ELK ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

October 2026

The referendum news is as good as we could have hoped for. Are you still feeling queasy because of how the entire vote process and advertising rolled out? It strikes us all that nothing has really been settled and the money spent was outrageous. We need to be aware and supportive of each other here and now.

ARTA's AGM revealed its five-year strategic plan, *Mapping the Future,* in which our member voice regarding advocacy is being raised, though we don't always know about it. ARTA is hard at work to "produce research-supported materials to educate members on issues affecting fellow seniors." Be sure to read the latest draft regarding the first Position Paper—*No Place Like Home*. Many seniors are currently being faced with difficult decisions across Alberta and throughout Canada because of a diverse set of circumstances in their lives.

Aging in the right place matters. This paper examines some of the personal, community, and policy barriers being faced by seniors and suggest policy recommendations to aid in developing a solution to the challenges posed by seniors' aging in the right place. With all the portfolios assigned to MLAs in Alberta, we need that SENIORS' portfolio.

Elk Island RTA members came together for the October Walk in the Park. Despite the wind, we had a great visit and walk. I had to wash my hair and jacket because I smelled like a fire pit though. 😉

Gary Sawatsky presented on October 21st regarding the updates and changes ARTA continues to put in place for the benefit of us seniors. I, for one, am so very impressed with what we have accomplished even since joining ARTA in 2012. Don't forget, if you have questions, it's as easy as going online or making a call to get the answers you need.

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ARTA
ALBERTA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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Ruby Okamura and the social committee are hard at it to prepare for the Christmas Lunch December 8th. Also, look for information about possible opportunities to hear topic-oriented speakers in the next quarter. If you need a further incentive, ARTA has generously shared some 'swag' for us to give away to attendees.

On a sad note, we are all feeling the emotions at the loss of life in the tragic accidental fire on the Military Base at Wainwright. On this November 11th, I'm sure we will honour our soldiers who have passed, and those who continue to recover from their injuries. The families and friends will need all manner of supports to get them through it all for the rest of their lives. Their bravery and sacrifice know no bounds.

If you're feeling the punch of everyday life right now and you are an ARTA Rx user, don't forget there is help online you can reach out to for your own needs. You don't need to go in person. Just log in to https://www.myarta.net/RTA for help.

When you have some time, you should peruse the ARTA topics on their YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@TheARTAChannel

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 wonderful Fall. See you Tuesday, December 8th for lunch.

SPECIAL REQUEST TO OUR ARTA BRANCH MEMBERS

Some ARTA staff members have begun working on a *testimonial project*. Our branch has an opportunity to help promote ARTA.
The team has been working on collecting member feedback, highlighting positive interactions and member satisfaction. In the coming year, the plan is to bring these stories to our wider membership in the form of testimonials that are shared online and through our newsletters. The goal is not to be self-congratulatory, but to highlight specific attributes of ARTA to help prospective members better understand how ARTA supports retirees. ARTA is looking for support in collecting testimonials from branch members across the province that highlight what a wonderful experience it is to be a part of a local branch. There are 17 branches spread across Alberta and one in BC. Would you have a story or two related to your experience, as a member of Elk Island RTA? We are asking those with dual membership for input. What has ARTA and the branch experience given you?
Below is an outline of what we're looking for:
Share your experience as an ARTA branch member in your own words. Suggestions:

- Why did you choose to join ARTA?
- Why did you choose to join Elk Island RTA?
- A memorable experience, connection, or opportunity you had through the branch
- The friendships, connections, or support you've gained as a member
- The impact the branch has had on your life, whether socially, personally, or through friendships and support
- Would you recommend joining our local branch to other retirees and why

There is no minimum or maximum length. We welcome stories of all kinds and encourage members to be authentic and share what their branch experience means to them.
Please submit your response before Christmas if you can. You should submit directly to ARTA staff member, MiCaela Kirwin mkirwin@arta.net

Elk Island RTA Executive

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Dianna Millard

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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

Walk Around the Lake

Our fall walk around Broadmoor Lake on Wednesday, October 13th, was done on a very, very blustery day. In fact, we thought the walk might have been a blowout (pun intended). However, with a roaring fire started by Ken Busch, Sheila's husband, we had a warm area to snuggle and visit.

Thirty-two people braved the windy afternoon to walk and talk with friends and fellow members. There were lots of goodies to nibble on, and drinks were also provided. Sorry, we ran out of coffee as many wanted refills to keep warm.

Members and friends always have such a great time together. Lots of laughter was prevalent. Meeting some new folks was special. All in all, it was an enjoyable time not to be missed. Next year, we hope to continue our walking exercise, and hope for a calmer day.





To Hell with the Bells Breakfast

Monday, August 31st, 2026, was the first day of school for students and teachers in the Elk Island School Divisions. Teachers had done their classroom preparations. Students had gathered all their school supplies. Excitement, as well as a little anxiety, greeted parents, teachers, and students on that day.

Meanwhile, at the Broadmoor Golf Course Clubhouse, there was no anxiety, **but** plenty of excitement, as retired members and friends of the Elk Island Retired Teachers Association joined together for fun, food, and fellowship. This was our **fall classic**…our **'we don't have any school worries',** aka **our THWTB breakfast.**

Our EIRTA executive outdid themselves with their decorating, their registering of members and guests, their warm welcomes, and their leadership. We all enjoyed a wonderfully delicious breakfast prepared by To a Tee Catering, along with friendly visitation and chatting at the tables.

