



ST. ALBERT AND AREA RETIRED TEACHERS ' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

August 17, 2021

Editors: Janet Kiriakides (rufromtheisleofmann@gmail.com)
Peggy Bergmann (pbergmann@shaw.ca)

*"The month of August had turned
into a griddle where the days
just lay there and sizzled."
– Sue Monk Kidd*

Mid-August to mid-September, summer lingers but its fire ebbs to embers. We relish those last halcyon days. Yet, even as we languish in its lingering heat the decreasing hours of daylight remind us we are headed into the "tunnel of winter" and a return to a life of more commitments and greater structure.



picture taken by Rita Guzik

*"The quiet August noon has come;
A slumberous silence fills the sky;
The winds are still, the trees are dumb,
In glassy sleep the waters lie."
– William Cullen Bryant*

September, in Roman times, was the month of Vulcan. Vulcan was the Roman god of fire and forge. It was the seventh month of the year in the Roman calendar which gave rise to its name. Given the incredible intensity and number of fires throughout the Northern

hemisphere this year it would seem more appropriate than ever to think of Vulcan and fire this September. In ancient Saxon times this month was called Halegmonath or month of festivals, later the AngloSaxons called it Gerst Monath meaning barley month. As this news bulletin reaches you, many of our colleagues who are not retired will be gearing up for a new school year. September always felt more like a new year than the celebrations on January first. Even now September still has that allure of a new beginning and a chance to try new things.

September is “Classical Music Month”

<https://www.yourclassical.org/story/2014/09/23/classical-music-for-fall-autumn>

Several composers of classical music have birthdates in the time span covered by this news bulletin. These include, Leonard Bernstein, Pachelbel, JC Bach and Antonin Dvorak.

September is also “Be Kind to Editors’ and Writers’ month.”

The Month Ahead

August 17: The Cat Nights begin. This is based on Irish folklore and is believed to be the source of the notion that cats have nine lives.

August 19: World Humanitarian Day: This year the focus is on making meaningful progress to alleviate the suffering caused by climate change among the world’s most vulnerable. You can also join “#theHumanRace” as you get involved with 100 minutes of walking, swimming, running or other activities between August 16 and August 30th. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/humanitarian-day>

August 19 at 7pm: St. Albert Public Library online event: Harvesting Your Own Seeds <https://www.sapl.ca/>

August 23: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition: This is an UNESCO initiative.

"On 23 August this year, we honour the memory of the men and women who, in Saint- Domingue in 1791, revolted and paved the way for the

end of slavery and dehumanization. We honour their memory and that of all the other victims of the slave trade and slavery, for whom they stand. (...) Once and for all, it is time to abolish human exploitation and to recognize the equal and unconditional dignity of each and every individual on Earth. Today, let us remember the victims and freedom fighters of the past so that they may inspire future generations to build just societies."

— Audrey Azoulay, Director General,
Message on the occasion of the International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

August 24: St. Bartholomew's Day: *"At St. Bartholomew there comes cold dew."*

August 29: International Day Against Nuclear Tests

August 30: International Day of the Disappeared

"According to the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992 as a body of principles for all States, an enforced disappearance occurs when:

"persons are arrested, detained or abducted against their will or otherwise deprived of their liberty by officials of different branches or levels of Government, or by organized groups or private individuals acting on behalf of, or with the support, direct or indirect, consent or acquiescence of the Government, followed by a refusal to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the persons concerned or a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their liberty, which places such persons outside the protection of the law."

Enforced disappearances affect the victim, their family and community and involve many violations of basic human rights.

September 6: Fight Procrastination Day: I'll make a decision about what to do about that another day.

September 8: International Literacy Day: This year's theme is, *"Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide"*. The day was created to stress the importance of literacy for the individual, the community and society.

September 8 at 2 pm: St. Albert Public Library online event: Seniors Drop in Book Club via Zoom: "*A Town Called Solace*" by Mary Lawson <https://www.sapl.ca/> This book is described as being about a family in crisis after their rebellious teenage daughter goes missing. The story is told from the point of view of three different characters.

September 12 from 11am to 1:30 pm: St. Albert Place: Treaty 6/ Métis Flag Raising Ceremony

September 13: Roald Dahl Day: Named after Roald Amundsen, he is best known for his children's fantasy novels. He also wrote fiction for adults, including short stories and screen plays.

September 13 at 7 pm: St. Albert Public Library online event: Drop in Book Club via Zoom: "Five Wives" by Joan Thomas <https://www.sapl.ca/> It is described as historical fiction telling the story of the wives of five Plymouth Brethren missionaries who were killed in Ecuador in the 1950s.

September 15: Make a Hat Day. You can make an origami hat out of paper. I tried it. I suspect it will be tough to find a small frog that would tolerate wearing it. There are many patterns on the internet with instructions for knitting, crocheting, and sewing hats.

The Arts in St. Albert

After searching several St. Albert organizations online on August 8th, it would appear that they are still being cautious. St. Albert Dinner Theatre has plays listed for the season with ticket sales being offered online at a later date. I could find no concerts scheduled at this time for the St. Albert Community Band, St. Albert Singers, or the Mission Hill Brass. It was difficult to determine if and when rehearsals for these organizations might start. There is an event sponsored by the St. Albert Visual Arts Council that will take place November 20 and 21. Sturgeon County has some online events including a webinar on the North Saskatchewan watershed. If you know of events or activities in our community that may be of interest to STARTA members, please forward the information to the editors so it can be noted in the bulletin.

We would be happy to promote the talents of our members and to list opportunities for our members to participate in activities.

