

# ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## President's Message

Elk Island retirees are a great bunch to work for. Your volunteer executive committee plans and promotes a sense of community, to help address seniors' issues and needs through organizing events and offering information sessions, to encourage members to take an active interest in the affairs of Elk Island Retired Teachers' Association as a branch of ARTA. ARTA is our generous 'parent' and support for all we do. The ATA Library helps us maintain a history and archive of the branch.

Our branch raised our membership fee after holding the line for over 40 years. You'll notice that increase as of October 1<sup>st</sup>. Every little bit helps to subsidize activities. Volunteers give of their time and energies for virtually no cost to all of us who participate.

October has been a fabulous month of weather and made your Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends. Our 'Walk in the Park' had us visiting as much as walking out there. Thank you to all who have been showing up.

My personal 'to do' list hasn't gotten any shorter. I Googled that word...and found out I'm just a procrastinator at heart. Every day is a new day for each of us to begin again, to continue something we've planned for, or to finish something too.

Some of our members already know this, but it's worth a mention. Our branch benefits from a grant each year from our parent group, ARTA. A portion of that grant enabled us to provide a great THWTB breakfast for members and invited guests for a reduced price. Elk Island Teachers Association hadn't increased our membership fee since 1985. We have been forced to increase it to \$20 per year in the branch. ARTA has not increased theirs. Thank you, ARTA! Just to note...if you are not already an ARTA member, your \$25 fee comes back to us in supports and grants from ARTA over the year.

And a note about participation in ARTA itself...we now have 6 members sitting on committees and as executive committee members. Deb Gerow is now Past President. As your President, I attend the Board of Directors meetings and share our news. Alain Levesque is Treasurer. Karen Wilson sits on the ARTA Foundation. Julie Ginther sits on the Health Benefits Committee. Edna Dach is now a member of the Communications Committee. We benefit by having input into the vision and mission of ARTA on all those fronts. Bravo!

Once again, the Christmas luncheon is almost ready with Ruby Okamura at the helm. Set your calendar for December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Broadmoor Golf Club has continued to be our go to venue because they present a very cost-effective meal. Bring your singing voice and friends. Bring a Christmas gift to donate as well if you can.

Valentine's Day luncheon is in the planning stage for February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Mark your calendars.



Fall Edition

October 2025

President's Message	1-2
EIRTA Executive	2
The State of Education	3
ATA Liaison Report	4
EIRTA News	5
Putting your Garden to Bed	6
THWTB Breakfast	7
Christmas Luncheon	8
Puzzle Page	9
Compassion & Congratulations	10
Answer to puzzle	11

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<http://artabranches.net/elkislandrta>

**ARTA**  
ALBERTA RETIRED  
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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**President**

Dolaine Koch

**Vice President**

Maj-Britt Bigotti

**Treasurer**

Alain Levesque

**Secretary**

Elaine Whitford

**ATA Liaison**

Denis Schell

**Compassion & Congratulations**

Cathy Allen

**Communication**

Julie Ginther

**Membership**

Cathy Allen

**Social Committee**

Ruby Okamura

Members: Sheila Busch

Sylvia Roes

**Members at Large**

Kaye Schindeler

Carol Gilbertson

Dianna Millard

Karen Wilson

Lorna Johnson

Our active member colleagues of the ATA are really being tested for their strength and resilience right now. Elk Island Teachers Association has been connecting for several years now. Our ATA Liaison, Denis Schell, met with our Local #28 at the start of this school year and since. He's been connecting our Catholic Local members, meeting regularly. There has been no positive change in the way the provincial government is handling the whole education portfolio. Many of us have been showing up to the rallies. If you wish to hear news and know where/what's going on, please let Julie Ginther know so you can participate and send the word to our government.

Send your thoughts to the Premier and her minions. Find their contact information easily. Don't forget to copy your message to the NDP leader, Naheed Nenshi.

