



ST. ALBERT AND AREA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

November 16, 2020

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Introducing one of your new Co-Presidents: Janet Kiriakides

Family is very important to me. I was blessed to have wonderful parents and grandparents who were very gentle and supportive. They went to a lot of effort to make sure we had many opportunities. My brother, sister and I grew up on a dairy farm east of Edmonton and my mother worked outside the home after we were all in school. She kept an exhausting schedule of work and taking her kids to clubs, church events and music lessons. My grandmother stayed with us during the week to better facilitate all of this activity. Grandma never encountered a cereal box that she could not turn into flash cards to improve her grandchildren's learning. She made us read aloud every day and we were expected to read with expression. My dad and grandfather also worked to ensure we developed skills and were both very patient. Grandpa and dad took such misfortunes as a spilled can of glue, a lawn mower crash into the house and the consumption of an entire supply of nails for hammering practice as part of the learning process. My grandparents and parents kept the farmhouse stocked with many books and magazines. There never was any hesitation about splurging on reading materials. We also had terrific teachers both at school and for music lessons and I am grateful for this.

I am married and my husband Bob has helped me in so many ways. We raised his two sons and adore our grandchildren. We are saddened that the pandemic has limited our contact with them.

I loved my career as a teacher and really treasured that special moment when something difficult became clearly understood. I loved seeing skills improve. I was fortunate to have amazing colleagues and I could not have become who I am **today** without their input as well. I do miss the kids and the time with colleagues but I also love having time in retirement to pursue a variety of activities. I especially love having more time to spend with my husband.

Covid-19 has brought many changes to all of us. We miss our travel excursions, we miss singing with the Edmonton Metropolitan Chorus, and we miss STARTA breakfasts. We keep our spirits up with regular walks, an exercise program, cooking, baking and I am struggling to learn to play the flute.

I had a clarinet teacher who would say that if you are not struggling to learn something new and to improve skills on a regular basis you would surely drift backwards. I try to keep that in mind for how I conduct my life.

I look forward to the time we can all safely meet together in person. Until then, we have technology to help us stay connected.

Also introducing our new Co-President: Mary-Pat O'Neill

My first Alberta job was with Great West Life as a secretary; but duties didn't keep me busy enough, so on a lunch break, I found another job with what is now called "the Co-operators". I spent over twenty years with "the Co-operators" rating auto renewals; training and supervising staff and agents; office services, accounting, auditing, communications, travelling and setting up offices between Winnipeg and Vancouver Island.

After the establishment of the Western Divisional office in Calgary, I decided to return full-time to school. Counsellors at the University of Alberta suggested I become a Business Education teacher. While attending the University of Alberta, I worked for the Alberta Research Council (Coal Technology). After graduating, I began my teaching career as a Business Education teacher, teaching adults at Alberta College, writing curriculum for accounting, marketing, legal studies and keyboarding. I became CTS Department Head, and later enjoyed the role of Principal for Academic Upgrading including ESL.

As part of my principalship, I had the opportunity to be involved in taking Alberta College from private to public and joining Grant MacEwan College. However, Grant MacEwan was soon to become a University, with three programs all offering the same subjects, General Studies, College Prep and the High School. After one year, in 2003, the High School was dropped and I was eligible to "retire".

However, at that time I had no interest in retirement, so I continued to work on various significant projects, such as a teacher for Special Events, Tourism, Hunting & Fishing programs while Lakeland College located in Sherwood Park. I also worked on the Alberta Government Emergency (Landlink Consulting Ltd.) – Overland Flooding and Seepage, spending a summer handling claims with their office housed in the University of Lethbridge.

Following that, I worked on the Heartland Transmission Project (Decision Partners) and was responsible for seven small offices, established in various towns, managing a team who conducted consultations and dialogue with community members during Phase 1 and 2.

During this time, I also worked evenings for the Tan Jay Shoppe in St. Albert and still has numerous closets filled with Nygard clothes. But all good things must end; and, I officially retired 2012.

As a "seed" member, I worked with the "leadership" team at MacEwan University to establish the first 'Retirees of MacEwan University Association (ROMU). Continuing as a member of the leadership team, I am now Chairperson, responsible for organizing "events", such as a "theatre" night and social events held at a local community hall in Edmonton for our 200 members.

