



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

The Heartland Herald

HARTA's Newsletter

of Branch Events

The COVID-19 AGM Edition

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A Branch of ARTA



October 2020 AGM

Zoom Friday, October 23rd, 2020, 10:30 AM AGM, Review of the past HARTA year. Presentation of the Budget and motions re: HARTA's 2020-21 Program Year.

Other Zoom Presentations In lieu of Luncheons, for the next few months we will be looking for various sources of information relevant to our members which we can present on Zoom. Please stay tuned.

COVID-19 Changes

With the COVID-19 Emergency HARTA will be updating our plans as the year unfolds re: luncheons and presentations We will be looking for other ways for our Branch members to connect with each other. Please stay tuned as we rearrange our programming to account for this new situation. Stay safe and stay healthy

ARTA Office Update

In the new year ARTA will be taking over the management of our Benefit Plans. There will be changes at the ARTA Office and to these Plans. As part of HARTA's Zoom AGM, Gary Sawatzky will give an overview of ARTA's Benefit Plans as we leave ASEBP and administer our own plans. Please join us on Friday, October 23rd on Zoom.

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. 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 abbreviations 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.artabranches.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 2021 Updates

HARTA's Mini Conference which was postponed has been tentatively rescheduled for Wednesday, May 5th, 2021. Other details will be confirmed as details are available. Tom Dirsra, a local historian, has reconfirmed his commitment to do a session on Leduc and District's History. Noel Cairney will be available to do her session on Laughter Yoga. Susan Soprovich will arrange for one of her colleagues to present the session on Investment Fraud. Lourdes Juan, the CEO for Food Rescue will do her session on Food Rescue and its mandate. ARTA's Past President, could be available to do a keynote address. Keep tuned throughout the 2020-2021 program year for further updates.

COVID-19 Humour

Word Abuse

1. An invisible man married an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at either.
2. I didn't think the chiropractor would improve my posture. But I stand corrected.
3. I took my new girlfriend out on our first date to the ice rink, and every entry was half price. She called me a cheap skate.
4. Studies show cows produce more milk when the farmer talks to them. It's a case of in one ear and out the udder.
5. Did you know that a raven has 17 rigid feathers called pinions, while a crow only has 16. The difference is a matter of a pinion.
6. I told my carpenter I didn't want carpeted steps. He gave me a blank stair..
7. My wife claims I'm the cheapest person she's ever met. I'm not buying it.
8. What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing his own incision? Suture self.

Membership Fees

Members who need to pay their fees can do so by mail. During the COVID-19 Emergency Members may 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 after retirement is \$10.00 (first year is free.)

HARTA Volunteers Needed

At various times during the program year, HARTA needs members to help with various tasks (when the Pandemic is over.) 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 Westaskiwin either Ron H or Ron T. During this time of COVID-19 Social Distancing, another way to contribute is to provide stories and other news for our newsletter. You can submit to: The Editor: r_n_thompson101@hotmail.com. It would be great

to get more submissions for our readers.

Ron Thompson, HARTA President

Other Branch Events

ARTA now has a 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

HARTA's AGM, October 23rd

Friday, October 23rd is the date for HARTA's AGM. The elections for Executive Members has been postponed until the next AGM. An email was sent to all HARTA members asking permission for all Executive Members to retain their positions. There were no emails indicating other nominations, so as of September 11th all Executive Members were re-elected by acclamation. A list of positions on the Executive is listed below along with a summary of each officer's responsibilities for your review. Members will receive an email with the link to Zoom included. Just click on to the link to join the meeting.

Executive Officer Roles Clarified

The President:

- Call and chair all HARTA meetings.
- Promote and help facilitate HARTA regional activities in conjunction with the Regional Vice Presidents.
- Act as Newsletter Editor in the absence of the role being filled by another member.
- Prepare and maintain an updated Member List in co-ordination with the Secretary, Treasurer, and the Mem-

bership Director.

- Ensure a copy of the updated membership list is sent to all members of the Executive.
- Promote membership in HARTA and ARTA and the benefits of each in conjunction with the HARTA/ATA Liaison Officers.
- Has signing authority in conjunction with the Regional Vice President(s), Treasurer and Associate Treasurer(s).
- Represent HARTA at ARTA Board Meetings and the ARTA AGM.
- Set and issue the meeting agendas in conjunction with the Secretary and other members of the Executive.
- Bank Deposits may be made by any member of the Executive.
- Ensure an archive of all HARTA minutes is kept.

