



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

The Heartland Herald

HARTA's Newsletter

of Branch Events

The COVID — 19 Holiday Edition

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A Branch of ARTA



October 2020 AGM

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.

Member Welfare

Dear HARTA members,

It is with great sadness that I inform you of

the passing of Lil Ross, who lost her battle with cancer on the evening of Monday, November 16th. She entered the hospital on Nov. 2nd, and after testing in Drayton Valley and St. Albert, was placed in Palliative Care.

Throughout the decades, she brought great joy to many in the Drayton Valley area with her music and singing. The several books she wrote will keep her family history alive. Lil touched the lives of so many during her years of teaching and singing with her various bands. She was active in many clubs and organizations within the community. Lil will be greatly missed.

I will think of her singing with or LEADING the angels in song!

Joan Henry - VP Drayton Valley

If you know of anyone needing our support, please let the editor know.

Health Benefit Changes

Health Benefit Changes:

Each year the Health Benefits Committee reviews and suggests updates to the Retiree Benefits Plan. These updates are made based on new legislation and feedback from covered members. As always, ARTA aims to provide members with the best retiree benefits available. Visit our news blog to [review the full list of changes](#) that are taking place, effective November 1, 2020.

ARTA Self Administration:

This means ARTA is growing. We've moved

to a larger office where we're welcoming new staff to help us with the transition. This change is going to be a big one, so be sure to stay informed by looking for updates in news&views magazine, ARTAfacts and through direct messages like this one. You can [read more about these changes](#) on ARTA's news blog.

Emergency Travel:

Global Affairs Canada has not yet changed their advisory for Canadians to avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada. Naturally, there have been a lot of questions about how this affects things like the travel plans and insurance premiums of members. We've gathered some of the most common questions in an easy-to-navigate list of FAQs. [Find them on ARTA's news blog.](#)

ARTA's COVID-19 Response:

As you might expect, COVID-19 has changed the way we've been doing business. We have temporarily closed our offices to members and all our staff have been equipped to work remotely. Even working from home, our dedicated staff continues to manage the day-to-day operations of ARTA, meeting and collaborating through remote means. Likewise, we have rescheduled all in-person meetings and have moved all committee, board, and executive member meetings online.

Our lines of communication with our members remain open, so our Member Services team are still able to meet virtually or over the phone to help our members, just as before.

As you can see, there has been a lot happening at ARTA, and we are excited to see what 2021 brings. Hopefully, we will be treated to a vaccine before long so we can get back to business as usual. We are looking forward to meeting you again once we're able, to celebrate our reunion and catch up properly.

Daniel Mulloy

Chief Executive Officer

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.

COVID Christmas Recipes

Over 40 years ago, my husband and I started a Christmas Eve tradition of serving a fish dinner to any family members who didn't have other plans. Here are two recipes that became favourites (Great served with a salad, rice or potato dish, and a veg.)

Halibut with Rosemary

1 ½ to 2 lbs. halibut steaks (each about 1 inch thick), thawed if frozen
 Salt and Pepper
 All-purpose flour
 ⅓ cup olive oil
 ¼ cup white wine vinegar
 2 Tbsp. water
 3 cloves garlic
 ½ tsp. fresh or dry rosemary

Directions

Wipe fish with a damp cloth; cut into serving pieces (3 by 5 inches) if desired. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; coat with flour, shaking off excess. Arrange in a single layer on wax paper within reach of range.

Heat oil in a wide frying pan over medium heat until oil ripples when pan is tilted. Add as many fish pieces as will fit in pan without crowding and cook, turning once, until fish is browned and flakes readily when prodded in thickest portion with a fork. For a 1 inch thick piece of fish (measured in the thickest portion) allow 10 minutes total-5 minutes on each side. When fish is done, transfer to a warm serving platter and keep warm; repeat process with remaining fish. When last fish is removed from pan, add vinegar and water to pan drippings. When sizzling stops, add garlic and rosemary; boiling rapidly until reduced by half, stirring and scraping occasionally to blend with drippings. Remove garlic with slotted spoon and discard; spoon vinegar mixture over fish. Makes 4-6 servings

Seafood Casserole

⅓ cup butter
 thinly sliced
 ⅓ cup flour
 ½ cup black olives
 1x 6oz. pkg. gruyere cheese

2 tsp. regular mustard
 3 cups milk
 ½ tsp. paprika
 Dash of red pepper (cayenne)
 1 Tbsp. grated onion
 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
 Dash of lemon
 1 lb. shrimp, tails removed
 1 lb. scallops
 1 green pepper, chopped

Directions

Melt butter in saucepan over low heat – blend in flour, mustard, salt, paprika, red pepper, Worcestershire sauce, and grated onion. Stir in milk and thicken, stir constantly. Add cheese and stir till melted. Remove from heat, add seafood and olives. Bake in a 350° F oven for 25 minutes, or until bubbly. Put in green pepper and lemon.

Serve

Best of the Holiday Season to All,
 Joan

Whipped Shortbread

1 pound butter
 ½ cup cornstarch
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 cup icing sugar
 3 cups flour

Directions

Cream butter well with electric mixer. Add the rest of the ingredients a little at a time, beating with the mixer after each addition until the mixture is light and creamy. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet at 325° for approximately 15—20 min.

