



# ST. ALBERT AND AREA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

March 24, 2020

Editor: Marian Oberg ([mroberg@telusplanet.net](mailto:mroberg@telusplanet.net))  
Peggy Bergmann/ ([pbergmann@shaw.ca](mailto:pbergmann@shaw.ca))

## April 3, 2020: Breakfast Meeting CANCELLED

### Lockdown

Yes there is fear.  
Yes there is isolation.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
Yes there is sickness.  
Yes there is even death.  
But,  
They say that in Wuhan after so many years  
of noise  
You can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
The sky is no longer thick with fumes  
But blue and grey and clear.  
They say that in the streets of Assisi  
People are singing to each other  
across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open  
so that those who are alone  
may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the  
housebound.  
Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
So that the elders may have someone to  
call on.  
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques  
and Temples  
are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the  
weary  
All over the world people are slowing down  
and reflecting  
All over the world people are looking at their

neighbours in a new way  
All over the world people are waking up to a  
new reality  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.  
So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the  
soul  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to  
live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your  
panic  
The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM

## **STARTA Executive Decisions**

Because the March 17 executive meeting had to be cancelled, two important decisions were made using email:

1. To cancel the upcoming April 3 Breakfast
2. To delay planning of the Lively Living Conference until the coronavirus situation is resolved.

The fate of the May 7 Barbeque and AGM is awaiting an official decision. As the days go by, it becomes easier to make that decision. Our constitution requires an AGM in May but we're hoping we will not be held to account for whatever action we take on your behalf. We will send out information as the coronavirus situation evolves.

A Notice of Motion will be brought forward when we do have that AGM that electronic motions and voting be binding in emergency situations. Until that happens, we will read all our electronic motions into the minutes when we finally meet in person.

## **The Spanish Flu**

A pandemic is described as an infectious disease that has spread over a large area and infected many people. Before the corona virus, the most recent pandemic was the swine flu of 2009.

One of the most devastating pandemics was the Spanish Flu of 1918-19, which spread to Canada with the return of troops from World War I. The internet is a source of much information about this pandemic, but if you're feeling overwhelmed with the current situation, you might want to avoid this research. An article in the St. Albert

history [A Bridge Over Time](#) describes the situation in St. Albert as the flu spread through the area and church bells rang to indicate new victims.

On a positive note, the Spanish Flu virus died out on its own. Although it was around into the early 1920's, the virus mutated to a less virulent form. With today's advanced science and better health care, we can hope for a quicker end to the coronavirus.

**STARTA Member Returns Home**  
We're glad to hear that STARTA member Judy Rausch, who was one of 120 Canadians stuck in Morocco, has returned home safely.

## **Postponed....123 and Flush...St Albert Diner Theatre**

**By Mike Dickinson**

As a few of you attend, this is to let you know the April 16 to May 2 show should be held in late fall (Nov and Dec). It will be the same show. Your seats will be the same. An announcement should be coming out to all those with tickets. This may be a good show to bring the grand kids to and introduce them to live theatre. We really appreciate the patience and support from all patrons.

## **Another cruise story by Mike Dickinson**

**My bro is back!**

My brother and his wife went on a little cruise through the Panama canal on the Carnival Magic ship. They left on Mar 5th. Then didn't Covid19 hit! We were worried sick.....

Then we learned that Carnival was bringing their ships home....so docking in San

Francisco....all good....wait, can't dock there? Riiiiight! Nooooooo! What about L A? SAN Diego? Nope, not a chance...

Finally, Long Beach allowed them in. They then went straight to....LAX! One the worst airports in the land..... Lots of hand sanitizer, and lots of wall to wall people.....They got on to a full plane and got into Edmonton the night of Mar 17th.They were met by health officials and told to self isolate. Their kids took their car to the airport parking lot and left it there for them. They jumped in and drove straight home. Their son, who was living with them, moved in with his brother. The kids are leaving food for them on their step. So far, it's ok but they are nervous.