I currently serves on the executive of the Archdiocese of Edmonton Catholic Women's League (CWL Edmonton Diocese Council) as "Resolution and Legislation" Chairperson, with duties and responsibilities to a) monitor legislation; b) work with parishes to develop resolution dialogue and c) promote letter writing on pertinent topics by all members. I had previously served as their Education and Health Chairperson and for two terms as their Secretary.

As an older adult, retired from teaching and having lost a spouse, I continue to find new meaning, passion and purpose in life by continuing to help others. This helps to take my mind off my own worries, keeping me mentally stimulated, adding joy and enrichment to my life, and truly making "my heart sing".

Both ladies are excited and pleased to become the new Co-Presidents of STARTA, and are looking forward to meeting and getting to know our members. Welcome ladies!

Teaching in these Covid times

ZOOM PRESENTATION on November 20, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Enjoy watching a video of several current Alberta educators recounting some of their recent experiences, followed by time for some discussion. If you would like to join this Zoom meeting, please

**“RSVP” to Wendy Poirier at rwpoirier19@gmail.com
or call Wendy at 780-460-1260.**

The Zoom invite will then be sent out to you by email.

A recording will be made as well.

St. Albert Food Bank Donation

REMINDER: The St. Albert Food Bank is still asking for monetary donations to supply food and gifts for St. Albert residents in need.

To make a donation online, go to

<https://stalbertfoodbankandcommunityvillage.com/support-us/funds/>

To make a donation by cheque, mail to:

St. Albert Food Bank and Community Village
#30, 50 Bellerose Drive, St. Albert, AB T8N 3L5

From our members:

In the October News Bulletin, members were asked, “What have you done, or what are you doing to fill your ‘Covid’ time and keep busy, active and happy! Here are a few of the stories received, and even a few pictures!

Andrew says: “These finely sliced apples are from a tree that my grandfather planted in the late 80s, when he was in his 80s, for one of the doctors in his community. The skins are so thin that the apples do not have to be peeled, providing their full food value to any desert. As a youngster, I marveled at the apple trees he planted and grafted - up to five different varieties of apples, no less than I marvelled at his ease in communicating with people in German or French and a number of Slavic languages.”



What else has Andrew been up to? He says “I accomplished almost all of my goals this year, cycling over a thousand kilometres on local roads until [November 4th](#) and raising over \$5,000.00 for the Alberta Cancer Foundation. It was an emotional Ride for me this year, riding for Carol and my two sisters-in-law who both succumbed to cancer before I began my training rides in April.

This picture celebrates my completion of the Virtual Ride, the 200 km Enbridge Ride to Conquer Cancer on the weekend of [August 29th](#).



Other activities during Covid-19:

Staying in touch with my Mom and Mother-in-law daily, as well as calling other family members and friends occasionally.

Walking, cycling, and gardening activities have recently given way to resistance training, rowing and stair-climbing indoors and reading and viewing TV (especially, *Escape to the Country*).

TRAVEL, HOLIDAYS and COVID by Kate Gale

My travel plans started going pear-shaped as far back as [November 2019](#). I had started to organize my bi-annual ‘grand tour’ of Hong Kong, Macau, China, to catch up with all the friends I have scattered throughout the region from twelve years of working there, and to be in HK for the wonderful International Arts Festival in [February 2020](#). The political unrest caused me to drag my heels with airline bookings. Then, as the Wuhan news started to trickle out it became apparent that the trip would be foolhardy.

When our own shutdown occurred I just made up my mind to concentrate on the garden this last summer, and did. With the June rains it was certainly one of the best ever!

But I had to cancel a three week visit to Toronto at the end of August, to supervise my grandchildren while their parents had out of town gigs, as of course Covid-19 shut down all theatre work.

My traditional three weeks in England in late October, doing the family rounds, had to be cancelled too, as it would have involved two weeks in quarantine initially, hardly worth venturing over.

