

ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Those of you who were able to come together at the Christmas luncheon heard me say that I would be spending the holiday alone for the very first time. Many of you were concerned by that, so I thought I would let you know I rather enjoyed it! The house was decorated, baking done, special meals made, gifts sent.... It was a lovely Christmas – and I ate way too much!

For many, the prospect of being alone can be a challenge. If you are one who needs some company – reach out. Even social media offers a connection of sorts. Do not fear asking for someone to visit! Loneliness can be a dangerous enemy. Finding peace in solitude is not an easy task. When you have known companionship and togetherness for a long time and it is gone, adjustment can take time; however, it is possible to be very comfortable with just your own company!

*Envelope of time
Impenetrable,
Locked away within this dream,
Alone, but not lonely.
Cushioned by the solitude
Inviolable,
Seeking no connection,
Alone, but not lonely.
Embraced by memories
Indescribable,
The colours and the music grow,
Alone, but not lonely.
Caressed by sweet sensation
Inescapable,
Touching to the level of the soul,
Alone, but not lonely.
Evolution comes
Incomprehensible,
Changing thought but not who I am,
Alone, but not lonely.
Complete transition
Irreversible,
Returning to the world of reality,
Alone, but not lonely*



Let's look ahead! Keep your eyes peeled for news about upcoming events. Check out the spring edition of *news&views* when it comes out. You may recognize the 'cover girl'.

Even as the weather gets colder, the days get longer and we know winter will end. Get outside, even for a few minutes, to feel that crisp freshness. Just be careful with that snow shovel!



WINTER EDITION

January, 2020

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Elk Island RTA website:
<https://artabranches.net/elkislandrta/>

Elk Island RTA email:
elkislandrta@gmail.com



Elk Island RTA is a branch of ARTA

Like ARTA, Elk Island RTA supports an engaged lifestyle after retirement through member-centered services, advocacy, communication, wellness and leadership.

Christmas Luncheon

We enjoyed another wonderful Christmas Luncheon on December 4, 2019, and we were thankful for many things connected to this event: the venue was perfect, the hot turkey dinner provided by Lois Derkson was delicious, and our singing of Christmas carols was joyful. Several of us certainly felt our mood shift in line with the season during that afternoon's festivities.

We are thankful, also, for the generosity of our members. The Board of Directors for the Strathcona Christmas Bureau sent a note of thanks expressing their gratitude for not just the cash donations totalling \$635.00, but also for the many gifts and toys donated at this event.

Thank you to all who attended for helping to make this a joyful beginning to our Christmas Season.





Elk Island RTA Executive

To contact any of the executive members listed below, please email us at:
elkislandrta@gmail.com

President:
Karen Atkinson

Vice President:
Deb Gerow

Treasurer:
Dolaine Koch

Secretary and Compassion and
Congratulations:
Carol Gilbertson

Past President and Communications:
Inge Coates

Membership:
Thelma Baumgartner

Phoning Committee Chair:
Dianna Millard

Social Committee:
Sylvia Roes
Sheila Busch
Ruby Okamura
Lorna Johnston
Karen Carlson

ARTA Reps:
Dolaine Koch
Karen Atkinson

Mark Your Calendar



Date – Tuesday, March 17, 2020
Event – Luck of the Irish Casino Trip
Location – River Cree Casino
Details – See page 5 of this newsletter.



News from ARTA

Please visit the ARTA website at <http://www.arta.net> for general information.

Information from ARTA Board of Directors meetings can be found at <http://www.arta.net/about/resources/briefing-notes/>

Links to the *news&views* magazine and Artifacts can also be found on the ARTA website

Please Keep Us Updated

Please register changes in your membership information if...

- You have turned 80 years of age. (Membership is free after this age if you have been a member for the previous 10 years.)
- You have moved. (We need your new contact information.)
- You are not certain if your membership has expired.

To register changes, contact Thelma Baumgartner at elkislandrta@gmail.com.

Important: Please do not send cash through the mail to pay for membership fees, or for any other reason. It is much safer to send a cheque, and the cancelled cheque can also act as a reminder as to the details of your payment.

Elk Island RTA Spring Social Event

River Cree Casino



WHEN: Tuesday, March 17, 2020

WHERE: River Cree Casino

A free bus will pick up participating members in the parking lot by Walmart on Wye Road.

Please Note: The bus will leave PROMPTLY at **9:30 a.m.** from the west end of the parking lot of the Walmart on Wye Road and Range Road 233 and will return to Sherwood Park around 2:30 – 3:00 p.m. We are required to be at the casino for a minimum of 4 hours.

Spouses and friends of Elk Island RTA members are welcome to attend. We invited colleagues from the Edmonton Retired Teachers Assoc. to join us this year. (A minimum of 15 people is required.)

Again, there is NO COST for the bus! Our tour guide will also distribute complimentary lunch tickets and a \$5.00 free play voucher to each attendee; however, each person is responsible for the payment of any beverages they order as well as the gratuity for lunch and beverage services.

While at the River Cree Casino, you may play the machines, gamble, dine, visit and/or explore. NEW! River Cree now has a separate smoking section!

