



# ST. ALBERT AND AREA RETIRED TEACHERS 'ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

February 17, 2022

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***As we settle in to the new year, we are looking forward to the changes this year might bring. Some of these will be good, and might be by choice, while other changes are neither good nor by choice.***

***First changes to STARTA:*** As you know, one of our leaders, colleague and friend, Janet Kiriakides, passed away suddenly after a brief but painful fight with pancreatic cancer. We looked to the executive for help in taking over Janet's duties. Wendy Poirier, our current Membership and Contact Co-Ordinator, was appointed by the executive to fill the position of Co-President of STARTA on a temporary basis. Ardyth Garrison has offered to take over Janet's role in assisting with the News Bulletin. Thank you to both ladies for stepping up to help – it is much appreciated!

We are pleased to welcome Wendy Poirier as Interim Co-President of the St. Albert Retired Teachers Association (STARTA).

Wendy Poirier was a high school Physical Education, Math, French, Health, and English teacher for 35 years in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Wendy began teaching in 1978 at a four-room high school in Yellowgrass, Saskatchewan. After one year she went on to spend fifteen years in Regina Public Schools and four years in Southeast Regional College in Qu'Appelle. While in Qu'Appelle, Wendy taught an Indigenous Women's High School Program to women, from the Gordon and Sinaluta Reserves. During this time, she gained considerable knowledge and insight into residential schools and life on a reserve from her indigenous students.

The Poirier family moved to St. Albert in 1999 and Wendy started teaching in Edmonton Public Schools. She retired as a teacher in 2012 and became the Co-Ordinator of the Rental Assistance Program for St. Albert Food Bank and Community Village until she fully retired in 2015.

Wendy joined St. Albert Retired Teachers Association (STARTA) in 2012; and has actively served as Membership Contact since 2016. On February 08, 2022, Wendy Poirier was appointed Interim Co-President of STARTA.

The executive also thanks Ardyth Garrison for volunteering to help Peggy with the STARTA News Bulletin. Thank you Ardyth!

Ardyth started teaching in the mid 70's and spread her teaching career of 30+ years across 7 different schools in the St. Albert Protestant Separate School District. What an amazing teaching and school career Ardyth has had! Beginning as Special Support for Grade 1 students, all the way to teaching Math 10, and becoming an Assistant Principal and then Principal! Even after retiring in 2006, Ardyth took on a new role as a University Facilitator for Student Teachers. Shortly after her retirement, Ardyth joined STARTA, and in 2014, she joined the executive as Co-Vice President, then Co-President, then Co-Past president. We are delighted to tap her many experiences and great literary skills as she now joins us in creating and editing the monthly News Bulletins!

***More changes - this time to the News Bulletin:***

We would like to honour those of our membership who have passed away. We know this is risky, as we will likely miss someone, so we need your help. Information will be generated from our membership, and **we will only publish whatever we receive from our members.** If you would like to honour a member who has passed, please write a short article and send it to [pbergmann@shaw.ca](mailto:pbergmann@shaw.ca). Be sure to submit the item(s) before the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, to get it published in the subsequent News Bulletin.

*In Memoriam – Honouring members who have passed away*

**Janet Kiriakides**

Janet passed away suddenly at the age of 67 on January 23, 2022, after a brief but painful battle with pancreatic cancer.

Janet's passion was teaching. She taught in 4 different schools in St. Albert and touched many lives in the process. Janet loved teaching music, especially band. She played the clarinet, saxophone and piano and had a beautiful singing voice. After her retirement, as a life-long learner, she learned to play the flute, proving her motto, "Anything is possible if you try!"

Shortly after retiring, Janet became an active member of the STARTA, offering her services with focus, positive energy, and in gentle leadership as one of our co-presidents. She was an amazing woman who has left the world a better place because of her many contributions. Janet touched so many lives in a beautiful way and will be dearly remembered and missed by many!

**Jerry Zimmer**

Jerry and his wife, Madelyn, passed away suddenly in a tragic accident on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, while vacationing in San Diego. While crossing a street, both were struck by an oncoming vehicle and died at the scene.

Jerry was a strong advocate for Catholic education during his entire career as teacher and Director of Education with Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and later with Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools as Superintendent. Jerry was highly respected and valued for his work as faith leader for the Division, and for his strong dedication to staff and to students and their learning. His many contributions to education, both at the local and provincial levels, helped to build strong foundations for continued improvements in educational systems. Both Jerry and Madelyn were exemplary faith models for their family and for the community in which they lived. They shall be greatly missed.

***STARTA EVENTS: old and new...***

**Valentine's Day Bon Fire at Lions Park- February 14, 2022**

14 members joined together to chat, person to person, around a warming bonfire at Lions Park. It was lovely to stand almost next to someone and have a conversation! Thanks to Emil for his attention to the fire, and to Wendy Poirier for organizing this event and arranging attendance prizes. Congratulations to winners Glen Kane and Emil Guzik who were fortunate to go home with a gift for their sweethearts!

We hope you enjoy the pictures of this event that are being sent as a second document!