### **World Water Day**

An email from Change for Children reminded their supporters that Sunday, March 22, 2020 was World Water Day.

The charity has many projects, including a well-drilling project in Nicaragua, educational initiatives and dental clinics.

(From their website: *Change for Children was founded in 1976 by a small group of people in the Edmonton area who were convinced that concerned Albertans could make a positive impact in the fight against poverty and injustice, internationally and in their own communities. They were right.*)

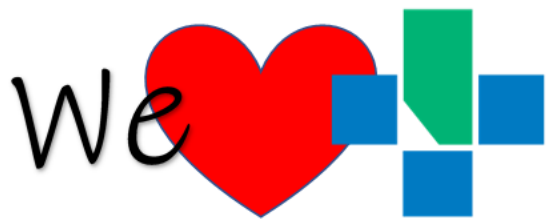
### **STARTA Executive at Home**

**Joyce:** I'm knitting a doll sweater. Ripped it out three times because I couldn't follow the instructions. Had to look up on YouTube Which direction to do YO = yarn over. Now it looks right as I

finish the back. I'm also doing lots of reading and house tidying.

**Mary:** I am so thankful that I have "Woody" my "retired" Jack Russel dog; who is very glad to get outside for a half hour walk after each of my daily meals and, or course, he never turns down a treat when we come back home.

**Ardyth:** A friend sent me this idea. They have sent this to all their neighbours encouraging them to show appreciation for Alberta Health Services from frontline staff to senior administration and their who have been potentially putting themselves in



harm's way as they work to care for the ill and to protect all Albertans. The idea is to print off this image and put it your front window.

**Mike:** No gym? No Servus Place? No problem!

It's too cold outside and too icy. But we can stay indoors and still be active. Stairs give you a great work out. You can also do push ups on stairs. You can also do push ups on a door frame.

You can run or march on the spot. Look in the kitchen for weights.... a bag of flour or sugar. A jug of vinegar. Bags of heavy canned goods (Costco sized).....carry them all over the house for twenty minutes or so. Heavy tins are great for bicep curls. There are all sorts of work outs on U Tube. Don't forget to stretch, stretch

and stretch some more. Roll out your muscles with a golf ball or tennis ball.

These balls are also great for the bottom of your feet.

Stay Safe!

### **Coronavirus Stats**

For those of you who would like to follow the statistics regarding the virus, here's an interesting link.

(Hover over the address, then Cntrl+Click)

<https://covid19stats.alberta.ca/>

Go to Geospatial, then click on the Edmonton Zone. There's an interactive map below the graph. As of Monday, it was showing 5 cases in St. Albert.

### **Winter Dream turned Quarantine!**

**By Peggy Bergmann**

We planned a winter 'dream' vacation: a 15-day round trip, San Francisco to Hawaii cruise on the Grand Princess. On Feb. 20 we flew to San Francisco. We boarded the Grand Princess cruise ship on the 21st., had 4 days sailing to Hawaii, and 4 days of island hopping. Excursions and sight-seeing on the islands of Hawaii were wonderful, just as we had imagined! Then we had 4 days sailing back to our final stop-over at Ensenada, Mexico on Thursday, March 5. On Wednesday afternoon, the captain announced on the ship's PA that we would be going straight back to San Francisco because there were suspicions that coronavirus was evident on the ship. Upon our arrival, we were not allowed to dock. Just after lunch on Thursday, March 5, we were asked to go to our rooms and remain there until further notice. The ship was to

wait about 40 miles off shore until arrangements for a safe docking could be made. We actually could trace the path the ship made on the GPS display on the TV in our cabin as it travelled around in circles, waiting for permission to dock.

Soon we heard the announcement that we were quarantined in our rooms, because several individuals on board had tested positive for the coronavirus. Cabin service was no longer available, and meals would be dropped off at our door. We were to stay in our cabins or on our balconies and practice social distance with our neighbors.