CONTACT: To register or for more details, contact Sylvia Roes via email (elkislandrta@gmail.com)

DEADLINE: Contact Sylvia on or before Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Making Your Voice Heard

One of the great things about democracy is that we can hear and respect each other's opinions. The Elk Island Retired Teachers' Association is consciously apolitical; however, we do encourage our members who feel strongly about education and teachers' issues to make their voices heard—no matter which viewpoint they support. It is also important for all of us to be well-informed.

Some ways that you can make your feelings known:

- Write your MLA and cc members of the Opposition and Cabinet members. Definitely write your MLA if they are a Cabinet Minister!
- If you live in Edmonton, regardless of who your MLA is, write to Minister @KayceeMaduYEG and cc an Opposition MLA. He is Edmonton's voice in Cabinet, and he should know what you feel strongly about.
- Talk to your friends and family. Get them writing too!
- Buy a membership and/or donate to a party that represents your opinion.
- Write to your school board trustee and cc the Minister of Education @AdrianaLaGrange.
- Write to your city councillor or county ward representative and cc Minister of Municipal Affairs @KayceeMaduYEG

It's not too late. The issues still exist. Your representatives need to know what you think. Here are a few links to websites that provide a variety of viewpoints on education or teaching in Alberta, as well as other links that provide contact information so that you can express your viewpoint:

[United Conservative Party Website](#)

[Sherwood Park Rep. Jordan Walker](#)

[Strathcona/Sherwood Park Rep. Nate Glubish](#)

[Fort Saskatchewan/ Vegreville Rep. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk](#)

Find the contact information for other UCP MLAs [here](#).

[New Democratic Party Website](#)

[NDP Critic for Education Sarah Hoffman](#)

Find the contact information for other NDP MLAs [here](#).

[Alberta Liberal Party Website](#)

[Alberta Green Party Website](#)

[Alberta Teachers' Association](#)

[Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund on Bill 22](#)

[Alberta Retired Teachers' Association - Advocacy Regarding Alberta Legislation](#)

And Now for a Touch of Humour!

One of our members submitted the following "sage advice" to share with our readers:

When reaching for the Preparation H, double check that it is not a tube of Sensodyne toothpaste! The toothpaste may smell nice and minty, but the resulting sting will have you soaking in the bathtub! (I guess it could have been worse... I could have been reaching for the Sensodyne and not realized that I found the Preparation H!)

Health Matters

“Health Matters” is a feature written by Carol Gilbertson that offers health reminders. These reminders are meant to be helpful, and are not to be taken as medical advice. At all times, readers are advised to consult their own physician to ensure that what they are doing health-wise is in their best interests.

Decluttering: When you’ve got a home filled with a lifetime’s worth of stuff, there often comes a time when you’ve got to part with some of it. Seniors especially, have compelling reasons to pare back possessions. Paring back this lifetime’s worth of possessions can feel overwhelming; however, there is a real sense of well-being as each part of this task is completed.

There is no one way to declutter. Keep experimenting, finding an arsenal of tactics that suit you. Here are some suggestions to get started that may work for you:

- Make it a regular practice. One task this month, another next month, slipping projects into your routine.
- Set aside one day a week. Reserve the time and plan nothing else that day.
- Take it an hour at a time. Tackle just one task, promising yourself that you can quit or keep going when the hour is up.
- Take ten minutes at a time. See if smaller chunks of time work better for you.
- Choose one task such as a drawer. You’ll get a nice sense of accomplishment completing one task.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Ideas for Outings

Are you looking for a unique outing?

- How about high tea in a castle? Check out [Ryan’s Castle!](#)
- Here is a link to [community events in Strathcona County](#) that might brighten your winter day.
- Looking for live theatre? You will find options on this website: [Live Theater in Edmonton.](#)
- Are you a stargazer or do you want to know when the northern lights are active? Here are some options for you: [Star Gazing.](#)
- Want to celebrate winter, and satisfy your curiosity about Indigenous villages? Check out the Indigenous Villages at these winter festivals: [Silver Skate Festival...Flying Canoe Volant...Deep Freeze Festival.](#)

Note of Congratulations

*Congratulations to Margaret Anderson on her 100th birthday,
celebrated on January 5, 2020!*

We would like to include good-news notices in our newsletter, and encourage you to please send your happy announcements in an email to elkislandrta@gmail.com. Your good news also puts smiles on our faces!

Notes of Compassion

It is with heavy hearts that we send our condolences

*To the family and friends of our colleague,
John Skakun,
who passed away on October 8, 2019*

*To Val MacMillan and her family at the passing of Val's nephew,
Matthew Swenson,
on October 12, 2019.*

*To the family and friends of our colleague,
Elaine Gillingham,
who passed away on October 23, 2019.*

*To John Younie and his family at the passing of John's wife,
Victoria Younie
On December 3, 2019.*

**Note: Please contact us at elkislandrta@gmail.com if you know of news that should be included in our Compassion section. We depend on our membership to keep us updated.*

Kindness

Are you aware of a member who is struggling?
Please let us know, and we will reach out with a call or a card.
Sometimes, just a little touch of kindness makes all the difference in the world.