



“If we had no winter the spring would not be so pleasant.” - Anne Bradstreet

**NEARTA: Northeastern  
Alberta Retired  
Teachers’ Association**

**Newsletter  
March 2026  
Volume 3, Issue 1**

### **March 2026 Meeting Highlights**

- ◆ **President Roy Ripkens presented his report.**
- ◆ **Vice President Zan Reilly presented the report from the February ARTA Board of Director’s Meeting.**
- ◆ **ARTA Insurance representative, John Orr, gave an update.**
- ◆ **Letter of concern sent to MLA Scott Cyr about medical services in our area, and the response.**
- ◆ **New Business: sound system upgrade, Public Interest Alberta, Bill 11 and the impact on seniors.**
- ◆ **Guest Speaker: RCMP Acting Corporal Dustin Frick, “Fraud and Financial Crime Prevention.”**

*\*Thank you to the Glendon Seniors’  
Centre for the Delicious Lunch!*



**The NEARTA Newsletter is produced four times per year. If you have suggestions please send them to the NEARTA email: [northeasternarta@gmail.com](mailto:northeasternarta@gmail.com)**

### **Contact NEARTA!**

**Email: [northeasternarta@gmail.com](mailto:northeasternarta@gmail.com)**

**Website: <https://artabranches.net/nearta/>**

**Follow Us on Facebook:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/northeasternarta>**

**Come to the next NEARTA Meeting:**

**Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 11:00 a.m.**

**Glendon Seniors’ Centre. See you then!**



**“Despite the forecast, live like it’s spring.” - Lilly Pulitzer**



**NEARTA**

*NEARTA, provides an opportunity for friends and colleagues to meet, enjoy activities together, and pursue a healthy lifestyle.*

*NEARTA activities offer social connectedness, an avenue for retired teachers to remain in contact with their colleagues, enjoy meals, benefit from speaker presentations, encourage and participate in community volunteerism, and have fun!*



### **Membership**

**NEARTA membership is valid from September 1st to August 31st.**

**NEARTA Membership is \$10.00 / year. For the NEARTA Membership Form, go to:**

**<https://artabranches.net/nearta/join-nearta/>**

**For more information about joining ARTA, go to:**

**<https://www.arta.net/join>**





## March Guest Speaker



**RCMP Acting Corporal Dustin Frick shared important information about Fraud Prevention. Thank you.**

**The presentation by Dustin is supported by the RCMP “K” Division Fraud Department which handles fraud and financial crimes.**

**The presentation included information on identity fraud, third party theft (theft from online sources, i.e. Google, Facebook), phishing scams and how to identify them; types of online and phone scams and how to detect them and avoid becoming a victim; bitcoin deposits.**

**Thank you for the informative presentation.**

### What every Canadian should know about *Fraud and Scams*

Fraud is the number one crime against older Canadians. Though people of all ages can be victims of fraud, older people get targeted more than others. Some of the reasons are that they are often home during the day to answer the door or phone, they can be more trusting and they may not have family or friends close by to ask for a second opinion. People who commit fraud and scams are commonly called con artists. Con artists don't just target people who have a lot of money. A con artist may steal a small amount from many people. They use a variety of ways to reach people, including the Internet, phone calls and even door-to-door visits.

#### Common types of fraud and scams

**Identity theft:** Identity theft occurs when a con artist steals personal information from someone so they can pretend to be that person and then do things like apply for a credit card, take out a loan or mortgage, get a cell phone or withdraw bank funds.

**Credit/debit card fraud:** Credit card and debit card fraud occurs when a con artist uses your card, or a copy, to make purchases or withdraw money from your account.

**Online scams:** There are many online scams and new ones appear all the time. Some appear to be asking for your help; some say there is a problem with your bank account or tax return. Scam e-mails are often easy to spot because of spelling and other mistakes, but some can look like they are coming from a person or organization you know.

**Phone and door-to-door scams:** Phone and door-to-door scams are also very common. Someone will call or come to your door pretending to be a representative of a charity, an employee of a credit card company, or even a distant relative. Sometimes people call or come to your door using high-pressure sales tactics to get you to buy something you don't want or need, or to talk you into getting work done on your house.

See more at this website. Retrieved February 17, 2026 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors-forum-federal-provincial-territorial/fraud-scams.html>

### Tips and Safeguards to Help Avoid Fraud

- Keep all personal documents in a secure place. If you don't need them, do not carry your birth certificate, passport or SIN card.
- Never tell another person your PIN or account passwords and take care to cover your hand when entering your PIN at bank machines and when making store purchases.
- Safely dispose of old bills and statements—shredding is best.
- Do not click on pop-up windows or respond to e-mails, open attachments or go to Website links sent by people you do not know. Your bank or credit union will not send you anything by e-mail unless you ask them to.
- Never give out your credit card, bank account, or personal information to someone over the phone, at the door, or over the Internet unless you know the person or organization you are dealing with, or you made the contact.
- Do not sign an agreement or contract to buy anything without giving yourself time to think it over. If a salesperson insists that an "offer" is "time limited" and you must decide that moment, it is probably better not to buy.
- Be suspicious if someone you don't know asks you to send them money or a cheque, or to return money they "accidentally" sent you.
- Before hiring someone or agreeing to have work done on your home, ask for proof of identity and references and check them.





**Happy Easter!**

**Easter is Sunday,  
April 5, 2026**

**May Your  
Easter Season  
be filled  
With Joy, Peace,  
Beautiful Weather  
And Happy Family  
Gatherings.**



**A Wee Bit of Irish Wit and  
Wisdom in honor of St.  
Patrick's Day**

\*May you have the hindsight to know where you've been, the foresight to know where you are going, and the insight to know when you have gone too far or too fast.

