
ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



President's Message

Summertime, and the living is easy...

Well, maybe...

The powers that be seem to think we can go back to 'normal life' again – no more pandemic restrictions.

I cannot seem to make myself do that yet. I still have concerns about vaccine efficacy and the numerous variants that keep coming out of the woodwork. I am quite comfortable maintaining my own restrictions – mask, hand sanitizer, distance. Better safe than sorry? Perhaps some of you have embraced the freedom offered. That's ok! We each have to make our own choices. I respect yours. I hope you will respect mine.

I do look forward to the possibilities that are coming – meeting in person instead of on a virtual platform; singing in a choir, going to the symphony. I remain hopeful that there will not be another 'wave' to prevent these.

At our Annual General Meeting on June 9, we held elections. Our executive has essentially remained the same except for our new vice president, Denis Schell. Welcome Denis! (Check out page 2 for a list of the 2021-22 executive).

Our branch executive will be discussing the prospect of holding social events again. We want everyone to be safe and to feel comfortable participating. We will keep you informed as our plans come together.

So – back to the lazy hazy crazy days of summer...

Enjoy them!

The breeze cools as evening lengthens into night;

The pavement still holds the heat of day;

Summer simmers.

The last of the bird song is heard

As the stars randomly scatter into view;

Still the path is active;

Clad in strollers and wanderers,

Their voices low, their laughter sweet;

Summer simmers.

Gradually the traffic lessens;

The darkness is left empty;

Open windows welcome the midnight air,

Blowing soft across the dreamers,

Soon to wake to another day;

Summer simmers.

Summer Edition

July 2021

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Elk Island RTA website:

<https://artabranches.net/elkislandrta/>

NEW Elk Island RTA email:

newseirta@gmail.com



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

Elk Island RTA Executive

President	Karen Atkinson
Vice President	Denis Schell
Treasurer	Dolaine Koch
Secretary/Compassion & Congratulations	Carol Gilbertson
Past President and Communications Website and Email	Inge Coates
Newsletter	Julie Ginther
Membership	Thelma Baumgartner
Phoning Committee Chair	Dianna Millard
Social Committee	Sheila Busch Ruby Okamura Sylvia Roes Karen Carlson
ARTA Reps:	Dolaine Koch Karen Atkinson

News from ARTA



ARTA Writing Contest

We want to hear the story of the retirement you've built for yourself! If you have a story related to this month's topic, we encourage you to share it!

July's Story Prompt:

Whether you live in Alberta or Nova Scotia; are a retired teacher or a retired nurse; or maybe you're not even fully retired yet - we are all still ARTA! We're connected in our common purpose of living an engaged and active lifestyle. Show us in a picture or video what your definition of ARTA is — and let us know where you call home, and what you spent your career doing!

Email your story to contests@arta.net and be entered to win an ARTA prize pack - we're giving away two each month! A bonus entry will be awarded to those who submit photos with their story, tell their story in one photo, or who record their story on video!

Links to the *news&views* magazine and Artafacts 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 780 464 4129 or email her at thelbaumgartner@gamil.com

ARTA Virtual Retreat

On May 27, I was once again privileged to attend the ARTA Virtual Retreat as a delegate, along with several other members.

The experience was as awesome as the organizing committee could make it.

Beginning with the brilliant idea of mailing out a gift bag to attendees, containing several card games.

As always, I learned new information and came away with fresh ideas and a new perspective. The virtual retreat included some guest speakers.

The first speaker, Todd Hirsch, from Alberta Treasury Branch, gave an interesting and informative presentation, based on 5 Economic Truths in Alberta. He spoke about what we need to do in our province, as we move forward based on 5 economic myths we need to unlearn.

After all of these months of Covid, when my thinking has been centered on myself and my family, I appreciated listening and learning about the state of things in Alberta. Todd spoke about the ways in which Albertans need to become 'untethered' to our old ways of doing things and needs to learn new ways.

In particular, he spoke about the balance between the economy and environment. He suggested that we should replace the word balance with the word 'Harmonize'. This word resonates with me and I intend to insert it into my thinking in the future. According to Todd, it suggests more clearly that we can create a situation that will be good for both economy and environment.

