



Heartland
Alberta
Retired
Teachers'
Association

The Heartland Herald
HARTA's Newsletter
of Branch Events
**The New Year's
2026 Edition**

Publisher: Ron Thompson

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Issue No. 6 February 2026

A Branch of ARTA



HARTA's Program Schedule 2026

- **HARTA February Luncheon**, Thursday, February 19, 2026. St. David's United Church, Leduc, Program: My Retirement Living Journey, Presenter: Steven Krahn
- **March Luncheon, Thursday**, March 19 First United Church in Wetaskiwin: Program : "Happiness & Meaning of Life" Presenter: Kim Silverthorn
- **HARTA's Mini - Conference** in Leduc, Thursday, May 14, 2026. at St. David's United Church.
- **The HARTA AGM** is tentatively scheduled for Friday, September 18, 2026, unless the date needs to be changed by unforeseen events.
- **ARTA's Heart & Sole Walks** – June 1st to 5th, 2026. Dates and locations to be decided later.

From the President

HARTA held its branch review with executive members, on Monday, January 12th. More information on the review will be shared in an article on the branch review later in this newsletter. Please review this newsletter for the coming luncheons, presentations, and other activities. More details are available in the articles which follow.

The ATRF Pension Fund Update

On Thursday, February 5, 2026, from 1:00 to 2:00 PM ARTA's Pension & Financial Wellness well host the annual ATRF Retired Teachers' Pension Fund Report online. If you wish to view the report please go to the ARTA website at www.arta.net and register for the session.

My Retirement Living Journey

On Thursday, February 19th, 2026, join Steven Krahn, Business Development Manager at Chartwell Retirement Residences, at St. David's United Church, for an informative and engaging seminar titled "My Retirement Living Journey."

Steven, a former educator with GSACRD #29, (Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools) brings both professional expertise and a compassionate approach to helping individuals and families navigate retirement living options. In this session, he will walk you through the different levels of living and care available in retirement residences in Alberta—helping you understand what's available, what to expect, and how to make informed decisions. Additionally, Steven will introduce **FitMinds**, a complimentary 8-week course designed to help combat memory loss and dementia. This program is ideal for anyone looking to maintain cognitive health and stay mentally active. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about retirement living and proactive brain health

HARTA's Branch Review, January 2026

On Monday, January 12, 2026, Robin Stuart met with members of the HARTA Executive to review the progress of HARTA over the last

13 plus years of HARTA's existence as a branch of ARTA. To help the executive members evaluate the state of HARTA as of January 2026, Robin posed a number of questions re: ARTA and HARTA's relationship to it.

The first question he asked was, "What does the acronym 'ARTA' stand for?" There were many responses about what ARTA does, but it took more questions before the participants gave the response, "the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association." Ron then gave a short history of how ARTA came to be. ARTA was born in November of 1963 when the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA), the Calgary Retired Teachers' Association (CRTA) and two retired teachers' groups in southern Alberta, (the Medicine Hat and Lethbridge branches) decided to form the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association. The main reasons for forming this association were to advocate for better pensions for practicing teachers and to encourage development of social activities for retired Alberta teachers. As the association grew a benefit plan was added in the mid 1990s. In 2013 the Wellness Committee became a permanent standing committee of ARTA. The Alberta Retired Teachers' Charitable Foundation and ARTA Rx are the latest activities undertaken by ARTA. The services offered by ARTA have grown over the years as members have seen the need. A more full discussion about the history of ARTA is included later in this newsletter.

The next question posed was, "What do the letters 'HARTA' stand for?" Members began to name the various services that HARTA provides. Robin focussed the group's attention on the difference between ARTA and HARTA. The acronym stands for Heartland Alberta Retired Teachers' Association. The name Heartland is a compromise



for not using the names Drayton Valley, Leduc, or Wetaskiwin in the name of the branch. The branch was formed in September of 2012 after six months of planning. The branch has traditionally offered luncheons in Drayton Valley, Leduc, and Wetaskiwin over the last 13 years.

The participants were then asked, “What do you see as problems for the branch?” The following were some of the problems named. Diminishing Membership, Difficulty in filling executive positions, Communication issues, and Difficulty in overcoming the distances between some of the communities in our region.

Robin then suggested that the executive look at the branch’s Constitution and By-laws and consider possible changes. Robin also suggested the striking of a nominating committee with the mission to present a slate of officers to the HARTA AGM in September. He also suggested that the executive review the problems identified by the executive at this meeting and develop plans for overcoming each of the problems cited. He also asked the executive to review the roles of each executive member as part of the review of the by-laws of ARTA.

