

ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER



Happy New Year

We all hope 2025 will be a year of health and happiness. We hope you can join us for our many events!



Winter Edition

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Communication contact:

newseirta@gmail.com

Elk Island RTA website:

<http://artabranches.net/elkislandrta>

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

President's Report

The new year has begun already, and I feel like I've been left behind. We have so much to do this year and so little time. We hope you had a year-end filled with family and friend meet ups and lots of great food to share.

EIRTA counts on its members to volunteer and enjoy activities shared by everyone, including non-members of ARTA. Our \$10 membership fee hasn't changed since 1985 or so. Did you know that teachers aren't the only members of EIRTA? Spouses can be associate members, and support staff of the school divisions may join as associate members. You can save enough to pay for that membership when attending activities where the non-member pays a higher price. <https://artabranches.net/elkislandrta/> is the link to visit, renew, join, and get more information.

Now, on to our little part of the world in Elk Island, we have been working behind the scenes to organize several activities for your enjoyment. We all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas Luncheon in December. Time to visit seems to always rush away and we want more activities to promote that visit time. Just in time for Valentine's Day, just around the corner, we are pleased to host a luncheon on Wednesday, February 12th. There will be an announcement email with details on how to register. March will be active as Sylvia Rose sets us up for the River Cree Casino trip. Time to visit and time to play isn't a bad thing. April 30th is our Walk in The Park date. Our AGM will be held in June as usual, the date to be announced. Consider joining the executive and have a say in our direction.

Are you a golfer? Do you have experience organizing a tournament? Are you interested in taking an active role in planning for one? New to us, EIRTA is honored to be appointed the host for the ARTA Charitable Foundation Golf Tournament. It will be hosted in June or July (date to be announced), and we are busy organizing for up to 144 golfers.

If you're anything like me, you've been listening to the news and feeling possibly more and more anxious about what's going on in the world. I haven't got an answer for that, but I do find that debriefing with friends and family does help me. Take time to yourself. If you have the time, I'm sure the Premier of Alberta would like to hear your thoughts: premier@gov.ab.ca Our MLAs should receive our input willingly. We all live in different electoral districts, and you find your advocate online: <https://www.assembly.ab.ca/members/members-of-the-legislative-assembly>

How about the Pharmacare and Dental Plan? The federal government has moved forward, and some of our seniors are benefiting. We experience a few holes in the benefits because of income barriers and such. We must help our MPs understand what really needs to happen for seniors and families to get preventative help to save the whole system costs and provide for better health outcomes and quality of life for us all.

You've received word about your cost-of-living increase. Do you know about the history of it all? Have you visited your personal account on their website lately? You can mark your calendar for the payment dates, get up to date information about what's happening inside our fund, and more by going to: <https://www.atrf.com> Do you have some time to devote to help organize a golf tournament? Or do you have some suggestions as to activities we may sponsor for us seniors? We're always happy when more people want to work with us. Many hands make light work. Please do let me know: dolainekoch@gmail.com

Elk Island RTA Executive Contact

RetiredTeachersElkIsland@gmail.com

New Executive Elected June 2024

President

Dolaine Koch

Vice President

Kaye Schindeler

Treasurer

Alain Levesque

Secretary

Elaine Whitford

ATA Liaison

Denis Schell

Compassion & Congratulations

Lorna Johnson

Communication (email, newsletter & website)

Julie Ginther

Membership

Cathy Allen

Social Committee

Ruby Okamura

Members: Sheila Busch
Sylvia Roes

Members at Large

Maj-Britt Bigotti Carol Gilbertson
Dianna Millard Karen Wilson

Membership has benefits!

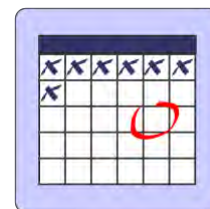
Being a member of EIRTA does have benefits. Our membership dues are only \$10 per year and this rate has not increased since 1985. Members receive special rates on many of our events. You get the opportunity to receive our quarterly newsletter and important email notifications. Please register changes 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, 780-719-3952

Upcoming Events for EIRTA

Mark your calendars and register as soon as possible



February 12 Valentine's Social at Broadmoor Golf Club. See complete info on the next page.