The Past President:

- Conduct elections during the AGM.
- Act as the Nominating Committee with input from the rest of the Executive.
- Interpret the Constitution and By-laws and updates the aforementioned in conjunction with the President and Regional Vice Presidents.
- Call and chair HARTA meetings in the absence of both the President and Regional Vice President(s).
- May perform other duties as assigned by the Executive.

The Regional Vice Presidents:

- Interpret the Constitution and By-laws and updates of the same in conjunction with the President and Regional Vice Presidents.
- In the absence of the President, the Executive Committee shall designate a Regional Vice President to chair a meeting.
- Have signing authority in conjunction with the President, Treasurer and Associate Treasurer(s).
- Co-ordinate one or two Regional Activities per year primarily for their Region.
- Attend HARTA Executive Meetings or prepare a report on the activities of the Region to be presented at the meeting.
- Inform members in their Region of upcoming regional events.
- Maintain, Encourage and Advocate to retain and expand HARTA's membership.

This may include contacting local ATA presidents, attending ATA meetings, and attempting to initiate contact with retiring teachers from their region (within the limits of FOIP/Privacy of information) in concert with the HARTA - ATA Liaison Officer for their Region, at the President's request.

- Perform other duties, as requested by the Executive.

The Secretary:

- Record and maintain a record of all HARTA Meetings.
- Distributes the minutes to the Newsletter Editor and the President and to the membership as required by the President.
- Remind Executive members of their To Do items by attaching a To Do list to the agenda and reminding the members of their commitments closer to the date of the next meeting.
- Send HARTA Membership(s) received to the Membership Director for inclusion in HARTA's member list.
- Bank Deposits may be made by the Secretary, President or Treasurer, or any other member of the Executive as appointed by the Treasurer.
- Maintain an archive of all HARTA Minutes.
- Maintain an archive of all Annual Reports.

The Treasurer:

- Collect the fees and membership registrations.
- Issue or cause to issue receipts for fees and registrations.
- Maintain the financial records for HARTA and reports a financial update at all meetings.
- Has signing authority in conjunction with the President, Regional Vice Presidents and Associate Treasurer(s).
- Prepare and update a Budget in conjunction with the President, Regional Vice President(s) and other Executive Members.
- Bank Deposits may be made by the Treasurer, Secretary or President or any other member of the Executive as appointed by the Treasurer.
- Assume other duties as directed by the President in consultation with the rest of the Executive.

The Newsletter Editor:

- Solicit, collect and edit news items.
- Publish and distribute the Newsletter.

The HARTA - ATA Liaison Officers:

- Shall liaise with the four ATA Locals in HARTA's Branch Boundaries. They are the Timberline, Black Gold, Wetaskiwin and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Locals.
- Shall be active member(s) of one of the four ATA Locals as well as the HARTA Executive.
- There shall be two (2) Liaison Officers (when available). Each Liaison Officer will be responsible for one (1) of two Zones within the HARTA Branch Boundaries: Zone One (1) which will include Wetaskiwin and Timberline Locals and Zone Two (2) which will include Black Gold and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Locals.
- Will report to the HARTA Executive re: ATA issues and activities of interest and concern to HARTA's Membership.
- At the request of the HARTA President, each Liaison Officer will make arrangements for HARTA's President or Regional Vice President in that Zone to attend an Annual Meeting of that Local for the purpose of sharing information about HARTA's purpose and proposed activities for the upcoming Year.
- Will communicate with Barnett House as requested by the HARTA President or the Executive as a whole.

The Membership Director:

- Maintain an updated list of current members and members in arrears.
- Monitor and Update members' contact information.
- Receive new member registration forms from the President, the Regional Vice Presidents or other members of the Executive and adds these to the current membership list.
- Contact members who are in arrears and informs them that their membership has lapsed.
- Upon direction from the President, develop and maintain a list of inactive members and removes those inactive members from the membership after a predetermined number of years if there is no response to the Director's queries.

Updated July 8, 2020



The Spanish Flu – Influenza on the Prairies 1918

The MacIntosh Family, from PEI, settled on the prairies in 1918 – in Cheadle, and then Langdon – east of Calgary. Here they faced the Spanish Flu epidemic, when their hearts had been set on fields of waving wheat and prosperity. This excerpt is from their story, taken from a book by Lillian Ross called “The Gentle Gamblers”. After all but one escaped death to the flu the family moved north to Nightingale, near Strathmore in 1920. Behind them in the picture above is the snowfall where ten meters fell on the prairies. Six hundred volunteers with pick axes and shovels cleared the roads for travel.