HARTA’s March Program and Lunch

On March 19th, HARTA will host its March Event in Wetaskiwin at the First United Church in Wetaskiwin. The church is located at 5115—51 Ave. in Wetaskiwin. Doors will be open at 10:30 AM, the program will start at 11:00 AM and lunch will follow.

Kim Silverthorn (no relation to Bob) will be our speaker. She is a Counsellor who works out of Beaumont and Sherwood Park. She also gives workshops in Edmonton through the Edmonton Life Long Learning Association. She will speak on “Happiness and Meaning.” Please save the date, March 19, 2026. Please see the information sheet at the end of this newsletter for more information.

ABOUT ARTA

In the last few months I have seen some misunderstanding re: the relationship among ARTA, the ATA, and ATRF. I hope the points below and the article which follows will clarify the relationship of these three organizations to each other.

1. ARTA does not receive funding from the Alberta Government.
2. The Alberta Teachers’ Association and the Alberta Retired Teachers’ Association are separate organizations.
3. ARTA does not have any connection with the ATRF.
4. Only the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund is responsible for Teachers’ Pensions in Alberta.

ARTA’s Early Days: 1950s-1963

Retired teachers began meeting on an informal basis in the late 1950s in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge, both to keep up social ties and discuss important concerns of the day: Securing adequate pensions, medical insurance, and health care.

Soon enough, the members of these meetings began to realize there was enough weight to their conversations, and enough commitment among their numbers, that they began forming into formal organizations: The Retired Teachers of Edmonton in late 1960, and the Calgary Retired Teachers’ Association soon after in early 1961.

In 1963, representatives from these two formal associations, as well as from Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, gathered to form the provincial association, and on November 14, 1963, The Alberta Retired Teachers’ Association officially came into being. At its founding, ARTA had 225 members, province-wide — a number that is almost hard to believe when compared to the over 33,000 ARTA members that are around today.

The world has changed a lot since 1963, but the concerns that guided those founding members live on today. When the Calgary Retired Teachers' Association formed in 1961, they listed five main objectives for their fledgling group:

1. To inform members of matters concerning teachers and the welfare of seniors.
2. To explore ways to improve and protect the welfare of members.
3. To speak with a united voice, giving weight and influence to the concerns of members.
4. To access special group rates that would benefit the membership as a whole.
5. To maintain social contact with peers and promote the enjoyment of life in retirement.

ARTA has a wider scope than it did when it was first founded, but those five guiding principles live on, and still guide the Association today

Is Your HARTA Membership Up To Date

In late November of each year, HARTA receives a subsidy cheque from ARTA, based on the number of paid-up ARTA members that are also Alberta retired teachers with 5 years or more of teaching experience for a board in Alberta as well as being a HARTA member as of September 1st of that year. Each branch president is required to send their list of current members to the ARTA office. HARTA's yearly subsidy is based on the number of paid-up ARTA members who are retired Alberta teachers who are eligible for an Alberta teachers' pension and who are members of ARTA.

If your membership is due for renewal, you can renew it at a regular HARTA meeting, by sending an e-transfer to: rnthompson@shaw.ca,

or by a cheque, or money order payable to HARTA, care of Ron Thompson, 4020 - 37th Avenue, Leduc, Alberta T9E 6C9. Please make out the cheque, money order, or e-transfer for \$10.00 for each year you would like to renew for, or, for \$25.00 you can renew your membership for three years.

If you are 80 years of age paid up, you are considered a lifetime member. You no longer need to pay membership fees. Please let us know when you celebrate your 80th birthday so we can change your membership status to lifetime. If you are a retired teacher, please also confirm your ARTA status with ARTA. (if you have an ARTA Benefit Plan, you do not need to verify your membership. Your yearly membership fee is included in your ARTA Plan.)

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. **AIMCo (Alberta Investment Man-**

agement Corporation) is the Alberta Government's umbrella Investment Organization which also manages various Government Pensions)

Abbreviations

ASEBP: A provider of Health Care Benefits:
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

ARTA 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>

AIMCo: Alberta Investment Management Corporation at: <https://www.aimco.ca>

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

Member Welfare

If you know of anyone needing our support, please let the editor know. With so much sickness around us, this might be a good time to reach out to someone you haven't heard from or seen in a while. Please keep well and keep safe. HARTA's editor can be reached at:
r_n_thompson102@shaw.ca

Public Interest Alberta

If you would like to keep abreast of the various emerging issues in Alberta such as Health Care, Education, and Long Term Care,

please go to <https://www.pialberta.org> up to the election and beyond for more information on these and other topics. This website will also tell you more about other organizations that are part of Public Interest Alberta. Maj-Britt Bigotti has been appointed ARTA's representative on this organization.