March 13 Luck of the Irish Casino Trip to River Cree Resort. More information to be coming soon.



April 30 Walk in the Park. Join us at Broadmoor Lake Park. More information to be coming soon.

Our Valentine Social

Have you been missing your old teacher friends, and would like to see them again as soon as you can? Would you like to get together for lunch and a great visit? **THEN, DO IT!** What better time to show more love to friends and family than February, the **LOVE MONTH**. Come out to Broadmoor Golf Course on February 12th. In person registration will begin at 11:15. At noon, a luncheon of salads, sandwiches, desserts, tea and coffee will be served. The cost will be \$25/person for both members and non-members.

Visit with friends. Enjoy lunch. Compete against the table next to yours as you try to outdo them in your knowledge of **LOVE**, and the history of **VALENTINE'S DAY**.

Wear your **REDDEST RED**. Come prepared for lots of fun.

To indicate your attendance, please *email Ruby Okamura* by February 8 at RetiredTeachersElkIsland@gmail.com

Looking forward to seeing you again soon.

Elk Island Teachers Association



Christmas Luncheon 2024- What a Great Day!

Christmas 2024 is over. All the festivities are over. However...great memories remain, and will continue to stay with us all until we make more new memories next Christmas season.

One of the holiday festivities was the Elk Island Retired Teachers' Christmas luncheon held on December 4th at Broadmoor Golf Course Clubhouse. Over 100 members and guests attended the function. The major attraction was a wonderful turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Positive comments about the delicious dinner were heard throughout the room.

Added to the meal were an abundance of door prizes supplied by very generous donors, presentations on interesting family Christmas traditions, and wonderful carol singing directed by our guest musicians, Bob Adamson, and his niece Melanie Schattle.

As always, friends were delighted to see each other again, and happy chatter abounded. Welcome hugs and cheery conversations pervaded the room. Good-byes were difficult, but the next social event will be happening in the very near future.

Remember that our next Christmas get together is less than eleven months away. Plan ahead. You won't want to miss the fun and laughter and joy that abounds at our next holiday luncheon. Stay tuned for more information in early fall. Time flies, you know!



Introducing

Hello Retired Teachers!

My name is Maj-Britt (pronounced Mybrit) Bigotti. I am a recently retired teacher from Elk Island Public Schools. For all 34 years, I taught Junior High School students. I mostly taught Language Arts, Drama, and Social Studies, but they occasionally gave me Health, Leadership, Computers, or whatever else needed covering.

I officially retired in January 2024, but I am still working part-time tutoring for Tutor Teach and editing online courses for NAIT.

My involvement with the Elk Island Retired Teachers' Association started with an invitation to the AGM last June. I was very warmly welcomed and felt a wonderful sense of community which I was missing not being in a school anymore.

I am currently a member at large (there has got to be a better name for that!) with EIRTA. I am also on the committee for The Second Wind Conference (a health and wellness conference for seniors) which will be taking place September 11, 2025 – SAVE THE DATE! More information will be coming soon.

I was also asked to be a Branch Representative for ARTA. The training session was on January 14, and I learned a lot about ARTA and how amazing everyone is. There are so many reasons to join ARTA for \$25 a year. If you are getting your benefits through ARTA you are already a member. The ARTA Perks program is reason enough to join; discounts to Canadian Brewhouse, Elks, Oilers and Stingers tickets, Mark's, Bell, GoodFood, and many, many more. When you sign up for ARTA membership \$20 will be granted back to EIRTA so that we can continue providing free or subsidized activities, luncheons, workshops, and more. There is also ARTARx, our pharmacy, which is celebrating its second anniversary. What an amazing service; medication pouching, free delivery and so supportive! Anyone can access the pharmacy even if you are not a member of ARTA. If you have any questions about ARTA, please feel free to contact me – maj-britt@shaw.ca.

I look forward to seeing you at future events and please invite a former colleague/friend to come with you!



Political Engagement

ATA Liason Winter Report

As it snows in the coming months of winter, we have two choices: shovel or make snow angels. Don't worry what the neighbours might think!

