



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

The Heartland Herald

HARTA's Newsletter

of Branch Events

The Christmas Edition

Publisher: Ron Thompson

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A Branch of ARTA



Events for January 2019 to June 2020 & the AGM

Leduc Wednesday, February 12th at St. David's United Church. Musical Presentation and Devices Workshop. Luncheon at 11:30 AM

Wetaskiwin Wednesday, March 11th at O'Brian's Restaurant. 11:30 AM. Program: Canada's New Food Guide.

Drayton Valley Luncheon Thursday, April 16th at Best Western Plus. 11:30 AM. More details to be announced.

Leduc Tuesday, May 5th, HARTA's Mini-Conference at St. David's United Church. 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Save the Date.

Leduc Friday, September 11th, 2020, 10:30 AM AGM, Election of Officers and Pancake Brunch at St. David's United Church in Leduc. ARTA Benefit Plans Updates. Confirmed

Member Welfare

Please let the editor know of anyone who would appreciate a get well note or a phone call from other HARTA members.

HARTA's Leduc Luncheon

On Wednesday, November 20, 2019 HARTA held its November Luncheon in Leduc. There were 25 members and guests attending the luncheon. The participants were served sandwiches, soup, a vegetable tray and a fruit tray.

HARTA Members gathered to hear Gary Hansen, past president of the Wetaskiwin ATA local and one of the newest members of HARTA's Executive (HARTA's ATA Liaison Alternate). Gary presented his concerns for the passage of Bill 22, an Omnibus Bill which cancelled the position of Election Commissioner with the guise of saving \$200,000.00. Also included in this Bill were the reorganizing Public Sector and Teachers' pensions so that control passed from the plans to the Government Controlled AMICo. As well, the WCB was included in this take-over giving control to the Alberta Government for all these funds. Gary encouraged the attendees to use the ATA produced online letters to our MLAs, the Premier, and the Finance Minister. Members were also encouraged to write letters to their MLAs, Premier, Finance Minister, Education Minister, Opposition Leader and others.

Vivian Armstrong presented a Christmas Card Workshop to a small number of participants. The participants enjoyed working on their projects. Thanks Vivian.

Pension Uncertainty

Fear and uncertainty are raging through Alberta as Albertans hear more about the actions of the current Provincial Government in regard to pensions. This uncertainty was created when the Alberta Government seized control of the assets of the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) through the passage of Bill 22.

The Kenney Government held no consultations with teachers prior to or after unprecedented 6-day passage of the Bill in the Alberta Legislature. Government did not provide a clear rationale for the move, citing improved returns from the Alberta Government's investment body, AIMCo. However, there has been conflicting data on investment returns of AIMCo compared to satisfying returns by ATRF investors. Teachers and teacher retirees were quick to respond to Government action by contacting Government and Opposition MLAs. By the end of November, some 32,000 messages had been sent to Alberta Government and Opposition offices. The outrage amongst teachers and current ATRF recipients continues.

However, these arguments do not meet scrutiny. The CPP has had excellent returns on investment. Can AIMCo really do better? Secondly, the argument used for moving the ATRF holdings to AIMCo - to have a larger pot with which to invest creating better returns - could also be applied to the CPP. Thirdly, according to Section 19 of the AIMCo Act, the Alberta Finance Minister can provide directives to AIMCo to which AIMCo must comply. This raises questions: Will AIMCo's investment decisions really be made by a body at arm's length from Government? What will AIMCo be investing in down the road? Questions about the future of pen-

sions for Albertans continue to create uncertainty and instability. Might the time have come to hear MORE teacher voices in regard to control of our pension funds?

Submitted by Gary Hansen,
Past President Wetaskiwin ATA Local
HARTA ATA Liaison Alternate

The Devices Workshop

On Wednesday, February 12, HARTA will hold its Executive Meeting in the morning. There will be a luncheon to follow at approximately 11:30 AM. After lunch members of "Potluck" will perform a few love songs in honour of Valentine's Day.

Following the performances, there will be a presentation on security. The session will be a presentation on online security relative to many different platforms from computers to cellphones and tablets.

The cost for the Sessions, Performances and the luncheon will be \$15.00 and \$10.00 for the luncheon and Performance. The luncheon will consist of sandwiches, soups, vegetable and fruit trays and squares. Please, save the date

Confusing Abbreviations

After you retired from teaching you probably noticed a number of abbreviations re: retirement. **ASEBP** (Alberta School Employee Benefits Plan) refers to the health benefits provided by various school districts and which are also available to retired teachers until age 65. The **ARTA** (Alberta Retired Teachers' Association) Plans, are plans available to all ARTA members and Associate Members. The **ATRF** (Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund) is the fund that pays teachers' pensions to retired Alberta teachers. Retired teachers with concerns re: their pensions, should contact the ATRF re: these issues. **CPP** (Canada Pension Plan) refers to the Pension Plan provided by the Canadian Government. The **OAS** (Old Age Security) is a supplementary payment to every person over 65 years also created by the Canadian Government. As a review of these abbreviations, I have listed all these abbre-

viations with their websites where you can get more information on a given topic. The **ARTCF (Alberta Retired Teachers' Charitable Foundation)** is ARTA's foundation to support various partners with their various projects to achieve their goals..

