



ST. ALBERT AND AREA RETIRED TEACHERS ' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

December 15, 2023

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



May you be surrounded by those
you love this season!



Christmas

~ Anon

*Every time a hand reaches out
to help another...that is Christmas.*

*Every time someone puts anger aside
and strives for understanding...
that is Christmas.*

*Every time people forget their differences
and realize their love for each other...
that is Christmas.*

*May this Christmas bring us
closer to the spirit of human understanding,
closer to the blessing of peace!*

December: Making Connections with our community

The beautiful Drive-thru Christmas Lights Display on Riel Drive at St. Albert Kinsmen Park is still open, through to January 7, 2024.

To purchase **TICKETS** go to <https://www.borealislights.ca/>

January is always a difficult time for the Food Bank, as many supplies are depleted over the Christmas season.

*At our next breakfast meeting on January 26, we will be accepting **DONATIONS of Cash, Cheques or Food Items for the FOOD BANK!***

UPCOMING EVENTS: Breakfast Friday, Jan. 26 2024

At Sturgeon Valley Country Club

9:00 AM- 11:00AM (Doors Open at 8:30 am.)

COST: MEMBERS \$26.00 or NON-MEMBERS \$30.00

Payment by cash or cheque at the registration desk

OR by e-transfer the Thursday prior to the breakfast. (details below)

Please note – there will be no refunds on e-transfer payments.

MEMBERSHIP Renewals now DUE - **\$10.00** per person paid by cash, cheque or by e-transfer. (including Associate members, who are not retired teachers)

To pay for your breakfast and membership fees using an e-transfer, be sure you have set up the e-transfer process with your financial institution. Send the e-transfer to startacontact@gmail.com

SPECIAL NOTES about e-transfers:

- **Send payment NO LATER** than the **Thursday** prior to the Friday breakfast.
- **All members still need to check in** at the registration tables upon arrival at the breakfast meeting.

If you have not been contacted about the breakfast by Monday, January 15, and you wish to attend, contact Maurine ASAP! at (780)418-8032 or text (780) 690-5644

PROGRAM: The Magician is booked! More information in the next News Bulletin!

Events in Review: Along with a delicious breakfast, at the November 26th breakfast meeting we celebrated both August and November birthdays and enjoyed hearing about ARTA from both Deb Gerow, ARTA President, and our own Vi Oko.

Deb shared that ARTA has now grown to 18 branches with over 30000 members. She spoke briefly about the mission and success of ARTArX, and thanked our branch as we continue to work together. Deb then presented a cheque for \$1860.00 to our branch from ARTA. The grant was based on the number of retirees who have memberships both in ARTA and in STARTA, and is provided to support branch activities and assist in growing its membership. Our president then presented a cheque to the Charitable Foundation of ARTA to provide assistance and support for senior causes in Alberta. She also shared the great news that one of our members, Vi Oko, was granted an ARTA Honourary Lifetime Membership at the ARTA AGM in October. for her many, many, many volunteer hours within the community, STARTA, ARTA, and the Edmonton branch as well.

Vi then presented her story board of 60 years with ARTA. She revisited the beginnings of ARTA in 1952, when volunteers began writing letters on behalf of retirees to advocate for an increase in Pension incomes. In 1962, a group Life Insurance Plan was set up. 1963 saw the openings of three branches – in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge. Seven more branches were opened in the 1970s, and 3 in the 1980s. STARTA, the St. Albert branch, was opened in 1997. Since then 4 more branches have opened! ARTA continues to grow!

Thank you Vi, for highlighting the vast progress ARTA has made over the years to best support retirees! Amazing!

Looking Ahead: Save these Breakfast DATES:

- Friday, January 26 Friday, April 26
- Friday, February 23 AGM in May (TBA)
- Friday, March 22 (NOTE: change of date)

A Review of the last ARTA Webinar by Maurine Maslen

Because of the Alberta Government's proposal for establishing the Alberta Pension Fund (APP), ARTA hosted a webinar about a Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) overview. The Alberta Government did not accept an offer to participate. Jeffrey Hodgson, a manager of the CPP, provided a comprehensive review of the CPP. As I listened, I noted the following information. I hope I have recorded it correctly.

