

ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

President's Message

I wanted to find some good news to share with you. Our branch has 9 new members. We're looking forward to meeting them at our To Hell With the Bell Breakfast on Monday, August 31st. I can't remember a time when school literally started the year on a Monday. 😊

How about FIFA? I'm not much of a fan for sports, but it was exciting to see our Canadian team get to play 3 games and nice to see Spain get to finish 1st.

We held the AGM and had input from members that tell us we need to do more. The survey results are telling us we definitely are hurting as Canadian seniors financially. Appropriate housing and health care have been top of mind for too long.

We could talk weather, but that's putting a 'damper' on things. We could talk politics, but that isn't fun at all. We should talk about all the good things happening in our lives. I recently had the pleasure of lunch with friends I hadn't seen in a while. I'm looking forward to our annual family gathering at the lake (8 siblings with their kids makes for hilarious fun). No big trips for us but the pedicure experience at the mall is an outing. 😊

Ruby Okamura and the social committee are hard at it to prepare for our upcoming breakfast. Look for information about the next Walk in the Park in October. It is so nice to greet you all and have time to visit. We must thank ARTA for the snacks at the June gathering. I'm happy to make that pot of coffee to share.

The Elk Island Retired Teachers' Association **AGM**, held at the Strathcona Museum, brought some information forward that we can be happy about. Are you joining us for the THWTB Breakfast? We'll have more news there. We happily elected an executive who are willing and able to support our branch organization, members activities, and help us all take advantage of what ARTA membership can give.

Continued page 3



Spring Edition

April 2026

President's Message	1 & 3
EIRTA Executive	2
Membership Renewal	2
To Hell with the Bells	
Breakfast	4
ATA Liaison Report	4
Heart & Soul Walk	5
Rock Garden Fun	6
Notes of Compassion	7
Puzzle Page & answer	8

Communication contact:

newseirta@gmail.com

Elk Island RTA website:

<http://artabranches.net/elkislandrta>

ARTA
ALBERTA RETIRED
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Elk Island RTA Executive

President

Dolaine Koch dolainekoch@shaw.ca

Vice President

Maj-Britt Bigotti maj-britt@shaw.ca

Treasurer

Alain Levesque alain0803@live.ca

Secretary

Elaine Whitford
samdenwal@gmail.com

ATA Liaison

Denis Schell djls@shaw.ca

Compassion & Congratulations

Cathy Allen cathyallen2011@gmail.com

Communication

Julie Ginther thirzadune@gmail.com

Membership

Cathy Allen cathyallen2011@gmail.com

Social Committee

Ruby Okamura masandruby19@gmail.com

Members: Sheila Busch

Sylvia Roes

Members at Large

Kaye Schindeler Carol Gilbertson

Dianna Millard Karen Wilson

Deb Gerow Lorna Johnson

ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWS

Membership has benefits!

Being a member of EIRTA does have benefits. Our membership dues are only \$20/year. 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

2026-27 EIRTA Memberships

It is time to renew your EIRTA membership for 2026-27. The membership fee is \$20 per year. Your fee can be paid in two ways:

1. e-transfer to treasurereirta@gmail.com
2. cheque, payable to Elk Island Retired Teachers Association, mailed to
Cathy Allen
418 Norway Crescent
Sherwood Park, AB
T8A 5Z4

Membership for first time members is FREE. Membership is also FREE to those who are 80+ years of age if they have been a member for 10 years before reaching that age.

If you have any questions about your membership please contact:

dolainekoch@shaw.ca

President's Message continued from page 1

Repeat message: If you know anyone who is planning to retire anytime soon or over the next few years, please ask them to consider becoming a member of our branch, Elk Island RTA. Do you know someone who's retired out of Elk Island Catholic Schools? Please invite them to join us. We encourage all of us retirees to get to know each other and share in the benefits of membership. All too often, our information seems to be blocked out there such that the benefits retirees could get aren't reaching them. Make their retirement better!

Don't forget, 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.

Repeat message: You may already be a member of Elk Island RTA, but are you a member of ARTA as well? It's only \$25 a year. But for us, your membership counts toward a grant we can receive from ARTA. This grant supports our costs for events, thus reducing the attendance fee for events as we can subsidize them. Each member of ours who is also a member of ARTA will bring our organization \$20. This year, of the 236 member names we submitted, ARTA counted 118 members fully a member of both organizations. This also applies as to how many voting representatives can attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held each first week in October of a year. We could only send two delegates in 2025. If you aren't already an ARTA member, please do call them if you have questions (780 822 2400). Join today!

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 can find your MLA online: <https://www.assembly.ab.ca/members/members-of-the-legislative-assembly>

We must help our federal 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. Why not take a few minutes to get a message to your MP?
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/search>

ATRF, our teachers' pension fund, is at the foundation of our financial wellness for many of us. 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>

Don't forget ARTA Rx Pharmacy Edmonton offers more than just medications by delivery. There are medical and support professionals available for consultation to support your health needs. Just ask! Calgary's pharmacy is open too. Watch the newsletters for announcements of health-related invites. The Foot Clinic as oversubscribed. Let's ask for more.

Elk Island RTA strives to stay connected with our active teachers. Our ATA Liaison, Past President Denis Schell, has been attending both the public and Catholic schools ATA meetings when he can. We want to support the teachers as we can by staying aware and taking action if we can.

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

We want to wish you all a better rest of the summer and hope to see you at the breakfast August 31st. Be kind to yourself.