Abbreviations

ASEBP: Provider of Health Care Benefits before 65 years of age: www.asebp.ca

ARTA: Alberta Retired Teachers' Association Provider of many services and Benefits to Alberta Retired Teachers and other Professional Retirees: www.arta.net

Branches: www.artabranche.net

ATRF: Provider and Funder of Alberta Teachers' Pensions: www.atrf.com **CPP and**

OAS: Pensions provided by the Canadian Government Contact Service Canada at: www.Canada.ca

ARTCF: Alberta Retired Teachers' Charitable Foundation at: <https://www.arta.net/advocacy/artcf>

I hope the above information makes the retirement information world easier to navigate.

HARTA's May Mini Conference

HARTA's Mini Conference will be on Tuesday, May 5th from 9:00 AM. to 3:30 PM. The following sessions have been confirmed: Tom Dirs, a local historian, will do a session on Leduc and District's History. Lourdes Juan, Founder of the Leftover Foundation, an organization dedicated to distributing unused food that would otherwise be thrown out will do a session on how her organization helps provide food at a more reasonable price. Susan Soprovich, A representative from the Alberta Securities Commission, will do a session on Investment Fraud. Finally, Noel Cairney will do a session on Laughter Yoga. As well, Wellness checkups featuring the Body Composition Clinic.

The Keynote Presenters have changed. Marilyn Bossert, Past President of ARTA will

be a joint presenter as will a representative from the ATA yet to be announced. The change was made necessary by the continuing concerns generated by the Provincial Government's changes concerning Teachers and other Professionals.

A1C screening and Blood Pressuring Monitoring will also be offered. These services are designed to screen for issues that could cause problems at a later date. Such screening could alert you to health issues before they become serious. Please reserve, Tuesday, May 5th, to attend this information-packed day.

We would like to present Marilyn Bossert with a cheque for the Charitable Foundation from proceeds we could collect from draws from our luncheons. I will have more to say re: this thought at our next two luncheons.

Membership Fees

Members who need to pay their fees can do so at HARTA Luncheons. Members may also send a cheque or money order to: HARTA, C/O Ron Thompson, 4020 – 37 Ave. in Leduc, Alberta. The Postal Code is T9E 6C9. Please send \$10.00 for each year you would like to renew. Membership for the first two years is \$10.00 (first year is free.) Our next HARTA event is at St. David's United Church in Leduc. See the details given earlier in this newsletter as well as the Poster at the end of this newsletter.

HARTA Volunteers Needed

At various times during the program year, HARTA needs members to help with various tasks. For the various luncheons, we can always use extra help in preparing the room for our programs. In Drayton Valley check with Joan, In Leduc, Elaine or Ron T. and in Wetaskiwin either Ron H or Ron T.

Ron Thompson, HARTA President

New Executive Members

As HARTA continues to grow the need for new Executive members has increased. With consultation from Walley Porter HARTA's ATA Liaison Gary Hansen has been appointed to a

second ATA Liaison Position or the Alternate. This position has been created to ensure we always have an active ATA Local representative on our Executive. Walley can not always attend Executive Meetings. Having two liaison members ensures that the ATA will be represented at our Executive Meetings.

A Second Member, a Membership Coordinator has become necessary to keep on top of the renewal of memberships and keeping track of memberships that have lapsed. Up to now the responsibility has been shared by the Vice Presidents, President, Treasurer and Secretary. Having a Membership Coordinator will simplify this responsibility. I would like to welcome Gary Hansen and Lawrence Dublenko to the Executive. Thank you for accepting these positions Ron Thompson—President

Other Branch Events

ARTA now has a new website which provides information on events in other Branches throughout Alberta and the Okanagan Branch in BC. If you would like to find other Branch events this website can help you. The website is: www.artabranches.net.

Ron Thompson, HARTA President

Christmas Hits Stopped with the '50

From the Edmonton Journal

Sunday, Dec. 20, 1998

For a composer, the quickest road to riches leads directly to Christmas. Johnny Marks, for instance, during his lifetime collected royalties from 150 million copies of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. As one of his friends said, "That's what's called writing your own annuity." So why hasn't a single composer really cashed in on Christmas since 1960?