The CPP is administered by an Independent Board of Directors which operates at arm's length from the government. The CPP Investment Board (CPPIB)'s members are financial professionals who direct the fund; no politicians are involved. Any changes to the Investment Act must be approved by 2/3 of the participating nine provinces. Before the CPP was established, Quebec had set up its own pension plan and chose not to participate in the fund. To sustain its fund, people from Quebec now pay more than CPP participants to get equivalent benefits to the CPP. The rate for CPP is the same for all participants no matter where they live in Canada.

The aim of the board is to keep risks low while obtaining maximum returns. When the fund was first established, investments were only made in provincial bonds and low risk investments. The Office of the Chief Actuary keeps track of investments and payouts of the funds. In the 1990's it was determined that Canadian birth rates were declining, and people were living longer. To make the fund sustainable, the strategy was changed to Global Investment in a variety of geographical and structural areas. Now the CPPIB invests \$576 billion. In the last 10 years, the average rate of return of 9.6% is the highest rate of return of all pension funds on the planet. The funds are invested in 55 countries through its nine international offices.

If Alberta moves out of the CCP, questions and considerations must be made regarding the following areas: asset transfer uncertainty- how much money would be actually given to Alberta; contribution rates required by each Alberta worker to maintain a fund; portability of pensions as people move in and out of the province; costs of implementation (start-up is estimated to be between \$100 million to \$1 billion); implementation and set up of management structure, risk pooling (there's strength in numbers especially during challenging times). Alberta now has a young population and that will change over time and payouts will become more over the years. An APP would be very open to political interference.

No mention was made about the holding of a referendum, what the wording of a referendum would be, nor whether the results would be binding or not.

As I try to keep informed about the above issues, I am greatly concerned about the creation of an APP. Please keep yourself informed!



The eleventh annual Second Wind Conference will be held in Edmonton on September 12, 2024, at the lovely Chateau Louis Conference Centre.

The conference features a keynote speaker followed by a wide variety of breakout sessions, a delicious buffet lunch and refreshments, complete with a 'wine down' and door prizes. Watch for a list of session topics and speakers posted on the conference website by mid-April 2024.

Plan to enjoy this uplifting and informative event with friends and former colleagues.

Mark the date on your calendar and invite a friend to accompany you!

Second Wind is a one-day health and wellness created by retired teacher volunteers in the Edmonton area for retirees. Its organizing committee very much appreciates STARTA's strong support of Second Wind. For more info. visit: <https://secondwindconference.ca>.

STARTA Members Travel the World:

What are your most treasured travel experiences?

Where did you go? What did you see?

We are continuing with the 'TRAVELLING' theme for the News Bulletin. We would appreciate contributions from our membership - just a one-page commentary, maybe with a few pictures, to share with our STARTA colleagues.

Send contributions to pbergmann@shaw.ca by the 12th of the month. Thank you!

Your STARTA Executive wishes you a very Merry Christmas!

*See you Friday, January 26, 2024
at the next breakfast meeting!*

Contact Information...

IF YOU HAVE HAD ANY CHANGES to your **CONTACT INFORMATION,**
please fill out and bring the attached form to the next breakfast meeting. Thank you!



ST. ALBERT RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP Information 2024

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

NEW MEMBERSHIP: _____ RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP _____

RETIRED TEACHER: _____ ASSOCIATE MEMBER: _____

Current ARTA MEMBER: Please circle one: YES NO

Membership Fee for 2023-2024 is \$10 for both a member and an associate member. An associate member is anyone who has purchased a membership in STARTA, but does not receive a pension from ATRF.

NOTE: Photos may be taken at STARTA events and may be published in STARTA media. If this is an issue for you, please discuss your concern with the photographer at the event.