

# ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## President's Message

Time does not seem to have a constant pace these days. It speeds up and slows down without any kind of predictability. We continue to make the best of a scary situation and slowly we see the spreading vaccinations offering a glimmer of hope. Restrictions continue because we need them. I hope you are all staying very safe.

After the sometimes-rocky beginning for ARTA's self-administration of the benefits plan, I think we have found it to be a positive experience moving forward. I hope any of you who had problems have had them resolved satisfactorily.

I am thrilled to see so many people have opted in to see the postings on EIRTA's Bulletin Board. Many people are sending links to information to keep members up-to-date on key issues. The more people get involved, the better!

The weather continues to offer surprises (or is it just a normal Alberta spring?). I know I am longing for green leaves and grass. Remind me in the summer, when I get behind with my yard work.... Soon the breezes will be warmer and the lengthening days will keep the day's warmth longer into the evenings. I hope you can get outside once in a while to enjoy the air.

This message seems to be wandering over many disparate ideas. I think it fits with the way my mind works in this pandemic world. I get started on one thing, distracted by another, forgetting the first... A series of falling dominoes leading me randomly all over the place. Once in a while I actually get something done.

I will leave you with a bit of random nonsense ...

Lilies, lavender, lilac  
Cool raindrops, soft breezes  
Fragrances of time  
Spring

Hot sun on happy children  
Sunscreen, sand, sweet drinks  
Fragrances of time  
Summer

Earth, rich and full  
Crisp dry leaves and smoky drifts  
Fragrances of time  
Autumn

Fireplace ashes, coals glow  
Soggy mittens, hot chocolate  
Fragrances of time  
Winter

Karen Atkinson



## SPRING EDITION

April 2021

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

Elk Island RTA email:  
[newseirta@gmail.com](mailto:newseirta@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.*

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## EIRTA's Email, Zoom and Website Communications

My role in "communications" for EIRTA has changed significantly since I started. In 2015, I made sure that we published four issues of our newsletter, and I sent out an occasional email blast. Then, when I joined the Communications Committee for ARTA in 2016, I did my best to promote ARTA's support for branch websites. When I created our first website using the Joomla platform, I learned much about how frustrating technology could be! In 2018, ARTA helped branches develop new websites using a template that was significantly easier to manage. We now simply send our website content to Tony, and he adds it for us! In 2020, my workload also lightened up as Julie Ginther has taken over the newsletter.

However, I like being involved in supporting retired teachers, so I recently took on another term with ARTA's Communications Committee. As a bonus, I am getting to know Julie Ginther better, because she is also on that committee, as is Deb Gerow--both of these ladies are wonderful people to work with.

Now we have COVID, and communication for everyone has become both difficult and important. I miss our executive's face-to-face meetings, and the EIRTA Social Committee has not been able to plan a face-to-face event for far too long. Thanks to ARTA, our branch now has a Zoom license that allows for webinars and more complex online, virtual meetings. I'm still working on maximizing our use of Zoom, but it has been more difficult than I anticipated!

The first Zoom webinar that we held was in regard to ARTA's benefit plan updates. Garry Sawatzky provided up-to-date information and answered questions from our members. The meeting was recorded, and now can be accessed under the heading "Past Events" on our website: <https://artabranches.net/elkislandrta/>. I am looking for more experts to feature on webinars. I am also hopeful that we might be able to run an AGM through Zoom and possibly provide a platform for school-based reunions. I am certainly open to ideas and connections you, our members, may have!

Many of us have also have been struggling with some of the moves that our provincial government has/is undertaking. Some of you have signed up for *EIRTA's Bulletin Board*. If you have signed up, I have already sent you emails regarding upcoming actions or email campaigns that you may be interested in joining. Again, I am counting on our members to let me know when they become aware of these events so that I can share that information.

As before, I still send out email blasts to all members with non-political updates as they occur or when I am made aware of them. Our phoning committee keeps our members without email informed on news shared in this manner.

In keeping with EIRTA's Mission Statement, I welcome EIRTA's members to send me an email with any suggestions they may have or help they may be able to offer in regard to EIRTA's communications.

*Elk Island Retired Teachers' Association provides a communication platform that conveys information of interest to its retired membership regarding planned social events, learning opportunities, and health and wellness initiatives. At all times, members are encouraged to participate in the planning as well as the events.*

Sincerely,

Inge Coates  
elk.island.rta@shaw.ca  
EIRTA Email, Zoom, and Website



## Elk Island RTA Executive

President: Karen Atkinson

Vice President: Deb Gerow

Treasurer: Dolaine Koch

Secretary  
Compassion and Congratulations:  
Carol Gilbertson

Past President and Communications:  
Website and Email  
Inge Coates

Newsletter  
Julie Ginther  
[newseirta@gmail.com](mailto:newseirta@gmail.com)  
Membership: Thelma Baumgartner

Phoning Committee Chair:  
Dianna Millard

Social Committee:  
Sylvia Roes  
Sheila Busch  
Ruby Okamura  
Karen Carlson

ARTA Reps:  
Dolaine Koch and Karen Atkinson



## News from ARTA

*ARTA's Latest Contest:*

### *WHAT DOES RETIREMENT MEAN TO YOU?*

Please visit the ARTA website at <http://www.arta.net> for more information on the contest and other valuable 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 Artafacts can also be found on the ARTA website

### **Pension and Financial Wellness Committee**

The Committee had a very successful session on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks to our presenter Randy Olson from Capital Estate Planning and the staff at ARTA. ARTA staff recorded the session and have made it available to members. Please follow the link below.