Todd spoke about the idea of Free Trade and suggested that Alberta might benefit from considering Domestic Trade as we move forward.

Some interesting economic ideas Todd brought out in his talk:

Did you know that the film and tv industry is booming in our province, especially around Calgary?

Were you aware that Alberta is a leader in renewable energy? Renewable energy such as geothermal and hydrogen production have tons of potential in our province.

The second speaker was Gregor Jeffrey, a very animated and entertaining speaker, who talked to us about the Keys To Connection. He is obviously very passionate about the idea of how our brains work to help us communicate and he shared several amusing personal examples of the implications.

He had me chuckling to myself as I finally realized; "Why my analytical husband's brain and my conceptual/social brain have such a dickens of a time building our lake cabin all those years ago!"

He spoke about metacognition (thinking about thinking) and led us through 4 different kinds of thinking, encouraging us to try and identify what kind of thinker we are, as well as what kind of thinkers we are relating to in our world.

He made the point that we have recently struggled to communicate under the most difficult digital circumstances. Moving forward, if we recognize that our brains are all wired differently and identify these differences, we can teach ourselves to become more tolerant, and take that learning back into our regular communication.

The retreat also included several breakout sessions that I also enjoyed. The discussions during the breakout sessions covered a myriad of topics and it was great to spend time with new and old friends.

I encourage any of our members to consider putting their name forward to attend an ARTA retreat.

Sheila Busch

Views & Inspirations

First Day

By Jim Walsh

As I stirred in my bed that first Tuesday morning, a warm fuzzy feeling swept over me. I was home in my own bed awaiting the time to rise and go to my first appointment at Harbord Public School.

A long, low, sad, “Mooooooooooooo!” soon snapped me into reality. I was exactly where I feared I was: at “Cairn Mount” Tallimba, or, ten miles from Public School Buddigower....a long way from home! And I had to get up. Two of my twenty-two students were sitting at the table waiting to greet ‘the teacher’.

That I made it is history. How I did it remains a mystery.

Gone were the days of long bike rides; and really long gone was the horse yard. Small pieces of barbed wire still surfaced here and there, and the soil was particularly rich at that end of the grounds! Most of the students were driven to school by parents. Several car pools were organized. “My” family was part of a four-family car pool. On the first day of the new school year, which was also the first day of my new career, the route began at my billet. We started the rounds with two adults, two pupils, and a preschooler. Yet to come were six more kids. However, the nearest policeman was ten miles away, and most of the route was on rough bush tracks. Overloading was a small concern. Seatbelts had not yet been invented!

Sometime later I learned that the trip that morning was the quietest ever! Maybe being the first run with THE teacher aboard was the cause. All too soon, we pulled up in front of the little blue grey school house.

I had had a tour the day before with the departing teacher. Now it looked more terrifying. Even the red earth looked more desert like! I was captive in an alien world. No car to escape in! I didn’t even know which way to go if I had a car and could drive it!!!! Sooooooooooooo, I took a deep breath, then another, and marched into my future.

At nine thirty sharp, I blew a pathetic blast on my little whistle. Twenty eager youngsters lined up on the concrete apron in front of the verandah. As I opened my mouth to voice a welcome and an introduction, it hit me.... all these kids under the age of twelve and not another adult within two miles...and me with no car to make those two miles in an emergency.

Operating on auto pilot, I marched them into the classroom and successfully took attendance. I survived until ‘play time’ (AKA recess) by exploring how Mr. B did things. After all, he had run the place for the previous fifteen years, so he had to have known something!

Some unspoken agreement had been negotiated whereby it would be “business as usual” until I had my programme and time table in place. By home time, I had located all necessary materials. A low-level feeling that, eventually, all might come together had begun to stir in the far depths of my mind...and my stomach.

Editor note: This submission is from the authors completed memoir of an almost 60-year career in elementary education. It describes day one (Tuesday, January 30, 1962).

What's In My Library?