Our theme was TRAVEL…after all, now that we are retired we can tour the world!! A fun alphabetical worksheet of country destinations kept members busy as they recalled all the countries they had visited. Several members had travelled to more than thirty countries. Great experiences!!

We welcomed newly retired members to their new world of freedom. They stood at the front of the room and shared about the schools from which they had retired, and what their future plans included. We clapped loudly for them as they joined our ranks.

What a way to start the fall and winter season for everyone. Great fun; great friends, both old and new; great food; and more social activities forthcoming. Yes, yes, yes!









I Love Gardening

By Carol Gilberson

I love gardening and I have been told many times that my garden is beautiful. By writing these articles, I am not trying to give professional gardening advice. I like to write about my experiences, my results, and my failures. My hope is to inspire a love for gardening. I am still learning new techniques all the time: some from research, some from friends, and some just from experimenting. I am not averse to trying new things.

Of course, I revel in the compliments, and I am thrilled to take anyone on a tour. If I am working in the front yard and someone stops to admire and talk to me, I always ask, "Would you like to see the back yard?"

I have several perennials that are still trying to display some autumn colors that I would like to share with all of you.







COVID-19 vaccine appointments are now available through the provincially funded Fall 2026 Seasonal Immunization Program . Please note that ARTA does not cover COVID vaccines for Alberta residents over the age of 65 starting November 1st. Individuals **65 years of age and older** qualify for a **free**, provincially-funded COVID-19 vaccine in Alberta.

- Free public immunization appointments can be scheduled or managed via the MyHealth Alberta Book an Immunization Appointment Portal .
- Have your Alberta personal health card (or identification) ready.
- If you need help booking an appointment or have questions about eligibility, you can call **Health Link 811** toll-free, 24/7.

Ever wondered what serving on an ARTA Committee is Like?

"I have the pleasure of being a new member on the ARTA Benefits Trust Board. This is the first time that I have served on an ARTA committee. The returning members of the Board were most welcoming and supportive. The chair of the committee has been very generous with her time assisting me with on-boarding and developing my understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a trustee. I am looking forward to the work that the Board will be involved in this upcoming term." Cathy Allen

I have served on ARTAs Health Benefit Committee for 3 years. There has been so much to learn, this committee reviews the benefit plan, helps to set the rates, and reviews individual members concerns and suggested changes committee. As a member, we are always reviewing the components of the benefit plan including adding or removing coverage for specific medications or services, based on member needs.

Julie Ginther

Good news! The Second Wind Conference is back for 2027. An enthusiastic group of retired teacher volunteers has started planning for the 13th conference to be held on September 9, 2027 at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre in Edmonton. Save the date on your calendar and plan to attend this exciting one-day mini holiday. Watch for more news over the next few months in branch newsletters, ARTA publications and, in early to mid-April, check on the conference website at secondwindconference.ca where detailed information will be posted.

If you would like work with a fantastic committee and to be a participant in the planning process, contact Lyndi Karbonik at secondwindchair@gmail.com.

ATA Liaison Report

October 2026

What a strange summer we've just been through! Now, we Albertans are faced with a fall that is focused on this controversial referendum. I decided to avoid the crowd and vote at my advance poll rather than waiting until the 19th. I will not give anything away, but I've learned to trust my gut. It may hang over my pants a little, but it still knows things!

The first Local ATA meeting was held at GARC this year. A Mexican style dinner was catered for us. Maxime, the ATA Local President, started the meeting by defining assignable and instructional time and then urged school representatives to have their staff members carefully check their times for discrepancies. There were also some comments raised regarding a new pilot report card for elementary students this year. The ATA District Representative's address to us relayed teachers' frustration with still having to teach curriculums without resources. She also mentioned that future changes are coming for high school students. One that was a surprise to me is that English will not be a required course needed to graduate. We were reminded that a year ago, our premier used the notwithstanding clause to end the teachers' strike and send Alberta's teachers back to work with a contract that was originally turned down at the very beginning of negotiations. We were all told to wear black as a symbol of mourning the following Friday in remembrance of teachers' rights being taken away. Their case against the provincial government is being taken to court and will be heard next August.

Are you looking for a winter retreat? I am getting some tempting advertisements from Mexican resorts nowadays.

"We've slushed prices. Best deals, brrrr none."

Remember this fall, our hands may be cold, but at least our hearts are warm!

Respectfully submitted,

Denis

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Mark Your Calendar!!

Christmas Luncheon

The Christmas season is delightful, and everyone looks forward to our turkey luncheon at Broadmoor. We look out the windows at the pristine whiteness of the snow-covered golf course. We look around the room inside the building and see colleagues with whom we have come to share our Christmas blessings and stories.

We usually have wonderful games and other entertainment and enjoy a delicious meal of roast turkey and all the trimmings. The atmosphere is enhanced by lovely decorations on the tables. Joy exudes from every attendee.

This year, our luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8th, from 12 pm - 2 pm. More details will be forthcoming with an email blitz around mid November. Keep the date open for this festive get together.

All our social gatherings are highlights for EIRTA members and associates. Don't miss out.



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6			8					4
	3				2	7		
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	9			7		4		3

Note from the Editor:

We really rely on our membership to let us know what is happening with our membership. If one of our colleagues is celebrating a milestone birthday, anniversary or event; or if one of our members has lost a loved one, please let us know at *newseirta@gmail.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 answer

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

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