<https://www.assembly.ab.ca/members/members-of-the-legislative-assembly>

ARTA Rx is well on the way to making our Benefit Plan the best in Canada. The Calgary pharmacy is set to open in January 2026 if all goes as planned now. Did you know that the profits from the operation go right back into the plan to keep your premium cost low and to continue to add supported benefits to enhance your health and wellbeing?

Are you getting any emails from ARTA Travel Newsletter? Some exciting offerings are making me look forward to learning more. ARTA updates us by emails regarding our Health Benefits Plans. I hope you've updated your member information with them.

As an ARTA representative, I attend Health Services Committee meetings for ACER-CART (Canadian Association of Retired Teachers) and can share that most other provinces are experiencing the same awful health care supports or lack thereof. The pharmacare situation isn't getting any better. The dental plan is so convoluted and poorly administered, that some of us are a casualty of poor communication. This is resulting in the government asking for money back. We cannot imagine how bad this can be for pensioner. We should be lobbying our own MLAs here in Alberta (see the link above) to ensure all Albertans get to benefit from that too. You may be interested in this website where information a regarding health and seniors is very helpful:

<https://www.friendsofmedicare.org>

The ARTA Board of Directors meeting (held September 9 and 10) gave us some timely information regarding our benefits premiums and what we can expect. You should see an email explaining any changes. We will see a change in premium and what's covered as of November 1<sup>st</sup>. Did you receive a new member card yet? You can always get updates by signing in to

<https://www.myarta.net/>

We are all in this together. Do you have a question, a suggestion, or an idea that you'd like to share? Do you know of someone who could use our help? Us seniors need to support each other. We hope our Elk Island RTA can be of help.

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## The State of Education in Alberta

*I felt the events of October needed to be recorded in our October newsletter. It is my intention to record the historical timeline of the events. I realize my political viewpoint has emerged and I hope I will be forgiven for editorializing.*  
Julie

The past month has been filled with highs and lows for teachers. On October 3, teachers went on strike after many months of negotiations. It was a bittersweet day for many teachers to walk away from their classrooms, but they felt they had no choice. On October 5, a Stand for Education Rally was held in front of the legislature. Twenty thousand teachers, students, parents and the public gathered to stand together for education. It was a day of support and solidarity for education.



On October 23, teachers, students, parents and the public from all over the province once again gathered at the Alberta Legislature during the Throne Speech to raise their voices for education. The largest crowd in history gathered in support and solidarity for teachers who were striking against overcrowded classrooms, crushing workloads, and the erosion of student supports.

Yesterday, October 27, as expected the government of Alberta legislated teachers back to work invoking the notwithstanding clause. There is much uncertainty as to what will transpire for teachers and their fight. As our colleagues formulate their strategies, retired teachers and supporters of public education should continue to support teachers and education. One way to support is to make your voice heard by contacting your MLAs and to arm ourselves with knowledgeable of what is going on. It seems one priority of our current provincial government is to support and encourage the advancement of private, charter and collegiate schools. One of our members suggested that we read what former Education Minister, David King had to say about "Private Schools". <https://albertaviews.ca/private-schools/>.

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# ATA Liaison Report

October 2025

Take heed, 'tis the season for the eerie indeed!"

I trust you have signed the Alberta Forever Canada petition going around! A big thank you to those of you at the "To Hell with the Bells" brunch that added their signatures to Elaine's and my petition sheets.

Our respect goes out to our fellow teachers who are on strike. They are clearly showing their concern for an underfunded public education system in our province. Remember, they receive no strike pay and despite attempts to turn Albertans against teachers, they remain strongly committed and supported. The future of public education depends on what we do today to support teachers.

It was awesome to see so many of our Elk Island Retired Teachers at the Legislature and Rogers Place rallies supporting striking teachers. What a feeling to be part of so many people standing up and rallying for this important cause. A big thank you goes out to Elk Island Local for inviting us to share their bus transportation as arranged by Maxine, the ATA Local #28 president. It is so important to educate Albertans, the Premier and Education Minister on the true state of education in our province. Rally On!