HARTA's Mini-Conference

HARTA's Mini-Conference will take place on Thursday, May 14th at St. David's United Church. There will be a Keynote speaker and three sessions on various topics. Please watch for more articles on the presenters in the February 2026 Newsletter.

HARTA's Keynote Speaker: Ray Hoger

Ray Hoger was hired by the Medicine Hat Catholic School board in 1978 as a high school Business Education teacher, newly graduated from the University of Alberta. He retired from full-time teaching from that same school board thirty-nine years later, as a grade three specialist. During that time, he spent thirty years volunteering with the ATA in various capacities—ARA and school rep, Business Education Specialist Council, Career and Technology Studies Council and Pension and Retirement Consultant. He also spent twenty-three years in the Canadian Forces Reserve, retiring with the rank of captain.



He has also volunteered with the community-based Medicine Hat Musical Theatre for over forty years, working on stage, backstage, as lighting director and has been a member of the board of directors for over 16 years.

Ray retired in 2017 and immediately enrolled in ARTA, joining the Pension and Financial Wellness committee in 2020. He served one year as ARTA vice president and is currently in his first year as ARTA president.

Humour Corner

The following jokes are from Harold Skidmore.

1. "Do not touch," must be one of the scariest things to read in Braille.
2. That moment when your steak is on the grill and you can already feel your mouth watering, do vegans feel the same way when mowing the lawn?
3. It's OK if you disagree with me. I can't force you to be right.
4. A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter. "What are you doing?" she asked. "Hunting flies," He responded. " "Oh! Killing any?" she asked. "Yep, 3 males, 2 females," he said. Intrigued, she asked, "How can you tell them apart?" He responded, "3 were on a beer can, 2 were on the phone."
5. I can't believe we don't have world peace after changing the name on pancake boxes and syrup bottles.
6. If children can work tablets, phones or games, they can work a broom, mop and dishes.
7. My last will and testament to my children: Being of sound mind I spent all my money. Your inheritance is in my craft room. Love mom.

8. Cell phones bring you closer to the person far from you. But they take you away from the ones sitting next to you.
9. Remember before Facebook when no one cared what you had for breakfast? They still don't.
10. I found \$20.00 in a parking lot and thought to myself, "What would Jesus do?"

So, I turned it into wine.

If you have jokes, you'd like to share in the HARTA newsletter, please send them to the editor at r_n_thompson102@shaw.ca.

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. Contact Ron T. or any other member of HARTA's Executive to let us know that you'd like to help.

If you'd like to provide stories and other news for our newsletter, you could submit to your contribution to: The Editor at: r_n_thompson102@shaw.ca. It would be great to get more submissions from our readers.

- Ron Thompson, HARTA President

Other Branch Activities

ARTA has a website which provides information on events in other Branches throughout Alberta and the Okanagan Branch in BC. The ARTA branches in Calgary and Edmonton host conferences once a year. At the end of April, the Calgary Retired Teachers hold the Steppin' Out Conference. You can go to the Calgary Retired Teachers' Association website to view the Steppin' Out Conference details for this year. At

the beginning of September the Edmonton Retired Teachers host the Second Wind Conference. Look for these announcements as the next year progresses. If you would like to find other Branch events, this website can help you.

www.artabranches.net.

- Ron Thompson, HARTA President

HARTA's new Facebook Page

HARTA has a new Facebook page "**HARTA's Coming Events.**" Please have a look at this new Facebook page and click follow to keep up with the latest in HARTA's events. The next event is the Leduc Luncheon. Steven Krahn from Chartwell Retirement Residences will give a review of the various living options for seniors in Alberta. Please go to HARTA's Coming Events page on Facebook to keep up with the latest in HARTA events.

ARTCF Updates

Partnership Updates

There are 2 new grant recipients: NorQuest College was awarded \$8,000. The Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association was awarded \$13,000.

Bethany Care Foundation was awarded \$25,000. Karen Wilson will serve as the ARTCF representative for Operation Friendship Seniors Society and NorQuest College. Donna Crawford will serve as the ARTCF representative for the Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association.

Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation

Charitable Foundation Details

Our Mission:

"From classrooms and beyond, the Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation and its

members are linked by one common purpose: to support Alberta Seniors in pursuit of Appropriate Housing, Health Services and English as a Second Language, to improve their lives!"

ARTCF supports the following Charities:

Parkinson's Association of Alberta - three ARTCF Tele-Support Groups

Alzheimer Society of Calgary - Funding for their Learning and Support Services

Operation Friendship Seniors' Society – Grant to support equipment for the facility

Bethany Care Centre - Grant to support a Music Therapy Program.

