



Northwestern Branch of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association 2020 – 2021 Branch Report to the Annual General Meeting

June 16, 2021

2020 – 2021 Executive



Top Row (L to R):

Yvonne Mury	Director
Joan Godbout	President
Karen Patten	Secretary

Middle Row (L to R):

Linda Schofield	Director
Maxine Maxwell	Treasurer
Jeanette Forrest	Director

Lower Row (L to R)

Gail Schau	Director
Lorna McIlroy	Past President
Russ Snoble	Director & ARTA Rep

We appreciate
NWARTA
members. 😊

The COVID-19 Challenge

- In late August, the executive team began monthly planning meetings. The priority was, and continues to be, **servicing and connecting NWARTA members**.
- The COVID-19 Challenge -- to connect with members through engaging, physically distanced, virtual activities. This has **allowed the executive to be creative in its approach**.

Executive members have been busy --

- pursuing various **personal interests and activities** including accessing online courses/workshops, participating in virtual fitness classes, tackling previously unfinished projects, and of course, embracing new technology.
- reviewing, revising, and **creating articles for the NWARTA website**. Several articles were added to *Our Busy Members*.
- sadly, continuing to submit names of deceased members to the **In Memoriam section of new&views**.
- maintaining the **Branch's financials**, including applying for ARTA grants, ensuring the Alberta Gaming License is maintained.
- **sharing information** about virtual activities, health-related sessions and informative presentations made available by various agencies (Primary Care Network, Seniors' Centre Without Walls, and Alberta Health).

Membership

- At the first Executive Meeting (August 2020), it was decided that memberships would be waived for the year. At the time there were **130 members** -- 93 Regular; 10 Associate; 22 Lifetime members.
- Sixty-two members had prepaid membership. **Prepaid memberships will be carried forward to 2021-2022**.
- To keep yearly membership fees at \$10, NWARTA continues to operate at cost recovery for each event. In addition, ARTA has grants available for some events.



OUR BUSY MEMBERS



To see more pictures, check NWARTA's website <https://artabranches.net/nwarta/>

2020 – 2021 Events and Activities

- Spring 2020 took NWARTA Walkers to **the Kleskun Hills Natural Area**. A fabulous spring day, the incredible vastness of prairie, the big sky of the Peace Country along with a picnic lunches made for an incredible outing.
- NWARTA Walkers celebrated the International Day of Older Persons (Oct 1st) at **Saskatoon Lake Park**. To overcome the COVID-Blues and in the spirit of encouragement, members were invited to submit a word, phrase, or sentence to create a **Fall Wall of Support**. The logistics of posting the messages on a wall proved difficult so it became a Vehicle of Support.
- On Remembrance Day, NWARTA honoured Canada's military men and women, past and present. A wreath was presented for the **Legion's Virtual Remembrance Day Ceremonies**.
- Unfortunately, all the 2020 Festive Season Events were cancelled. NWARTA made the best of its cancelled St Nicholas Luncheon by asking members to submit greetings to be compiled to create a **Members' Greeting Card**. Greeters' names were entered into a draw for lunch or dinner gift cards. While not the same as gathering for a St Nicholas feast, it allowed members to connect electronically.
- Live **musical performances** were sadly missed during the Festive Season. YouTube videos of the **Grande Prairie Boys' Choir** and other coral performers were shared by email and on the website.
- January's **Winter Wellness Day at Home** became a collection of executive-tested fitness YouTubes (with music). Hopefully, these seniors-focused fitness videos helped to keep members active through dark winter days.
- Spring 2020 saw NWARTA postponing its **6th New Frontiers Retirees' Conference**, but it was redesigned as a virtual event for February. **New Frontiers re-imagined** was a free Zoom event featuring one speaker on each of the three days. To support the event, registration gifts were delivered or mailed to participants.

Just a Few Initiatives

- Following the principles *ARTA's Policies and Procedures*, three executive members prepared **NWARTA's General Guidelines**. After several revisions, the executive accepted the document as one that will need to be updated on a regular basis.
- To honour deceased members of the northwestern region, two executive members are working to gather information and to create a **Memoriam page for NWARTA's website**.
- The **Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention** was held virtually in March 2021. Several NWARTA members agreed to be **moderators for live sessions**. It was rewarding to be a part of our profession; thanks so much for those who were able to help.



2020 – 2021 ARTA Events

- **ARTA's Annual General Meeting** was held the mornings of Oct 6 & 7 via Zoom. There were over 80 participants with representatives from the 18 branches, ARTA staff, and guests. Karen Patten, Russ Snoble, and Joan Godbout represented NWARTA. While Zoom meetings allow for large virtual gatherings, gone was the opportunity for connecting with members of the other branches and the ARTA staff. Breaks, however, were not overlooked; all participants received a Snack Box by mail the week prior. NWARTA's **Lorna McIlroy was re-elected** as ARTA President and Joan Godbout as a member of the Strategic Planning and Advocacy Committee.
- **ARTA's 2021 Spring Retreat** was held virtually on May 27th. NWARTA's representatives were Maxine Maxwell, Russ Snoble, and Joan Godbout. The one-day event featured: Todd Hirsch, *Economic Truths to Unlearn* and Gregor Jeffrey, *The Key to Connection*. Participants had the opportunity to connect in both morning and afternoon breakout rooms.
- To date, there have been five virtual **ARTA Board of Directors meetings**. Joan Godbout has represented the Branch at each of these.
- ARTA's Management Team and Staff are to be commended for their hard work. They had many challenges on the road to **successfully administrating the ARTA Retiree Benefits Plan** as of January 1, 2021.