**February 25th Coffee and Chat at 10:30 am (mountain standard time) Zoom Meeting with Gary Sawatzky (from ARTA)**

We will begin at 10:30 with a few minutes to visit and chat. At 11:00, one of our Program Co-ordinators will welcome Gary Sawatzky from ARTA to chat about the many changes to the benefits plan.

*If you have any questions or queries, please send them to [laura.heatherington2@gmail.com](mailto:laura.heatherington2@gmail.com) before Wednesday, Feb. 23,2022, so she can pass these on to Gary. Thank you!*

To Join the Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85927869409?pwd=Y3NVQlowQ0NSYU04K3FNL2E3OFdLUT09>

Meeting ID: 859 2786 9409

Passcode: 616481

Phone: 587 328 1099

**Next Zoom Coffee & Chat will be March 17<sup>th</sup> – St. Patrick's Day  
10:30 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)**

*(If we have the 'Luck of the Irish', it might be our last Zoom meeting)*

To join the Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86427707012?pwd=WU1HMk1EK0NuTG53NjlrTVF0czJtdz09>

Meeting ID: 864 2770 7012

Passcode: 205568

Phone: 587 328 1099

(Did you know: Our Zoom Coffee & Chats have attracted members near and far? We have participants from Vancouver Island, on holiday in Hawaii, lake homes and more! Don't be limited by space and distance! Join from wherever you are and leave whenever you must!)

### **Truth and Reconciliation**

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

Sites to visit:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-first-nations-response-to-bc-floods-held-up-as-a-model-to-help/>

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/lifestyle/indigenous-girl-shamed-for-what-she-wore-to-school-pushes-for-national-ribbon-skirt-day-1.5733286>

## **One Dog's Expedition**

By Jean Elder

What joy for me when my dog, Julie, came into my life a year ago. Previously she had to survive on her own in a wilderness area likely since she was a few months old. She is a petite, medium-sized dog. At the time of my adopting her, she was almost a year old and already had a litter of pups. Julie was super thin, had a very unhealthy coat, and was extremely fearful of people, of being in a house, of dogs, of cars, of a city. The fast pace of St. Albert was traumatizing. A leash was too confining and threatening. What brought Julie excitement and joy was when my friend, Susan, visited with her large, Labrador-mix dog, Hozhoni. She is also a rescue dog, probably six years old. She was and is a guardian angel, mother and teacher for Julie.

The second day that I had Julie, I decided to take her to my vet for a check-up. Julie was in the back seat of my car. When I opened the driver's door, she shot past me and ran! It didn't matter where as long as she could escape. I watched in unbelievable horror as she dashed across four lanes of traffic on Hebert Road. No thought to where she was going – anywhere but this insane city. She was terrified. Immediately my vet put out an alert on his website and on Facebook. Thank goodness I had a photo of her.

Julie was spotted at Campbell Park, about three kilometres away. I called the RCMP detachment, where the centre for animal control is. The media warned of a dog on the loose. Four Peace Officers came to the rescue. Julie headed back west and multiple times crossed six lanes of very busy traffic on St. Albert Trail. The officers had to stop traffic for the safety of drivers and Julie. At one point she was in behind Sorrentino's restaurant but was too elusive for the officers to catch her. She ran down Salisbury Avenue and then back and forth across St. Albert Trail. In the meantime, several people were driving around trying to find her. She wore a bright pink collar but had no tags or other identification. She didn't even know her name. I was numb with fear and disbelief. Was this a horrendous nightmare or a trip to outer space gone awry? My only recourse was to pray to Julie's guardian angel that she would watch over her and bring her back safely. The Peace Officers didn't give up.

Eventually Julie ran behind St. Albert Inn into a construction site which was fenced in and this is where she was captured. She didn't put up a fight. She surrendered. After several hours of running and trauma, she just couldn't go on anymore. The officers took her to the vet's office where Susan was waiting. Julie lay under her chair and was not able to comprehend what happened or what would come next in her young life. I am ever so grateful to the Peace Officers. I wanted to thank them publicly in the St. Albert Gazette. My hesitation was that everyone would then know that this was my dog causing so much chaos.



A miracle happened! There was no traffic accident, no one was hurt, and Julie was safe. If she has nine lives, I think she has used up 8.98 of them.

Today Julie is a dog who loves life. She lives with her best dog friend, Hozhoni. Life couldn't be better. She knows that she is well cared for, feels safe and secure, and realizes that this is her home. Her gentle, loving character brings joy to many. Susan said that I got a ten-million dollar dog. How true! She has a special intuitive gift. At a palliative care unit, a patient who loves dogs dearly, was allowed to have Hozhoni and Julie visit her. When Julie came to the door, she made a beeline for the patient and put her head on her lap. Such a natural presence! This action showed a special bond of love. I treasure my ten-million dollar dog!

***Your STARTA executive needs your help!***

*By Debbie Kelley*

For the past two years the executive has not been able to fill the position of Co-Vice President. This is a two-year position with the assumption that the people in this position will move up to the Co-President job. With the STARTA year ending, there is no one to assume the Co-President position. We need this position filled so that STARTA will continue to be a viable organization.

Won't you please consider volunteering for this job? Talk to a friend about helping you by becoming your Co-President! We really NEED you!

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to this News Bulletin!*