Ron & I wish you all Love & Laughter this holiday season. Linda

LAYERED CANDY CANE DESERT

Total Time: Prep-25 min.+ chilling

Yield: 24 servings

1 package (14.3 Ounces) Oreo cookies (36 cookies)

⅓ cup melted butter

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese softened

¼ cup sugar

2 tablespoons 2% milk

- 1 carton (12 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup crushed candy canes (about 7 regular size) divided
- 2 packages (3.3 ounces each) instant white chocolate pudding mix
- 2-3/4 cups milk

Directions

1. Pulse cookies in a food processor until fine crumbs form. Add melted butter; pulse until just combined. Press onto bottom of 13" x 9" dish. Refrigerate while preparing filling.
2. Beat cream cheese, sugar and milk until smooth. Fold in 1 cup whipped topping and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed candy canes. Spread over crust.
3. Whisk pudding mix and milk 2 minutes; spread over cream cheese layer. Spread remain topping. Refrigerate, covered, 4 hours. Sprinkle remaining candies just before serving.

(Suggestion-Cut entire dessert into desired serving pieces (wipe knife after each cut) Freeze individual servings (not served) on cookie sheet. Transfer to freezer container to be served later as required. Try cinnamon hearts for Valentines Day, green mints for St. Patrick's, etc)

Best of the season, Connie

COVID-19 Humour

1. Why did the old man fall in the well? Because he couldn't see that well.
2. What do you call a factory that sells passable products? A satisfactory!
3. Want to hear a joke about construction? I'm still working on it.
4. I was really angry at my friend Mark stealing my dictionary. I told him, "Mark my words!"
5. How does Moses brew his coffee? He brews it.
6. I'm starting a new dating service in Prague. It's called Czech-Mate.
7. I was just reminiscing about the beauti-

ful herb garden I had when I was growing up. Good thymes.

8. Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field.
9. What do you call a fish with two knees? A two-knee fish.

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

Spotlight on Public Education

Public education continues to be in the spotlight of issues in the Alberta public eye. Every day new issues seem to arise with little attention by provincial decision-makers to the reality of or advice from the front lines.

As the COVID-19 infection and hospitalization rates in Alberta and elsewhere climb dramatically, the role of schools in increased infections continues to be debated. Some suggestions now coming forward suggest that schools are important sources of transmission.

Meantime, Alberta teachers continue to work

under exceptionally difficult circumstances. Continuing to work in unsafe conditions such as having students less than two metres apart; teaching students to sanitize regularly; preparing homework for missing students or those working online; and working to catch up students who have missed school recently or at some point prior to June closing; and the inability to bring students together in groups for teaching purposes are just a few of the issues teachers are facing each day. Add to this list, the curriculum review; budget cuts; and issues around special needs supports and you have a recipe for exhaustion and burnout such as never seen before in Alberta schools.

The pressure on teachers only continues to grow. Recently, the Government of Alberta proposed in AUPE contract negotiations that workers take a 4 percent rollback followed by 3 years of 0 percent increases. One can expect similar proposals to come before teachers once list bargaining is completed.

Add to these bargaining issues that the education department of the Alberta Government has now passed on negotiations with teachers to the finance ministry; teacher have not received wage increases for the last 6 of 7 years; and you can sense an air of uncertainty and feelings of underappreciation, frustration and disgust with the state of public education in Alberta.

We have all seen many of these issues in our teaching careers (though usually not this many layered on at the same time). Consequently, you will have empathy for those currently struggling to provide the high quality of education Alberta teachers are known to provide to students. If you are moved to action, please continue to advocate for public education:

- Keep informed about education and other issues.
- Write, phone and visit our MLA, Premier and Leader of the Official Opposition <https://www.assembly.ab.ca/members/members-of-the-legislative-assembly>
- Write letters to the newspaper

- Talk to your neighbours, friends and family

Submitted by Gary Hansen ATA Liaison
Blackgold & St. Thomas Aquinas Locals

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

Separate, But Together Scavenger Hunt

Here is an activity you and your families and/or relatives may enjoy as we celebrate a more socially distanced Christmas season.

A photo response Christmas Scavenger Hunt.

Make a list of “things” for your Scavenger Hunt and send it to participants. Using their phone or tablet camera (or other device), they take a picture of the items they have found, and send them to the “coordinator” or to all participants. (This could be done in a group text.) The Scavenger Hunt may be drawn out over several days before Christmas, by sending out one item to find each day. Participants would send their picture of that day’s item and everyone could vote on the best find. Here are a few suggestions to get your thoughts “percolating” on a Scavenger Hunt list.

1. Ugliest Christmas sweater
2. Best Christmas Tree topper/or most unusual
3. Oldest tree ornament
4. Most amazing outdoor display in your neighbourhood or community
5. Reindeer
6. Strangest ornament

7. Christmas card
8. Best store or business Christmas display
9. Tray of Christmas baking
10. Christmas book
11. Christmas CD or Sing a favourite Christmas song
12. Fireplace
13. Christmas stocking
14. Elf
15. Santa

Submitted by Joan Henry,
VP Drayton Valley

Melissa Purcell's Presentation

Finding Our Way in Indigenous Education: Connecting Hearts & Minds

Fostering and developing a braided approach in the Indigenous focused competencies and indicators continues to be a challenge for many. The following are common statements from teachers and school leaders across the province; "I don't know what I don't know", "I'm afraid to say and do something offensive" and "I just don't know where to begin". Come and learn about resources and strategies to deepen understanding of the Indigenous-focused competencies in the Teaching Quality Standard.

Melissa gave her presentation in November. She also recorded her presentation so those who missed it could view it at their convenience. If you would like to view this presentation, please email me for the link to the presentation. I have not published the link in the newsletter as per Melissa's request.

Ron Thompson

HARTA President

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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.