



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

The Heartland Herald

HARTA's Newsletter of Branch Events

The COVID — March 2021 Edition

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A Branch of ARTA



Other Zoom Presentations In lieu of Lunch-eons, 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.

HARTA Zoom Presentation for April

On Wednesday, April 14th, HARTA will host an informative session on Insurance presented by Laurie Bauer of TW Insurance, one of ARTA's Partner Organizations. The link will be available closer to the date.

HARTA's Mini-Conference Will be held on Zoom on Wednesday, May 5th. Check the details in this newsletter for a great deal for your membership renewal and the Mini-Conference!

HARTA's AGM—September 17th 2021

The HARTA AGM will be held on Friday, September 17th. The Executive will determine whether or not the event will be in person or on Zoom closer to the date.

Gary Sawatzky's Benefits Session

Gary Sawatzky gave his presentation on the ARTA Self-Administration changes on Wednesday, February 17th. He gave a summary of the benefit changes as a result of the change to self-administration. There is very little change re: the Benefit Plans. Participants also got a chance to ask question re: the change to self-administration. Gary also explained that at the start of the change-over on the week of January 1st, there were approximately 1200 phone calls per day for the first week. By the end of the first month the responses had caught up to the requests for information. In all approximately 15 people participated in the Zoom call. Thank you Gary.

Retired Teachers' Charitable Foundation

On Wednesday, March 10th, HARTA presented information on the Alberta Retired Teachers' Foundation. Gordon Cumming, Foundation chair, gave a brief outline of the history of ARTA. He outlined the development of the Foundation. Finally he outlined the partners the Foundation is currently working with and the projects that are being funded. He also explained how HARTA members could make a donation to the Foundation.

Member Welfare

If you know of anyone needing our support, please let the editor know so we can show our support in helping their return to good health.

Health Benefit Changes

Health Benefit Changes:

We've moved to a larger office where we're welcoming new staff to help us with the transition. This change is 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 is 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.

During the month of January ARTA staff

were experiencing phone calls at the rate of 1,000 calls a day while staff were only able to respond to approximately 150 call per day. ARTA is currently working to solve these issues.

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.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.

Gwen Hooks Remembered

Gwen Hooks was remembered in the ATA News in the February 23, 2021. February, being Black History Month, the ATA took this opportunity to give tribute to Gwen's contribution to her students in Warburg and Breton. Linda and I remember Gwen as a vital member of our church family after her retirement. She often shared some of her poetry at some of our church events. The following editorial appeared in the February 23rd edition of the ATA News, Volume 55, Number 9.

Celebrating a Special Teacher for the Black History Month

Whenever February comes and I reflect on Black History Month and the profession of teaching in Alberta, I think of Gwendolyn Hooks, a Black teacher and one-time ATA local president.

Hooks began her teaching career near Breton, Alberta in 1942, which is where I began my teaching career nearly 60 years later.

Breton, I was surprised to learn after I began teaching there, was settled by Black settlers in the early 20th century, one of four communities in Alberta settled by Black people fleeing racism and violence in the United States in the decades following the abolition of slavery.

Through the passage of segregationist measures, which became known as Jim Crow laws, state institutionalized racism disenfranchised Black people and made it difficult for them to own property and live free, safe lives. Public services were segregated and Black schools and libraries were often woefully underfunded.

Thousands of Jim Crow refugees fled north looking for an opportunity in Canada. Like other settlers at the time, they were drawn to Alberta by the incentive of inexpensive land in exchange for a promise to clear, plant, build and live on that land.

They didn't automatically find acceptance and tolerance in Alberta. Hostility from local politicians, including Frank Oliver, and a 1911 order in council attempted to shut the door on these immigrants, deeming them "unsuitable" as future Canadians.

Facing hostility in urban centres they settled in four communities in rural Alberta: Amber Valley (near Athabasca), Campsie (near Barrhead), Junkins (now Wildwood) and Keystone, which would later be renamed Breton. The isolated nature of the rural areas allowed the Black settlers to live more peacefully under local government, institutions and norms that they established for themselves.

Hooks' parents—her father from Oklahoma and her mother from Kansas—married and settled in Keystone. Hooks moved around Alberta a little growing up, but ultimately ended up back in Keystone to begin her teaching career.