Be sure to be informed regarding the Private School Petition asking whether the Provincial Government should be allocating our public tax money to private schools. Remember that Alberta is the only province in Canada that builds private schools with our public dollars and then funds their students at 70% of the per-student grant provided to public school students. This is the largest subsidy in the country at \$460 million which is definitely excessive, especially when our public schools are the least funded in Canada.

I hope you were able to get out and vote at the municipal election on the 20<sup>th</sup> and didn't have to wait too long in a line up. Did you notice that our Kaye Shindeler won her seat on the EIPS school board with the highest number of votes of all school board candidates? Congratulations Kaye!

Perhaps I should be a bear or some other hibernating animal for Halloween this year. My instinct nowadays is to be half asleep and just like my pal Yoda from Star Wars says, "For a tropical retreat I'm looking. Yes, hmmmmm."

Eat, drink and be scary friends!

Denis





## Membership has benefits!

Being a member of EIRTA does have benefits. Our membership dues are only \$10 per year and this rate has not increased since 1985. Members receive special rates on many of our events. You get the opportunity to receive our quarterly newsletter and important email notifications. 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 please contact Cathy Allen,  
[RetiredTeachersElkIsland@gmail.com](mailto:RetiredTeachersElkIsland@gmail.com)

## Fall Walk

It was a lovely crisp fall day when 32 members and guests met on the afternoon of October 8th at the picnic shelter in Broadmoor Lake Park. With a roaring fire, hot coffee and tea to warm our insides, and snacks to give us energy, the afternoon became a great time to visit and walk. The skies were blue and clear as walkers did laps around the lake or stood by the fire to share their latest news and adventures.

Our walks usually happen two or three times a year. They provide a wonderful opportunity to get outside for fresh air and exercise. Our next walk will probably be in early spring. Make a point to come out and join us then.



## Meet your EIRTA Executive



I am Karen Wilson, a member-at-large for EIRTA. I retired from Fort Saskatchewan High School, during COVID, and I spent the first few years of my Freedom 55 isolating in a cabin at Lake Wabamun. Two years ago, I moved into Edmonton where I “reintegrated “into society”. One of the first things I did was to reconnect with my Elk Island colleagues from my thirty plus years in the system.

Presently I serve as one of the four directors on the Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation is to provide funds to help assist Alberta seniors in the pursuit of appropriate housing, health services and education to improve their lives. EIRTA just hosted a golf tournament for the Foundation which raised over \$8000.00.

My current hobby/fixation is genealogy. Because I enjoy puzzles and mysteries I am beginning to learn more about my family which helps me understand not only my ancestors but myself. I am President of the Edmonton branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society, and I encourage any of you with this interest to join the Society. You definitely get your monies worth out of your membership (and you can even see me on a regular basis — BONUS, right?)

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*Carol Gilbertson contributes to our newsletter with tips and ideas reflecting her passion for gardening. Carol has an amazing green thumb, and she enjoys spending time in her gorgeous garden*

## Putting Your Garden to Bed

When the weather is lovely and the garden is in full bloom, it doesn't seem likely that the time will come to say good night to your beautiful garden...but it does. There are many activities that need to be completed before this task is done.

After all the raking, fertilizing and pulling of annuals, the next task is deciding whether to cover the soil before it freezes to prevent early weed seeds from germinating. This is not an activity that I do because with such a large flower garden it just takes too much time in the spring to get it all off. However, many people do. You can cover the soil with 2 to 3 inches of mulch or even cardboard which will both be effective.

The next will be to decide which perennials to cut down and which to leave until spring. Some plants get slimy or get mildew or do not look pretty after the first frost, so it is best to cut them down. Such plants include bee balm, hostas, lilies (all types), phlox, iris, columbine and peonies. I always cut them about two inches above the ground. Some perennials are best left until spring as they provide ground cover for important pollinating insects. Such plants include coneflowers, coral bells or ornamental grasses. I also leave those with attractive seed heads as they look pretty through the snow. Do not trim evergreens.