Jewish Family Services of Calgary - Grant to support their programs

NorQuest College - Grant in 2025

The Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Assn - Grant in 2025

ARTCF, with your support, will make a difference. We have provincial status as an Alberta Society, as well Charitable Status (ability to give Tax Receipts) from Canada Revenue Agency. Join us in expanding our impact. Honor or Memorial gifts will be recognized, and all gifts will be Income Tax receipted. Online donations, may be made at www.arta.net/cf-give

Cheques may be made out to **ARTCF** and mailed to:

ARTCF Office
15505 - 137 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB
T5V 1R9

Executive Contacts for the 2024-25 Program Year

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

(r n thompson) r_n_thompson102@shaw.ca
(HARTA correspondence)

Bob Silverthorne: Vice President & ATA
Liaison—Wetaskiwin and Timberline Locals
(780) 387-6676

rsilverthorne.peachills@gmail.com

Drayton Valley Contacts. Ron Thompson is the
temporary contact.

Janice Storch: Secretary & ARTA
Branch Rep. (780) 986-0056 jes90@telus.net

Connie Dublenko: Treasurer (587) 783-8588
ccdublenko@gmail.com

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

HARTA's Goals

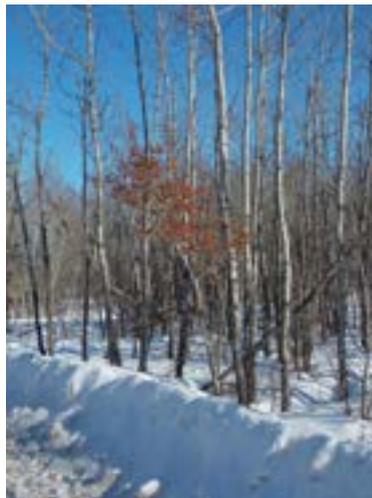
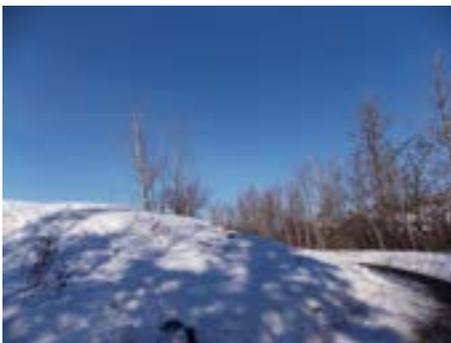
- To carry on social activities, enabling our members to maintain contact with their colleagues.
- To provide information to our members about the resources available through the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association. (ARTA) and other sources.

HARTA's Website

www.artabranches.net/harta

Also view HARTA's event page at:

HARTA's Coming Events On Facebook



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



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ARTA

ALBERTA RETIRED
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

**You're Invited to
HARTA's February
Program & Lunch,
Thursday, Feb. 19th,
2026 at
St. David's United
Church in Leduc
"An Information
Session on Seniors'
Living"**

Presenter:

**Steven Krahn
from Chartwell**



email:

rnthompson@shaw.ca

phone:

(780) 986-8349

Ron Thompson

**Thursday, February 19th, 2026
Membership \$10.00 Per Year, \$25.00 for 3yrs
New members free,
Doors open: 10:30 AM, Program at 11:00 AM,
Lunch to follow
Lunch is \$15.00 per person, free for guests.**



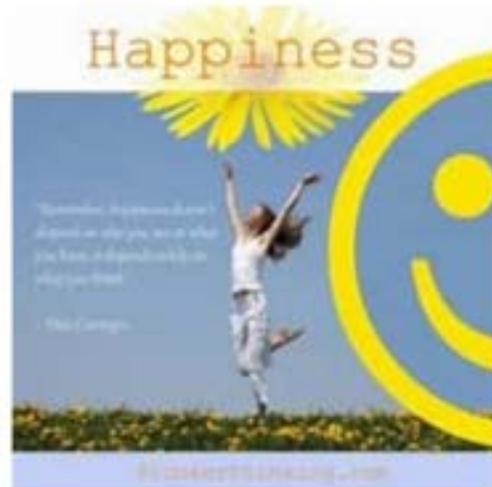
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"Finding
Happiness and
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Presenter:
Kim Silverthorn,
Counsellor**



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phone:
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**HARTA
Mini-Conference
Confirmed Sessions**

- **Ray Hoger (ARTA President) - Keynote**
- **Susan Carter- Comedienne**
- **Ross D MacGregor - All About Locks**
- **Carolynne Melnyk - Qigong**

Thursday, May 14, 2026

9:30 AM to 2:45 PM

More info available early January 2026

Save the Date

For more info as available phone [\(780\) 986-8349](tel:7809868349)

or email: rnthompson@shaw.ca (r n thompson)