It was almost noon on Monday when our cruise ship was finally given permission to dock at Oakland. Almost everyone with a balcony was out, watching as our ship sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco Bay. What a neat experience, made even better by our ESCORTS! We felt like royalty, being escorted by the Coast Guard, several helicopters and 4 or 5 other smaller boats.

As our ship was slowly approaching the port, loud cheering erupted from the dock! Fellow passengers responded by clapping, cheering, and calling 'Thank you' and 'We're back!' What a lovely welcome!

The captain announced that some passengers would disembark that day, and suggested that everyone pack up, setting aside one bag of daily necessities and a change of clothing in case the disembarkation took several days. Disembarking began with those who were very ill first, so they could quickly be transported to hospitals and health facilities. The plan was that those who tested positive would be next, so they could be isolated,

then Californians and Americans, and finally international guests, so we expected to remain on the ship for a couple of days.

Early in the afternoon, the captain came on the PA to say that a plane had arrived at Oakland airport for all Canadians. We placed our large suitcases outside our cabin door to be picked up and taken directly to the plane. We had not heard if, when and where anyone was being tested, but we were ready to go!

We were learning to wear a mask ALWAYS. We had one provided before we left our rooms on the ship, and wore it continuously until we got to our room at the base.

There were 235 Canadians on the ship. As we left the ship, all Canadians were screened by medical teams at the dock. We had to answer several questions and our temperature was taken. On the bus to go to the Oakland military airport, we each received a boxed lunch- a large ham sub sandwich, an apple, granola bar, a cookie, and a bottle of water. It was almost 8:00 pm. We had not eaten since noon, and we were really hungry so that was welcome.

At the airport, the bus actually drove us onto the tarmac, and right up to the plane, where we boarded by walking up 7 layers of ramps. So, no regular check-in airport stuff. We were assured that our luggage was already on the airplane!

The plane was a bare bones modified 747 cargo freighter. We had to be careful where we stepped as there were steel rails, clasps and binding straps all over the floor! These were designed to secure and transport a variety of materials, Emergency supplies and materials all over the world.

The plane had 260 numbered seats, and 4 portable 'potty' units. The seats were a variety of styles and colours, bunched together as in economy seating in any airplane! We were assigned numbers 35 and 36- close to the front of the plane. The pilot's area was cordoned off by a big black tarp.

Again, we were treated well. On each seat was a bottle of water and a large plastic container, holding two individually wrapped half sandwiches, a baggie of sliced tomato, another with 3 leaves of lettuce, packets of mustard, mayo and ketchup, a bag of potato chips, a large 'unripe' peach, two cookies, a granola bar. (No coffee).

The attending team members who helped us board, find our seats, and get settled, were completely covered with white HazMat suits, 'gas' masks and rubber boots. As we were waiting to leave, one of their members explained to us that they were not flight attendants, but were a specialty containment team. They travel all over the world as needed, picking up individuals or groups of people who may have been exposed to dangerous diseases such as ebola, corona, etc. We were told that the long white 'trailer' on one side of the airplane was a containment area for highly infectious diseased individuals. (Scary!)

Once we were all buckled in our seats, the plane slowly started moving. At that point, someone near the front of the plane started singing 'O Canada'. Soon many passengers joined in! We are certainly proud of being Canadian, and were very happy at that moment to be heading home!

The flight was uneventful, except that our temperatures were taken halfway through

our flight by a Canadian medical team who accompanied us from the ship.

Almost 6 hrs. later, a huge cheer erupted as the plane set down at Trenton Air Force Base in Ontario. Exhaustion from the events of the day, and concern for what was about to happen were all put aside for a moment. It was wonderful to be back on Canadian soil!

What an adventure so far!

The Red Cross has been fabulous in this experience. Upon arrival, after our medical and other 'interviews', the Red Cross had tables set up to provide snack foods, a cozy blanket, and a soft fuzzy teddy bear. (but NO COFFEE!) Buses then delivered us to our 'hotels'. Our room looks like a standard economy motel room. It is reasonably comfortable... double bed, sofa bed, coffee table, desk, lamps, dresser and TV, bar-sized fridge, microwave, large closet, regular bathroom with blow dryer.