Remember that not all annuals need to be thrown out in the fall. There are a number of ways that they can be saved. Some can be brought indoors over the winter such as geraniums, begonias and coleus. Remember to put them into a plastic bag and spray with bug spray before bringing them in. Dahlias, begonias and Canna lilies can be stored as dormant tubers in a cool, dry place. Geraniums should be dug up after the first frost, cut back and stored upside down in a bag or box.

There are always questions about what to do with hydrangeas. It really depends on which type you have. You may have to do some research here. I do not cut them back. I wait until spring to see where the leaf buds are before trimming. I do not do major trimming of roses in the fall...just long skinny branches that are in danger of breaking with heavy snow. Rose hips look lovely through the snow.

There...a brief overview of some actions to take. Enjoy your winter garden until next spring!





## To Hell with the Bells Breakfast

On Thursday, August 28th, we had almost ninety members and guests gather at the Broadmoor Golf Course Clubhouse for our annual fall breakfast. The caterers served a delicious breakfast which we all thoroughly enjoyed. The room was delightfully decorated. A sense of relaxation permeated the atmosphere.

The focus of the morning was 'Friendship'. The current members were reminded of the friendships they had created while working in our Elk Island schools. Those friendships are renewed, and continue to blossom, as we all come together for social events planned throughout the year. New members were welcomed and lauded. They, too, now come under the umbrella of this continuous ongoing friendship. To older members, and to new members, a huge thank you was certainly for the incredible years of inspiration and dedication given to all the students with whom we came in contact.

Thanks to all who attended to make this function a resounding success.



***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.***

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Elk Island Retired Teachers' Association invites you to:

## Annual Christmas Luncheon



With the month of November coming within a week, the month of December and Christmas celebrations, are not far behind. You won't want to miss the EIRTA 2025 Christmas turkey dinner luncheon. Important details are included below.

- When:** Wednesday, December 3rd @ 12:00  
Registration begins @ 11:15
- Where:** Broadmoor Golf Course Clubhouse  
2100 Oak Street, Sherwood Park
- Cost:** \$35 for members & \$45 for guests. (See Note #1 below)
- Dress:** Wear red and/or green clothing
- Program:** Christmas activity sheets, Christmas music, door prizes, table visitation and discussions.

**FUN, FUN, FUN, SO come, come, come**

**Strathcona Christmas Bureau:** As we have done in previous years, unwrapped gifts and cash will be

welcomed and taken to the Christmas Bureau location after the luncheon.

- Registration:** Please let us know your intention to attend by the November 28th deadline. (See Note # 2 below)  
Email Ruby Okamura  
[RetiredTeachersElkIsland@gmail.com](mailto:RetiredTeachersElkIsland@gmail.com)

The Elk Island Retired Teacher executive members would be delighted to have you in attendance. Mark the date on your calendars and come join us in this upcoming festive season.

*Note # 1*

- a) *The cost for the luncheon as quoted by To a Tee Caterers is \$36.95 + 5% GST + 18% gratuity = \$45.78*
- b) *The room rental is \$130.00*
- c) *ARTA donates \$500 to its branch members. EIRTA uses this amount for the room rental with a subsidy for the luncheon cost for members only. Therefore, the cost for non-members remains a bit higher.*
- d) *The meal for seniors 90 years and over, who have been members for ten years, is complimentary.*

*Note # 2*

*Registration for the luncheon implies that you will be attending. The cost of your meal will be charged to EIRTA by the caterer, even if you do not attend. Please let us know before the registration date if your plans change. Otherwise, you will be responsible for the cost of your meal.*