\*When you are unsure of the way, walk slowly.

\*Count your joys more than your woes, count your friends instead of your foes.

\*A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures.

\*The best things in life are the people we love, the places we have been, and the memories we have made along the way.



## ***Did You Know?***

***Submitted by NEARTA President Roy Ripkens:***

Well, the 2026 government budget has been released and whilst it may be good news for education and health, there may be some challenges for our membership. Seniors' benefits, it would appear, were on the chopping block.

In a recent news article, CBC Edmonton reported that "Finance Minister Nate Horner said the province is dropping the threshold for eligibility by nine per cent to align with other Canadian provinces. Under the new rules, an individual will only be eligible if they receive an income of less than \$32,690 a year, down from a cutoff of \$34,770. For a couple, the cut-off will be \$53,800, down from \$56,820. Provincial officials say the grant component of the seniors' home adaptation and repair program threshold will be similarly cut."

As many of us know, seniors need extra in-home support, especially if they are attempting to live in their family home as long as possible. Family care is often not only necessary but often critical to ensuring seniors with physical or mental impairment are not forced into long-term care homes. In the same article, CBC reported, "The provincial government plans to consolidate two tax credits into one and will change the eligibility criteria. The new tax credit will focus on Albertans caring for loved ones with physical and mental health impairments. It will exclude anyone caring for someone who is aging but not infirm. Provincial officials say 35,000 people are currently getting this tax credit, which is worth roughly \$1,000 as a non-refundable credit. Next year, 16,500 Albertans will lose the credit."

Bill 11 is of concern as well. As most seniors know, at 65 you must register with Alberta Blue Cross to receive health benefits, primarily for pharmaceutical supports. For our membership, any amount not covered by Blue Cross, is covered by ARTA. Bill 11 flips the script. ARTA will become the primary insurer and Blue Cross the secondary coverage. What impact this will have on our membership and the baseline premium costs for ARTA insurance remains to be seen but be prepared for higher monthly premium costs!



## Donation to the Clayton Bellamy Foundation for the Arts

On February 3, 2026, members of the NEARTA executive made a presentation of \$500.00 to Clayton Bellamy in support of the Clayton Bellamy Foundation for the Arts.

The Clayton Bellamy Foundation for the Arts is a regional organization committed to enriching the province through arts education and community initiatives. The Foundation impacts the arts scene by managing the Strathcona Performing Arts Centre. The Foundation supports the theatre, after-school arts programs, secondary education bursaries, and brings high caliber acts to North-eastern Alberta.

The Bonnyville Theatre Strathcona Performing Arts Centre is a 340-seat, state-of-the-art theatre located in the Bonnyville Centralized High School. At the June 2025 NEARTA meeting held in Glendon members enjoyed a presentation and performance by Clayton Bellamy.



Pictured in the Strathcona Performing Arts Centre (L to R) – Tracie Young, BCHS Principal, Roy Ripkens, NEARTA President, Clayton Bellamy, Richard Cameron, NEARTA Secretary, John Orr, NEARTA Treasurer.

## In Memoriam—Lily McCool

Lily Jane McCool passed away on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the age of 92 years.

Lily's teaching career began in 1950 in a small community in the Strathmore area. In 1952, her parents relocated to the Elk Point area and wanting to be closer to home, Lily accepted a position for one year at the Celtic School at St. Brides. The next year, a sense of adventure saw her accept a teaching assignment at Fort Resolution, NWT. During her year at St. Brides, Lily had met James McCool. In 1955, she returned from NWT and she and James were married in 1956.

In 1959, Lily began teaching at the new Racette School in St. Paul. When St. Paul Regional High School opened, Lily transferred there, where she would remain until retirement in 1986.

Following retirement, Lily became involved with both ARTA and NEARTA. In 1988, she became president of NEARTA, a position she held for 5 years. During that time, she also served as a member of the ARTA Governance Committee and 1 year as President of ARTA. In the ensuing years Lily was involved with many projects sponsored by ARTA.

Lily faithfully attended NEARTA meetings until 2023, when mobility issues curtailed her attendance.

In her retirement, Lily became more deeply involved in charitable causes, volunteering with various organizations, especially as a volunteer at the bingo hall. A local chapter of Development and Peace was established by Lily and her colleague Margaret Michaud. In 2015, NEARTA/ARTA inaugurated an award to recognize outstanding charitable work by members. Lily and Margaret were the first recipients of this special award.

An avid quilter and knitter, Lily shared her skills by donating countless quilts and blankets for the homeless and those in need. This continued until the last year of her life.

\*Submitted by Paul Boisvert



*\*Save the Date!*

**The NEARTA / ARTA Heart and Sole Wellness Walk 2026 is taking place in St. Paul during Alberta Seniors' Week.**

**See you Friday, June 5th at 10 a.m. at the Iron Horse Trail Staging Area (near Willie's Pond). Use the entrance to the staging area/campground, 4012-53 avenue, St. Paul. Look for the Gazebo.**

**Each walk is a drop-off location for food bank donations. Please bring your kindness and generosity and a donation for the Food Bank.**



**Go the ARTA 2026 Wellness Walk Page and Click the blue tab—Register Here. Register by May 1 to receive an ARTA Heart and Sole gift to commemorate the event.**



**HEART AND SOLE  
WELLNESS WALK**

**Link to registration page:**

**<https://www.arta.net/wellness-challenge>**