But, never mind, I have three weeks in Toronto booked for [Christmas!](#) Oops! Not so fast, cancel that idea, change tickets for [June 2021!](#) How come? Well, with the ‘bubble’ culture rules, the only way we could see for me to safely be in the family house would be for the grandchildren to be withdrawn from school two weeks prior to my arrival, to self isolate. There is no way I would do that to them, learning apart, they are hanging in, staying happy, by reason of their daily socializing and seeing peers. The first wave with no contact with friends for two months was emotionally very hard on them.

So, is this ‘A Series of Unfortunate Incidents’? A feel sorry-for-me whine? NO! Far from it!

I am grateful for my relative good health.

I’m grateful for an assured income.

For neighbours and friends who keep in touch, visit, offer to do errands for me, walk, laugh, chat.

For mobility, for local stores which have special hours for us.

As a history buff it has always intrigued me to think of the waves of immigrants who have come here, to

escape famine, programs, persecution, or to seek and build a better life. Many must have left Europe knowing they would never see their homeland again, or those they were leaving behind. Wrenching. And quite possibly never hearing from them again, or a letter which took months to track them down. Even in the 60's when I arrived in what was pre-boomtime Fort McMurray, contact with home was the weekly tissue thin blue airmail letter, not long chats on the phone.

But now, thanks to advances in technology we can zoom, skype, chat, FT, FB, post pictures on Instagram..... and a host of other options.

We needn't be isolated, and adversity has brought out the best in society, there is kindness and thoughtfulness in the air.

We will get through this, my mantra has long been "that which does not defeat us makes us strong". I wish everyone the same good experiences I have been having and best wishes for the upcoming holiday season, however and whatever you celebrate.

Kate Gale

The following comes from the musings of a teacher, looking back over time!... The Worm Story:

Every morning in my Grade 3 class, we had a creative writing workshop. I gave the students a sheet of story starter listed to give them ideas if they needed help. Most of them made their stories into illustrated books to share.

One day one of the boys came in from recess with an inch worm and that got my imagination going. In my story, the whole class collects inch worms in jars to keep on their desks. Eventually the worms started to grow and fight each other. They become big enough to eat one of the boys.


One of the illustrators of the following story was a talented student/artist interested in guns and knights and dragons. As an adult he served in the military in Afghanistan. I went back to the town a few years after I retired and, amazingly, met him in the grocery store. I still have one of his large drawings of a knight on horseback fighting a dragon.

THE INVASION
OF THE GREEN
WORMS ♪

Written by J. Keltie ©1989

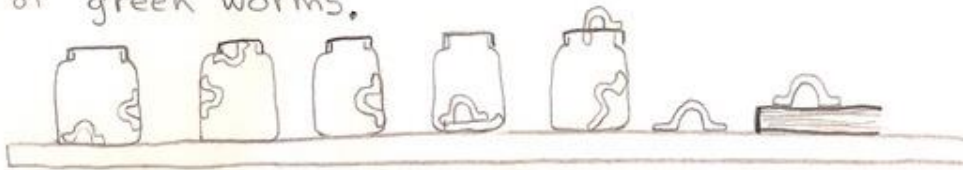
Illustrated by J. Keltie
A. Vig
K. Lewis

Dedicated to Grade 3 1989-90

It was Monday morning, just after recess.
"Look what I found!" called Garrett.
"What is it?" I asked.
"It's an inch worm," said Garrett.  "I found it out on the trees over the sandbox. Can I have a jar to put it in?"



"There are lots under the sink," I answered.
Little did I know what I had just started.
The next day everyone in the class had a jar full of green worms.



What happens NEXT? Read the 'rest of the Story' in the next Bulletin!

HOMEWORK DUE DATE EXTENSION: Due to a shortage of entries, the due date is extended to the next News Bulletin...

How will you and your family celebrate Christmas this year? Send your ideas, plans or special recipes to pbergmann@shaw.ca on or before **DEC 12, 2020 (Please!)**

Just a REMINDER: Mark your calendar

Nov. 20 at 10:00 a.m. for an interesting Zoom presentation on "Teaching in These Covid Times" (RSVP to Wendy Poirier!)

Get your HOMEWORK in to pbergmann@shaw.ca before **Dec. 12, 2020**

A huge 'Thank you' to ALL who contributed to this News Bulletin!