Chapter Fifteen – Death on the Prairie

...strong capable, backbone of the community, John Lyons hauled coal from Langdon in the sleigh when it was 50 below, fought side-by-side with the whole town of Cheadle on the

prairie grass fires, drove the horse and carts with those beautiful big pacers of his – why him?

.....She stopped suddenly, as she realized her husband was struggling to breathe. The wheezing and rattling in his chest was becoming more laboured. He opened his eyes at her imploringly as he struggled to speak. With the anguish of the helpless, she realized that he was drowning in his own body fluids. Then the breathing stopped and he slipped away.

“No, no, John, please! Don’t leave me,” Grace sobbed. Then she realized that his heart was no longer beating....

..... When Donald was in Studd’s Store buying groceries, he overheard conversations that alarmed him. People were talking about the Influenza epidemic. Apparently, it had not died after all,

but had been lying dormant. The monster was alive, and again, sweeping through the land. It could be, one man in the store had commented, that it was mostly because people were seeing more of one another, now that winter was over.

..... “Don’t bother going to the hospital if you have something wrong with you, because if you haven’t already got the Influenza you’ll get it there! The nurses and doctors are even tending patients with cloths soaked in Lysol covering their faces.”

Donald didn’t stop to find out what price pigs were selling for, without stopping to visit, he hurried home without looking to the left or right down the wooden sidewalks of Langdon..... Donald smiled wanly, but the sweat standing out on his forehead, the haggard expression, and the red-rimmed eyes made Sadie go weak with fear. Her children, and now her husband had the dreaded Influenza.

Richard would have to go across the road to Sid’s and tell him they were sick, and just to bring the milk over and set it on the step. She had never seen Donald so sick.

By morning, everyone was sick. Sadie staggered out of bed to put more coal in the cookstove, but the fire was out. She felt too ill to start it. The porridge water was on, but no one could eat anyway. Mary and Willie, at the foot of their bed, awoke whining and complaining of feeling sick to their stomachs, but Sadie could do nothing. The house was slowly going round and round. She heard Donald’s hacking cough as he slid his trembling legs over the edge of the bed. Holding his head in his hands, he growled at Mary to stop whining. Then, overcome with body-aching weakness, he lay back down again. His throat hurt and so did his chest. It hurt to breathe and he burned with a fever. Every muscle ached, and he was so thirsty he could not stand it anymore.

Influenza had settled over the house like an ugly grey pall. Sadie tried to get up as she heard the children upstairs crying and calling out for her. Baby Edith was wheezing

and her nose was running, but Sadie couldn’t get up.

Donald had to get up! He *had* to get up! Half crawling up the stairs with a pitcher of water for the children who begged and cried that they were thirsty, he stopped. Leaning against the doorjamb, tears welling his eyes, he was overwhelmed with pity for his little ones..... Heart thumping, coughing and sneezing, he urged himself to get up: “I’ve got to feed the animals.” His head hurt so much he couldn’t remember how long he’d lain there. Listening to the children still crying out for more water a fleeting thought went through his mind: “Are we all going to die? If I die what will happen to my family?”

The above quotes are from The Gentle Gamblers by Lillian Ross—Lillian is a member of HARTA. Thank you Lillian for allowing us to quote from your novel.

The 1918 –1919 Pandemic

The above quotations from Lillian’s novel The Gentle Gamblers, give a picture of what a family experienced from the “Spanish Flu.” In 1918, just at the end of the First World War, what became known as the Spanish Flu first appeared among the troops on both sides of the war. By 1919 the flu spread to most parts of the world. The 1918 flu became known as “The Spanish Flu” because only Spain did not have a policy of naming this disease. As a result of no censoring of the news media in Spain, other countries began to refer to this pandemic as the “Spanish Flu.”

In most cases the symptoms were nothing more than the ordinary flu. In rare cases the flu could become more virulent. When the disease returned in its second wave, it was more likely that patients would be having trouble breathing. As recounted in Pale Rider by Laura Spinney, the 1918-19 flu lasted two years. It started in one country then spread to another. It took until the early 1920s for the disease to finally be diminished in its virulence. I suspect that COVID-19 could follow a similar pattern.

We're now approaching the fall and winter seasons, seasons when the weather will likely be colder and many functions would generally held inside. The COVID-19 virus stays alive longer in colder weather. I believe the virus will spread more easily since most of our activities will take place inside. I believe it will be more important than ever to follow the Provincial Guidelines on COVID-19 safety as outlined by Deanna Hinshaw and Alberta Health.