Well, as usual, blame (or credit) the Baby Boomers. Millions upon millions of new babies must have inspired composers, because the figures don't lie: of the 25 or so Christmas Standards, 15 were written from

the beginning of the postwar population boom to its peak (in 1959 in Canada and in 1961 in the United States).

The first in the string recorded by Nat King Cole in 1946. Composer Mel Tormé, on a hot July day a year earlier, had driven up the San Fernando Valley to visit his song writing partner. Trying to beat the heat with thoughts of winter, Bob Wells had jotted down four lines. Mel Tormé quickly came up with a melody and 45 minutes later, the two young men titled their 16 lines *The Christmas Song* (or; Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire).

Gene Autry tapped into the Christmas Market in 1947 with *Here Comes Santa Claus*. Two years later, Johnny Marks asked him to do *Rudolph*. According to legend, after the September release, one department store decided to play the tune over its loudspeaker, all day every day, until Christmas. (No mention of employees suing for mental stress.) The overexposure never hurt Autry. The Cowboy Singer/Actor struck gold again in 1950, with *Frosty the Snowman*.

Other seasonal successes during the forties and fifties included: *Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!* (1948), *Silver Bells* (1951), *It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas* (1951), (There's No Place Like) *Home for the Holidays* (1955), *Scarlet Ribbons For Her Hair* (1956 written in 1949), and *The Little Drummer Boy* (1958).

At the same time, there were the novelty hits. In 1948, Spike Jones and the City Slickers reworked a 1946 composition. His sheer touch of genius—the sound of air whistling through the gap of a child's teeth—turned *All I Want for Christmas* (Is My Two Front Teeth) into the major-selling novelty record. The second came in 1952 with Jimmy Boyd singing *I Sing Mommy Kissing Santa Claus*. A trio of composers in 1957 dared to join the words Christmas and rock in *Jingle Bell Rock*. By 1960, of course, that was old hat for Brenda Lee to sing, *Rocking Around the Christmas Tree*.

Perhaps the most successful of novelty numbers was made in 1958. Ross Bagdasarian, a.k.a. David Seville, taped voices at half speed then played them back at normal speed to create chipmunks. He dubbed them Alvin, Theodore, and Simon after executives at Liberty Records. (Hmm, come to think of it, aren't chipmunks rodents?) The critters won a Grammy for *The Christmas Song* or (Christmas Don't Come Be Late). Unfortunately for

Bagdasarian, this was one group that couldn't tour.

And that was it. Just as the Boomer birth rate dropped off, the Christmas hits came to a virtual stop. We did get *Holly Jolly Christmas* from the 1962 television special, Rudolph. But Elvis Presley's *Blue Christmas* (1964) doesn't qualify; it was written in 1945. That's where the rest of the standards came from, the pre-Boomer years. The first "secular carol" was written in 1857. Originally titled *One Horse Open Sleigh*, it was later renamed, *Jingle Bells*.

Apparently however; composer J.S. Pierpont was way ahead of his time. Nothing else memorial appeared until *Winter Wonderland* and *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* in 1934. The war years then gave us, *I'll Be Home For Christmas* (1943) and *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas* (1944). As well, the score of the movie *Holiday Inn* (1942) yielded *Happy Holidays* and *White Christmas*. With that second tune, composer Irving Berlin truly found the mother lode. By the time of his death in 1989, *White Christmas* had become the most valuable song property in the world.

Surprisingly, although written during the way, the piece still has a close connection to Baby Boomers. Through overuse or carelessness, the master recording of the single suffered some damage. So Decca Records brought Bing Crosby and the Ken Derby Singers back to the studio. Every effort was made to reproduce the original sound, but the fact remains—the version of *White Christmas* we hear every Yuletide was recorded on March 19, 1947.

Initially Bing Crosby refused to sing a secular carol. It took Jack Kapp, founder of Decca Records, and mastermind behind Crosby's career; to convince the star of the songs innocence. Kapp then turned his power of persuasion on the composer; arguing two words of the original lyrics—"Beverly Hills"—had little meaning to people outside North America. Berlin wisely agreed and cut them. The rest as they say is history

Rita Lang Kleinfelder — The Edmonton Journal December 20, 1998

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Re: Clarity on changes to Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund, Nov 29, 2019—Lacombe Express

A response to MLA Ron Orr's clarification of ATRF pension issue

I am writing today about a number of concerns that I and other teachers have in regards to MLA Ron Orr's article on changes to Bill 22 that would transfer the assets of the teachers' pension plan to be managed under the exclusive authority of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo).

Orr begins his article by stating that the Alberta Teachers' Association has misrepresented the situation, and then follows with a series of other misrepresentations. I will attempt to address those here, but before that, I would like to begin by stating the general concern of teachers and the Association:

This change was made without any consultation and was enacted very quickly in the face of significant opposition. If Orr and the government believe this change is in the best interests of teachers and the plan, then why would they rush it through the legislature so quickly without reasonable time for discussion and debate?