The link  
is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RPW3X7Ua3s&t=78s>

## 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 780 464 4129 or email her at [thelbaumgartner@gamil.com](mailto:thelbaumgartner@gamil.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.

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## News and Events from other ARTA Branches

### *Okanagan Alberta Retired Teacher Association*

We of OKARTA are fortunate to live in the sun-drenched Okanagan Valley, which among other things, is home to world-class vintners and a vibrant wine community with more than 200 wineries (more per square kilometer than anywhere else in Canada). So have we got a deal for YOU! Thanks to the fine work of our Treasurer Carl McColl we have arranged a virtual wine tasting/food pairing experience with the Penticton Wine Info Centre and Wendy Vallaster. The attached ad below has all the info.

Here's what you need to do:

- **register** for the event through [the link in the attached ad](#) by April 30/21
- **purchase** the selected red blend (The Leap) and white (Semillon) Okanagan wines
- **Not listed however**, shipping for a 12-bottle case would be \$30. *Conjures up the idea of organizing 6 people and have the wine shipped to one location.*
- **join** the event by **ZOOM on May 20, 6pm**

Suggestions for easily sourced **foods** with preparation **recipes for pairing** are **included with the wine**.

Any questions? Carl is our MVP (Major Vino Promoter).

Contact him at [cjamigo@telus.net](mailto:cjamigo@telus.net) regarding pick up or for any other details.

Google ***Tightrope*** and ***Nagging Doubt*** Wineries for information on their location and other wines.



### *Heartland Alberta Retired Teacher Association*

#### **HARTA's Regional Mini Conference**

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

9:30 am to 3:40 pm On Zoom

Cost - Free with HARTA membership renewal to August 31, 2022 for the workshops!

For more info: phone (780) 986-8349

Or email: [rnthompson@shaw.ca](mailto:rnthompson@shaw.ca)

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# The Vagaries of Life

By Dolaine Koch

I grew up living far away from extended family, visiting every other year to Manitoba. I had one lovely summer with my mom's mom and we had a great time. My mom was the oldest of 12 and I am the second oldest of 9, so you can imagine there wasn't a lot of aging going on then. The chats weren't about aches and pains and issues about aging. After I retired, it struck me I didn't learn a lot about what I could be facing. I married young and wasn't so involved with my parents that I paid little attention to their health issues because they were quite healthy for the longest time.

Well, not long after I retired, things changed in a hurry for them. My mother had disastrous surgery on her knee, another surgery for a break, and dementia hit her like a ton of bricks. My father was doing all he could to help her. My siblings and I became the chauffeurs and bookkeepers, especially after they took my father's driver's license away. We lost my mother in 2016 and my father last year in August. Long stories there, but suffice to say, we were a good family that could help my parents age gracefully for the most part.

I learned two good things:

1. My father said going uphill/stairs is easier than going down. I couldn't disagree more...until I realized that having a large torso makes balancing more difficult. Going up is really easier than going down.
2. My mother—make sure you have good shoes for walking. Well actually, she talked about the cobble stone streets they walked on in France...the one trip they took to Europe in their life. Make sure you have good exercise regimens in place to have strong ankles and strong legs. I have developed an exercise regimen to include making my ankles work and that I have a stronger musculature in the torso.

Another crazy circumstance struck me. I knew my grandparents on both sides and actually met great-grandparents in my younger years. I just expected everyone had that kind of family.

I started to think...On my husband's side there were no grandparents in short order because my mother-in-law was the youngest of 12, and my father-in-law's family mostly died young. In fact, my youngest sister-in-law grew up without any grandparents. My children got to know their great-grandparents when they were young as we visited several times over the years. My grandchildren got to know several of their great-grandparents on both sides as well. Who knew there is such a diverse family line, and how many never get the opportunity to meet the elders? I'm sorry so many never had that opportunity. I believe I got the chance to learn a lot by observing the elders in my life. In my mind, it made for richer life.



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## What's in my Library?



*Many of us have received our vaccinations, and I believed that by now we would be coming out of restrictions and stay-at-home orders. I had hoped we could return to meeting in person. However, this pandemic has a different time line.*

*How we fill that time is very personal, but if you are like me, my favourite way to fill time is with a good book. Book clubs provide us with an opportunity to be exposed to other literature to read, but my book club hasn't met in over a year. I find myself asking, "What should I read now?". I know I could use some suggestions and I hope you do too.*

***I would love to provide our readership with an ongoing feature to provide some book suggestions. For the article, I will review a few pieces of literature that I have enjoyed. For our summer issue I invite you to submit a book suggestion. These book suggestions should be emailed to: [newseirta@gmail.com](mailto:newseirta@gmail.com)***

### **The School of Essential Ingredients by Erica Bauermeister**

The language and description in this novel is a delight, Bauermeister is a skilled writer and storyteller. From the first pages, I settled in, knowing I was in for an amazing journey through culinary adventures and their impact on people who give themselves over to them.