Becoming

An autobiography by Michelle Obama



Although this book starts just shortly after the Obamas left the White House, we are drawn in as Michelle ponders about the differences between life in the White House and her upbringing as a child living in a middle-class district of South Chicago, in a small apartment on the second floor of a house owned by her aunt.

We are introduced to Michelle as a grade school student, and we meet Michelle's older brother whom she looks up to, her father who goes to work every day as a meter reader and never takes a sick day off even though he struggles with MS, and a strong mother who insists on making sure her daughter has the best education possible.

As the book progresses, we are privy to Michelle's observations about life as a Black girl at various campuses, and life as a member of her family with all the attendant cultural histories of Jim Crowe and family peculiarities. We see her constant struggle with feeling "not good enough" even as she excelled at her local public school and advanced high school, and was brilliant at both Princeton and Harvard Law. She was always driven to be top of class as she moved forward towards being a lawyer. Throughout this journey, her insights on race are subtle; they do not predominate, nor are they shrill or loud, but they are powerful.

Of course, we also see the budding romance between Michelle and Barack, and we understand their very different backgrounds. She talks about her awareness that she had to "anchor (herself) on two feet in order to face the barreling wave with a mighty undertow" that was Barack Obama.

One significant insight I gleaned from reading this book is Michelle Obama's opinion that, if we want change, we have to allow people to grow past the stage they are in, and celebrate their progress rather than judge them for viewpoints held a long time ago (or the actions of their ancestors). This is only one of many lessons about life that she shared in this autobiography.

Inge Coates

Branch members of Elk Island Retired Teacher's Association are invited and encouraged to submit to both "Views and Inspirations" and "What's in My Library". Our newsletter is published quarterly. If you have a submission, please submit it to newseirta@gmail.com.

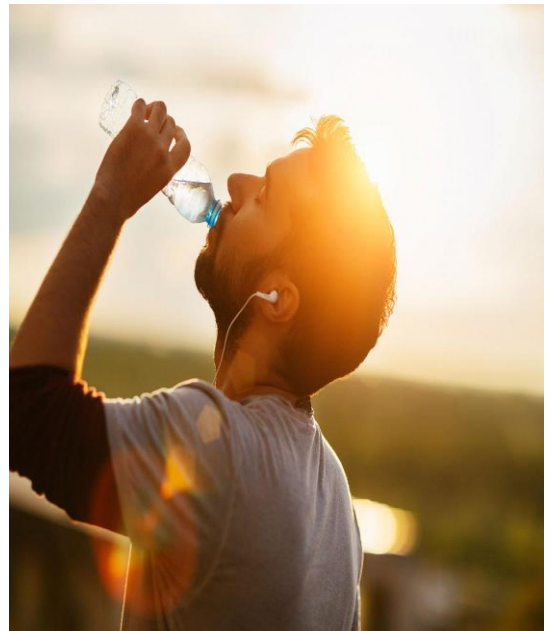
Health Matters

“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.

Seniors and Dehydration

With the extreme hot weather, we have been experiencing (and will most likely experience again), it is very easy to become dehydrated. Older adults are more susceptible to dehydration for several reasons:

- There is a decline in total body fluid as we age which means there are fewer water reserves available for your body to use.
- There is a lowered thirst response which becomes weaker with age. Older adults may not sense they need to drink.
- The function of the kidneys can decline with age, meaning that more water may be lost through urination.
- Some older adults have underlying health conditions or take medications. In some cases, these conditions or meds can lead to an increase in water loss through urination.



Some common signs include:

- Dry mouth
- Sunken eyes
- Darker urine
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Fatigue
- Decrease in urination
- Muscle cramping

It is important to replace the fluids that have been lost. Drink lots of water or other fluids such as juices or broths. If dehydration is severe, hospitalization may be required.

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,

John Gavinchuk

Who passed away in April 2021

To our colleague Barb McNeill and family at the passing of

Wayne McNeill

Who passed away April 26, 2021

To the family of our colleague,

Christine Campbell

Who passed away July 9, 2021

To the family of our colleague,

Erica Page

Who passed away on July 4, 2021

**Note: Please contact us at newseirta@gmail.com if you know of notices that should be included in our Compassion or Congratulation 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.