Racism followed her as well. In a 2003 interview with the Alberta Labour History Institute, Hooks recalled racist incidents and intolerance from her own schooling, her experiences at normal school and then as a teacher in the Breton area.

Hooks was forced to leave Breton after some members of the community opposed her transfer to Breton School from the nearby predominantly Black Funnell School. An incident in the community involving blackface minstrel shows had heightened racial tensions. Hooks went to teach in nearby Warburg. She said the Breton community wanted her back the next year, but she had already settled in Warburg, where she would teach for the next 25 years of her career, returning to Breton just for the final four years.

By the time I started teaching in Breton, none of the Black families that settled Keystone remained, but much of the history would be preserved thanks to Gwen Hooks, who was instrumental in founding the Breton and District Historical Museum in Breton's old two-room schoolhouse. She also wrote and published two books chronicling this important part of Alberta's history, including; *The Keystone Legacy: Recollections of a Black Settler*.

But Hooks is also remembered fondly by her former pupils, some of whom I taught with in Breton, which is how first learned of her.

Gwen Hooks died in March 2018, but her

online tribute wall speaks to the lasting impact she had on the community through teaching, through her preservation of Black history and through her community leadership.

“We were very fortunate to have her influence.” says one comment. “She made learning so much fun,” and “she was a very special lady, role model, that inspired the lives of many young and old.”

And then there is this: “She was my first teacher. I knew only about six words in English when I started school. She made me feel safe and I loved, admired and respected her all her life.”

I am grateful to have had the chance to learn about Gwen Hooks and through her work, to learn about Alberta’s Black history and some of the history of Black teachers in Alberta.

Editorial by Jonathan Teghtmeyer

From the ATA News

February 23, 2021

Volume 55, Number 9

COVID-19 Humour

1. My friend says to me, “What rhyme with orange?” And I told him, “No it doesn’t.”
2. Did I tell you the time I fell in love during a backflip? I was heels over head.
3. My uncle named his dogs Rolex and Timex. They’re his watch dogs.
4. Did you hear about the Italian chef who died? He pasta way!
5. When the grocery store clerk asks me if I want the milk in a bag, I always tell him, “No, I’d rather drink it out of the carton!”
6. I don’t play soccer because I enjoy the sport. I’m just doing it for kicks!
7. After dinner, my wife asked if I could clear the table. I needed a running start, but I made it.
8. Someone complimented my parking today! They left a sweet note on my windshield that said, “parking fine.”
9. My hotel tried to charge me ten dollars extra for air conditioning. That wasn’t cool.
10. Which U.S. state is famous for its extra-small soft drinks? Minnesota!

Membership Fees

At HARTA’s most recent Executive Meeting the Executive gave all members who have purchased their 2022 HARTA membership, a free registration to this year’s Mini-Conference in May. (This includes Lifetime members who pay no more fees after the age of 85 provided that they were up-to-date on their 85th birthday.) Everyone who has already updated their membership to 2022 or beyond can take in the Conference by Zoom in May. More information on the Mini-Conference will be available in this and future Newsletters.

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 lunches, 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

HARTA’s May Mini Conference

HARTA’s Mini Conference will be on Wednesday, May 5th from 9:30 AM. to 3:40 PM. The following sessions have been confirmed: Tom Dirs, a local historian, will do a session on Leduc and District’s History. Audra Stevenson, 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. Noel

Cairney will do a session on Laughter Yoga. Marilyn Bossert, Past President of ARTA will present the keynote to commence the Conference as well as a session on ACER—CART, the Canadian federation of retired teachers' associations for Canada's Provinces and territories.

More about the Presenters

Tom Dirsa

Tom grew up on the tip of Cape Cod in Massachusetts and moved to Alberta, Canada for two years, which became a lifetime.

After a successful 38 year career as a teacher, basketball coach, and a school administrator he retired to Leduc, Alberta.

Since his retirement Tom began a second career as a writer. He wrote the Alberta Distant Learning Preview/Review programs for the Junior High Social Studies courses. In 2017 he was the author of Canada Becomes a Federation as part of the Canada Turns 150 series.

For the past few years he has published a series of children picture books about a child with ADHD as he learns to cope with the world around him. They are based on his experience with his grandson who was diagnosed with ADHD. In 2018 working with the Leduc Public Library he published an updated history book of Leduc called Leduc: Then & Now.