Yesteryears

In early July as we were preparing for the mid July bulletin some of the text mysteriously appeared in purple. We managed to make it go away. As you can see later in this bulletin the purple text has come back to try for its moment on the page. We'll let it have its time. We had a discussion about whether or not dark purple print might be easier on the eyes than black print. We couldn't find any evidence that it was, but this led to a discussion about the evolution from blackboards to white boards and smart boards.

Blackboards were originally black and the chalk was white which was a strong contrast and this was eventually deemed to be less than ideal for the human eye and thus black boards became green in colour (although they were mysteriously still often referred to as blackboards) and creamy or yellow chalk was swapped in to replace the white chalk to satisfy our ocular well-being.

Later on, the green boards and yellowish chalk became redundant with the advent of white boards and erasable markers. At first the markers had an unfortunate smell that was somewhat akin to the smell of ditto fluid except even harsher. Those first markers almost resulted in dizziness as your brain tried to shut down external portals to protect itself from the potent chemicals in the markers. Later the markers were amended so they were much more friendly to the olfactory sense though I always wondered if they were still bad for the brain. The other issue with the markers and whiteboards was their slippery nature. It took a while to adapt to the loss of resistance when writing or drawing on the board. It felt a little uncontrolled at first. The white boards were then augmented by smart boards. There was an action you needed to do to "register" the smart board from time to time, it always made me think of a ritual that might be performed in ancient times in the hopes of enacting a cure and sometimes it seemed to have the same rate of success with the smart board as the shaman's ritual had with the unfortunate patient of yesteryear.

Janet Kiriakides

Reminiscing

Our one-room school had traditional blackboards, created by using special paint on smooth panels. As there was no good way of duplicating anything for the up to eight grades, the boards were plentiful and well-used. Sometimes, the boards were repainted over the summer. When we moved on to a consolidated school, we had green boards, judged to be much easier on the eyes.

When the addition to Salisbury High School opened in 1958, there were a couple of new features which greeted us. First was the octagonal (or maybe it was hexagonal, I can't remember) gymnasium, and secondly, the multi-colored chalkboards. There were blue, green, brown, and even pink boards. None were black, or the more usual shade of green seen in other schools. The darker colors worked well, but the pink became unreadable at the end of the day when there was chalk buildup. This is the only example of this innovation I've seen: perhaps it was determined that standard green was more functional.

From there we progressed to whiteboards. My colleague commented that he was turning into a Smurf as the day progressed due to the use of blue markers!!

I retired at the beginning of the smart board era so I will leave it to others to comment on its effectiveness. *Marian Oberg*

Please help us out!

If you know of any STARTA member who is ill, injured or hospitalized please contact Wendy Poirier so that she can send them STARTA's wishes for a speedy recovery and a return to better health. Contact Wendy at rwpoirier19@gmail.com

Picnic

On July 13th a group of about 20 STARTA members met in Lion's Park for the Covid version of the annual STARTA picnic. Although there was a heat warning we met early enough in the day to escape

the worst of the heat. It was very pleasant in the shade of the shelter and a lovely breeze added to our comfort. It was wonderful to see people in their entirety after many, many months of seeing only heads and shoulders on a flat screen. (Ah, the wonders of 3D) I believe it is safe to say that people enjoyed the food as everyone brought their own and have themselves to thank for the gustatory delights.

Truth and Reconciliation

We recognize, acknowledge, and honour the ancestral traditional First Nations territories on which we live as well as the contributions of all Indigenous People to our community and to our nation.

One suggestion for the non-First Nations Canadian Community to show support for Canada's Indigenous People was that we should learn more about their culture.

Food is an integral part of culture, and we are familiar with some foods of the First Nations. In the days of the early pioneers there were examples of each group's food traditions influencing the other. As time progressed the foods of the First Nations people have changed as is the case with any modern food tradition. The following link offers some recipes along with suggestions of restaurants where you can enjoy First Nations food. Hopefully these establishments have survived the travails of Covid.

<https://www.lavenderandlovage.com/2017/02/bannocks-fry-bread-indian-tacos.html>

This link also has First Nations Recipes. Some of them have ingredients that you would not necessarily find in your local grocery store. They do, however, look interesting.

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/lifestyle/foodrecipes/12-canadian-first-nations-recipes-to-make-for-national-indigenous-history-month/ss-AAKV3V5>

If you try any of the recipes in these two links, we hope you will share your experience in the news bulletin. If you have a First Nations recipe that you know and love, we hope you will send it for inclusion in the mid-September bulletin.

Recently there have been several articles written about the First Nations People and their techniques for managing the forest. There were people within these communities who were known as fire keepers. It was their job to manage the forest so that there were areas for hunting, for berries and to keep the forest so it was navigable. They regularly had many small well controlled fires during the non-wildfire season. These practices resulted in keeping most of the forest younger and more resilient to disease and pests (think of the devastation of the Western Pine Beetle). These controlled burns covered a more extensive total area than the controlled burns of forestry services today. The good news is that there still seems to be First Nations People with fire keepers' knowledge. Let's hope that we can have the benefit of their expertise to help diminish fire hazards and protect the forest. Here is a link to one of the articles.

<https://www.vox.com/22586851/indigenous-native-firefighters-western-wildfires-climate-change>

We hope you find joy in the last days of summer and that it has refreshed you in mind, body, and soul. Please let us know of any activities or events that may be of interest to STARTA members and to send us any recipes you have for the preparation of the foods of the Canadian Indigenous people. (send to pbergmann@shaw.ca)
We would love to have you as a contributor to this news bulletin.