Most of the claims of the government—as reiterated by MLA Orr—are subject to scrutiny, and that is why we asked for the government to bring in the auditor general as an independent third party to review the data and the entire proposal. This reasonable request was ignored.

So let's examine some of the misrepresentations made in MLA Orr's article. He claims that teachers will still have full governance and oversight through the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) board, but this cannot be true if the board cannot choose who to invest their funds with. Bill 22 says that the board must invest only with AIMCo. Orr says that ATRF returns only appear to beat AIMCo returns because of different year ends, yet the ATRF numbers had been adjusted to reconcile differing year ends. Orr says the pension is "government guaranteed," no matter whether the plan performs well or not, yet the risks of the plan are actually shared equally by the province and by teachers.

The final misrepresentation deserves more scrutiny. Orr says the move is estimated to save

\$41 million in administrative costs and ties these savings to the Alberta budget. He suggests that these savings will be fully realised by teachers and the government. This is not the case. The costs of the plan are deducted from the returns of the plan—any savings belong to the plan and would essentially be used to fund pensions.

The only way cost savings become actual savings for teachers and the government is if contribution rates are decreased. So is Orr guaranteeing a decrease in contribution rates for teachers? Furthermore, is he guaranteeing that a contribution rate decrease realised by the government would be reinvested in public education? Does MLA Orr actually have the authority to commit the ATRF or the government to these actions? And if he did, would that then negate the claim that the board retains full oversight of the plan?

The government has never made any such commitments to teachers. Instead the government chooses to reiterate the same talking points—just as MLA Orr has done—while ignoring the genuine concerns and reasonable requests of teachers.

Don Brookwell,

ATA District Representative and Red Deer Public teacher

Thanks to Jere Geiger for bringing this article to the Editor's attention.

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The Goals of HARTA

- To carry on social activities, enabling our members to maintain contact with their colleagues.
- To provide information to our members about the resources available through the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association. (ARTA) and other sources.

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

NEED A CAREER BOOST?



Your career success often depends on how well you can express yourself. If you want to improve your performance in business meetings, presentations, job interviews, conversations, sales, and problem-solving situations a Toastmasters International Speechcraft workshop can help.

During the workshop you will prepare and present short talks and practice impromptu speaking in a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere. By the end of the workshop you will be able to communicate with confidence and poise at work and at home.

Give your career a boost. Reserve your place in the Speechcraft workshop being presented soon by Leduc Blackgold Toastmasters International Club.

To enroll, contact:

Ron Thompson @ 780-986-8349

or

Laurel Kvarnberg @ 780-986-7940

rnthompson@shaw.ca

laurelkv@gmail.com

Leduc Blackgold Toastmasters

Speechcraft Workshop Jan. 21- Feb. 25, 2020

Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m.

St. David's United Church

4614 48 Street Leduc, AB

Enter from 48A St. west side

If you live near Drayton Valley or Wetaskiwin go to www.d99tm.org to check for meeting places, dates and times for Toastmasters Meetings in Drayton Valley and Wetaskiwin



Topics

- Computers
- Cellphones
- Tablets
- Online Security

**Funded in part by
ARTA**



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

HARTA

**Devices Workshop
In Leduc**

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

11:30 AM to 3:30 PM

St. David's United Church,

4614 - 48 Street

Leduc

**Cost \$15.00 for the workshop
and lunch!**

For more info phone 780-986-8349 or email:

rnthompson@shaw.ca

(r n thompson)



A Branch
of ARTA



HARTA Devices Workshop Registration Form

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

St. David's United Church

4614 48th Street, Leduc

Surname _____ First Name _____

Street Address _____ -

City _____ Postal Code _____

**Email Address _____ Phone No. _____

** We do not share or sell registration information. For confirmations and correspondence: We will be emailing or phoning ALL confirmations. No regular mail confirmations will be sent.

After February 1st Please register by phone or email and pay at the Workshop the Workshop fee.

Do you have any special dietary needs? Please specify:

Membership: Check one or more. If you are a branch member, indicate the branch.

___ ARTA ___ Branch: _____ ___ Non-member

Workshop Fee: - \$15/person (Includes Lunch)

No refunds after February 7, 2019. Space is limited so register early.

Payment Details: Enclosed is Cheque/Money Order for \$ _____ -

Your registration is not complete until payment has been received by the Workshop Registrar. Make your Cheque/Money Order payable to [HARTA](#).

Mail your registration to: **Ron Thompson, 4020 – 37th Ave., Leduc, Ab. T9E 6C9**

Email: rnthompson@shaw.ca (r n thompson) **Phone:** 780-986-8349