Retired teachers, more than most Albertans, realize the importance of educational assistants. Without their valuable presence in the classroom, many students fall through the cracks and are left behind. All educational assistants deserve a fair wage and our support no matter the system they work for.

Our Elk Island Teachers are in the midst of their own contract negotiations with the help of a mediator. At their last meeting in December, I was told progress was being made. I'm waiting for an update on this soon.

Of the 90 schools promised by the UCP for future construction in the province, it was said that 420 schools were requested. It seems overcrowded classrooms in public schools will not be a thing of the past with more people moving to Alberta all the time. The demands on teachers will be substantial with no sign of more funding in the foreseeable future. Understandably, over 25% of teacher graduates are reportedly not going into the classroom. Valid concerns over the government's strategy for handling curriculum and development, resources, testing, LGBTQIA2S+ issues, lack of funding and little support for education were suggested as reasons why new teachers have apprehension for joining the profession.

Our Elk Island Local ATA encourages us to join their "Red for Ed" campaign by wearing red while you are out and about on Fridays. I urge you to write to your MLA and the premier to advocate for adequate funding of our public education. Stay informed and continue talking to friends, neighbours and family about the importance of supporting education in Alberta.

Respectfully submitted,

Denis

Great Seminar with Excellent Information

Dusko Trivic's "Preparation for End of Life" seminar on January 22 was well attended by many Elk Island teachers and friends.

Unfortunately, parking was at a premium, which might explain a few no-shows. Dusko talked about types of funerals and celebrations of life. He talked about cost considerations, personal preferences, after care services and helpful hints and services provided by Dignity Memorial. There was sufficient time for many questions. Everyone left feeling they had learned some information that might make a stressful and emotional time for families a little easier.



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

Winter Garden Wonders Winter Wonders

Notwithstanding that winter is not my favorite season, I still find many lovely scenes in my garden that take my breath away leaving me in awe of winter's beautiful creations with their crisp white beauty.

In the autumn, I pull out all the annuals and cut down all the lilies, day lilies and irises. (They get slimy after the long, cold weather). I leave all of the perennials to enjoy: the grasses with their feathery tassels gently swaying in the breeze above the snow cover; roses frozen in their natural form and bright red or burgundy rose hips peeking through the branches of snow; hydrangeas with their pale pink or blue balls or cones of tiny flowers covered in a light dusting of snow; giant sedum with flat clusters of amber coloured blooms forming a shelf for the snow; and trees and shrubs glistening with their coating of hoar frost. Inanimate objects such as rocks, benches and garden decorations also add a sense of glamour in their fresh blankets of snow.

In the winter we receive many bird and squirrel visitors in our decorative crab apple tree. They love to feast on the tiny apples and flit through the branches while the squirrels scurry through the tree top eating and gathering the fruit.

After a fresh snowfall with the sun shining brightly, the snow shimmers with a carpet resembling tiny crystals scattered by the breeze.

I love to gaze out my windows or take a stroll around my garden and enjoy the splendors that I see. I hope that you have the same lovely experiences this winter.



Puzzle Page

The answer is included at the end of the newsletter. *Hope you enjoy!*

	2		6					
7				2		3		9
	8	5	9	3			4	
8	4				6	9	2	
		1	4		2	6		
	9	6	8				7	5
	6			8	5	2	9	
4		2		7				6
					4		5	






Notes of Compassion

It is with heavy hearts that we send our condolences:

*To our colleagues
Norman and Betty Yanitski
At the passing of Norman's mother,
Natalka Yanitski
On December 24, 2025*

*To the family, friends, and colleagues at the passing of our colleague,
Emma Lien
December 25, 2024*



**NOTE; Please contact us at newseirta@gmail.com if you know of news that should be included in our Compassion and Congratulation section. We depend on our membership to keep us posted*



*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.*



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

Answer key for Puzzle.

9	3	8	2	6	4	1	5	7
4	5	2	1	7	9	8	3	6
1	6	7	3	8	5	2	9	4
2	9	6	8	1	3	4	7	5
5	7	1	4	9	2	6	8	3
8	4	3	7	5	6	9	2	1
6	8	5	9	3	1	7	4	2
7	1	4	5	2	8	3	6	9
3	2	9	6	4	7	5	1	8