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## Puzzle Page

### **THE YELLOW PAGES**

**PUZZLE 62**

AIRLINES

RESORTS

SHOES

AWNINGS

ROPE

SIGNS

BAKERS

SADDLERY

TIRES

BANKS

SAFES

TOOLS

BOOKS

SCHOOLS

VIDEO

ELEVATORS

FISH

SEED

Answer on page 95

FLORISTS

GAMES

GAS

GLASS

HATS

ICE CREAM

LOANS

MACHINERY

MEAT

MOTELS

OILS

OPTICIANS

PRINTERS

RADIOS

RANGES

REALTORS

RECORDS

A	W	I	F	S	R	O	T	A	V	E	L	E	R
W	S	O	S	L	O	O	H	C	S	E	P	A	F
N	E	E	M	G	O	G	A	S	D	S	N	O	V
I	N	D	O	A	S	R	T	F	E	G	A	T	R
N	I	I	R	M	C	D	I	Y	E	F	I	L	H
G	L	V	H	E	A	H	R	S	S	H	A	A	G
S	R	S	O	S	A	E	I	O	T	M	T	S	S
S	I	G	N	S	L	L	R	N	C	S	E	Y	R
F	A	A	K	D	S	E	T	C	E	E	D	A	E
U	O	O	D	O	B	T	T	O	E	R	R	T	T
L	O	A	I	A	I	L	H	O	R	C	Y	O	N
B	S	D	N	R	D	S	P	I	M	S	I	O	I
B	A	K	E	R	S	T	R	O	S	E	R	L	R
R	S	S	R	O	P	T	I	C	I	A	N	S	P



## ***Notes of Compassion***

*It is with heavy hearts that we send our condolences:*

*To our colleague*

***Luci Rushton***

*At the passing of Luci's husband,*

***Bruce Edward Rushton***

*On October 8, 2025*

## ***Notes of Congratulations***

*We celebrate the election win for our colleague*

***Kaye Schindeler***

*Who was elected as a trustee to Elk Island Public Schools*

*We celebrate the election of our colleague*

***Edna Dach***

*To the ARTA Communication committee*

*We celebrate the election of our colleague*

***Alain Lesveque***

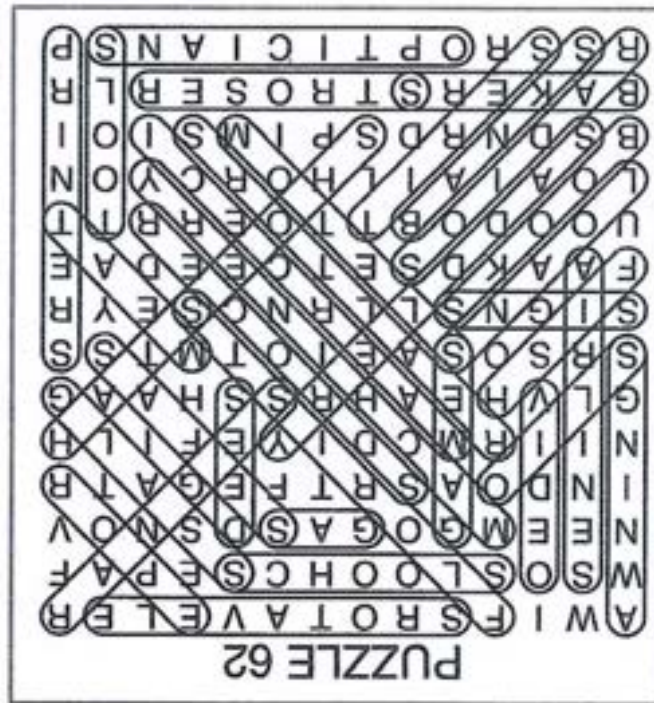
*As the treasurer for ARTA Board of Executives*



[www.CreativeCertificates.com](http://www.CreativeCertificates.com)

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Puzzle answer



**Please forward this newsletter to any colleagues, friends or interested parties who would enjoy reading about what is happening in Elk Island**