Currently he is working on a second Leduc history book and speaking at teacher conventions.

Audra Stevenson

For the last decade Audra has taken ideas and transformed them into solutions that have had a positive impact in the arts, technology, and small business sectors across Alberta. By combining a BFA in technical theatre from the University of Alberta and an MBA from the University of Calgary, Audra has developed the perfect skillset to build creative solutions to large societal problems. Audra has now found her home at Leftovers Foundation, where she has focused on social innovation of our food systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to more families than ever going to bed hungry. Food insecurity now affects over 600,000 Albertans, but at the Leftovers Foundation, we know that we can get food to those who need it by working together. Discover how you can make a major difference in your community with just half an hour of your time and an app on your phone.

Noel Cairney

Noel is a retired educator from Northern Alberta who has worked with students from 18 months to 81 plus years of age. After a fortuitous Face Book pop up ad in 2009, she discovered the world of Therapeutic Humour and has never looked back. In 2010, in Orlando, Florida, she became a Certified Laughter Yoga Leader and Leader Trainer under founder Dr. Madan Kataria and has also studied with Steve Wilson from World Laughter Tour.

Noel's passion for Laughter and learning took her to West Virginia for three weeks to work with the renowned therapeutic clown, Patch Adams, who inspired the name of Noel's breakthrough palliative care project, "The Last Laugh". She is excited to share the benefits of Laughter, Humour and Happiness with you.

This presentation will focus on Laughter and Joy. We will discuss the health benefits of laughing 'for no reason' and experience a mini-Laughter Yoga session involving breathing, stretching and playfulness. Noel will share her experience with Patch Adams doing Therapeutic Clowning with incarcerated youth, elderly in care homes and the general public. Get ready to chuckle, giggle and belly laugh!

I will share other presenters' information as it is available.

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

Executive and Contact Info for the 2020-21 Program Year

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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.



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**HARTA's Zoom
Presentation:
An Insurance
Information Session
With Laurie Bauer
Wednesday,
April 14th
10:00 AM**

**Zoom Annual
Licence
Funded by
ARTA**

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

**Membership \$10.00 Per Year
New retirees \$10.00
for the first Two Years**



Zoom provided by
ARTA



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

**Wednesday, May 5,
2021
9:30 AM to 3:40 PM
On Zoom**

**HARTA Regional
Mini Conference
On Zoom**

**Cost - Free with HARTA membership renewal
to August 31, 2022 for the workshops!**

**For more info phone (780) 986-8349
or email: rnthompson@shaw.ca (r n thompson)**

Topics

- **Keynote - Marilyn Bossert - Past President ARTA**
- **History of Leduc**
- **Food Rescue**
- **Laughter Yoga**
- **ACER - CART**



Heartland
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HARTA Online MINI- CONFERENCE

WEDESDAY, May 5/2021

On ZOOM

9:00 A.M. - 3:40 P.M.

Workshop Sessions

9:00-9:30- Log on

9:30- 10:00- Keynote – Marilyn Bossert

10:00- 10:10- Break

10:10- 11:00- Laughing Yoga – Noel Cairney

11:00-11:10- Break

11:10- 12:00- Leduc's History – Tom Dirsra

12:00- 1:30- Lunch Break

1:30 - 2:20 - Food Rescue – Audra Stevenson

2:20 - 2:30 - Break

2:30 - 3:20 – ACER—CART (Canadian Retired Teachers' Associations Working together) – Marilyn Bossert

3:20 - 3:40 – Evaluations – Wrap-up

Registration is free if your HARTA membership

has been updated to August 31, 2022

Registration Deadline: April 23/2021 by mail.



A Branch
of ARTA



HARTA Mini-Conference Registration Form

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

On Zoom

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 Friday, April 23rd Please register by phone and pay by email to rnthompson@shaw.ca Indicate that payment is for HARTA membership to August 2022.

The registration for this Mini-Conference is free with the renewal of your HARTA membership to August 31, 2022. Membership is \$10.00 per year or \$10.00 for the first two years if this is the first year of your retirement.

___ ARTA ___ Branch: _____ ___ Non-member

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

Your registration is not complete until your HARTA 2022 membership has been verified by a member of the HARTA Executive.

Mail your registration to: Ron Thompson,

4020 – 37th Ave., Leduc, AB. T9E 6C9

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