be acknowledged. Strategies require development and need to be practised in order to positively confront challenging situations. Be purposeful in associating with hopeful people.

As this year draws to a close, choose to remain hopeful and plan to meet whatever challenges the new year brings with a renewed sense of hope.

## *The New Year*

*At the sound of the tolling midnight bell  
a brand-new year will begin.*

*Let's raise our hopes in a confident toast,  
to the promise it ushers in.*

*May your battles be few, your pleasure many,  
your wishes and dreams fulfilled.*

*May your confidence stand in the face of woe  
and give you the strength to be bold.*

*May peace of heart fill all your days  
may serenity grace your soul.*

*May tranquil moments bless your life  
and keep your spirit whole.*

*~Anonymous*