Submitted by Ron Thompson

Thank You

I want to thank members of the HARTA Executive for their help in dealing with an emergency situation when I was hospitalized in August. In particular, thank you to Alvin Rurka, who organized the online elections which resulted in all members of the Executive being re-elected by acclamation. Thank you everyone.

Ron Thompson, HARTA President

Gary Sawatzky's Info Session and Bio

Gary will provide an update on the ARTA Retiree Benefits Plan, including plan design changes, experience, group benefits, and marketplace developments, as well as how the COVID epidemic has affected members' travel coverage. Attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions regarding the Plan and pursue a number of topics including eligibility, plan design, and how future direction may be impacted in the current political climate.

After working in group benefits consulting for 20 years, Gary joined ARTA to serve as their Chief Operating Officer and Director Member Services in 2017. Gary has his Certified Employee Benefits Specialist designation, and is the Past President of the Alberta Chapter of the International Society of Certified Employee Benefit Specialists.

Info provided by Gary Sawatzky , BA, CEBS

Chief Operating Officer

Low Sodium – My Journey to Healing

It was our Anniversary, August 16th. It should have been a happy day. Instead I suffered a seizure as a result of low sodium. How did this happen? I had been taking a diuretic as part of my blood pressure medication. One of the side effects of this medication was the depletion of sodium in my body. I was rushed to the University Hospital by ambulance where I was assessed. It was determined that I had suffered a seizure and had broken the humerus in my left shoulder as a result of the seizure.

The following Thursday, I was sent to the operating room to repair my shoulder. The next day, I met with the Physio Therapist at the hospital and was shown three exercises to use until I had my first meeting with the Surgeon. I went home that evening to recuperate for the next two weeks. During those first two weeks I was put in touch with Home Care through FCSS in Leduc. During the first of my recuperation Home Care came once a day and then once every two days to change the dressings on my left shoulder. By the end of the second week I no longer needed Home Care.

I saw the Surgeon for my two-week review of my surgery and was given three new exercises to do for the next 5 weeks. He reviewed the x-rays of my shoulder and was pleased with the healing so far. At the same time, the nurse removed the remaining dressings.

Why did I develop low sodium? It was the result of the diuretic which was part of my high blood pressure medication. My medication was changed at the hospital as a result of the assessment after my visit to the Emergency Room at the University of Alberta Hospital. From my time in the hospital, I learned that men are more likely than women to get

a seizure as a result of low sodium. In summary, it pays to be aware of the possible side effects of the medications you may be using.

Submitted by Ron Thompson

Executive and Contact Info for the 2020-21 Program Year

Alvin Rurka: Past President (587) 274 - 4562 abrurka@hotmail.ca

Ron Thompson: President & ARTA Rep (780) 986-8349 rnthompson@shaw.ca (r n thompson)

Joan Henry: Vice President Drayton Valley. (780) 542-3209 brijohenry@gmail.com

Elaine Merriman: Vice President Leduc (780) 467-0010 terry6@telusplanet.net

Ron Holmlund: Vice President Wetaskiwin (780) 352-4842 rdholm@hotmail.com

Walley Porter: ATA Liaison—Wetaskiwin and Timberline Locals (780) 388-3849 walleyp@telusplanet.net

Gary Hansen: ATA Liaison—Black Gold and St. Thomas Aquinas Locals (780) 986-1745

gbhanson@telus.net

Alain Lefevre: Treasurer (780) 941-2245 elefevre6@gmail.com

Erika Lefevre: Secretary (780) 941-2245 elefevre6@gmail.com

Lawrence Dublenko: Membership Co-ordinator (587) 783-8588 mayoprospector@gmail.com

Susan Schwindt: Finance Committee Member—D.V.(780) 542-4136 salschwindt@gmail.com

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.



You're Invited to HARTA's annual AGM

ARTA Benefits Presentation by
Gary Sawatzky to follow
The AGM will be online, Gary's
Presentation will be on Zoom
For more details contact
Ron Thompson
(see contact info)



email:
rnthompson@shaw.ca
(r n thompson)
phone: (780) 986-8349

Friday, Oct. 23rd, 2020, 10:30 AM

Annual Membership \$10.00

(Membership \$10.00 for two years for new retirees)

Please RSVP by Wednesday, Oct. 21st, 2020