

## ***Last year in Review: Report from the Presidents :***

### **St. Albert and Area Retired Teachers' Association Presidents Report to the 2018 ARTA AGM**

Serving as co-presidents of STARTA for 2017-2018 has been a great privilege. It has been a busy and rewarding year, complete with many exciting and a few challenging experiences. After our facility challenge last year, and following renovations at Sturgeon Valley Golf and Country Club, we were welcomed back for the May 2017 evening barbecue. We have continued at that facility for the breakfast meetings this entire year, and are pleased with their commitment to us!

A new initiative for us this year was to work on several revisions— we really needed an updated Logo and brochure. After much input from our executive and membership, and thanks to help both with design and grants from ARTA, we now have both. As well, we really appreciate the table roll-up banner financed by ARTA to help us advertise our upcoming events.

Beginning with our celebration of retirement, the 'Swell! No Bell' Coffee in September of 2017, each month's meetings have been enjoyable and energizing. Many members contributed to each breakfast meeting, ensuring it was run smoothly and efficiently, and engaging for all. Marian Oberg and Debbie Kelley, our Co-Vice Presidents worked with the facility staff and presided over the arrangements for each event. David Flower composed a newsletter each month to inform membership of upcoming events and interesting perspectives and commentaries on local and world news items. The newsletter was distributed by email to members by our webmaster Emil Guzik. Wendy Poirier and the Membership Contact Committee contacted members each month to confirm attendance at our events. Maurine Maslen, our treasurer, with the assistance of other executive members, Wendy Poirier and David Flower manned the registration desk to collect money and welcome new members at each event. Sherry and Clarence Capowski ensured that name tags were available and table numbers were in place each month. Susan Supurniuk and her team created beautiful table centers appropriate to the season or topic for each breakfast. Eryl Jones directed the STARTA Choir, as they led us in "O Canada" and "Happy Birthday" at each meeting as well as entertaining us at Christmas, and leading us in a Sing-a-long. Our program coordinators, Donna Mayer and Donna Fedoration invited interesting speakers and prepared various short activities for each breakfast meeting. Past Presidents, Leo Bruseker and Emil Guzik, were on hand to make sure that all members and guests had a place to sit at the STARTA Breakfasts. Debbie Kelley created two gift baskets for the monthly draws. Joyce Keltie, our Historian, recorded highlights in pictures and incorporated them into a beautiful archive in binders that were available for member perusal at each meeting. All of this for the 75 to 130 members and guests who came to our monthly events.

As well as brunches, each month an executive meeting was held for planning purposes. Along with the volunteer executive and other members mentioned above, Secretary Dawn Curran kept us focussed and documents all the important details of our meetings. Maurine Maslen took care of our finances and provides financial summaries. Past Presidents Emil Guzik and Leo Bruseker offered encouragement and leadership, steering us in the right direction when concerns arose. Helen Kieran, a former executive member, filled in as a substitute whenever and wherever she was needed. This group was such a pleasure to work with—14 people who gave freely of their time and energy to run a smooth organization. A huge thank you

goes to this dynamic and giving team! We also thank the Board of Trustees and District Office staff of St. Albert Public Schools for making space available for our monthly meetings. The presidents of each branch are members of the Board of Directors of ARTA. In that role, both presidents attended the ARTA Retreat at the end of May and the Annual General Meeting in Edmonton, October 4 and 5, 2016. We also attended regular Board meetings September 13 and 14, 2016 and February 21 and 22, 2017. We were kept informed of the various initiatives and the business of the provincial organization, and participated in discussions and decision making regarding Extended health and dental care benefits, Alberta coverage for Senior drug benefits, pensions and care facilities for seniors. It was also interesting to meet other presidents and learn what their branches are doing. This past year, we reached out to enhance our profile in the community with two other events. The first was the presentation of gift baskets to four beginning teachers. Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board and St. Albert Public School Board were each asked to select two individuals for these gifts. We travelled to their respective schools to present each chosen individual with a 'beginning teacher' gift basket from our organization. The other event was a brief presentation to a group of people attending a pre-retirement seminar. All attendees were given one of our newly revised STARTA brochures, thanks to the printing grant from ARTA.

We were pleased once again to support initiatives in our community by providing a wreath at Remembrance Day in honour of our veterans, making donations of money, food and gifts to the Kinette's Club at Christmas, collecting items for the food bank, and sponsoring the Second Wind Conference with a monetary donation.

We had two occasions to be involved in ARTA sponsored events. February of 2018 was convention time, and we were invited once again to share responsibility for the ARTA booth with Elk Island RTA, Parkland RTA and Heartland RTA. Co-vice President Debbie Kelley volunteered time to help set up the booth, and organized volunteer members to man the booth for our full day commitment. Then, in spring of 2018, 38 members participated in the 'Wellness Walking Challenge', collecting a total of 13,905,505 steps this year. Of special note is one of our walkers, a 87 year old who uses a walker, recorded a 'Best of 30 days' total of 358,120 steps, coming in within the top half of our participants.

This past year saw changes both in our constitution and in the executive, as voted in at our AGM in May, 2018. We welcome our new executive officers and wish them well for the 2018 – 2019 year. Last year's Co-Presidents became Past-Presidents, and Vice-Presidents became Co-Presidents. Positions filled at our May Barbeque were those of Treasurer, and Program Directors. Positions still to be filled this fall are Vice-President and Newsletter Writer and Editor.

We continue to have a few challenges. Our website is not yet up and running, but we are planning to continue to pursue it, following some assistance and guidance from ARTA. This fall the monthly breakfast will be \$22.00 per member, up \$2.00 from last year. As costs go up, we are monitoring attendance at the monthly breakfast meetings, aware that whatever we do needs to be reasonable for our membership.

It is such a pleasure to be involved with those in our community and surrounding areas! We are looking forward to another busy and exciting year!

*Respectively Submitted by Peggy Bergmann and Ardyth Garrison*

Topics and speakers arranged by our Program Co-ordinators for our 'first Friday of the month' breakfast meetings for 2017-18 year are outlined below:

September	<i>Swell- No Bell. Opening coffee gathering and ice breaker</i>
October	<i>St. Albert Historical Society Presentation, presented by STARTA member Lynn Duigou <b>and</b> 'Gently used' Book Exchange and Sale</i>
November	<i>Stories of Remembrance. Day: A panel presentation by members Leo Bruseker, Ardyth Garrison, Pat Glenn, Laura Heatherington,, Marian Oberg, and Reggie Welsch,</i>
December	<i>My Life in Broadcasting, presented by Bob Layton <b>and</b> The STARTA Choir Presentation of Christmas Songs</i>
January	<i>Everyday Life, presented by comedian, Paul Sveen</i>
February	<i>Weather Forecasting and stories, presented by a number of STARTA members, <b>and</b> 'Gently used' Book/ DVD/ Magazine/ CD Exchange / Sale</i>
March	<i>Aging Stronger: Start Simple presented by Paul Robinson</i>
April	<i>Bi-annual Silent Auction Fundraiser to support STARTA programming</i>
May	<i>Barbeque and <b>Annual General Meeting</b></i>

Other events for 2017-18 are outlined below:

<b>July</b>	pot-luck "Picnic in the Park", arranged by Eryl Jones and a committee of volunteers
<b>August</b>	Horse Races outing, arranged by Maurine Maslan
<b>Feb. through April</b>	Groups of members attended various performances local dinner theatre Presentations