I felt this novel was what I needed to just escape. The students taking cooking lessons each brought their own stories into the class. Through their lessons their lives are like an onion, slowly being unpeeled.

### **Hench by Natalie Zina Walschots**

This Science Fiction novel is not a novel I would usually read. I picked it up because it was one of the five novels in the 2021 Canada Reads. I was searching for anything to read and thought, "Why not take part in Canada Reads?"

Anna Tromedlov, the main character, is well educated and experienced with navigating the processes and software of the modern world. She just happens to be employed as a temp by supervillains. Anna becomes seriously injured by a superhero and from this incident Anna becomes enraged at her situation. Using her internet research acumen, she discovers her suffering at the hands of a hero is far from unique. When people start listening to the story that her data tells, she realizes she might not be as powerless as she thinks.

I laughed out loud with this novel, but I also found myself challenged by how our perceptions are influenced through social media. As I stated, I would never choose a science fiction novel to read but I believe Hench is a great read for 2021.

### **The Paris Library by Janet Skeslien Charles**

In the past few years, many of the popular reads have been set during World War II. I read a number of these novels and was unsure about another novel set in the war era. I am pleased that I entered the world of The Paris Library. Based on the true story of the American Library in Paris during WWII, with its cast of heroes and heroines who put their own lives at risk to ensure that everyone had access to this place. When Jews were banned from entering, staff hand delivered books to them. They began a Soldier's Service that sent thousands of books to servicemen to raise morale.

Odile, the main character, tells the story of The Paris Library, and a young girl, Lily, who befriends her in her later years. Their relationship is truly beautiful. There is such depth, and such heart in it that nobody could fail to be moved. Odile's friendship with Lily, during her troubled adolescence, is filled with care, concern and a love of literature.

I loved the journey this novel provided and I would recommend that you take the journey, too.

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## 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.*

In today’s scenario, people don’t take enough time to enjoy and relax. We are getting more stressed due to hectic schedules, finance issues, disappointments, Covid 19, etc. There are countless benefits of laughing and sharing funny jokes.

It has been said that “Laughter is the best medicine.” Nothing works faster or is more dependable to bring your mind and body back into balance than a good laugh. Funny jokes boost up the human immune system by increasing infection fighting antibodies. Laughing impacts circulation and helps with heart and other cardiovascular problems. Jokes stimulate most of the organs in the body. They increase endorphins, released by the brain which help in reducing pain. Laughter increases heart rate and blood pressure, both of which cool down our stress response. People who share good jokes, can easily build up friendships. Jokes also allow people to express their feelings without hesitation.

Humour lightens your burdens, inspires hopes, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert. Here’s to living a longer, healthier, and happier life!



When I started teaching many years ago, I occasionally would get quite a giggle from some of the answers my science students submitted, so I started to jot them down. My collection consists of gems resulting from misspellings, misinformation, and just plain old “any answer is better than no answer at all.” I hope you will enjoy reading a selection of my favorites (as they appeared verbatim) as much as I enjoyed collecting them.

### Biology is the Study of Life

*Carol Gilbertson*

- Biology can save people and other living things from desires.
- Flowers are pollinated by bees and other insect.
- If there wasn’t a classification system, scientists would get their organs all mixed up.
- Internal means it gets its own fertilization back. External means it gets someone else’s.
- The graphs showed a raped population growth.
- Don’t shoot extinct animals.
- We conserve animals by breeding the extinct ones.
- Oxygen is impotent to life.
- By the stream we saw moss, liverwurst and fungus.
- The yeast in bread makes the dough rise.
- 100 years ago, doctors were hardly ever sterile. This often caused diseases and other problems.
- Milkmaids suffered from a disease known as Cowpox.
- The nine planets are Mercury, Venus... Uterus...Pluto.
- Harmful substances that reach the windpipe are swept outward by microscopic hairs called pubic hairs.
- Electrons are found orbiting around the central nucleus.
- Q. Explain one way you can control pests. A. Send them to school.

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## Notes of Congratulations

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

*Congratulations to Mas & Ruby on the birth of their granddaughter, Indie Mae, born on March 1, 2021 to Melissa, Kevin & big sister Reya*

## Notes of Compassion

*It is with heavy hearts that we send our condolences to the families of our colleagues:*

*To the family of our colleague,  
Ray Monpetit  
who passed away on January 22, 2021*

*To the family of our colleague,  
Dr. David Pysyk  
who passed away on February 14, 2021*

*To our colleague, Natalia, and her family at the passing of  
Bill Labatiuk  
a former EIRTA (SCRTA) executive member,  
who passed away on February 22, 2021*

*To the family of our colleague,  
Gordon Rancier  
a former superintendent of Strathcona County,  
who passed away on March 6, 2021*

*\*Note: Please contact us at [newseirta@gmail.com](mailto:newseirta@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.