A welcome package was waiting for us in our room. It was a travel sized 'comfort' package with a toothbrush, toothpaste, hand soap, shampoo, deodorant, a pkg. of Kleenex and a comb. Also supplied was a full pkg. of medical masks (we are to wear masks at all times when in the presence of anyone other than our spouse), a full new box of blue medical gloves, a bottle of sanitizer, several bottles of water, and a Welcome Information pkg. There was also a laundry pkg. with Tide pods and softener sheets. Apparently, there were laundry rooms, free for our use, on each floor of our 'hotel'.

Our temperatures were again taken when we arrived at our rooms. We were told that a pair of nurses would be around at least twice a day to take our temperatures. Each

of us also received a thermometer with the suggestion that we take our own temp. whenever we wish, and to report any significant changes to the visiting nurses.

Another daily event: A cleaning lady in a HazMat suit comes in daily with disinfectant to wipe down light switches, door handles, closet doors, microwave oven door, desk top- any places that are commonly touched, and to remove garbage. Another person in a HazMat suit comes every 3 days to vacuum!

Meals are delivered to our door in an 8.5 x 5" plastic storage-type container! If we hear doors opening and closing, we check outside our door (with our masks on of course), and usually find something there!

The food here is very basic. Hot food for breakfast, lunch and supper is delivered to the rooms in small portions. It is left outside the door, and if you are not peeking, it is cold before you get it. I am sure that soon we will get into a routine so we know when things are coming!

When we first arrived, there was a 'common' room where we could go to pick up items we need. (long as we wear a mask every time we leave our room!) There were muffins, condiments, instant coffee pkgs., tea bags, granola bars, peanut butter and jam, bottles of water, baggies of 3 apples or oranges, cookies, paper plates, cups and plastic cutlery. There were also pkgs. of sweet junk food... those sponge chocolate cakes, cookies, and lots of varieties of juice but no salads or veggies. It seems new items are added on an irregular basis. Still no percolated coffee, and no toast or buns. That has now been closed, as it was deemed not very sanitary.

We can leave our rooms ...as long as we are wearing a mask and keeping about 2 metres away from others! We can go outdoors as well, but we do have restricted hours. Four specific times a day, we are allowed to go out anytime within that hour. Our times are from 9:00 to 10:00 am, 1:00 to 2:00 pm, 5:00 to 7:00 pm and 8:00 to 9:00 pm. We are only allowed to walk around three parking lots- those of our 'hotels'. It is very windy here, so -5 degrees feels like -20. Most of the clothes we took along were for Hawaii weather, so there are days when it is just too cold to go out!

Fairly quickly, a daily routine was established, and time passed.

Each day at suppertime, we received a multiple page handout with news, telling us if anyone had tested positive that day, and giving suggestions for exercise and activities to keep us occupied. There were 13 individuals (out of about 220 Canadians) who tested positive during our quarantine time. Immediately upon getting test results,

they were moved to an isolation wing in a different building. No-one tested positive during the last two days of the quarantine. Now our adventure has almost come to an end! Flight arrangements have been confirmed for tomorrow, so within 24 hours, we will be sitting at the airport, waiting to board our Air Canada flight from home!

As we look back over this experience, many thoughts come to mind. It is hard to believe that only a few weeks ago, we were in the midst of a situation that was being televised all over the world. The rescue from that potentially hazardous predicament was, in itself, a great adventure! We realize that, the moment we settled into our seats on the rescue airplane, we felt safe. That feeling continued, as we moved into our 'hotel' room at Trenton Air Force Base, and as the Red Cross workers did their best to meet our needs. Who would have guessed that our carefully laid plans for a dream vacation would become such an experience! What a great story to tell our grandkids!

(Peggy's flight home is scheduled for March 24, 2020)

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. If you know of anyone who cannot receive the newsletter by email, please pass on a copy, or let us know so we can mail one.*