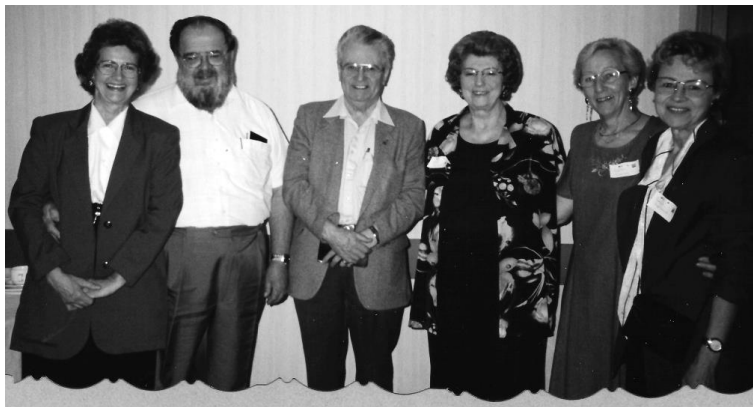


St Albert and Area Retired Teachers' Association
STARTA

June 4 1997, a group of 23 retired teachers met at the Seniors' Centre in St Albert, to discuss the possibility of starting an ARTA (Alberta Retired Teachers' Association) branch for the St Albert, Sturgeon, Morinville, Legal and Westlock areas. STARTA was chosen as the acronym for the group: St Albert and Area Retired Teachers' Association.

The following September fifty retired teachers met at the Canadian Legion Lounge for the first Breakfast Buffet. Ten new retirees were introduced. Gerry Smith from ARTA was the guest speaker.

Later that month twenty eight members met at the Canadian Legion Lounge where Joe Berlando conducted the Election of Officers for the group. They elected: President - Mary Forest, Vice President - Joe Berlando, Secretary - Susan Supruniuk, Treasurer - Terry Parsons, Social Convenor - Jean Thornton and Phone Committee - Helen Kieran. Executive meetings were to be held monthly from September to May at the St Albert Protestant School District Office.



l to r: Jean Thornton, Joe Berlando, Terry Parsons, Mary Forest, Helen Kieran & Susan Supruniuk

In October a charter was granted to STARTA by Dora Corbett, President of ARTA, naming STARTA the 13th chapter of ARTA in Alberta. The constitution was available for all the members to read. A newsletter was initiated with Eryl Jones as the first editor. In 2002 David Flower took over the editorship. Beginning in the fall of 1997, David and Peggy Bergmann became a team to prepare a monthly "Bulletin" that is sent electronically to members.

In addition to the elected executive, a variety of important roles emerged over the years including Phoning Committees, Historian, Membership & Contact Coordinator and Program Convenors. A choir was started in the first year under the direction of Fran Schuhard. Later Eryl Jones assumed that role. Each year the choir prepares two programs that it shares at nursing homes and senior residences.



l to r: Susan Supruniuk, Mary Forest, Dora Corbett, Jean Thornton, Joe Berlando & Helen Kieran

Monthly breakfast meetings including a program have been held since that first year. Some of the programs have been: guest speakers, performances by the STARTA choir, fashion shows, ballroom dancing demonstrations, workshops and displays of crafts and hobbies, displays by member artists. Some of the memorable topics have included: **volunteerism** (in Africa, Spain and Central America); **health and seniors issues** (identity theft, scams, and fitness); **nutrition and meal planning** (Alberta Pork Producers and Atco Blue Flame Kitchen); and **travel** (South America, polar bear watching and trekking to orangutans). Several excellent **comedians** have entertained us.

Other activities include an annual picnic in Lions Park and lunch at Northlands racetrack during the summer months. As well special events and tours have been held from time to time such as **theatre outings** (Rosebud, Jubilations, Mayfield and St. Albert Dinner Theatre); **tours** Christmas Lights, Ukrainian Village, Sherwood Park Museum, Provincial Museum, Muttart Conservatory, Legal Murals, Fort Edmonton, and Alberta Prairie Railway); and **life-long learning opportunities** (word processing, smart phone and tablet utilization, social media and memoir writing).

Some fund raising activities are held each year. Book sales and a Silent Auction are examples. These enable the Branch to contribute to the community. To mark the International Year of the Older Person, a bench with a commemorative plaque was donated to the St Albert Botanic Park. Each year a wreath is purchased for the St. Albert Remembrance Day ceremony. Other notable donations include Lois Hole Foundation, St. Albert Public Library, St. Albert Youth Center, St. Albert Kinettes, Operation Christmas Child and the St. Albert Food Bank.



L to R: Mayor Paul Chalifoux, Joe Berlando (Vice STARTA), Coleen Soetaert (MLA) Carol Wataman (St. Albert City Council)

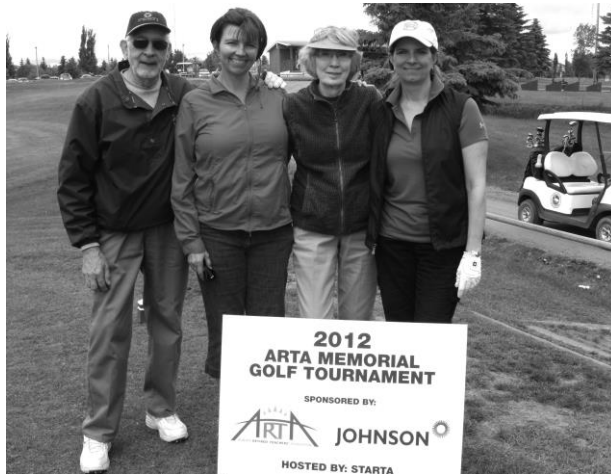
l to r: St Albert Mayor Paul Chalifoux, STARTA Vice President Joe Berlando, MLA Coleen Soetaert & Councillor Carol Watamaniuk

Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, the Honourable Lois Hole was the guest speaker in October 1999. She extolled a good education for all children, the dedication and achievements of educators and urged retired teachers to always be active proponents of teachers. In 2010 a donation in her memory was made to the St Albert Public Library for purchasing children's books and gardening DVDs.



Bernie Lemay, Mary Forest, Her Honour Lois Hole, Joe Berlando

For several years an Annual Golf Tournament was held at St Albert Trail Golf Course, A steak BBQ and prize awards followed the golfing. On June 18, 2012, STARTA hosted the ARTA Memorial Golf Tournament at the Sandpiper Golf and Country Club to honour Rod Thronson, a late Past President. The tournament attracted twenty-four teams from around the province. Special guests for the event included Rod's wife Betty, their daughters and grandsons.



l to r: Gordon Miller, Terena Le Corre (daughter), Betty Thronson
& Shawna Christensen (daughter)

For their dedication to STARTA Life-time memberships were awarded in 2002 to founding members Mary Forest, Susan Supruniuk, in 2007 to members Helen Kieran, Eryl Jones and Jean Thornton and in 2009 to Joan Trettler.

In 2013 ARTA celebrated its 50th Anniversary. As part of the celebrations, STARTA members Lynne and Lou Duigou received the 50th Anniversary Outstanding Volunteer Award for providing outstanding volunteer services to the community and beyond. Members Helen Kieran, Maureen Smith and Maurine Maslan designed and made quilt squares for the ARTA Anniversary quilt.