*The Elk Island Retired Teachers Association (EIRTA)
Invites you to attend our annual*

To Hell with the Bells Breakfast



Our breakfast is coming soon. This invitation is sent to all retired staff who would like to come together for good food, fun, and fellowship

When: Monday, August 31, 2026

Where: The Clubhouse at Broadmoor Golf Course
2100 Oak Street
Sherwood Park

Cost: Members \$35 and Guests \$40.

The cost for this event will be waived for new retirees, and retirees who have joined EIRTA since August 2025. An EIRTA membership form must be completed at the event. The first year of membership with EIRTA is also free (normally \$20/year).

Please note: *The cost to members and new retirees is subsidized by a grant from ARTA.*

Payment: Cash and cheques will be accepted at the door. E-transfers can be made to:
treasurereirta@gmail.com

Timeline: At 8:15 guests will need to sign in to confirm their pre-registration
Find a table for your group.
Coffee, tea, and juice will be available until breakfast is served.
At 9:00 a hot breakfast buffet will be available, followed by a short program and visiting.

Registration: RSVP by Wednesday, August 26th, noting whether you are a new member to:
Ruby Okamura
masandruby19@gmail.com

NOTE: *Please be aware that registration implies that you will be attending. The cost of your meal will be charged to EIRTA should you change your plans and not attend. However, you will be held responsible if you have not cancelled by August 28th.*

ATA Liaison Report

This has been quite an eventful summer so far, hasn't it? One advantage to all of this rain is we haven't had to do much watering. With this warmer weather, I'm busy weeding my flower beds and being eaten alive. To save you a visit to the clinic and some stitches, do not use a garden spade to swat mosquitoes!

I was fortunate to attend the annual ARTA Retreat in Canmore at the end of May. The guest speakers' topics about living better and longer, protecting your income, reducing taxes, wellness in later life and good nutrition were very informative. Naheed Nenshi was also a speaker. He talked about his concerns for education and seniors' issues in Alberta nowadays. He was clear in his plan to advocate for senior citizens if his NDP are elected next fall. Mr. Nenshi addressed our questions and many of us talked with him personally afterwards. I was impressed!

Thank you for your endorsement at the AGM in June and allowing me to continue as the ATA Liaison for Elk Island Retired Teachers. I believe it is very important that we continue to support our working colleagues. No one knows the importance of public education better than us retired teachers. I know our attendance at the provincial protest rallies last fall and our letter writing to the premier and the minister of education are appreciated by teachers throughout the province. I am looking forward to attending Local ATA meetings again this coming school year and sharing information with you in our future newsletters.

big thank you to Inge for helping me put together ARTA and EIRTA information packages for our new retirees from Elk Island Schools. Hopefully we will see them at our "To Hell with the Bells" brunch, August 31. Be sure to welcome them!

Enjoy your summer, friends! Take time to smell the flowers, listen to bird songs, go for walks and enjoy the company of friends and family. A trip to the beach is a good idea, but taking a wandering dog along named "Shark"... not the ' '

Respectfully submitted,

Denis



On June 3, 2026, a crowd gathered on a blustery day to join ARTA members throughout the province for a wellness walk. The walk provided a chance for those on the walk to visit with each other, and a bonus was seeing the geese and their goslings showing off while we did our walk



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

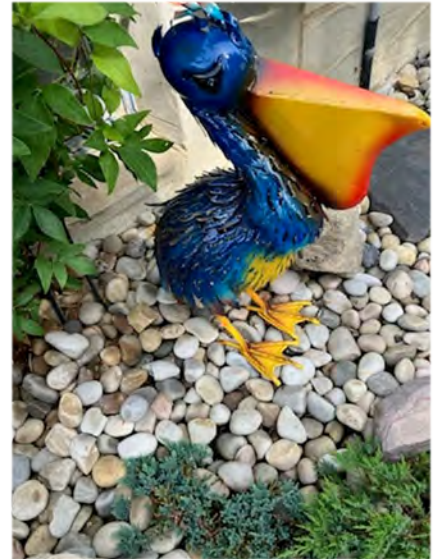
ADDING SOME FUN TO ROCK GARDENS

Last summer I did something bold with my backyard garden. I decided to simplify. My yard now has river rock in all the garden areas, and I have planted roses, hydrangeas and a number of small junipers and shrubs. I like how it looks, but it seemed quite bare.

Over the years I have gathered a number of what my dad used to refer to as “doodads and wigwams” ...a lovely description of garden ornaments. There is no rhyme nor reason to the collection that I have accumulated through a few sources. Some have been gifts from my family and friends, some I purchased at various greenhouses, and some are the result of a thrifting day.

I recently acquired a couple of wrought iron small bicycles on which I have crazy glued a small flowerpot with a flowering plant. The other day I found a wrought iron cat with a post on its back to hold candle. Hmm...what if I find a small flowerpot with hole in the bottom...that would fit nicely over the post with a pretty plant in it. I have wrought iron mushrooms and umbrellas, clay mushrooms, frogs and birds. There are metal flowers as well and some hanging flower baskets.

As you can see, I just had fun collecting and then finding a spot for them in my garden. So can you. You don't have to spend a lot to have some fun!



Notes of Compassion

*It is with heavy hearts that we send our condolences:
To the family of our colleague,*

Lynda Hurd

January 2, 1948 – May 26, 2026

www.CreativeCertificates.com



***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.***

Puzzle Page

Seduko 152

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

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

152